



**CONGLETON
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
Part 2: Character Area Profiles**

Congleton Town Council

CONGLETON

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Part 2: Character Area Profiles

Prepared for:

Congleton Town Council

By:

Ruth Benson Landscape Planning & Design

Final Draft March 2020

6 Landscape character area profiles

Contents

Figure 16: Local Landscape Character Types and Areas in Congleton parish	2
1a Town centre historic core.....	3
L.....	4
1b West Road	6
1c Willow Street-Brook Street.....	9
2a Dane Valley - Town Centre	11
2b Dane Valley - Congleton Business Park.....	15
2c Dane Valley - Buglawton/Lower Heath.....	18
3a West Heath.....	20
3b West Heath Industrial Estates	23
3c Astbury Mere.....	24
3d Waggs Road and Howey Hill	26
3e Park Lane - Canal Road	28
3f Bromley Farm	31
3g Lower Heath	33
3h Buglawton	35
3i Hightown, Mossley & Astbury Lane Ends.....	38
4a Priesty Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane.....	40
4b Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook	42
4c Buglawton Hall.....	45
4d Dane Valley, Congleton to Bosley	47
4e Congleton Moss	49
5a Congleton Edge	51
5b Timbersbrook and Rainow Hill.....	53
5c The Cloud.....	55

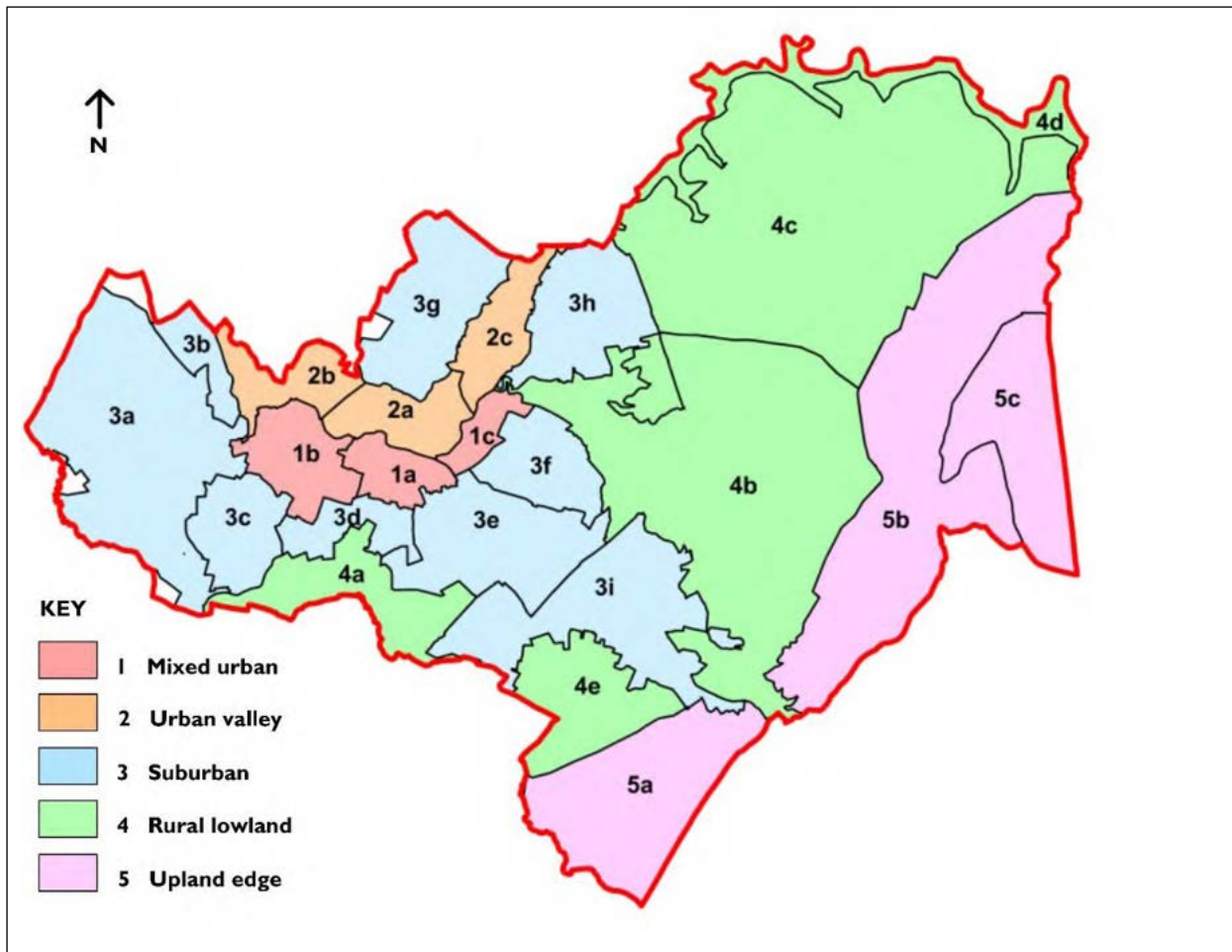
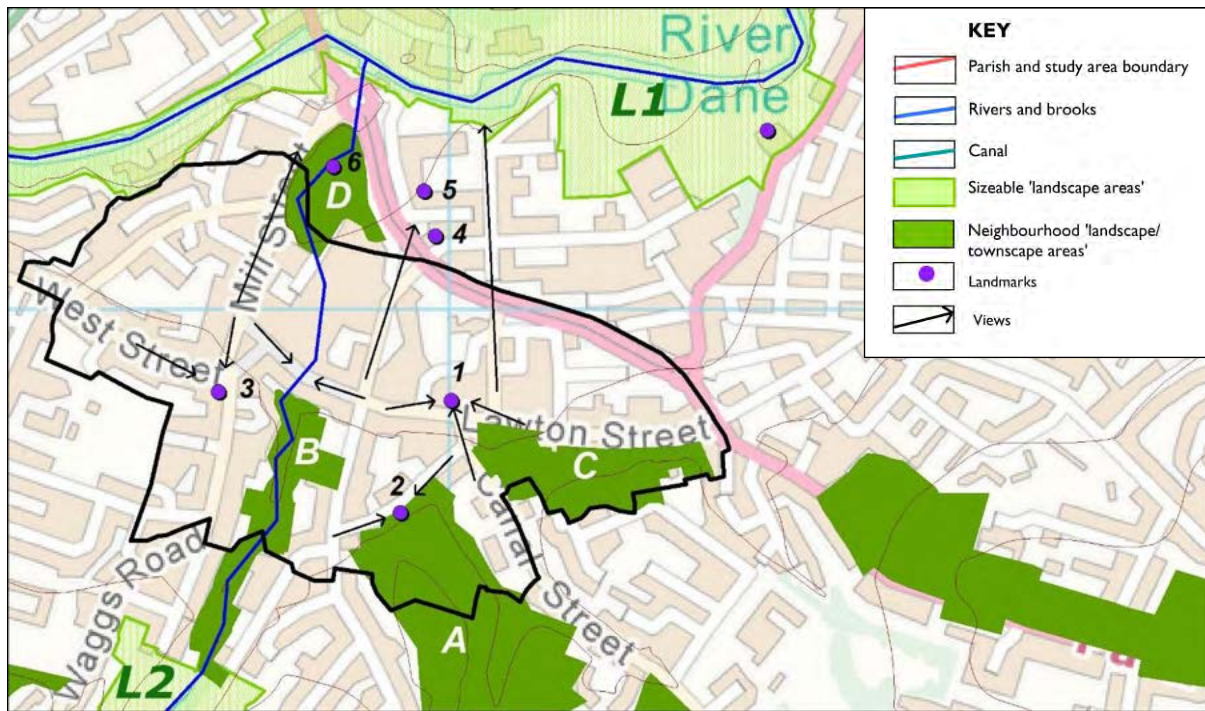


Figure 1: Local Landscape Character Types and Areas in Congleton parish

LCT No.	Local Landscape Character Types	LCA No.	Local Landscape Character Area
1	Mixed Urban	1a	Town Centre Historic Core
		1b	West Road
		1c	Willow Street / Brook Street
2	Urban Valley	2a	Dane Valley - Town Centre
		2b	Dane Valley - Congleton Business Park
		2c	Dane Valley - Buglawton / Lower Heath
3	Suburban	3a	West Heath
		3b	West Heath Industrial Estates
		3c	Astbury Mere
		3d	Waggs Road and Howey Hill
		3e	Park Lane / Canal Road
		3f	Bromley Farm
		3g	Lower Heath
		3h	Buglawton
		3i	Hightown / Mossley / Astbury Lane Ends
4	Rural Lowlands	4a	Priesty Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane
		4b	Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook
		4c	Buglawton Hall
		4d	Dane Valley - Congleton to Bosley
		4e	Congleton Moss
5	Upland Edge	5a	Congleton Edge

Ia Town centre historic core

Landscape Character Type: MIXED URBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Town centre location plan

Landmarks: 1 Town Hall, 2 St Peter's Church, 3 Lion and Swan PH, 4 Meadowside Mill, 5 Riverside Mill, 6 Stonehouse Green Mill

Local landscape areas:

L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment, L2 Priestly Fields, Howty Valley & Lamberts Lane

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas or features:

A St Peter's churchyard, B Howty Valley (town), C Lawton Street Gardens D Stonehouse Green

Views: Out - occasional, from higher land or buildings, eastwards towards the Cloud or north eastwards up the Dane Valley. In - from escarpment to north, filtered by trees, or from Rood Hill towards Town Hall and St Peter's Church. Within - confined east-west or north-south views along streets, particularly down towards Dane Valley and its mills.

Landmark buildings are sometimes only seen at short distances, such as the Town Hall or Lion and Swan inn

Key characteristics

- Historic core is linear and situated on land sloping northwards towards the River Dane, although it is separated from the floodplain by Mountbatten Way dual carriageway.
- Medieval street and enclosure pattern still largely retained although some C20th development is at odds with it. A large proportion of buildings are Post Medieval rather than modern.
- Civic centre, retail centre with market, professional, religious and other services, as well as a number of old converted mills and small industrial sites.
- Centre enclosed by topography, with views northwards being backgrounded by the wooded Dane Valley escarpment and southwards by rising land.

- Prominent mature trees in or near St Peter's churchyard and the Howty Valley behind Moody Hall contribute to the sense of enclosure of the town centre.
- Views along Bridge Street, High Street and Lawson Street confined by building frontages, with longer views to north along north-south streets.
- Drainage is towards River Dane with Howty Brook and associated woodland close to Bridge Street and culverted below, reappearing at Stonehouse Mill. 'Lost' watercourse between end of Cockshutts path and River Dane.
- Garden and allotment areas form sizeable blocks and provide valuable habitat within the heart of the town, as in the long burgage plots behind Lawton Street, and in the Community Garden and Physics Garden ('Lawton Street gardens').



View from Town Hall to St Peter's Church and associated mature skyline trees, the most visually significant in the town centre which continue to the south east along a minor ridge towards Highfield House off Canal Road.

Landscape change

The growth of Congleton is described in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey, Congleton Archaeological Settlement (2003), Conservation Area Appraisals and other publications. Much of the medieval street pattern survives, particularly Lawton Street, High Street, Duke Street, Swan Street and Mill Street. The historic settlement developed in a linear form and in practice is continuous with character areas Ib (West Road) and Ic (Willow Street - Brook Street) which also contain many older buildings. Textile mills and other industrial development expanded along the Dane valley to the north and towards Buglawton, while

residential development tended to expand to the west, along West Road. These areas all contain a proportion of residential and commercial development but the town centre has remained the civic and retail centre. The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation shows that approximately 65% of the town centre is made up of post medieval settlement. Around 17% is C20th development although all parts are affected by modern changes.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

Landscape features, particularly trees but also built features such as gritstone walls, are visually important in some parts of the Moody Street and West Street Conservation Areas as is recognised in the Conservation Area appraisals. The Conservation Area boundaries were extended in 2010 to include some significant greenspace close to the town centre, in particular part of the Howty Brook valley within the town which includes woodland and allotments. The settings of listed buildings in the town centre cannot be individually described but notable landscape/townscape areas are shown on the location plan above.

Landscape/townscape issues

- The West Street Conservation Area which has 23 listed buildings is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register (2019) due to its poor and deteriorating condition, while Moody Hall, a late C18th grade 2 listed building with attached woodland in the Moody Street Conservation Area is severely neglected and clearly at risk.
- A large unused green space between the Police Station, Library, Museum and Town Hall where Council offices once stood has much potential for a civic square or town centre park.
- The Howty Brook corridor, attractive countryside to the south of the town, is interrupted and neglected within, with Moody Hall woodland at risk. The corridor could form the basis of a restoration/regeneration scheme which would benefit the town centre.
- Mountbatten Way dual carriageway cuts across the former rectilinear road pattern. Roadside planting forms an intermittent green corridor here but crossing points are limited.
- Erosion of townscape character through cumulative small changes including surfacing, signage and window and door replacement.
- Sustainability of wooded areas with poor age structure of trees.
- .

Ib West Road

Landscape Character Type: MIXED URBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



West Road location plan

Landmark buildings:

1 West Heath water towers, 2 Cheshire Tavern, 3 Overton House (photo above), 4 St James's Church

Local landscape areas:

L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment, L2 Priestly Fields, Howty Valley & Lamberts Lane, L3 Astbury Mere

Neighbourhood landscape areas or features: A Trees on water tower embankment, B Danesford (West House) frontage, C Astbury Mere northern edge, D Banky Fields to Marlfields.

Views: Out - towards Cloud (from West Road) towards Dane Valley and to skyline trees around water tower and St Peter's Church. Within - to local features around West Street/West Road.

Key characteristics

- West Road forms the spine of this mixed but largely residential area.
- To the north, the land falls to the Dane Valley, and to the south it rises towards Banky Fields and the edge of Astbury Mere's northern embankment. Much of the area is only gently sloping.
- Views generally east-west along West Road with occasional views to the upland edge and to the wooded Dane Valley.
- Former 'elite residences' which were built as the town prospered have left legacy of mature trees with some houses remaining as at Overton House and the Cheshire Tavern on the former Danesford (West House) site.
- Private gardens form the main green infrastructure matrix, with an intermittent network of hedges in older residential areas.

- East-west slopes or embankments on the boundary with Astbury Mere and the Banky Fields area (Banky Fields to Marlfields) form green infrastructure corridors to the south of the character area.
- Significant recreational areas - the cricket ground and bowling green, the football ground, and Marlfields school playing field together with the Danesford (West House) frontage and some smaller green spaces.



View north east along St James Avenue towards Dane Valley and Sutton Common on the upland edge beyond. Mid C20th planned housing and trimmed hedges form a harmonious composition.

C19th terraced cottages, originally in a tight grid, where some older housing has been cleared in an earlier regeneration scheme to form a square, now largely used for car parking but providing some space for trees

Landscape change

The West Road character area is made up of around 19% Post Medieval Settlement (Cheshire HLC) which includes some older industrial development in the Silk Street/Booth Street area. Although there are fewer older buildings than in the town centre, some were built as substantial country houses and are very prominent, including Overton House, and West House and Mortlake House which became part of the Danesford School National Children's Home. The former Mortlake House is now the Cheshire Tavern. The boundary walls and grounds of these houses still make a contribution to the local urban landscape and St James's Church is also a notable building. In contrast, there are some tightly built and quiet streets of workers' terraces on a grid pattern to the west of St James's, between Astbury Street and West End Cottages. These appear to have been built within linear fields and have an enclosed and intimate character. Originally the density was even higher but a past regeneration scheme has opened up a small square as shown above. Other C19th terraces are also present along West Road.

Around 58% of the remainder of the character area is C20th Settlement (HLC), including areas of inter-war municipal housing, at a lower density than the C19th terraces. This includes streets of short terraces or semi-detached housing with privet hedges such as along Crescent Road, which originally also had grass verges on either side planted with trees, and Ruskin Road. Some interwar developments may also have been speculative, such as Holmesville Avenue. There was infill development at the Westlands and Mereside Avenue in the 1970s to '80s but there was relatively little other change until the late C20th/early

C21st when after the closure of Danesford School a large housing estate with a cul-de-sac layout was built in the grounds sloping northwards towards the River Dane.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

The West Street Conservation Area extends from the town centre along West Road as far as St James Church (locally listed). The only building within the CA where the external landscape makes a significant contribution to its setting is the mid C18th grade 2* listed Overton House, once a country house on the edge of the town. Its remaining grounds contain a number of mature trees. It is set back from the road and its front gates and internal planting can be viewed from the south. The open spaces of the cricket ground and bowling green, also within the CA, allow open views towards Overton House and St James's Church.

