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SECTION 1 : BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Landmark Partnership was commissioned in July 1999 to carry out a landscape assessment of the Hartlepool Local Plan area. The purpose of the study was to aid the formalisation of planning policy, focusing development on the most appropriate sites in the Borough, and to provide clear and quantifiable landscape measurement criteria which could be used to defend these planning policy decisions at appeal or inquiry.

1.1 GENERAL AIMS

The project aims are summarised as follows: -

- To assist in the evaluation of limits to development, with regard to both the main urban area and rural village envelopes. In particular, to identify which areas outside the existing limits to development (urban fence and village envelopes) should be safeguarded from further development.

- To evaluate the landscape quality of the countryside in and around the existing Special Landscape Areas in order, if necessary, to redefine their extent to reflect their special characteristics.

- To provide baseline information for the preparation of a Countryside Design Summary, which would supplement existing policies within the Local Plan.

- To help define the parameters of green wedges, potential green links and limits to development

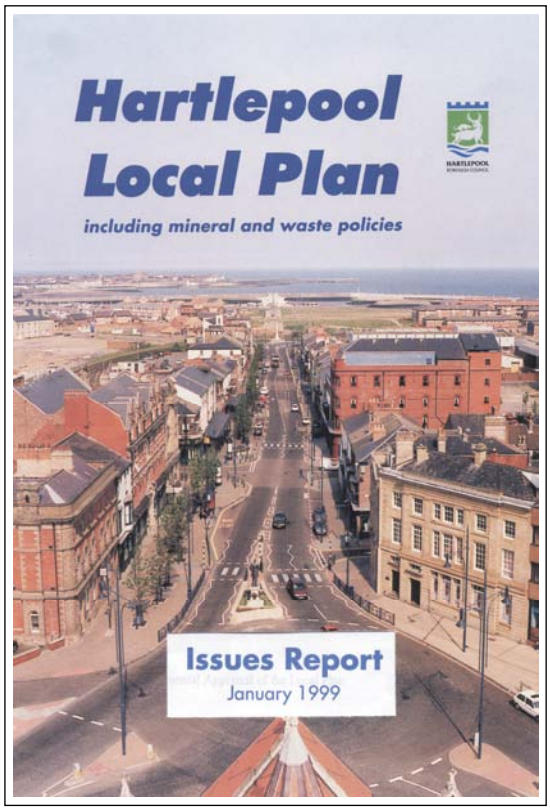
- In particular, to determine from the point of view of the landscape and community value, the most important elements of the proposed green network within the main built up area, and the key open spaces within it that should be protected from development.

- To identify those areas that would benefit from improved management and conservation, in order to realise the enhancement potential of existing green space and open countryside in terms of landscape, visual and amenity value.

In pursuing these objectives, it was necessary to create a methodology that would allow a quantifiable evaluation of landscape quality, both inherent and intrinsic and to consider the amenity value of open space and farmland within the Hartlepool Local Plan area.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The study operated within the Hartlepool Local Plan area, encompassing the whole of the Borough of Hartlepool. In conjunction with the current review of the Draft Hartlepool Local Plan, a landscape assessment was commissioned to aid the formulation of planning policy and to assist in the decision making process on development control matters. Set out below is the background description of the assessment process, its role and function, and the broad principles upon which the study was based.



Photograph no. 1

2.1 THE USE OF LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Structured systems of landscape assessment are gaining increasing recognition in terms of their value to informed decision making. The purpose of a landscape assessment should be to make a thorough and accurate analysis of the chosen landscape area, based on quantifiable measurement criteria. The systematic study and evaluation of a landscape area, in this fashion, is likely to highlight important issues, which can subsequently influence land use decisions. Ultimately, the classification of local landscape character zones, the management of sensitive areas such as the urban/rural fringe and the formulation of planning policy are all likely to benefit greatly from the conclusions of a thorough landscape assessment.