Outside the Conservation Area, a group of trees around the telephone exchange, to the south of 44-50 West Street, probably originated as planting within the grounds of an 'elite residence', shown on the 1882 OS map as belonging to Antrobus house. Listed buildings at the former Danesford School are Westholme House (Victorian), Westhouse (late C18th) and obelisk, and Woodlands (originally Mortlake House when built in the C18th, now the Cheshire Tavern). The grounds of these former country houses were extensive, but have been largely developed for residential use. A substantial frontage, including both the listed building, new apartment blocks, and a modern former school building, remains facing West Road. The surviving mature trees include two cedars. A small garden at the entrance, planted by volunteers, commemorates a local Suffragette, Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, and 100 years since women gained the right to vote.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Traffic on West Road - it remains to be seen how much the Congleton Link Road will affect this, but it could provide more opportunities for sustainable transport infrastructure.
- Risk of development on remaining open green spaces which would be detrimental to landscape/townscape and quality of life.
- Sustainability of areas of mature trees due to poor age structure.
- West Street Conservation Area on Heritage at Risk Register.
- Cumulative loss of historic character through small cumulative changes including surfacing, signage, window and door replacement.

Ic Willow Street-Brook Street

Landscape Character Type: MIXED URBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Willow Street - Brook Street location plan

Landmarks: 1 St Stephen's Church, 2 Jubilee Mill (and Edward Mill nearby)

Local landscape areas: L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment, L5 Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook Valleys

Views: Out - over Hankinson's Field towards River Dane and Congleton Park. Within - west north west towards Dane valley. Viewpoint: by St Stephens's Church

Key characteristics

- Small linear area situated to the south east of the River Dane valley on gently sloping ground, sandwiched between the flood plain and Bromley Farm housing with sharp breaks of slope separating them.
- A transitional area - its history links it with the town centre and also with the mills of the River Dane valley to its east and west.
- Urban character lacks coherence with mixture of mills and commercial or industrial premises, C19th terraced housing, an area of apartment blocks and C21 housing on a former industrial site.
- North eastern boundary is the Dane in Shaw Brook (Tommy's Brook) which once marked the municipal boundary between Congleton and the township of Buglawton.
- Easy access to extensive areas of greenspace at Hankinson's Field, Congleton Park and the Dane in Shaw valley.
- No consistent green infrastructure matrix or network - the pattern of green space is varied but lacks any larger areas.

Landscape change

About 27% of the character area is Post Medieval Settlement (Cheshire HLC) i.e. dating from before 1909, and of this about half is older industrial development, including mill buildings - Jubilee Mill, Edward Mill, Spindle Street Mill, Spragg Street Mills. Stretches of C19th terraces remain along Moor Street, Willow Street, Herbert Street and Spindle Street.

In the C19th and early C20th there were dense terraces of workers' cottages, some of which remain. They would then have been close to the open countryside of Bromley Farm. Earlier continuity with the town centre was broken by the construction of Mountbatten Way in 1980. This cut across the east-west roads of Park Street and Lower Park Street which tied the area into the town centre, leaving gaps, dead end roads and a much less coherent townscape. Approximately 40% of the area is C20th industrial development, including Jubilee Mill.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

The most notable buildings contributing to landscape character are the locally listed St Stephen's Church, a local landmark, and the former Vicarage, which is a substantial listed mid-Victorian red brick house with a gritstone boundary wall. Hankinson's Field and trees around the Vicarage provide a green setting which allows the position of these buildings above the River Dane to be appreciated. Tree and shrub planting on the other side of Willow Street, around Berisford's car park, contributes to the green setting.

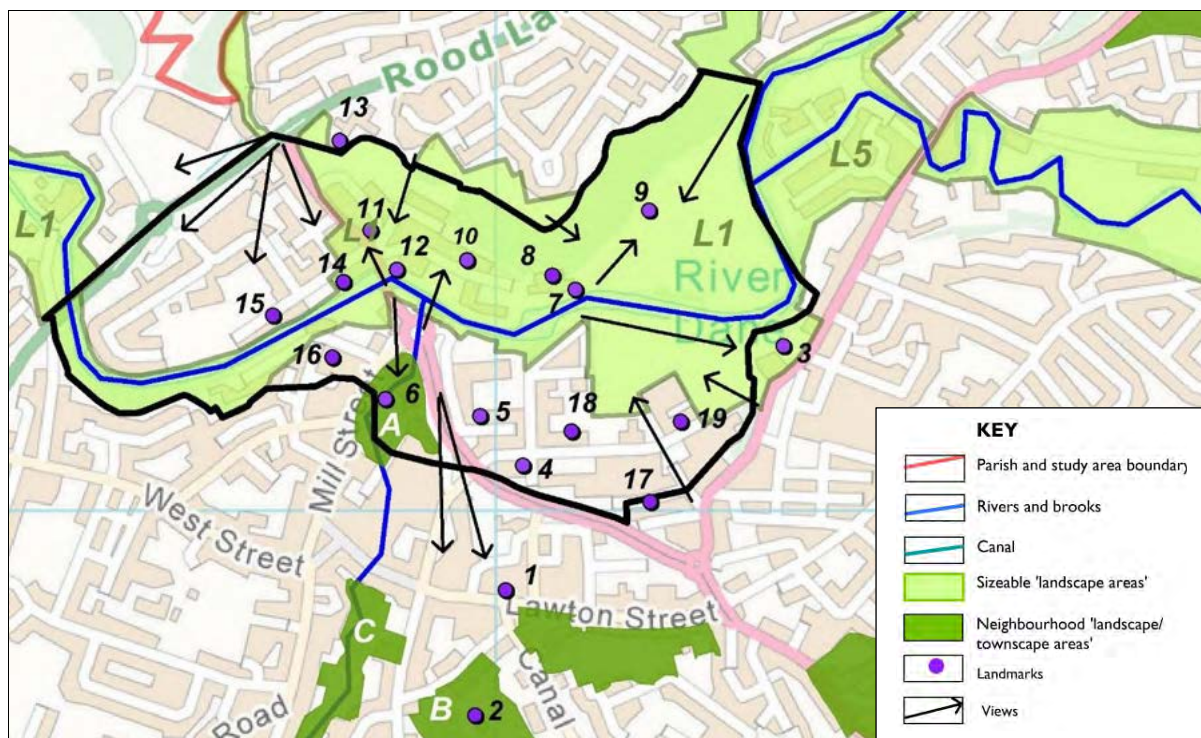
Landscape/townscape issues.

- Sustainable transport infrastructure needs to be improved.
- Regeneration of townscape is generally needed.
- Unsightly industrial premises at the end of the Biddulph Valley Way and in the Dane in Shaw valley detract from townscape quality;

2a Dane Valley - Town Centre

Landscape Character Type: URBAN VALLEY

Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Dane Valley-Town Centre location plan

Landmark features:

1 Town Hall, 2 St Peter's Church (outside area) 3 St Stephen's Church (on boundary) 4 Meadowside Mill, 5 Riverside Mill, 6 Stonehouse Green Mill 7 Bridge to Park 8 Park Pavilion 9 Park bandstand 10 Mill Green apartments 11 Salford Mill, 12 Dane Bridge & copper beech, 13 Clayton Manor care home, 14 Bridge Mill, 15 Royle St Mill, 16 Providence Mill, 17 Park Mill, 18 Perseverance Mill, 19 Victoria Mill

Local landscape areas: L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment, L5 Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook Valleys

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A Stonehouse Green, B St Peter's Church to Highfield, C Howty Valley

Views: Out - from Rood Hill across Dane valley and towards town centre landmarks, from Mountbatten Way towards town centre landmarks. Within - group of -mill and apartment buildings intervisible across Dane Bridge and Mountbatten Way, and group of features intervisible within Park, also across Hankinson's Field to St Stephen's Church.

Key characteristics

- Defined in the centre of Congleton by the course of the river and the extent of the floodplain at around 80 m and the steep escarpment to the north at around 110 m above sea level.
- Mosaic of different and very contrasting land uses and ages of building providing a townscape of contrasts, visual interest and distinctiveness.
- Overall, just under half is semi-natural or non-built, including the river, wooded escarpment, river corridor and recreational land, particularly Congleton Park and Hankinson's Field.

- Recreational and events focus with Congleton Park, River Dane Walkway, leisure centre, bowling green, Scout hut, paddling pool and playing field at Hankinson's field.
- Contains nationally important Victorian park including Town Wood, which is also a central focus for the town's multifunctional green infrastructure network.
- High density of prominent 2-4 storey former textile mill buildings originally sited to take advantage of water power and now converted to residential or commercial uses, as well as 3-4 storey apartment buildings on site of old mills.
- Escarpment woodland is visually prominent, forming a background in views northwards from the town centre, but buildings such as old mills, of which there are many, are often more locally dominating.
- Poor off-road or other linkage with the town centre or other parts of Congleton or the Dane Valley up and downstream.
- Important for blue and green infrastructure as it links River Dane with valley to east and north west of town. Town Wood is semi-natural ancient woodland continuous with escarpment woodland to east, and is a Local Wildlife Site but some of the tree planting is Victorian and functionally it is also recreational with a network of paths.



View north at the entrance to Congleton Park, a Victorian bridge over the River Dane. The steep escarpment and Town Wood visually dominate the Park as well as the town centre to the south.

Landscape change

Around 17% of the area's built landscape is classed as pre C20th in the 2007-8 Cheshire HLC, 8% of that being older industry, characterised by some notable mill buildings, weavers'

cottages and other terraced housing, mostly in red brick but with some brick painted white.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

A small tongue of the West Street Conservation Area extends into the Dane Valley Town Centre character area, covering the listed weavers' cottages and Stonehouse Green Mill. It is included in the Urban Valley landscape type because it is in the flood plain of both the Howty Brook and River Dane, although cut off by Mountbatten Way.



View of Stonehouse Green Mill, one of the 5 former Brook Mills beside the Howty Brook, now converted to housing. The Howty, and associated greenspace, is on the other side of the mill.

The historic town extended to the historic crossing of the river at Dane Bridge, which is now marked by a prominent Copper Beech. The small but distinctive listed Salford Mill on two levels faces towards the river, with some late C18th/early C19th 3 storey weavers' cottages on the south side of the road. On the north side of Rood Hill There is also an unusual listed raised pavement and steps providing access to a row of C19th terraced houses. The concentration of historic industry in the Dane Bridge area is still present to some extent although some formerly prominent historic mills, particularly the 5 storey Brook Mill (one of a complex of 5), have been lost. Along the river new residential apartments have been built which emulate the form of the mills they replaced.



Apartments by River Dane

Dane Bridge and Salford Mill

River Dane from River Dane Walkway

Another historic industrial area is along Worrall Street, enclosed by Mountbatten Way which runs above it on an embankment. This also contains mill buildings, some still in commercial use and others converted to housing.



View south west from Town Wood footpath showing Urban Valley historic mills - Providence Mill to the left which is now apartments, new apartments in the centre on the site of a former fustian mill, Bridge Mill (white gables, now a carpet warehouse) in front of it, and the back of the listed Salford Mill which sells fabrics on the right. The River Dane runs left to right between Providence Mill and Bridge Mill.

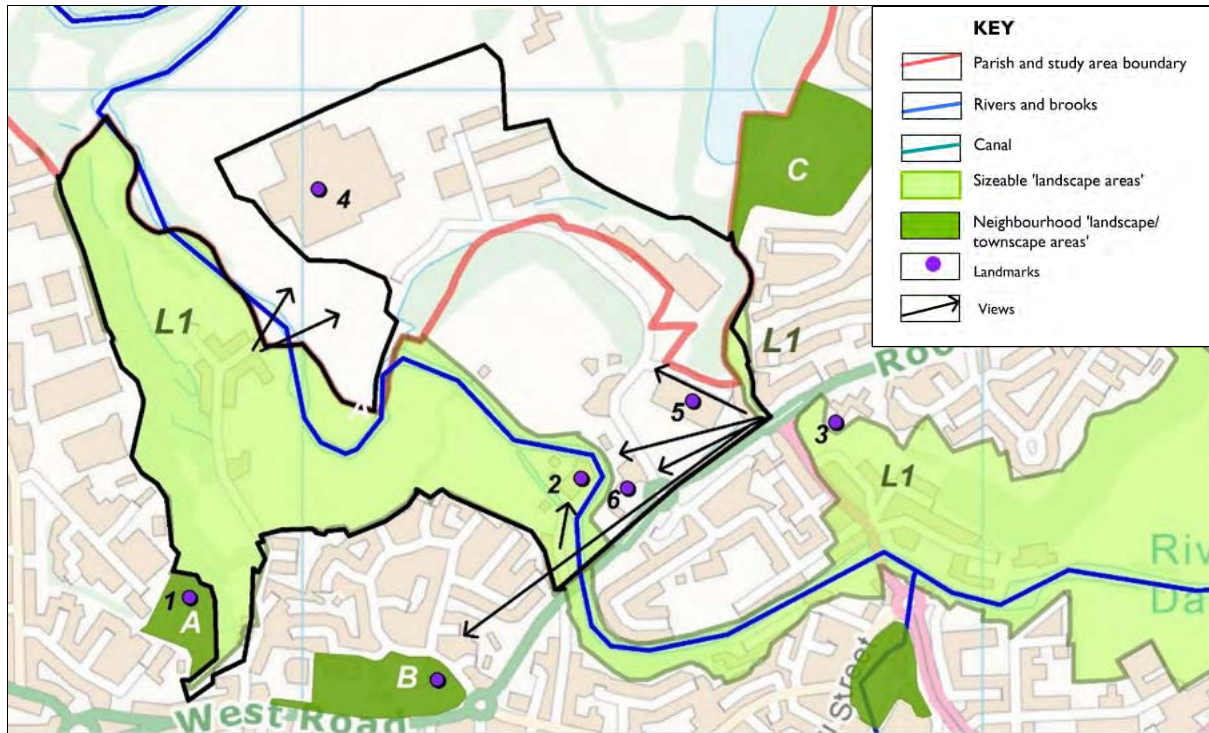
Landscape/townscape issues

- Poorly connected - linkage to the north east is via only one footpath, between Congleton Park and Riverdane Road although, a new footbridge across the river is promised, between the Park and new Dane Side housing. Separated by Mountbatten Way, areas of car parking, or embankments from the town centre although historically they were connected. To the north, Hillfields steps and winding footpaths through woodland are the only off-road means of reaching Lower Heath.
- Sustaining visual and ecological value of wooded escarpment due to poor age structure of woodland and recreational pressures.
- Lack of investment in public realm in some areas, including creating safe accessible footpath and cycle links.
- Some erosion of heritage interest including recent losses but also due to cumulative small changes such as replacement windows or effects of neglect.
- Potential development pressure on valley slopes with less severe gradient.

2b Dane Valley - Congleton Business Park

Landscape Character Type: URBAN VALLEY

Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Dane Valley - Congleton Business Park location plan

Landmark buildings:

1 West Heath water towers, 2 Dane Mill, 3 Clayton Manor and tree group, 4 Airbags factory, 5 Supermarket, 3 Petrol filling station

Local landscape areas: L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment (detached portion is Lady Warburton's Walk which continues to north)

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A Tower Hill trees C Westlow Mere (part)

Views: Out- north west towards Dane valley to north of parish boundary, and south east to Danesford trees and ridge beyond. Within - from Rood Hill/Lady Warburton's Walk over commercial area to wooded embankment beyond

Key characteristics

- A distinct part of the Dane Valley within Congleton which is on the edge of the current settlement and separated from the town centre section by the Clayton Bypass with a further area off Forge Lane, accessible from West Road.
- Area of transitional character, diverging from its former semi-rural character towards urban development.
- Few heritage features other than the unlisted Dane Mill, an impressive 3 storey C19th building (similar to Martins Mill in the Dane in Shaw Valley) which is situated, on the site of an older mill, on an 'island' close to the River Dane. There are other C19th buildings nearby.
- Prominent development off the Clayton Bypass, including petrol filling station and supermarket, detracts from townscape quality, as does business park development, some of which is beyond the boundary of the study area.

- Significant green infrastructure - wooded escarpments with semi-natural ancient woodland are present to north east (Lady Warburton's Wood) and south west (Forge Wood), together with the river which continues to meander across the floodplain - although the parish boundary follows an earlier course so some parcels of land have become detached from their original parish.
- Within the valley landscape character and quality have deteriorated, but in the context of the town as a whole much of the developed area is low-lying and not generally prominent.



A remaining meadow on the opposite side of the River Dane from the business park

Ancient woodland on the escarpment very close to new residential development

Historic character

The 2007-8 Cheshire HLC shows ancient field systems (irregular) in the valley bottom, but some of these have subsequently been built on, leaving patches of former open countryside that are cut off by river, development or linear strips of woodland and scrub. Some of the former Danesford (West House) site extended into the valley bottom, and was at one time in the same ownership as Dane Mill. Only embankment woodland now remains. The site of Forge Mill, a former silk mill, as well as other greenfield sites off Forge Lane have recently been developed for residential use, putting pressure on the adjoining river corridor and the ancient woodland of Forge Wood,

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

There are none within this character area other than Local Wildlife Site designations for the natural heritage of Forge Wood and Lady Warburton's Wood. The former is also covered by a Tree Preservation Order.



Dane Mill with bridge to the 'island' on which it stands



Dane Mill House



Light coloured roofs and cladding of industrial buildings in the Dane Valley would blend in better with the wooded setting if they were in more sympathetic recessive (less light-reflecting) colours.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Cutting off of the Dane Valley from its continuation downstream by the Congleton Link Road/bypass.
- Lack of coordination and continuity in strategic plans for development, including lack of off-road footpath and cycle links.
- Value of the Dane Valley for its potential contribution to climate change mitigation, which could be adversely affected by inclusion in strategic development sites or impact from adjacent development.
- Lack of protection for remaining areas of enclosed meadow within valley bottom, cut off by development, or woodland within the valley bottom. Although protected by designation, both Forge Wood and Lady Warburton's Wood are narrow, even aged, and already affected by too-close development.
- Lack of protection for historic Dane Mill building and surroundings, and lack of respect for the contribution it could make to Congleton's townscape.
- Current developing lacking local distinctiveness with the area diverging from the character of the rest of the settlement. There is a sharp change in character at the Clayton Bypass beyond with generic building styles and amenity planting beyond.
- The retail and business park developments are visible and audible from valley sides within the town while the constraints of the meandering river and floodplain have led to the new development appearing to sprawl across the valley. New industrial/retail development is not designed to integrate into the valley location.

2c Dane Valley - Buglawton/Lower Heath

Landscape Character Type: URBAN VALLEY

Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Dane Valley - Buglawton/Lower Heath location plan

Landmarks: 1 Eaton Bank High School, 2 Siemens building, 3 Throstle's Nest House 4 St John's Church spire

Local landscape areas: L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment, L5 Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook Valley

Views: Out - only to edges of adjoining areas of housing. In - from housing at top of escarpment to west, and much of Buglawton to east. Within - majority of views, as area is very enclosed by topography and vegetation.

Key characteristics

- Visually and practically very enclosed by topography and vegetation. Defined geographically by the extent of the floodplain and the steep wooded escarpment to the west. To the south east the land rises more gently but the boundary generally follows a break of slope.
- Part of the former separate township of Buglawton. Historically, both industry and housing have been built immediately next to the River Dane, with some old mills and the old rectilinear street pattern remaining.
- Modern industry, made up of the Eaton Bank Industrial estate and Daneside Business Park, accessible by vehicle only from Lower Heath, also takes up a large well-defined area within the valley. New valley bottom housing has been built close to floodplain.
- Heritage interest associated with historic mill buildings.
- Green infrastructure is lacking within the industrial area but linear escarpment woodlands and river corridor enclose it and provide a backdrop.
- Large area of amenity grassland on the floodplain to the south of Havannah School, as well as areas of semi-natural habitat following the river.
- River and steep embankment constrain east-west routes between Lower Heath and Buglawton. Better visual and footpath links to housing in Buglawton, with footbridge

across river from Havannah Street, but housing in Lower Heath backs onto the valley without any public access or viewpoints.

Landscape change

Land to the east of the River Dane was within the township of Buglawton, separate from Congleton until 1937. Mills, including silk, cotton, fustian cutting and paper mills dependent on water power extended along the eastern side of the river, along with workers' terraces in grid layouts off Havannah Street, particularly between Mill Street and King Street. These have been replaced by industrial units but the street pattern remains. The western side of the river remained largely rural until the mid C20th, as did the gentler slopes to the east and the continuation of the valley to the north of Jackson Road. The main development of the current Eaton Bank Industrial Estate on farmland in the floodplain and river terrace occurred between 1960 and 1980.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

There are two listed buildings within this character area, Flint Mill (the central part of Higher Washford Mill) and Throstle's Nest House, a Late Georgian white stucco 3 storey building which is close to areas of historic industry. It is on rising ground with a garden only to the front and is mainly visible from the Buxton Road rather than from the valley bottom. Part of Havannah Wood Local Wildlife Site extends south as far as Jackson Road.



Lower Heath housing above the wooded escarpment of the Dane Valley overlooks the Eaton Bank Industrial Estate.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Potential for future flooding of industry and housing due to effects of climatic change.
- Views down Jackson Road towards the spire of St John's in Buglawton are affected by roadside clutter such as masts, telegraph poles and unsightly security fencing, and by the prominent Siemens building and new housing.
- No continuous off-road route for walkers and cyclists along the river.

3a West Heath

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



West Heath location plan

Landmark buildings: 1 West Heath water towers

Local landscape Areas: L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment, L3 Astbury Mere, L6 Back Lane playing fields

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A West Heath 'boulevards' B Trees on water tower embankment C Astbury Mere northern edge.

Views: Out - to south towards Astbury Church spire and Mow Cop. Within - generally limited by buildings but some longer views from highest areas of open space near Newcastle Road. Directional views along straight main roads.

Key characteristics

- Large suburb to the west of Congleton, connected to town centre by West Road.
- Situated at between 90 and 110 m above sea level with gently undulating topography. The escarpment on which the water towers are situated, and The Mount (a former country house, now a small housing estate) are the highest points at over 110 m.
- Pleasant, relatively uniform character.

- Few landmark buildings or features but water tower and trees on 'Tower Hill' are locally prominent.
- Tree-lined 'boulevards' along main roads including areas of mature trees from former country houses enhance entrance to town and provide landscape structure.
- Developed after WW2, largely on flat or gently undulating arable and pasture land but few traces remain of the former field pattern.
- Mosaic of areas of boulder clay (till) and glacial sands resulting in contrasting soil types within the suburb. Glacial lake deposits underlie Astbury Marsh, at the southern tip of West Heath and to the west the alluvial valley bottom of the Loach Brook is followed by the parish boundary.
- Black Firs area towards Back Lane playing fields characterised by pine trees as well as other mature trees.
- Areas of greenspace throughout residential areas but generally isolated by housing.
- Formerly surrounded by countryside to north, west and south now much is in transition as the urban area expands in most directions.

The West Heath industrial estates are described separately, under 3b.

Landscape change

Before West Heath became a residential suburb there were no ancient landscapes present - almost all of West Heath was characterised by C19th field systems created through planned enclosure dating from the late C18th or C19th. Occasional hedgerow trees or short sections of hedge can be found but there is now little evidence of the earlier landscape. A former hospital for infectious diseases has gone as have farm steadings, ponds and nursery gardens. Whilst a few small pre-C20th country villas and remnants of their associated grounds are still present, the vast majority of the suburb consists of mid to late C20th housing development with C21st housing estates on the periphery.

The earliest suburban estates in West Heath, at Lythe Avenue and Heath Road, were developed in the 1930s on fields between the Sandbach Road and Newcastle Road. The semi-detached houses and short terraces had small front gardens hedged with privet. Many houses and gardens have since been altered, including surfacing of front gardens for parking since garages were not thought necessary at the time of building, and roads are relatively narrow. After WW2 there was a period of rapid house-building, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. Westlands Grammar school (closed 2000, now a residential estate) was established on the Holmes Chapel Road in the late 1950s, and Heathfield High School (now enlarged as Congleton High School), was built in the mid-1960s. Housing expansion continued into the 1980s and 1990s, usually in the form of cul-de-sacs of detached houses. 21st century housing mainly consists of smaller infill developments. Growth continues to the west, up to the Loach Brook and beyond into Somerford Parish, and to the north, with former farmland allocated for development up to the line of the bypass.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

There are no existing local landscape or townscape designations in West Heath. The suburb has a few listed buildings but one of the water towers is listed. Fortunately, the industrial buildings are not intrusive in views of the water towers. The two former country houses on Sandbach Road (the mid C19th Heathfield and Green Gables, formerly Birch House) are listed. Bryn Hall on Holmes Chapel Road (formerly West Heath Mill which manufactured silk ribbons) is locally listed, and a type of building that is unique in West Heath. There are no Local Wildlife Sites but mature trees associated with former country houses often have Tree Preservation Orders as do many on the western side of Padgbury Lane.



Mature trees including pines provide an attractive setting for suburban housing in the Black Firs area.

There are no Local Wildlife Sites but the Loach Brook on the south west boundary is of some nature conservation interest. There are TPOs on many of the remaining mature hedgerow and country house trees but the number of pre-WW2 mature trees is inevitably slowly declining, with former Wych Elms lost and others ageing or felled for other reasons.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Connections with surrounding countryside weakened by housing expansion and construction of Congleton Link Road, also relatively few rights of way compared with areas to south and east of Congleton.
- Large area of playing fields and tree belt at Back Lane, formerly in a rural situation, is becoming enclosed by new development.
- Constraints to access to Astbury Mere Country Park due to lack of safe crossings on busy Newcastle Road (A34).
- General lack of larger tree species within housing estates and planting which has little local distinctiveness or relation to the contrasting soil types within West Heath or the natural habitats which could be present.

3b West Heath Industrial Estates



Within Radnor Bank industrial estate

Key characteristics

- Relatively inobtrusive in the flat landscape of West Heath as the Greenfield Farm buildings are only 2 storey and in recessive colours, and the Radnor Bank buildings are screened by a belt of largely evergreen planting along Back Lane.
- Forge Wood to the east provides a backdrop/screen deciduous, but is effective mainly in summer, with partial views from the east possible in the winter.
- Hardstanding, buildings, plant and security fencing predominate within the Radnor Bank industrial estate. There is little or no internal planting

Landscape change

Radnor Bank industrial estate was developed on farmland in the mid C20th and Greenfield Farm industrial estate in the later C20th, the latter on an area of Ancient Fieldscapes. No historic character remains although the character of each reflects the time of establishment.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

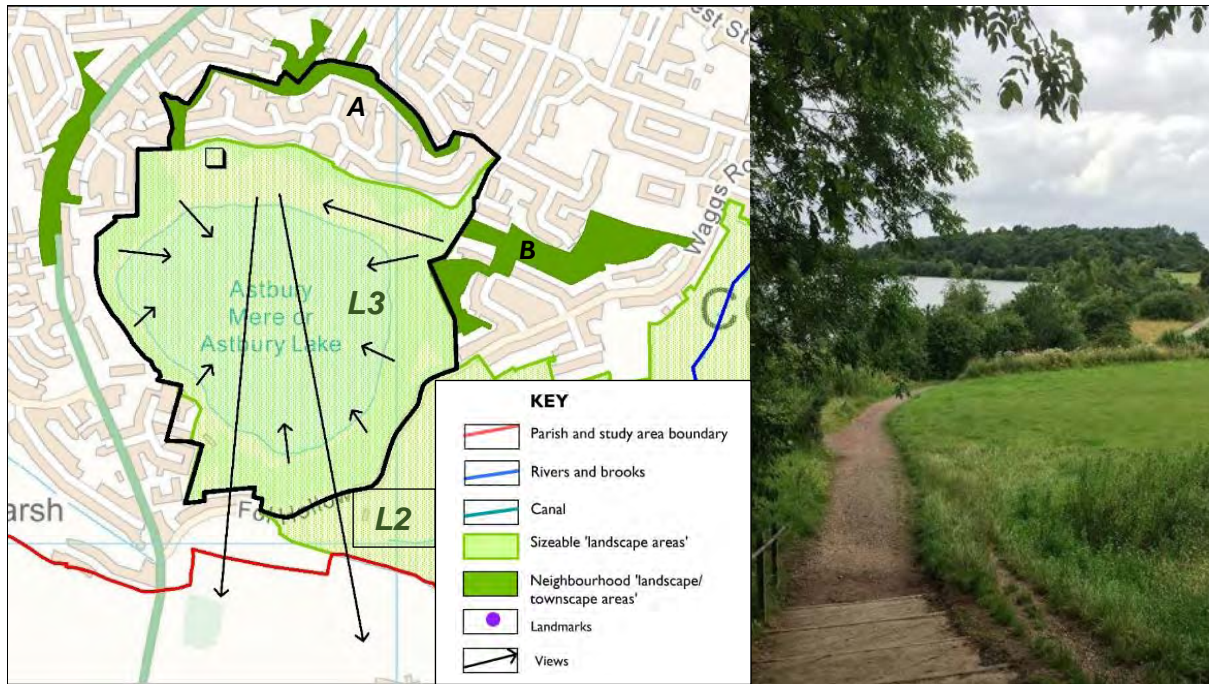
The two water towers to the south, are visible from the Greenfield Farm estate, partly hidden by buildings. The listed tower is largely screened by the larger, non-listed tower. Forge Wood to the east is a Local Wildlife Site, but vulnerable to damage or loss of value.



Greenfield Farm Industrial Estate - buildings with recessive green cladding which integrate well into the landscape.

3c Astbury Mere

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Astbury Mere location plan

Landmarks: None, but the visitor centre is marked with a square.

Local landscape areas: L3 Astbury Mere Country Park L2 Priesty Fields, Howty Valley & Lamberts Lane

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A Astbury Mere northern edge, B Banky Fields to Marlfields

Views: Out- to Astbury Church spire and Mow Cop. Within- towards mere. In - from footpath from Banky Fields (photo above).

Key characteristics

- Self-contained, post-quarry sunken landscape created in the late C20th, and now maturing.
- From the north, scenic views can be obtained over water to the tall spire of Astbury Church and the eyecatcher ruin on Mow Cop in the distance.



- The restored landscape contains an attractive housing estate to the north of the country park, now largely screened from the mere.
- Houses are backgrounded by the wooded northern bank of the quarry, which at one point backed on to another quarry, leaving a ridge inbetween. The trees on this embankment and ridge can be seen on the skyline from local viewpoints.



- The character area adjoins the open countryside of the Priestly Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane area to its south east, which continues outside the study area towards the village of Astbury.
- Very well connected with footpath links to a dense network of rights of way and circular walks, also well connected to local residential areas and to the town centre.
- Woodland and species rich grassland form the main natural elements in the ring around the 'blue infrastructure' of the central mere.

Landscape change

As a restored quarry, formerly known as Windy Bank Quarry, Astbury Mere has a late C20th character with some features common to other restored sand quarries beyond the study area, such as lake, embankments and semi-natural grassland. Quarrying has removed any historic landscape features - the former ancient fieldscape (Cheshire East HLC) of Marsh Farm and Brownswood Farm was stripped in the 1960s and '70s.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

There are no heritage features within the character area, or close enough for its landscape to contribute to setting. Astbury Mere is a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape/townscape issues

- None known - the landscape is under effective management through Astbury Mere Trust and a countryside ranger.
- In the long-term better integration between the management of the country park and the mere (in separate ownership) could allow for better views of the water.

3d Waggs Road and Howey Hill

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Waggs Road and Howey Hill location plan

Landmarks: None

Local landscape areas: L2 Priestly Fields, Howty Valley & Lamberts Lane, L3 Astbury Mere

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A Banky Fields to Marfields, B Howty Valley (town), C St Peter's Church to Highfield

Views: Out - towards Mow Cop, Astbury Mere, St Peter's Church and churchyard, town centre, Astbury village and Church spire, new housing off Lamberts Lane, Howty Valley. Within - confined views along narrow Waggs Road which becomes a sunken lane.

Key characteristics

- Small character area in two parts, Waggs Road and Howey Hill and adjoining housing, separated by the Howty Brook valley and linked by the Vale Walk.
- Transitional in character grading from traditional C19th terraces near the town centre to suburban and semi-rural, with characteristics of the Mixed Urban and Suburban landscape types with housing of different ages.
- Both parts have developed on minor ridges above the town centre followed by narrow roads, and look out over countryside.
- Separated from adjoining suburban areas to west and east by greenspace, which together with the narrow roads has constrained further development.
- Waggs Road is a former sunken rural lane, connecting with the former drovers' roads of Stony Lane and Lamberts Lane, and some sections still have a rural character. or semi-rural character.
- Gardens form much of the green infrastructure matrix in this character area, very often backing onto green space or open countryside.
- The Howty Valley is part of a more extensive green infrastructure corridor, while another corridor follows the churchyard, cemetery and minor valley to the east of

Howey Lane, and a further corridor links Marlfields School to Banky to the west of Waggs Road. The Howty Corridor is a Local Wildlife Site.

- Close association with the Priestly Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane area (4a), also with Astbury Mere.