The Countryside Commission document CCP423 'Landscape Assessment Guidance' presents the latest information on landscape assessment, for the purposes of planning and land management in rural and urban fringe landscapes. The basic principles of landscape assessment encompass the following:

Landscape description is the process of collecting and presenting information about the landscape in a systematic manner, and usually forms the basis for any landscape assessment.

Landscape classification is a more analytical activity whereby the landscape is sorted into different types or units, each with a distinct, consistent and recognisable character.

Landscape evaluation means attaching value to a particular landscape, landscape type or landscape feature, by reference to specified criteria. Generally an evaluation should be based on a prior classification.

The majority of landscape assessments undertaken so far in this country have concentrated on broad geographical areas, operating at County, Regional or even National level, and have generally focused on the physical characteristics of the landscape, such as landform and vegetation cover.

This assessment differed from many previous assessments in that it covered a relatively small geographic area, defined by the Borough boundary and Local Plan area. It also differed in that the primary aim of the assessment was to identify the relative value of each parcel of land within the Borough, essentially as an aid to development control and to assist in the formulation of planning policy.

Photograph no. 2

This involved not only the classification of landscape character types, but also an evaluation of the quality of each area, taking into account the physical and visual qualities of the landscape. Furthermore, such factors as amenity value and the level of land management also had to be assessed, quantified and evaluated on order to determine the landscape potential of each site.

This assessment therefore represents an extremely useful planning tool, in that it provides information not only on the landscape quality and visual condition of the survey area, but also on the use of the landscape and its potential for enhancement. The value of such information, especially during the current Hartlepool Local plan review, is likely to be considerable in terms of informing planning policy decisions, and supporting these decisions at the Inquiry stage. However, the assessment is also likely to remain an extremely useful tool after the adoption of the new Local plan, in assisting day-to-day planning decisions and informing new strategies.

2.3 THE HARTLEPOOL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Photograph no. 3

To meet the particular requirements of this study, existing assessment techniques were developed and refined around a core of principles, specifically designed to meet the needs of Hartlepool Borough Council. These principles aim primarily to assess relative landscape *quality*, as opposed to landscape *character*, as this is considered to be the driving issue behind the use of the assessment as an effective planning tool. The core principles adopted for the methodology are set out below:

Survey units: In order to provide an accurate and detailed picture of the Borough landscape, and to maximise the potential usefulness of the survey data, the assessment was conducted at an extremely detailed level. Whereas many past assessments have concentrated on identifying broad landscape areas, this study took individual sites (an arable field, an urban park, an area of woodland) as the standard landscape assessment unit (LAU). This enabled a 'site-by-site' analysis of landscape quality to be produced across the Borough with users of the survey data being able to pinpoint small sites with relative ease.

Scoring: To reach a situation whereby the quality of different sites within the Borough could be compared, it was considered necessary to design a systematic method of recording survey data, based on a scoring of the elements present within the landscape and an evaluation of the subjective and aesthetic qualities. This again represented a break from the methodology contained within the Countryside Commission guidance. In terms of assisting decision making, the implementation of a well-defined scoring system would promote consistency and objectivity, ensuring that each site within the study area was subject to an assessment on an equal basis, and that the reasoning behind the assigned score would be readily understandable if placed under scrutiny.

Identification of landscape types: Integral to the assessment was the identification and classification of all surveyed areas into broadly similar landscape character areas within the Borough. The division of the Borough into these different character areas enabled a more accurate and objective appraisal of relative site values to be made. This is because certain landscape types will tend to score more highly than others, purely because they contain a larger number of scored elements, and therefore their overall score range is higher. This does not mean, however, that one landscape type (as a whole) is more valuable than another.

Photograph no. 4

Visual Quality & Amenity value: The purpose of the assessment was not only to assess the character and quality of the landscape in visual terms, but also to take account of its importance as an amenity resource that should be protected from future development. The incorporation of this factor into the assessment helped to build up a more complete and working picture of the value of the landscape, outside the scope of a purely visual analysis. This is considered to be vital in assisting decision-making on future development sites.