Landscape change

This character area is close to the town centre and includes a significant proportion of Post Medieval Settlement (pre 1909 in the Cheshire East HLC) including more substantial C19th terraces and individual houses for the better-off as well as more tightly built ones for workers. Although small, the area contains C20th housing styles from most periods with planned interwar/mid C20th housing at Banky Fields and small private developments infilling gaps. As with much of the housing areas around the town centre this character area expanded over Ancient Landscapes (Cheshire East HLC) including Medieval Town Fields. Howey Hill is one of the very few remaining areas in the town where the traditional relationship between the town and its surrounding fields are still exists - in form at least.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

Older housing on Howey Lane and part of Howey Hill is within the Moody Street Conservation Area although there are no listed buildings. The traditional workers terraces of the late C19th Swan Street/Nelson Street development off Waggs Road have been included in the West Street Conservation Area since 2010. Whilst the housing in this triangular area is at a high density, with narrow streets, no front garden, and a yard to the back, the scheme includes allotments, and a small area of greenspace within the housing. The allotments have been included in the character area. Most of the original sash windows have however been lost from the C19th terraces.



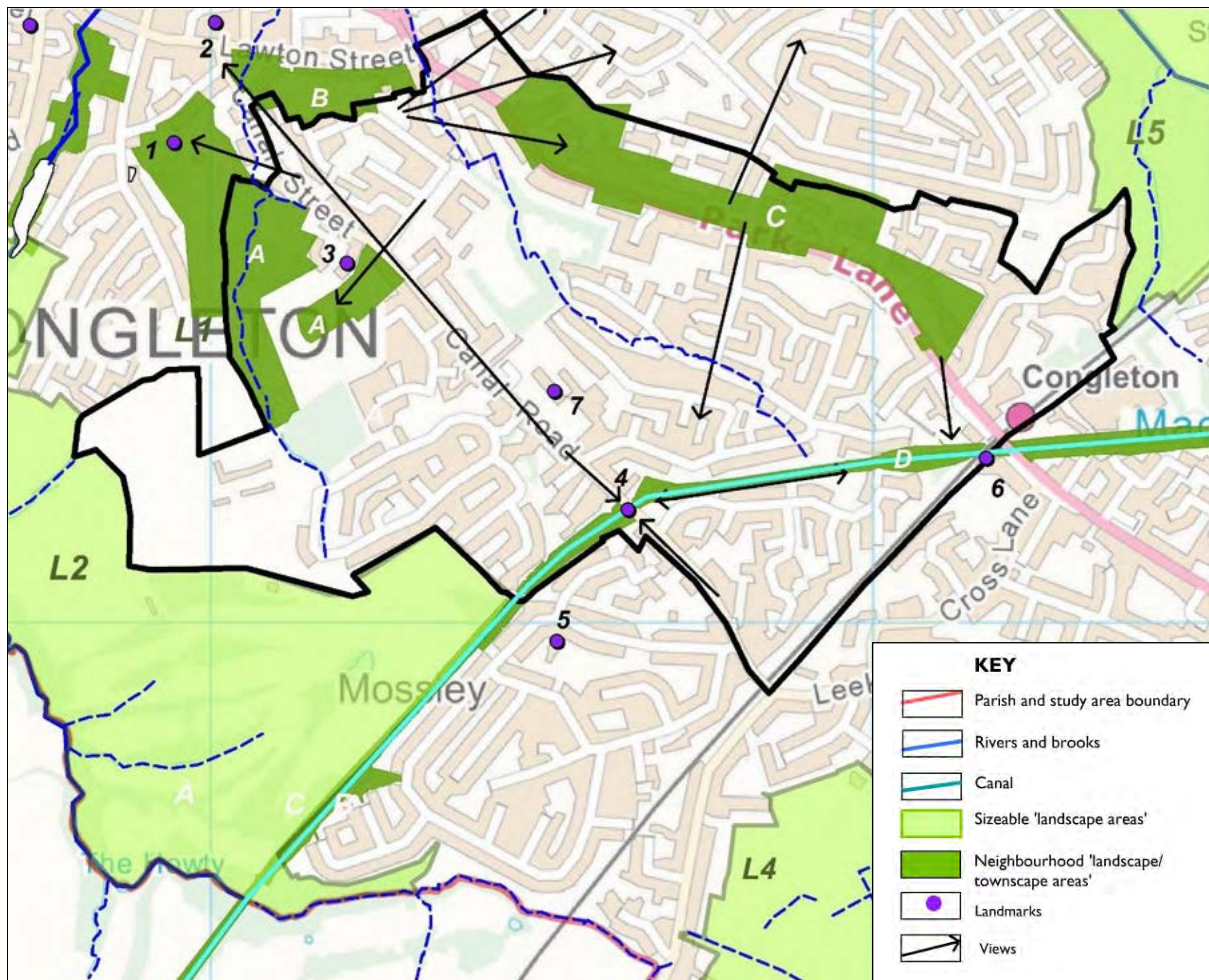
Housing is on a ridge above the town centre, which here allows a direct view over the town to the Cloud.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Vulnerable to housing development on adjoining greenfield land
- Pressures to widen Waggs Road would have an adverse impact on historic character.
- The small Howty Valley contains the former Vale Mill site, undergoing redevelopment. Scheme leaves only a narrow connecting corridor to countryside.

3e Park Lane - Canal Road

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Park Lane and Canal Road location plan

Landmarks: 1 St Peter's Church, 2 Town Hall 3 Albany Mill, 4 Canal Road Aqueduct (Dog Lane Aqueduct) 5 Water tower, 6 HJ Lea Oaks Animal Feed Mill, 7 Congleton War Memorial Hospital

Local landscape areas: L2 Priestly Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane, L5 Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook Valley, L4 Congleton Moss

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A St Peter's Churchyard to Highfields, B Lawton Street Gardens, D Park Lane ridge

Views: Out - south from Park Lane to water tower and Mow Cop (down Kennet Drive), north west from Canal Road to Town Hall and Jodrell Bank. Within - to St Peter's to Highfield ridge from Canal Road. Directional views down Canal Road and Park Lane and along Macclesfield Canal

Key characteristics

- Mainly post WW2 residential development with older houses along the main roads, C20th infill between and significant recent expansion into farmland to south west.
- Several minor north west-south east ridges - one on which Park Lane is situated, another small ridge immediately to the north of Canal Road, and one on which Highfield House is located, to the south of Canal Road.

- Significant mature trees on Park Lane ridge.
- Highest land at 130 m is at top of Park Lane. Canal follows higher land and whole area slopes north west towards the town centre, separated by a break of slope.
- Several small valleys with lost or hidden watercourses.
- Visual links to features beyond the character area from ridges.
- Well-connected - the Macclesfield Canal crosses the area against the general grain of the landscape, providing east-west linkage to Mossley and to the open countryside of Dane in Shaw and Timbers Brook valleys and the Priestly Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane area. Within easy walking distance of town centre.
- Includes important heritage features - Park Lane and Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area; listed 'snail' bridges, Canal Road Aqueduct and blocked tunnel, Wharf Inn, former large country houses; former farm houses and mill buildings.
- Green infrastructure is mainly in the form of gardens, small to medium in size other than along Park Lane where plots can be large. Few hedges other than along Park Lane, but Daven School and adjoining greenspace contain young woodland seen from a footpath link to the town centre.
- Permeable interface with open countryside only to south west (Lamberts Lane area). Small interface with Dane in Shaw Brook woodlands provides no public access.
- The canal is part of an important green corridor. 1970s/1980s housing estates generally back onto it but some areas of green space adjoin it and the towpath links the area with open countryside to north and south.
- Small areas of isolated greenspace within housing estates.

Landscape change

Whilst Park Lane developed as high-status housing, Canal Road also has some former 'elite residences'. Areas to the south of Canal Road retained some views south over open countryside until recently. Canal Road still has a view across remnant fields to Highfields which is valuable now because of its scarcity, its proximity to the town centre, and its reminder of the town's historic rural setting. The valley between Park Lane and Canal Road, once containing a silk mill, was largely infilled with housing estates between the 1970s and 1980s. Since then most new housing has been built to the south west of Canal Road, and this is continuing on greenfield land off Lamberts Lane.

The Dare, a minor tributary stream of the River Dane, originating in Congleton Moss, followed the valley between Park Lane and Canal Road. Two mills (now gone) may have relied on it for water power when the Moss was wetter but it is now lost from view. There is another minor valley on the western edge of St Peter's cemetery - the water flowed through the town centre to the River Dane in the vicinity of Hankinson's Field.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

The Park Lane Conservation Area's Victorian and Edwardian villas are described in the Appraisal. Mature trees are an important element, raised above the road behind local gritstone retaining walls. The Sycamore and Oak trees (Elms were also present when the

TPO was put on in the 1970s) on the south side may date from the days when the road was a rural lane, but on the north side there is a greater variety of species, including Beech, Copper Beech, Robinia and Horse Chestnut. Evergreen shrubs and large trees dominate the view, to the extent that it can be difficult to see the buildings behind. The trees play a wider role in the town because of their position on a ridge. Housing to the west of Canal Road, developed in the 1980s to '90s, includes some hedgerow trees with TPOs, although the network of hedgerows around the former small fields has gone.



Skyline trees on the Park Lane ridge, viewed from green space at Lowe Avenue



Apartments at the Wharf at the top of Canal Road

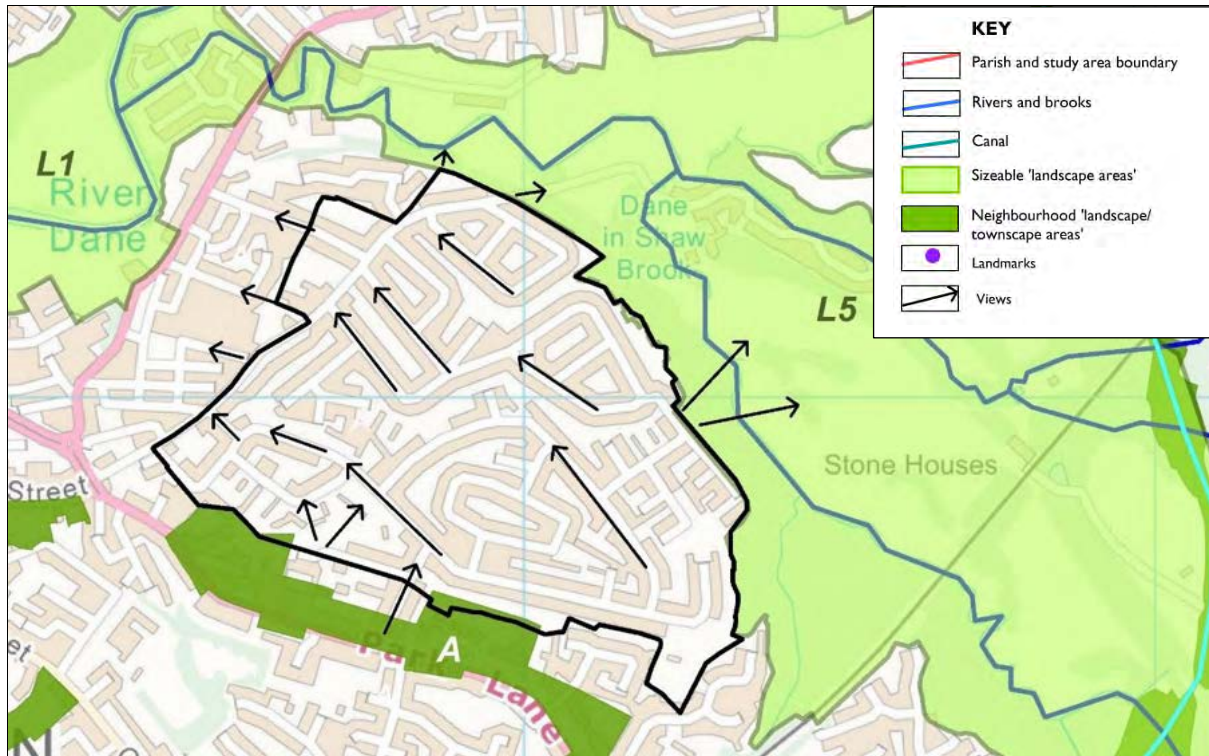
Aqueduct over Canal Road

Landscape/townscape issues

- The natural landscape is becoming masked or hidden by development;
- Small areas still of heritage interest are at risk, vulnerable to change or loss;
- Some of this largely residential area does not have any local distinctiveness but it benefits from its visual and functional proximity to the town centre, and also to the Macclesfield Canal;
- Sustainability of mature trees which are important to townscape.

3f Bromley Farm

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Bromley Farm location plan

Local landscape areas: L1 River Dane valley, L5 Dane in Shaw and Timbers Brook valleys

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape area: Park Lane ridge

Views: Out - north west to Dane valley, north east to Dane in Shaw valley. To Cloud from higher ground at Windsor Place near Park Lane ridge. Within - mainly north west towards Dane valley

Key characteristics

- A distinct residential suburb which began as planned municipal housing dating from the 1930s and completed in the 1950s, with the majority of ex-Council house stock now run by Dane Plus Housing. This has led to a greater uniformity of townscape than other suburbs in Congleton
- Relatively self-contained area, with Bromley Road the main point of connection with the town centre which is within walking distance.
- Undulating land with highest point at around 130 m to the south east of the area towards Hightown, sloping to the west or north west towards the Dane valley.
- Trees provide some visual enclosure of the character area as a whole - on the edge of the Dane in Shaw Brook valley to the north and east, on the Park Lane ridge to the south, and to the north west by the wooded Dane valley.
- Some publicly accessible viewpoints towards the Cloud from the top of the wooded slopes of the Dane in Shaw but generally trees form a barrier. Main orientation is north west towards the Dane valley.

- Gardens are the most common form of green infrastructure and a much better network of garden hedges has survived than in later housing estates.
- No significant landscape corridors within the estate, but Edinburgh Road to Bradwell Court (parallel to the route to the original Bromley Farm steading) includes a wider verge with a line of trees.
- Scattering of public green spaces throughout the Bromley Farm estate but generally not well connected, and few off-road footpaths. Recreational park with active community centre and play facilities is a focus.

Landscape change

Most of the character area consists of mid C20th housing, started in the 1930s and completed in the 1950s or '60s. Subsequently there has been incremental change - including parking in front gardens, replacement of windows and doors, and solar panels on south-facing roofs but the layout and built form remains and many gardens still retain their original privet hedges though. There are some recent C21st estates on the periphery. All of the farmland was classified as Medieval Town Fields in the Cheshire HLC. In the earlier parts of the Bromley Farm estate the housing layout follows former field boundaries, although it is not clear whether any hedges were retained. A number of former hedgerow oak trees remain within the estate, mainly within gardens. Bromley House and Bromley Farm were removed with little trace when the farm was developed.



Aerial photo and overlay show influence of former field pattern (green) on layout. Former hedgerow oaks circled.

Tall former hedgerow oak within garden

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

There are no designated heritage assets present within the character area. However, most of the eastern boundary adjoins the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation area (Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy) which includes the Dane in Shaw valley. The Dane in Shaw valley woodlands/Bromley Farm woodlands are a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape/townscape issues

- The townscape still reflects the social aspirations of the time, to provide a more spacious and pleasant environment for residents. The views of those who live in Bromley Farm are needed on whether changes are needed and where.

3g Lower Heath

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Lower Heath location plan

Landmark buildings: 1 Eaton Bank School, 2 former Grove Inn, now local shop 3 Clayton Manor care home

Local landscape areas: L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment,

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: Westlow Mere (part)

Views: Out - occasional views over or through trees to Buglawton and St John's Church spire, with open countryside beyond, and towards town centre. Within- directional views down along Rood Lane towards Dane valley.

Key characteristics

- Predominantly residential suburb that has grown since the mid C20th alongside the main roads to Manchester and Macclesfield, accessed from the town centre by Rood Hill/Rood Lane which climbs the river escarpment.
- Separated from other parts of Congleton by the River Dane valley to its south east and south and by the sunken restored landscape of Westlow Mere to the west.
- To the north and north west, the built-up area is expanding into the neighbouring parishes of Eaton and Hulme Walfield.
- Gardens are the predominant form of green infrastructure, with partial networks of hedges in some older parts.
- Former concentration of country house estates of which little has survived 1960s-1970s development other than some mature trees, stone boundary walls and bank on part of Rood Hill and the Lodge to Upper Daisybank House.

- There are no notable green corridors within the residential areas.
- There is a dispersed pattern of isolated areas of public open space and a green space with play equipment forming a local focus between Manchester Road and Giantswood Lane.
- Views out are limited by trees to east, south and west.



1882 map of the former Daisy Bank, Higher Daisy Bank, Springfield and Dane Bank properties.

Landscape change

At the end of the C19th Lower Heath consisted of little more than a terrace of houses opposite the entrance to Dane Bank, a country house on land that is now occupied by the Wiltshire Drive estate. A belt of trees next to the escarpment is all that survives. Of the other country house estates present, Lower and Higher Daisy Bank are now occupied by the Daisybank Drive estate, and Springfield is replaced by Clayton Manor care home and housing at Hillfields. In the early C20th some ribbon development occurred along main roads. Most of Lower Heath is mid or late C20th residential development, starting with interwar municipal planned housing at Norbury Drive and continuing into the 1950s. Private estates followed, and the rate of expansion has increased in the C21st to include large estates off the Macclesfield and Manchester Roads.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

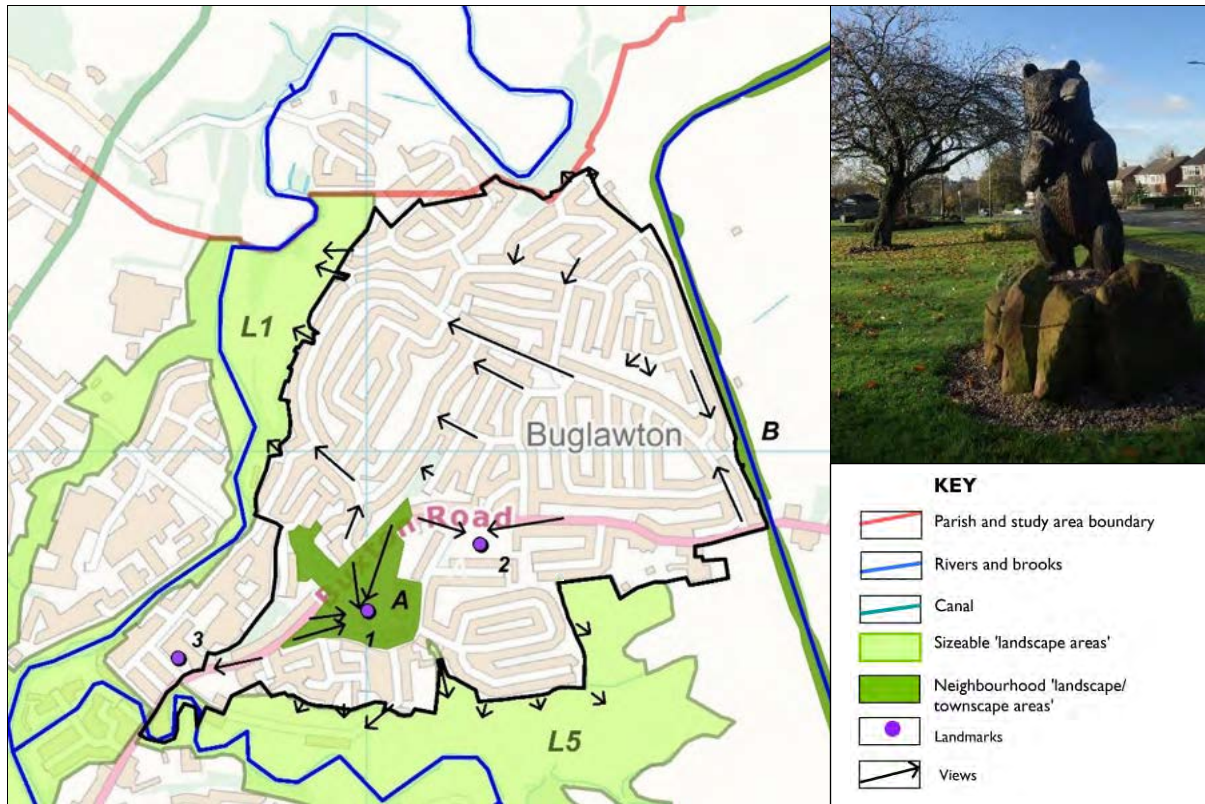
There are no designated heritage assets present.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Need for sustainable travel connections with the town centre which are constrained by topography and the busy A34 which also brings noise and air pollution.
- Expansion northwards towards Eaton with potential coalescence.
- Potential effects of Congleton Link Road and new estates.

3h Buglawton

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN
Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Buglawton location plan

Landmarks: 1 St John's Church, 2 Church House PH, 3 Throstle's Nest House

Local landscape areas: L1 Dane Valley and wooded escarpment, L5 Dane in Shaw and Timbers Brook valley

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A St John's Church and Old Buxton Road, B Canal corridor

Views: Out - towards the Dane valley, and Dane in Shaw valley. Within - mainly north west towards Dane valley.

Key characteristics

- Formerly an independent township, with old mills and housing in the valley bottom (within character area 2c), and a small historic core on the Old Buxton Road, bypassed by Buxton Road.
- Buxton Road, which follows higher land between the Dane valley and the Dane in Shaw valley, is the only road in and out of the suburb as river valleys and the Macclesfield Canal enclose Buglawton, with only tracks or paths across them.
- Highest area at 130 m is at Tall Ash Farm at the top of Buxton Road. The majority of the area slopes to the west north west, towards the Dane valley. A smaller area south of Buxton Road slopes towards the Dane in Shaw valley to the south.
- Undulating, with several west north west to east south east minor ridges providing views over housing and towards the Dane Valley and its wooded escarpments. Minor dry or culverted tributary valleys include small wooded clough west of Buxton Road.
- Housing mainly post WW2, with mid-C20th planned housing estate off St John's Road, and later modern estates off Buxton Road and higher parts of St John's Road.

- Heritage includes Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area and listed bridges to east of character area, listed Beech House, the Lowe House, and St John's School by St John's Church. Brick and stone boundary wall remnants of former country houses.
- Green infrastructure mainly in the form of gardens, but linear wooded embankments/breaks of slope parallel to and above the river valley are a distinctive feature of Buglawton. Some significant mature trees associated with older properties. Other green spaces isolated in a dispersed pattern across the suburb.
- Suburb almost surrounded by greenspace - Dane and Dane in Shaw valleys, canal corridor and open countryside to east with off-road connections to other suburbs.

Landscape change

Before development in the C20th, most of Buglawton consisted of farmland, with an ancient enclosure pattern (Cheshire East Historic Landscape Characterisation), and small areas of settlement at Hardings Bank near St John's Church and around the Lowe. There was also a large country house, Bank House, to the south of St John's Church which had a lake and was surrounded by belts of trees. The Vicarage, now Beech House, was also a large house with extensive grounds. The boundary walls of these properties survive along Old Buxton Road and Buxton Road. Buglawton's industry was historically in the Dane valley (area 2c), but the Bank House estate was developed by the Congleton Board Company in the 1960s and in the C21st it was redeveloped for housing. The municipal planned housing estate along St John's Road was built on a terrace above the valley bottom beyond the older densely built area of industry and terraced cottages to the south west.



Mid C20th planned estate housing with privet hedges and wooded slopes of Dane valley beyond.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

The Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area is partly in cutting and has limited visual connection with the suburb. The white stucco building on Buxton Road formerly known as Lowe House, or The Lowe, is present but the Lowe Farm has gone. Further south on Buxton Road, on the edge of the Dane in Shaw valley, stands the late C18th/early C19th

Beech House, which had large grounds sloping down to the valley bottom. Groups of large mature trees were associated with this house, protected by TPO, and some still remain. The red brick boundary wall of this property, and of the listed white stucco Throstle's Nest House across the road are notable features of this part of the urban landscape.



Buxton Road sloping to the Dane in Shaw valley with the Throstle's Nest and Dane Valley woodlands in the background



The greenspace around St John's Church and school is a local focus.

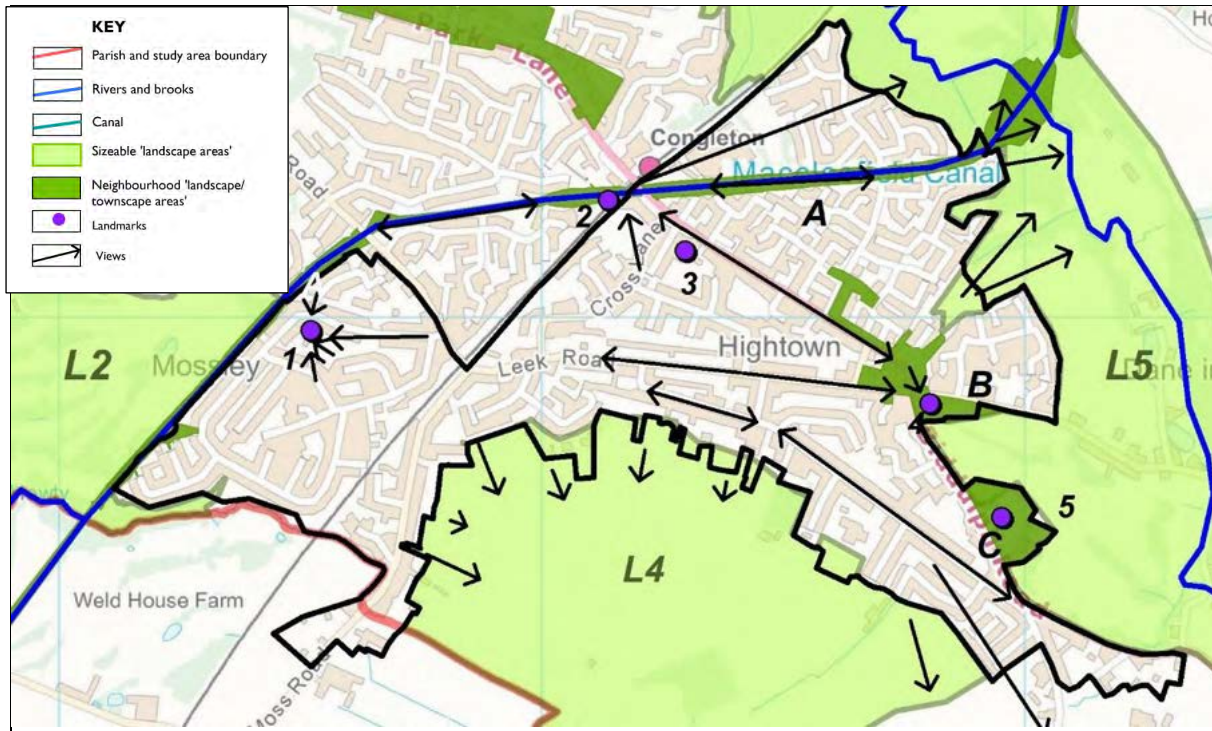
Landscape/townscape issues

- Overhead wires or other visual clutter disfigure the townscape in some parts of Buglawton;
- Urban edge expanding into sensitive countryside;
- Some parts of the suburb lack local distinctiveness;
- Relatively hilly - changes in level not well handled in some areas.

3i Hightown, Mossley & Astbury Lane Ends

Landscape Character Type: SUBURBAN

Cheshire East LCA: Unclassified



Hightown, Mossley and Astbury Lane Ends location plan

Landmarks: 1 Water tower, 2 HJ Lea Oakes Animal Feed Mill, 3 Former workhouse, now pet store, 4 Holy Trinity Church, 5 Former Mossley Hall and trees (hall currently hidden)

Local landscape areas: L2 Priestly Fields, Howty Valley & Lamberts Lane, L4 Congleton Moss, L5 Dane in Shaw and Timbers Brook valley

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A Macclesfield Canal, B Biddulph Rd/Leek Rd, C Trees at Mossley Golf Club

Views: Out - to the Cloud and Congleton Edge, or into Congleton Moss. Within - to water tower in Astbury Lane Ends or animal feed mill at Hightown. Long confined views along Biddulph Road, Leek Road and Macclesfield Canal.

Key characteristics

- Largely flat plateau at around 130 m or over with clay soils or peat over clay, formerly pasture or mossland, with sharp steep drop in level on eastern boundary with Dane in Shaw Valley.
- Distinct community, situated at a notably higher level than the town centre. Unclear boundary with town - either rail or canal.
- Relatively scenic location with wooded Dane in Shaw Valley immediately to east and Peak Fringe (upland edge - Cheshire East local landscape designation) to east and south east including Rainow Hill and Congleton Edge.
- Largely residential - grew as a desirable commuter settlement from the early-mid C19th around Hightown, where the railway crosses the Macclesfield Canal. The local centre there includes railway, shops, pubs and a small amount of industry.
- Former ribbon development along Leek Road and Biddulph Road

- Built heritage includes Macclesfield Canal with listed structures, listed Railway Inn and Mossley Hall, with group of locally listed building around Leek Road/Biddulph Road crossroads, and individual locally listed old Workhouse building (now HJ Oakes animal feed retail) at Hightown and the Cedars on Leek Road.
- Legacy of mature trees near Biddulph Road from C19th country house estates.
- The green infrastructure matrix is gardens, large to small, some with hedges, particularly in older residential areas and areas with larger plots, where there are also a larger number of mature trees and shrubs.
- There are links with open countryside via rights of way, canal and Biddulph Valley Way.
- The Macclesfield canal and main line railway subdivide residential areas, with linear corridors of hedges, trees and other vegetation on either side.
- Suburb is surrounded by open countryside other than on its northern boundary with the rest of the settlement.

Landscape change

Leek Road was part of an ancient routeway, drove road and in the C18th a toll road, running east-west to the south of Congleton town, continuing to the west as Lambert's Lane and to the east as Reades Lane. The Biddulph Road was not constructed until the early C19th. Much of the C19th and early C20th middle class suburban development was at Hightown, related to its proximity to the station (which was some way from the town centre), as was industrial development related to the railway and canal wharves.

C19th/early C20th peat cutting and drainage on Congleton Moss allowed residential development to expand along Leek and Biddulph Roads. Country houses were developed at Mossley Hall (built around 1800 as Mossley Moss Hall and now within Mossley Golf Club), at the recently demolished Mossley House, and later in the C19th at Henshall Hall (demolished in the late C20th). Ribbon development occurred along main roads prior to WW2, and housing estates were built throughout the 1960s to 1990s including the large Henshall Hall estate north and south of the Macclesfield Canal. C21st housing has expanded eastwards towards the Dane in Shaw/Biddulph Valley, as well as backland and infill sites elsewhere. Garden and equestrian development has occurred into Congleton Moss.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

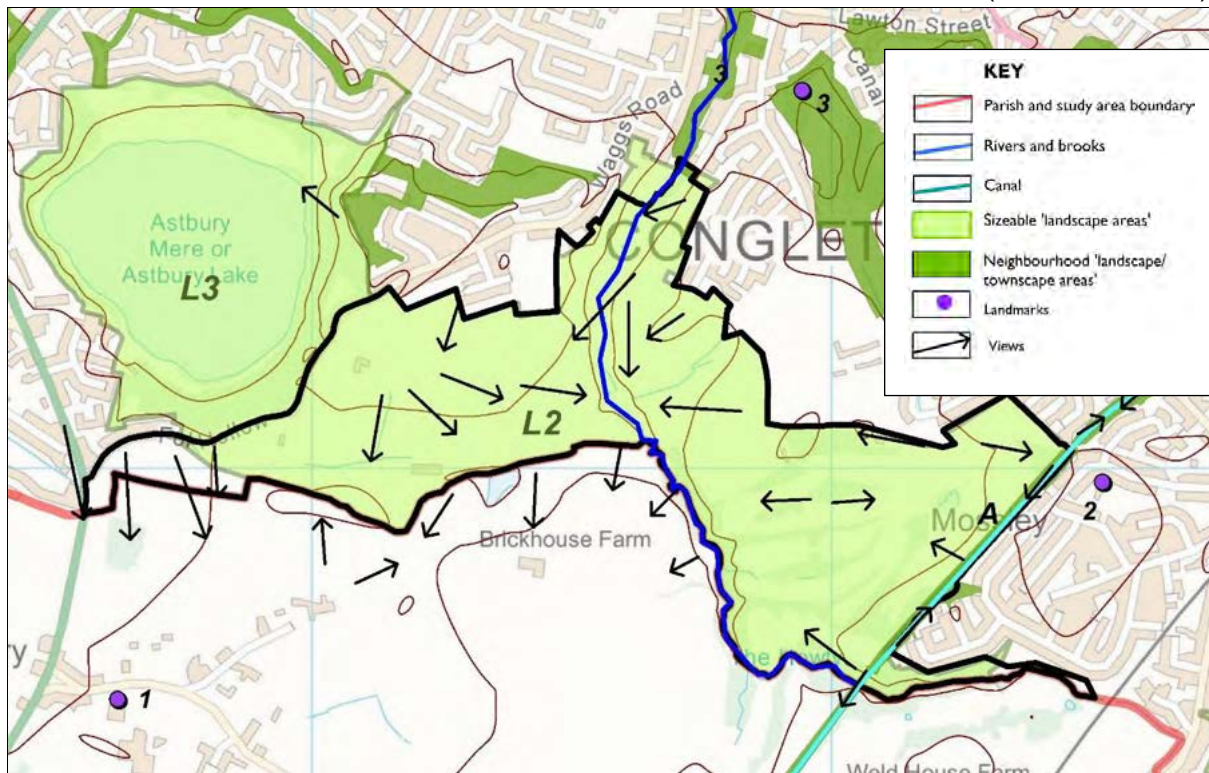
Canal and listed building settings have generally already been affected, with no particular future risk identified. The north eastern part of Henshall Hall estate borders the Dane in Shaw Pasture Site of Special Scientific Interest while the eastern boundary borders woodlands which are part of a Local Wildlife Site.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Few areas of public green space, other than in newer residential areas;
- Urban edge expanding into sensitive areas of countryside.