Enhancement potential: A specific requirement of this assessment was the development of a survey and analysis methodology that would identify enhancement potential, in order to highlight those sites that would significantly benefit from improved management and conservation. This effectively represented a further refinement of existing landscape assessment techniques and was designed to assist Hartlepool Borough Council in identifying those areas of low value that would benefit from special attention.

Throughout the assessment process, the validity of the assumptions and methodology used in the landscape assessment were continuously tested, and in some cases this resulted in changes being made, for example to the description and definition of the landscape types. Additionally, the methodology adopted in this assessment makes provision for ongoing monitoring and updating of baseline information.

3.0 STUDY AREA

The Borough of Hartlepool lies to the north of the Tees Estuary, and the main Teesside conurbation occupying approximately 95 km² in area. The Districts of Easington and Sedgefield, both within County Durham, border to the north and west respectively. The River Tees and Stockton-on-Tees form southern boundaries to the Borough, whilst to the east lies the North Sea coastline, which extends along the length of the study area.

3.1 LOCAL CONTEXT

The Hartlepool landscape is influenced by the undulating upland Durham magnesian limestone plateau, to the north and northwest, whilst the broad low-lying plain of the Tees lowlands dominates the southern scenic character.

The landscape in the western half of the Borough is predominantly arable farmland, interspersed with a number of small village settlements and scattered farmsteads. The A19 trunk road corridor cuts through the open countryside as it crosses the study area in a north-south direction. The Wynyard estate, currently the focus for a major development, lies to the west of the A19 and contains the largest tract of woodland within the study area. Generally however, tree cover and woodland is sparse, and mainly concentrated around the narrow dene valleys.

Photograph no. 5

Along the coastal strip and around the mouth of the River Tees there are a number of ecological sites that are recognised as being of national and international importance, and have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These cover extensive areas around Seaton Snook, Greatham Creek and Hart Warren, and encompass sand dunes, coastal mudflats and estuarine land. Seal Sands and I.C.I. No. 6 Brinefield are also designated Ramsar sites.

The main urban and industrial areas centre around Hartlepool dominate the eastern half of the Borough. This accounts for over a third of the total study area.

Originally the town was established around the old harbour and port areas, but rapid expansion over the past 150 years has extended built development along almost the entire coastal fringe and westwards, towards the surrounding farmland. Today, this urban development is the single most influential factor on the coastal landscape, and also dominates views from many inland areas.

3.2 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Archaeological records indicate that the Hartlepool area was settled in pre-historic times. During this period the landscape was heavily forested, and hunting and fishing formed the main activities of the early inhabitants. Over time, as farming and cultivation developed, more permanent settlements began to form, with an accompanying increase in woodland clearances.

Photograph no. 6

By the medieval period, small-dispersed farmsteads, and small administrative centres at Hart, Greatham and on the coastal headland, dominated the local settlement pattern. This settlement pattern survives to the present day, and examples of the medieval planned form comprising two farms either side of a village green can be seen in villages such as Hart, Elwick and Dalton Piercy. Between the 11th and 12th centuries, however, a major re-organisation of the landscape took place, resulting in the creation of nucleated settlements and the establishment of a town around the protected natural harbour of the Headland.

The influence of the medieval landscape can still be seen in the ridge and furrow system of crop farming, examples of which survive around some villages, giving a clue to their early origins. Other aspects of medieval life such as the salt industry can also be seen to influence the landscape in Seaton common and Greatham Creek.

The Hartlepool landscape further evolved towards its present day appearance with the enclosure of agricultural fields in the 16th. Century. Although some of the original hedgerows have been lost, the field pattern created by enclosure is still an important factor today. Similarly the dominance of arable farming in the rural area has continued from earlier centuries. Due to the soil quality and presence of salt water, it was difficult to grow vegetation other than cereal crops. Indeed, local historical records note that the local corn-lands were of national importance, and that the typical landowner was reluctant to grow wood, Hutchison attributing this to the fact that *'he can not cut it without licence, and paying heavy due to the church'* (Hutchinson Vol. III, Page 34, MDCCXCIV 1794).