4a Priestly Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane

Landscape Character Type: RURAL LOWLANDS
Cheshire East LCA: Lower Wooded Farmland (Brereton Heath)



Landmarks: 1 Astbury Church spire, 2 Water tower, 3 St Peter's Church.

Local landscape areas: L2 Priestly Fields, Howty Valley and Lamberts Lane L3 Astbury Mere

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: (much of the character area)

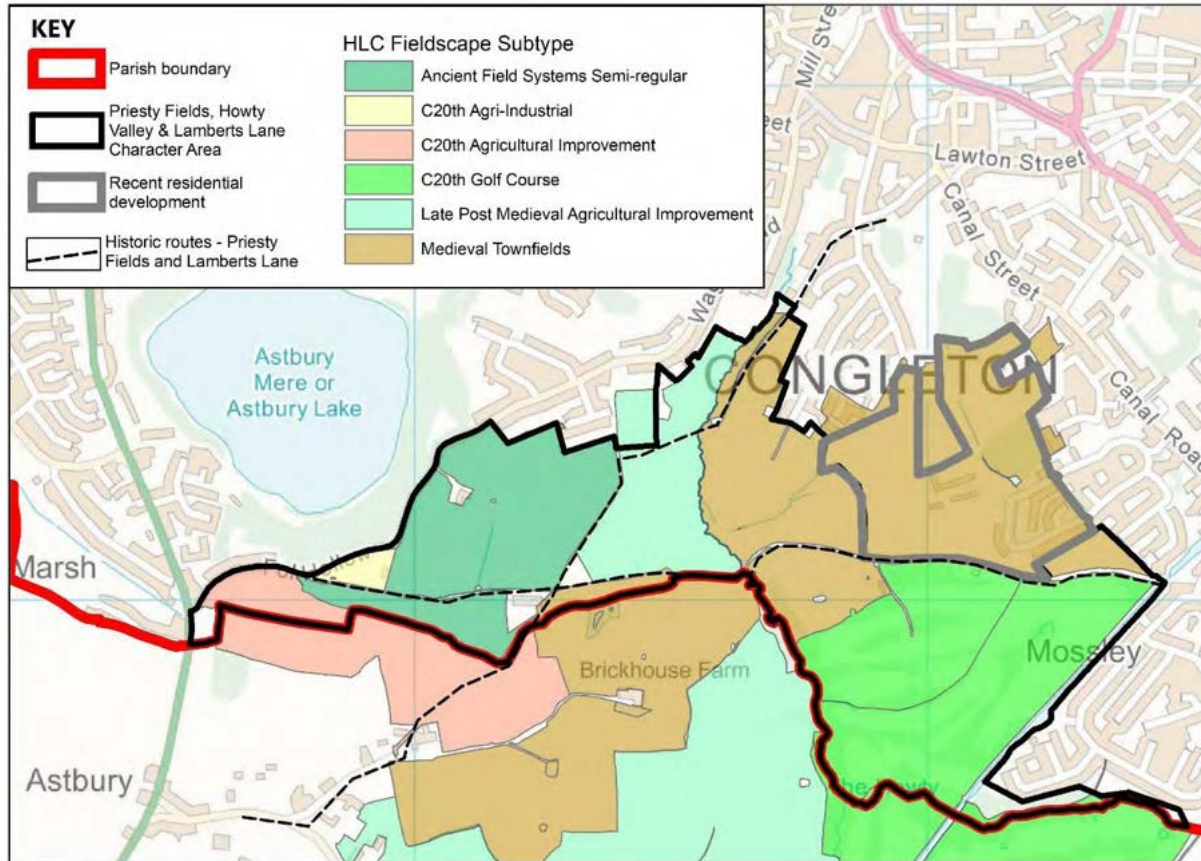
Views: Out - Mow Cop ruin and occasionally the Cloud also visible in distance, Astbury is main focus. Within - into Howty Valley, directional views along Lamberts Lane, Stony Lane, Macclesfield Canal.

Key characteristics

- Rural area, part farmland, with small scale network of fields enclosed by hedges and hedgerow trees.
- Eastern part is former farmland modified post WW2 to form a golf course that retains some of the older landscape including the Howty Valley, some hedgerow trees, and earthworks showing 'ridge and furrow' effects caused by C19th steam ploughing which have been protected from intensive cultivation.
- Dense network of public rights of way and bridleways connecting with Astbury Mere Country Park, Astbury, the open countryside, and Mossley.
- Howty Brook and tributary valleys with associated woodland, and Lamberts Lane and Stony Lane and their associated hedgerows form green corridors through both farmland and golf course, connecting to the town centre, Astbury Mere Country Park, the Loach Brook and almost to Congleton Moss.
- Golf course has a mosaic of young woodland and mown grass with a number of ponds, two of which were present in earlier farmland, and it also includes former hedgerow oaks.

- Historic routes - Lamberts Lane and Stony Lane which are partly sunken lanes. Stony Lane forms part of well-used and well-known historic Priesty Trail from Astbury Church to St Peter's Church.

Landscape change



Historic landscape character (Cheshire HLC 2008).

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

There are no existing landscape or heritage designations but the Howty Brook corridor is a Local Wildlife Site.

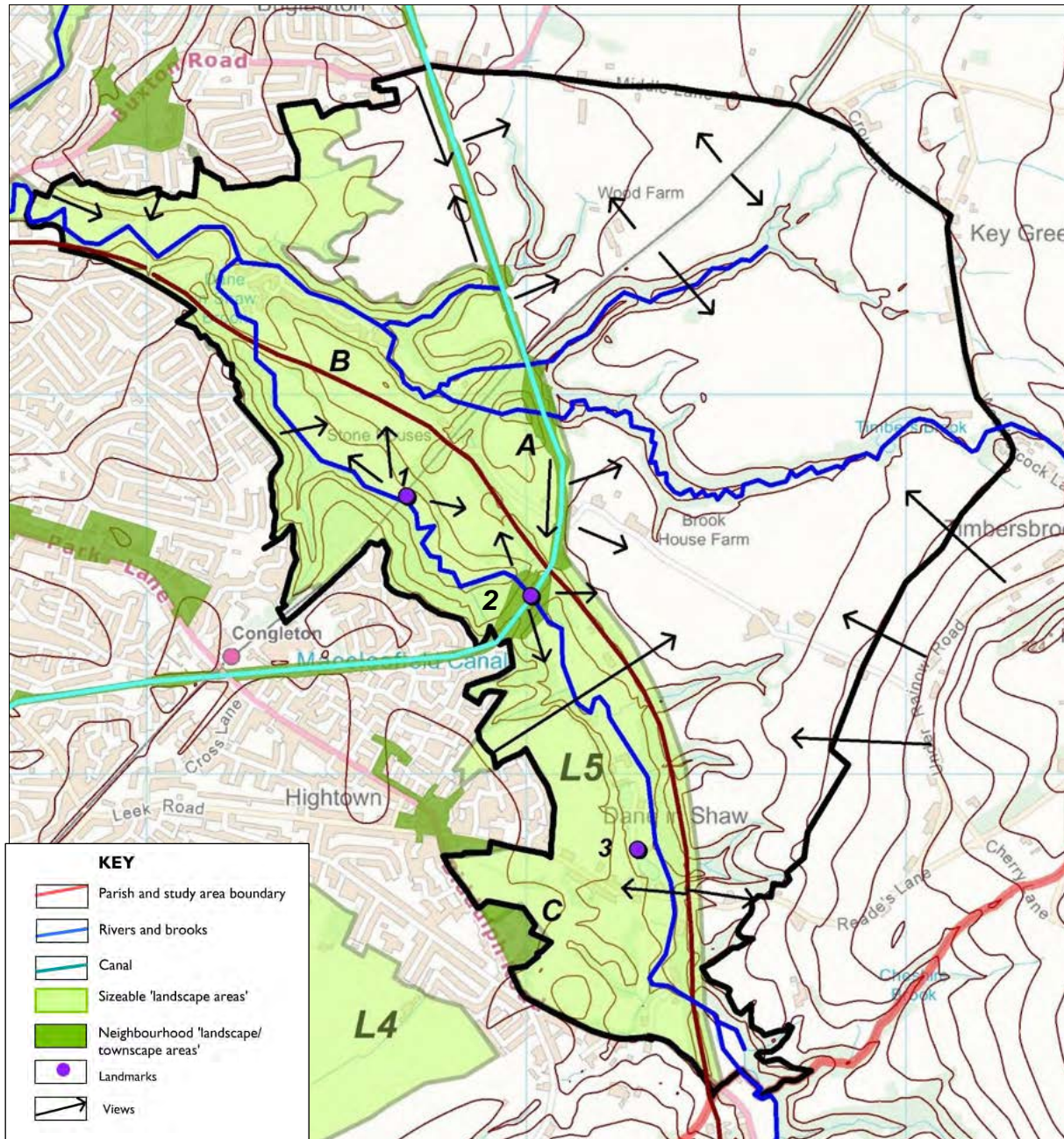
Landscape/townscape issues

- Pressure for development which would adversely affect the special qualities and public enjoyment of this remnant area of Congleton's town fields. The area is vulnerable following appeal decision allowing housing north of Lamberts Lane.
- Management of farmland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees to sustain landscape character.
- Intensification of farming practices including hedge removal and reduction in habitat for wildlife.
- Suburbanisation of rural character through conversion of farm buildings, cottages and farmland to residential uses not related to the land.
- Conversion of farmland to amenity open space or other recreational uses.

4b Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook

Landscape Character Type: RURAL LOWLANDS

Cheshire East LCA: Higher Wooded Farmland (Buglawton)



Landmarks: 1 Railway viaduct over Dane in Shaw Brook, 2 Canal aqueduct over Dane in Shaw Brook, 3 Martin Mill

Local landscape areas: L1 Dane valley L4 Congleton Moss, L5 Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: A Macclesfield Canal, B Biddulph Valley Way

Views: Out and in - towards the Cloud and Rainow Hill and to edges of settlement. Within - oblique views from main line railway, from Canal embankment over Dane in Shaw Brook, from Biddulph Valley Way. Directional views along Canal and Biddulph Valley Way.

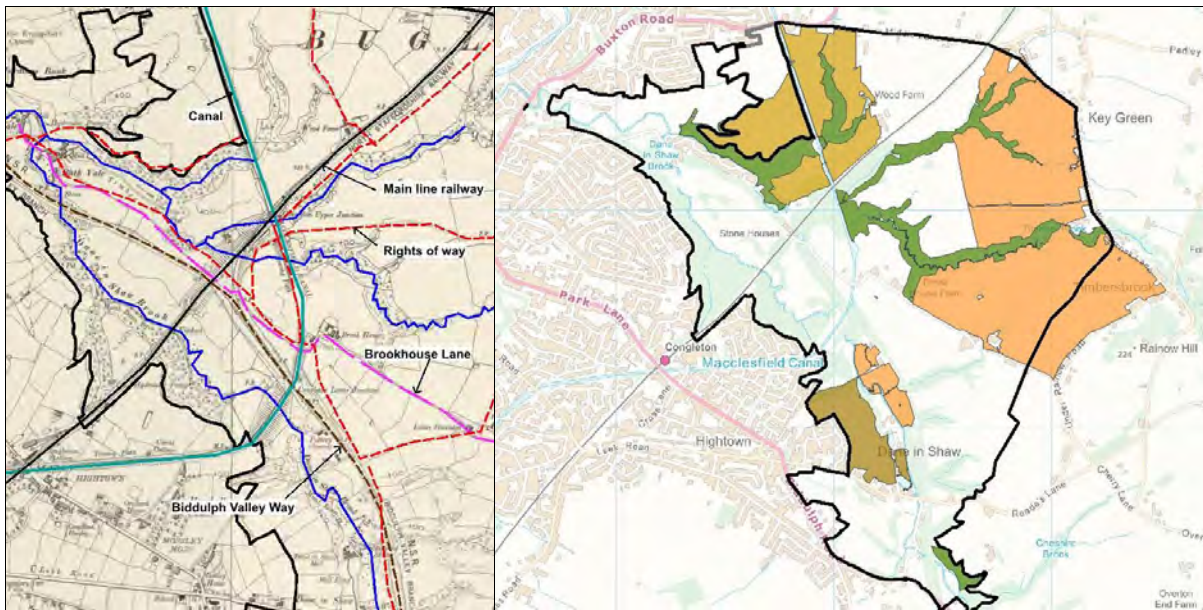
Key characteristics

- Valleys of the Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbersbrook and their tributaries modified by early C19th canal and mid C19th railway constructed against the grain of the

landscape to create intricate landforms with steep slopes and embankments. These have subdivided the character area into two parts - within the Macclesfield Canal, and beyond it. They share the same natural character.

- Semi-natural vegetation including steep wooded valley sides and species-rich grassland, with areas of farmland on flatter land.
- Areas of largely pastoral farmland on clay or loamy soils.
- Settlement in the form of isolated farm steadings, dispersed houses present, and a linear area of residential development at Bath Bale.
- Dane in Shaw Brook (also known on section close to Congleton as Tommy's Brook) and Timbers Brook (in section of valley known as Bath Vale) in semi-natural channels or modified to provide water power to historic silk mills.
- Narrow historic routes - Brookhouse Lane and Tommy's Lane
- Historic mill locations - Davenshaw Mill, Bath Vale Mill, Martins Mill.
- Links with River Dane Valley - a major green infrastructure corridor
- High degree of connectivity with recreational routes to Biddulph Valley Way (and Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire), Macclesfield Canal (Kidsgrove and Stockport), Timbersbrook and Upland Edge countryside and Peak District
- Panoramic views from eastern edge to the Cloud

Landscape change



1899 map showing 'spaghetti' of historic routes and today's recreational paths overlaid

Historic landscape - ancient woods and fields

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

Most of the area south of Timbers Brook is part of Cheshire East's Peak Fringe local landscape designation area. The Macclesfield Canal is a Conservation Area for its entire length, with listed structures along its length, of which the Dane Aqueduct is the most significant landscape feature. From this, there is a good view towards the listed Dane Railway Viaduct. At the north western end of the character area, the listed Beech House

overlooks the valley. At the southern end, south of Reades Lane there are some locally listed buildings of interest including the C18th or earlier Castle Inn and a converted chapel. North Reades Lane are two mill ponds, one reflecting the impressive Martin's Mill which has been converted to housing, and part of a small hamlet.



View west from Dane Aqueduct to Dane Railway Viaduct over Dane in Shaw Pasture

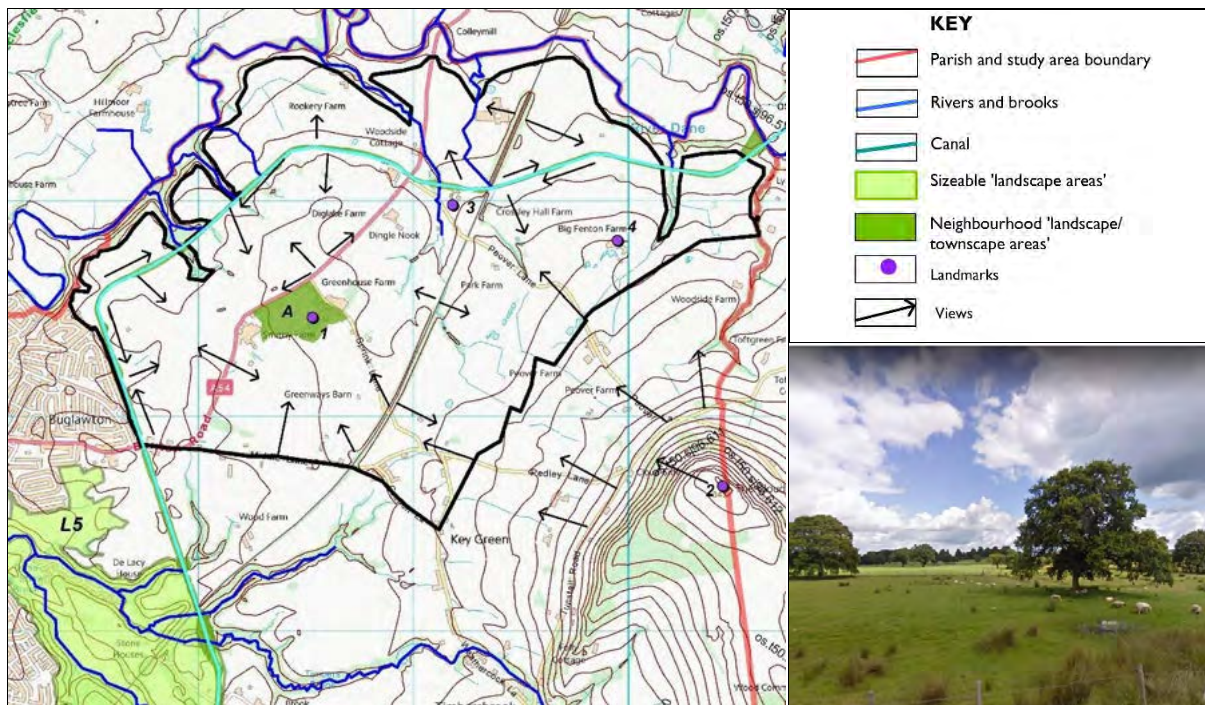
This character area includes Dane in Shaw Pastures, a Site of Special Scientific Interest with unimproved grassland of national importance, managed by Cheshire East Countryside Rangers with support from local farmers. As one of very few remaining wildlife meadows in Cheshire it is a source of seeds for the re-creation of species-rich grassland elsewhere. Its biodiversity also makes it an exceptional landscape to experience, underlining the relative sterility of farmland elsewhere.

Landscape/townscape issues

- This is an area with many perspectives and values, and could benefit from coordinated management and protection of non-designated features of interest.
- Proposed housing at Tall Ash Farm, sited prominently on a ridge of land will visually intrude on the valley between Bath Vale and the canal, and affect the currently rural setting of the canal, and will also be visible from countryside to the east.
- Cumulative loss of value through incremental change and development pressure is a key issue.
- Linkage to the Dane valley is tenuous and needs to be strengthened, with a safe crossing on the A54, and footpath connections.

4c Buglawton Hall

Landscape Character Type: RURAL LOWLANDS
Cheshire East LCA: Higher Wooded Farmland (Buglawton)



Landmarks: 1 Buglawton Hall (although largely hidden by trees), 2 The Cloud, 3 Crossley Hall Farm 4 Big Fenton Farm
Local landscape areas: L5 Dane in Shaw Brook and Timbers Brook valleys
Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: Buglawton Hall and parkland
Views: Out and in - to and from the Cloud and roads on its footslopes, and from edge of Buglawton, also towards Dane Valley. Within - from main line railway, Macclesfield Canal, and A54 Buxton Road. Directional views- Canal and A54.

Key characteristics

- Gently sloping area of farmland at about 120 to 150 m above sea level, between the Cloud footslopes, the Dane Valley, the eastern edge of Buglawton and Key Green.
- Buglawton Hall, a castellated stone mansion with part stucco exterior, sits on a gently domed area to the south of the A54 and, although its parkland is much smaller than it was, the trees surrounding the hall are still a dominant feature in the surrounding landscape.
- Farmland is more open in this character area, particularly where it was once parkland, allowing good views towards the Cloud, which visually dominates the landscape.
- Macclesfield Canal crosses the countryside, following the line of the Dane valley to its south, and providing a linear viewpoint from which both the lowland and upland edge landscapes can be appreciated.
- Views are also obtained from the A54 road to Buxton and the main line railway.
- The character area is mainly farmland, with a network of hedges, and linear corridors along canal, railway and roads.

Landscape change

About a third of this character area's farmland is identified in the Cheshire East HLC as ancient field systems, either irregular or semi-regular in shape. The area around Buglawton Hall, parkland from which older field boundaries would have been removed, was largely re-enclosed in the C20th, except for a smaller park retained around the house and garden. The Cheshire Gardens Trust's 2010 report on the park and gardens found that its remaining designed landscape was remarkably intact. This is the only example of an extant historic parkland associated with a country house in the study area.



Bryant's 1831 map showing the former extent of the Buglawton Hall parkland

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

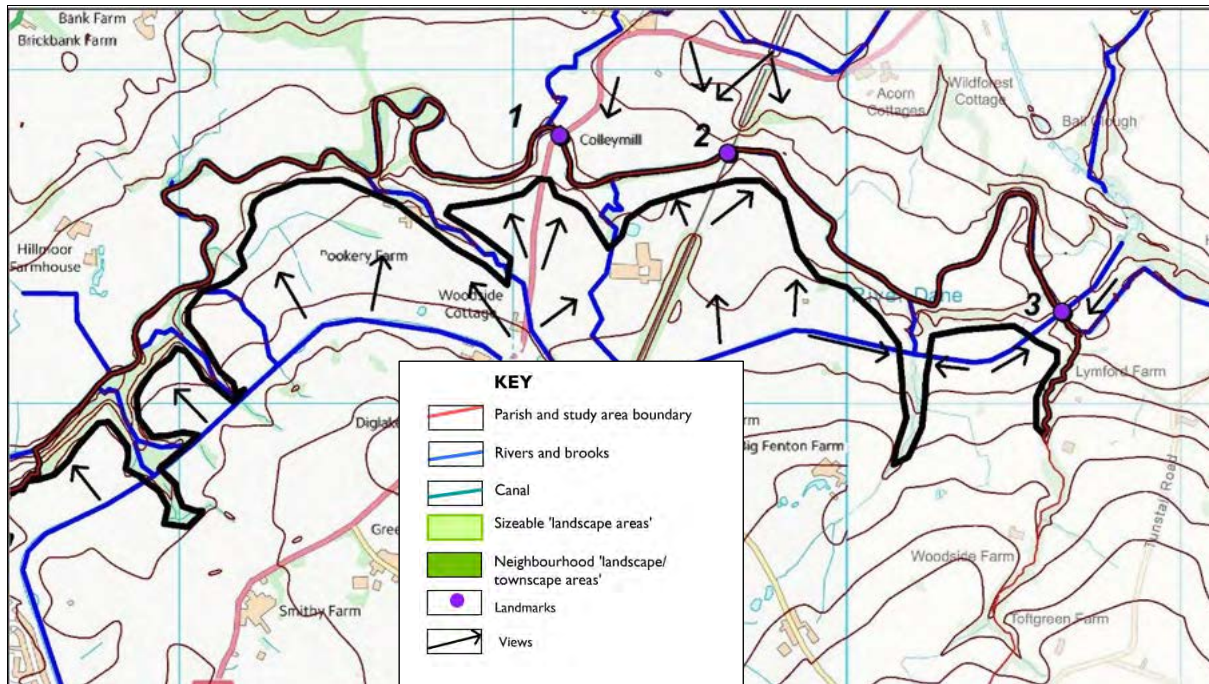
Around a third of the character area, between the Cloud and the Dane valley where they are in closest proximity, falls with the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation area. The designated area contains the greatest contrasts in scenery and includes much of the remaining ancient fieldscapes as well as the listed black and white farmhouses of Big Fenton (grade 2*) and Crossley Hall (grade 2). While Buglawton Hall is grade 2 listed, its surrounding parkland is undesignated. The Macclesfield Canal is a Conservation Area for its entire length, and has 14 listed structures within the character area.

Landscape/townscape issues

- The future of Buglawton Hall's landscape is uncertain;
- Beech trees along the Buxton Road between Congleton and Buglawton Hall are over-mature or lost and could be replaced.
- Potential for enhancement through agricultural land management.

4d Dane Valley, Congleton to Bosley

Landscape Character Type: RURAL LOWLANDS
Cheshire East LCA: Higher Wooded Farmland (Buglawton)



Landmarks: 1 Colley Mill and Colley Mill road bridge over River Dane 2 Dane Viaduct (railway,) 3 Dane Aqueduct

Local landscape areas: L1 River Dane Valley within Congleton lies to the west - not shown as parish boundary excludes part of the valley, which passes through Eaton parish.

Neighbourhood landscape/townscape areas: None other than Macclesfield Canal crossing.

Views: Out- to the Cloud to the south east, and the BT tower on Sutton Common to the north east. In and within - from main line railway, Macclesfield Canal, A54 Buxton Road, and Dane Valley Way long distance footpath.

Key characteristics

- Dane Valley upstream from Congleton town (omitting Havannah section and the southern half of the valley due to the parish boundary following the river).
- Quiet rural landscape which can be appreciated from Macclesfield canal and public rights of way.
- Valley woodlands are barrier to northward views.
- Heritage features at road, rail and canal crossings.
- The northern slopes of the Cloud dominate views at the eastern end and provide a backdrop.
- To the west, expansion of the town is constrained by the steep wooded escarpment of the River Dane, and the canal corridor to the north of Buglawton.
- Ecologically valuable corridor with ancient woodland and river in natural channel.
- Wooded tributary cloughs are incised into the farmed landscape to the south.



Looking south on the Macclesfield Canal on the approach to the Dane Aqueduct, with valley woodlands in the middle distance, and the north face of the Cloud in the background

Landscape change

This linear rural landscape still contains a high proportion of Ancient Woodland and Ancient Fieldscapes (Cheshire East HLC). Field sizes are generally small.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

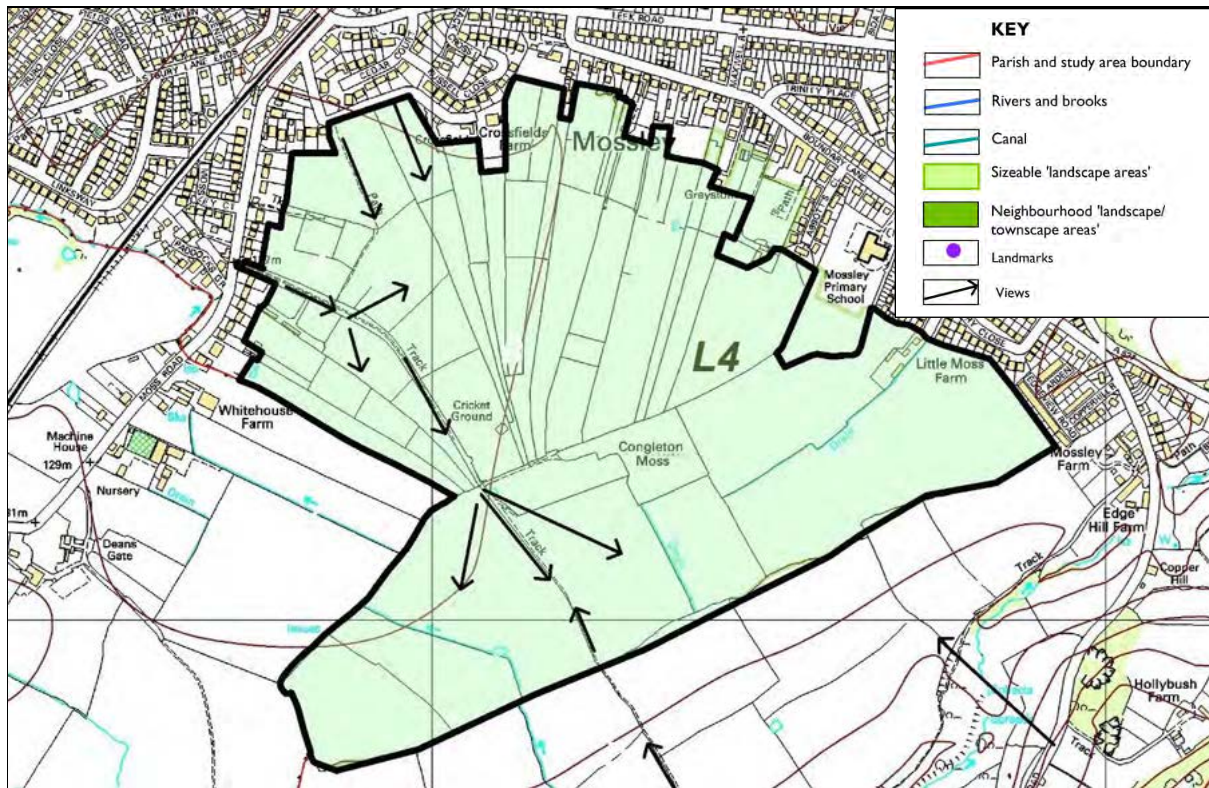
Part of the area is within the Cheshire East Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation area. Madams Wood is an SSSI and the whole valley is a Local Wildlife Site. The Congleton Railway Viaduct, the A54 Buxton Road Colley Mill Bridge and Colley Mill House and the Dane Aqueduct are listed structures or buildings.

Landscape/townscape issues

- None known.

4e Congleton Moss

Landscape Character Type: RURAL LOWLANDS
Cheshire East LCA: Mossland (Congleton Moss)



Local landscape areas: L4 Congleton Moss itself.

Views: Out - to Congleton Edge or edges of Mossley housing. Within - variable, depending on vegetation cover.

Key characteristics

- Wide flat expanse of land with radial enclosure pattern that is unique in the Congleton area.
- Weak green infrastructure network of boundary trees, many birch trees, that have grown up through natural regeneration (the narrow moss room boundaries were not planted with hedgerows), and occasional drains and a few areas of broadleaf wood.
- Low visibility from public viewpoints in town, but gained from properties on the edge of the Moss and by walkers on rights of way.

Landscape change

The Cheshire East HLC identifies several different subtypes within the Moss. The narrow linear Moss Rooms which take up about half of the area are a particular form of Ancient Field Systems and unique within the study area. On their south western edge are some C20th fields and a small woodland and a drained and improved area of grassland which is a cricket field. Traces of the former peat cutting industry appear to have gone. Many of the

Moss Rooms are used for grazing, particularly horse grazing, while nearer the settlement, gardens and outbuildings extend into the strips.



Parallel boundaries of the Moss Rooms

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

There are no designated heritage assets within or close to the Moss. However, it lies next to Congleton Edge which is within the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation area. A small central part of the Moss is a Local Wildlife Site



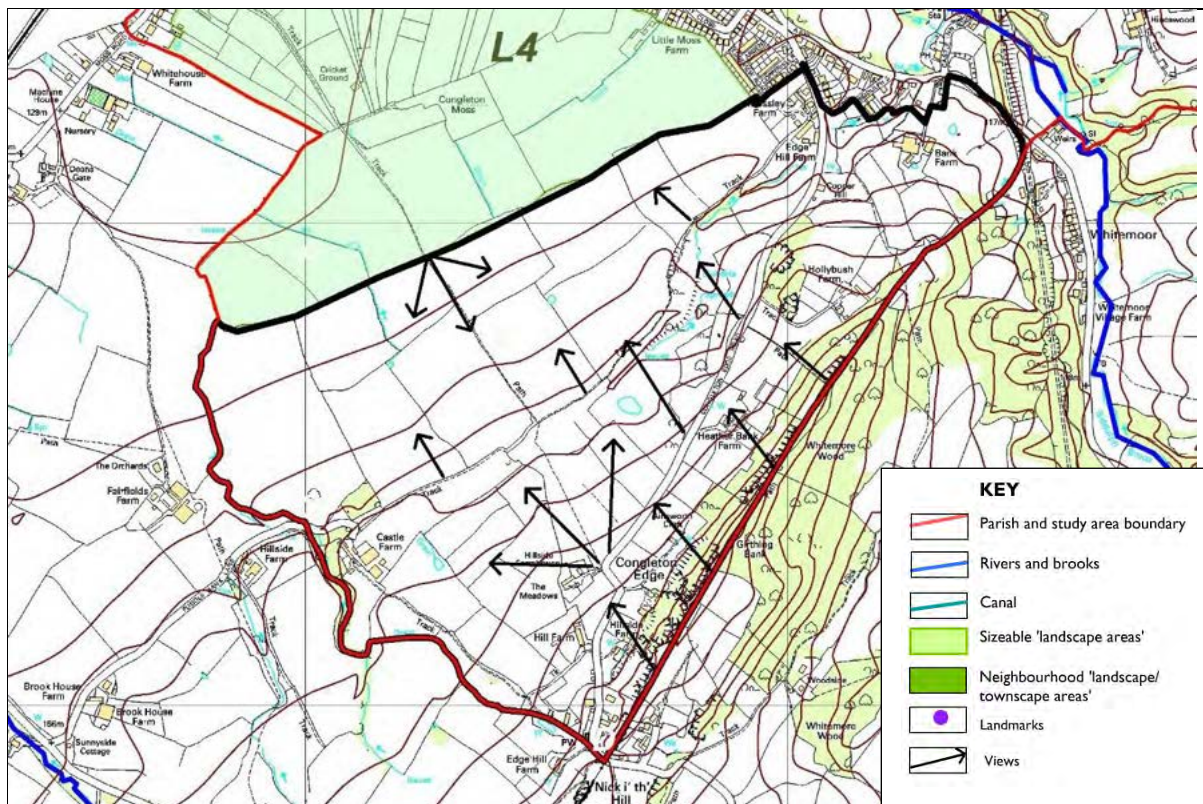
Degradation of the Moss - recently dug trench in arable field on peat soil, showing excavated peat.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Incremental ‘suburbanisation’ around the edge, and amalgamation of field boundaries.
- Cumulative growth of woody vegetation is occurring as the Moss dries out which will change its character. The narrow Moss Rooms should not be planted with hedges - not part of the subdivision, and would increase the drying out of the peat.
- Extent and depth of remaining peat is uncertain but some is still being disturbed and drained whereas if wetted it would store and even sequester carbon, contributing to climatic change mitigation.

5a Congleton Edge

Landscape Character Type: UPLAND EDGE
Cheshire East LCA: Upland Footslopes (Mow Cop Ridge)



Landmarks: None within but Jodrell Bank Lovell Telescope, water towers, HJ Oakes animal feed mill, Eaton Bank High School, Eaton Quarry and other features can be seen.

Local landscape areas: L4 Congleton Moss. Area is part of the Peak Fringe local landscape designation.

Views: Out - open panoramic views over the Cheshire Plain and Congleton.

Key characteristics

- Straight sharp ridge which forms part of the gritstone ridge between the Cloud and Mow Cop with farmed footslopes to the west sloping down to Congleton Moss.
- Panoramic views westwards over the Cheshire Plain from the public right of way that follows the ridge, and occasionally eastwards to the Biddulph Brook valley within Staffordshire Moorlands to the east.
- From Congleton town the wooded slopes form a backdrop to views from Mossley, Astbury Lane Ends and Congleton Moss.
- Small areas of heathland, sessile oak and birch woodland along the top of the ridge, and areas of exposed gritstone where it has been quarried in the past. T
- Gritstone walls on higher ground, whilst the open farmland has a network of hedges with some hedgerow trees.

Landscape change

Gritstone quarries were developed along the wooded ridge in the C18th and C19th, and there were scattered small farms and a small hamlet at Nick I'th' Hill where a Methodist Chapel was built. Older vernacular buildings are stone-built, but larger houses were built in the C20th which are more suburban in character, using different materials and developing large gardens around them. Irregular and semi-irregular ancient field systems still exist on the slopes to the west of Nick i'th' Hill and around Bank Farm to the north east of the character area. Elsewhere there is a mixture of enclosure types. Nick i'th' Hill is a dip in the ridge, visible from lowland areas to the west and used by drovers and others to reach Biddulph before the current road following the Biddulph Brook valley was constructed. It also marks the most southern point of Congleton parish.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

Congleton Edge is within the Cheshire East Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation area. The Edge itself is a Local Wildlife Site.



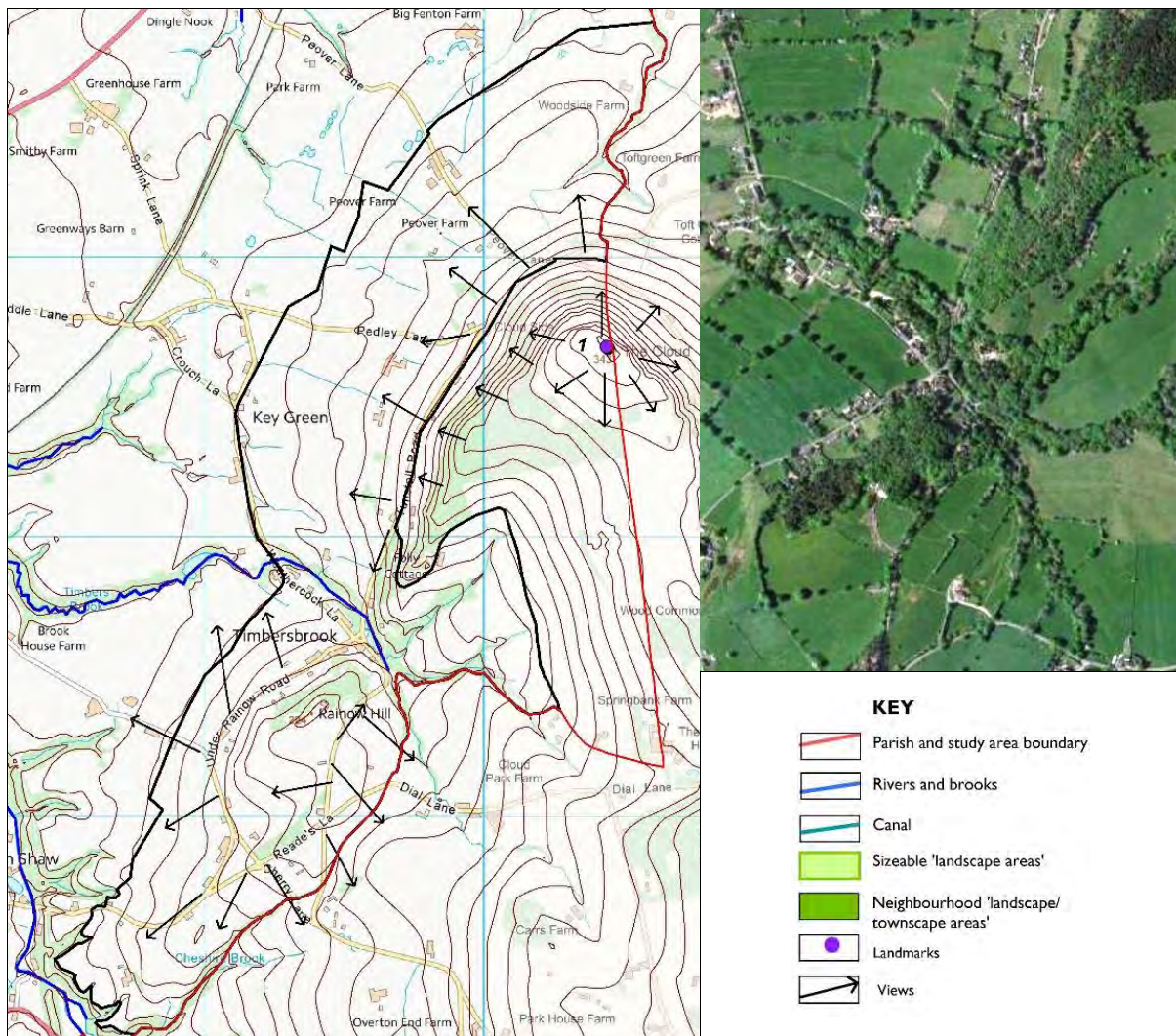
Congleton Edge Road with the Edge on the left, and gritstone wall along the roadside.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Properties sited to take advantage of the views can sometimes convey a local suburban character to this otherwise rural area.
- Although the Gritstone Ridge does not follow the top of the ridge on this section, it does on the section to the south of Nick i'th' Hill, and the ridge is a popular walk. There can be localised parking problems at the hamlet of Nick I'th' Hill as there is no available space. Paths may become eroded by use.

5b Timbersbrook and Rainow Hill

Landscape Character Type: UPLAND EDGE
Cheshire East LCA: Upland Footslopes (Mow Cop Ridge)



Aerial photo of Timbersbrook village and woodland

Landmarks: The Cloud itself

Views: Out - west over Congleton and Cheshire Plain, south to Congleton Edge, north east to the Cloud. Within - Timbersbrook village, enclosed by topography and woodland.

Key characteristics

- Includes the lower farmed westward-facing slopes of the Cloud, the dispersed village of Timbersbrook, and Rainow Hill and its lower westward-facing slopes.
- The Timbers Brook, and its upper wooded tributaries which are incised into the gritstone ridge, divide the Cloud and its footslopes from the lower Rainow Hill and its footslopes. Incised clough woodlands are characteristic of the upland edge.
- Predominantly farmland in pastoral use.
- Parts of the dispersed settlement of Timbersbrook are relatively enclosed by topography and woodland but many houses and local roads have a long view westward over the Cheshire Plain.

- Older vernacular buildings and walls in Timbersbrook are often in the local gritstone with some C19th brick buildings. There are examples of both stone and brick terraced cottages.
- More recent residential properties are likely to be situated to take advantage of the view. They are in varied materials and may be suburban rather than rural in character.
- Small-scale network of hedges with hedgerow trees, and gritstone walls are also present in higher areas.
- Former industries have gone but have left some landscape impact.
- High recreational value, with network of local rights of way, including the long-distance Gritstone Trail which generally follows the ridge.

Landscape change

This character area shows a slower rate of change than in the study area as a whole. Generally, the higher land is shown on the Cheshire HLC as C19th Parliamentary Enclosure, and the lower slopes as Semi-regular or Irregular Ancient Field Systems created before 1600. Land sloping away from the Cloud is almost all Ancient Field Systems whereas to the south of Timbersbrook there is a mixture of periods but still with a high proportion of ancient fieldscapes. The Cheshire HLC discusses woodland references made in the Domesday survey - the frequency in the Peak Fringe area suggests that it was likely to have been more wooded than the rest of Cheshire. Some of the fields may therefore have originated as assarts - land enclosed from woodland for agricultural use, a practice which continued into the C19th. Small gritstone and gravel quarries were worked around Timbersbrook, and the Timbers Brook provided water power for Pool Bank Mill nearby, and mills in Bath Vale and Congleton further downstream. The current picnic area is on the site of the former Silver Springs Bleaching and Dyeing Works which had a tall chimney. There was a small Primitive Methodist Church at Timbersbrook, now converted. Current settlement is dispersed along local roads and is a mixture of C20th and older buildings.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

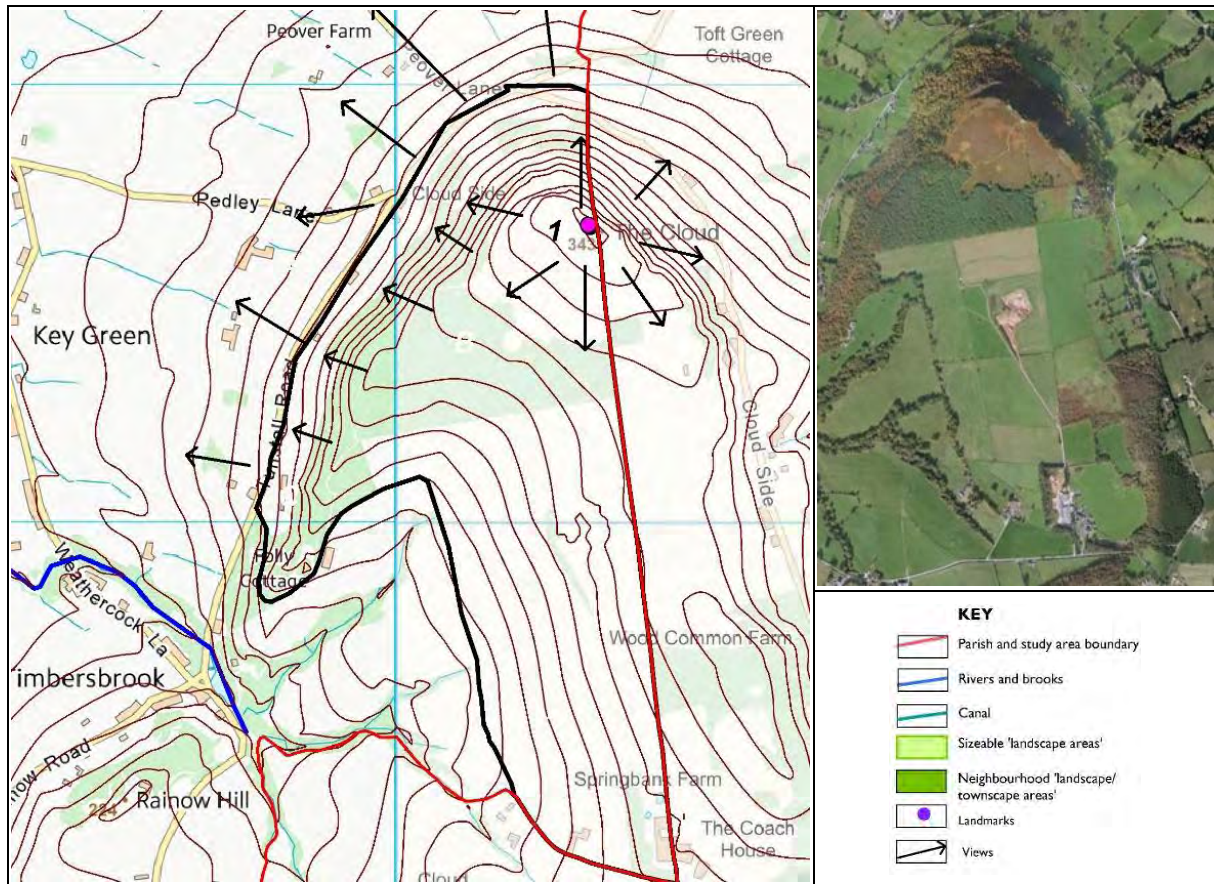
The whole of the character area is within the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation area (Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy). Two vernacular stone buildings are listed. There are a number of Local Wildlife Sites including Folly Cottage Meadow and Wood, Rainow Woods and Pastures, Woodside Clough and Cheshire Brook Wood.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Some of the properties in the area can convey a rather suburban character although the overall character is rural.
- This is also a popular area for walking, and parking along rural roads can be an occasional problem.

5c The Cloud

Landscape Character Type: UPLAND EDGE
Cheshire East LCA: Upland Footslopes (Mow Cop Ridge)



Aerial photo showing land use

Landmark: Cloud summit with trig point

Views: 360° panoramic

Key characteristics

- The Cloud, also known as Bosley Cloud, or sometimes Congleton Cloud, has a very recognisable profile partly caused by 19th century quarrying of its northern face.
- At over 300 m (343 maximum) it is the highest part of the gritstone ridge which forms the eastern boundary of Congleton parish and provides a backdrop to the town.
- Outstanding views over Congleton and the Cheshire Plain to North Wales and South Lancashire, north and south along the upland edge and east towards the Peak District.
- Semi-natural, farmed or forested upland landscape with land use influenced by height, topography, soils, habitats, land ownership and administration (it continues into Staffordshire Moorlands) and management policies.
- Summit has Millstone Grit exposures, and unenclosed heathland, coniferous and sessile oak woodland.
- Where land is enclosed, stone walls form a network.

- Woodland on the steep slopes connects with the wooded Timbers Brook valley to the south.

Landscape change

The summit of the Cloud is shown on the Cheshire East HLC as ‘Unimproved Land’ because of its unenclosed heathland. However, heathland covers a relatively small area and a larger area at a slightly lower elevation is Post Medieval Plantation, which in this case is Scots Pine. This is shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1870-5, at which time it also covered the whole summit as well as the steep west-facing slopes. The slopes are now C20th deciduous woodland. Within the plantation are earthworks thought at first to be the remains of a Neolithic or Iron Age hillfort but now thought to be part of an earlier field system of uncertain date. The gritstone quarry at the north of the Cloud, which produced millstones and stone for the canal, is identified as Post Medieval Industry Inactive (as is the Bridestones Quarry to the south, although this is active). The farmland to the south of the plantation, and below the steeper slopes, is all C19th Parliamentary Enclosure dating from around 1831. The pre-WW2 [Dudley Stamp Land Utilisation](#) map shows whole hill top covered with plantation woodland, as does the 1909 map, so the heathland is a restored habitat.

Landscape and heritage designations and settings

The Cloud is within the Peak Fringe Local Landscape Designation area, protected by Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Policy SE4. Much of the Cloud is Registered Common Land/Open Access Land (the only such area within Congleton Parish) under National Trust management. The Cloud is a Local Wildlife Site with a large area of lowland heath and acid grassland, significant within Cheshire as a whole, not just the study area.

Landscape/townscape issues

- Some erosion of footpaths due to the popularity of the hill. Disturbance of habitat through mountain biking is a particular issue but this is to be managed in future by partnership working between the National Trust and Congleton Mountain Biking Club.
- Deciduous woodland succession is a potential issue as it could affect views as well as heathland, while the future of the remaining conifer woodland is uncertain.