The most significant event in the development of the local landscape was undoubtedly the coming of the industrial revolution. Whilst this left the rural area in the western half of the district largely unscathed, the fledgling urban area of Hartlepool underwent major changes.

The cutting of embankments in to the Headland precipitated the formation of a dock area. The early docks and accompanying railway line formed the basis of a nationally important industrial centre, and left a deep influence on the Hartlepool landscape. As the population of the town grew, the need for land increased, and so large areas were drained and reclaimed along the coast by extensive filling with ballast (taken from ships coming into the docks) and timber.

Additionally, the by-products of industries such as the steel works were deposited on any available land, increasing the height of the land above sea level by up to 5 metres in some areas near the coast. Many sites that were excavated and filled with ballast, timber or waste, were subsequently built upon. This factor contributes to an extremely high variance in soil pH factor over relatively small areas along the coast.

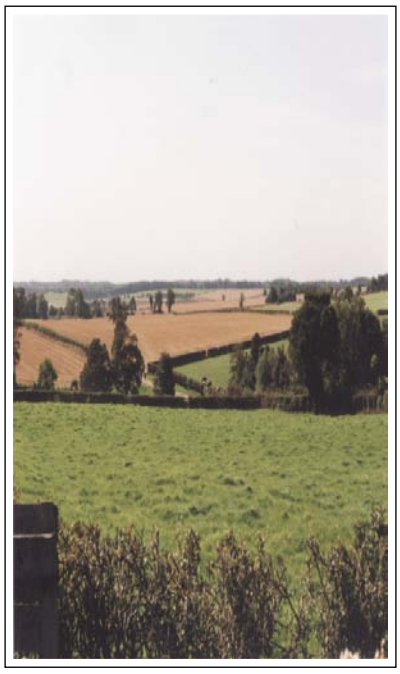
Photograph no. 7

3.3 PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology & Soils: The Borough straddles two distinctive geological zones. The Durham magnesian limestone plateau to the north consists largely of dolomites and limestone, which have historically been exploited for industrial and construction purposes respectively. This plateau overlies the coal reserve underneath, and dips in height towards the east and south east as it merges with the Tees Lowlands.

Red mudstones and sandstone characteristically underlay the lower lying region, which falls within the Tees Lowlands geological area. Much of the localised glacial deposits of clay, sand and gravel are tinged red as a result of this.

A heavily textured glacial drift that has resulted in the formation of poorly drained clay and sandy clay loam soils covers much of the district. However, in certain areas better drainage occurs, especially where sand deposits have formed in the glacial drift, and also where the drift-cover over the underlying magnesian limestone rock is thinner.



Photograph no. 8

Topography: Between the Durham magnesian limestone plateau to the northwest, and the Tees estuary and coast to the south and east, the landscape of the study area decreases gently in height from northwest to south/southeast, descending from a maximum height of around 150 metres above sea level in the northwest to sea level along the eastern coastal and southern estuarine boundary.

The north western part of the Borough lies at the foot of the Durham plateau, and contains the highest land within the Borough, generally between 90-150 metres AOD, permitting excellent views across the surrounding landscape, the coastline and the Tees Estuary.

This upland area forms a contrasting feature to the majority of the study area, as the landscape gently undulates downwards, forming a belt of land of between 20-90 metres AOD which runs from north to south west. To the east and southeast of this area lie the flat coastal and estuarine plains, which occupy a broad, sweeping expanse of land towards the River Tees and the North Sea coastline. Land in this area is typically between 0-20 metres AOD.

Vegetation cover: Hartlepool is dominated in terms of land cover by the agricultural lands that cover the western half of the Borough. The majority of this farmland is given over to arable uses, particularly the historically significant cereal crop. Most of the remainder of the land consists of intermittent areas of natural and semi-natural grassland.

Of the available agricultural land, over 86% is classed as being Grade 3, and is of good to moderate quality. The better draining sand based soils account for the 2% of agricultural land in the Borough rated as Grade 2, or very good quality. Grade 5 land is found around the area of salt marshes to the south and east of Hartlepool.

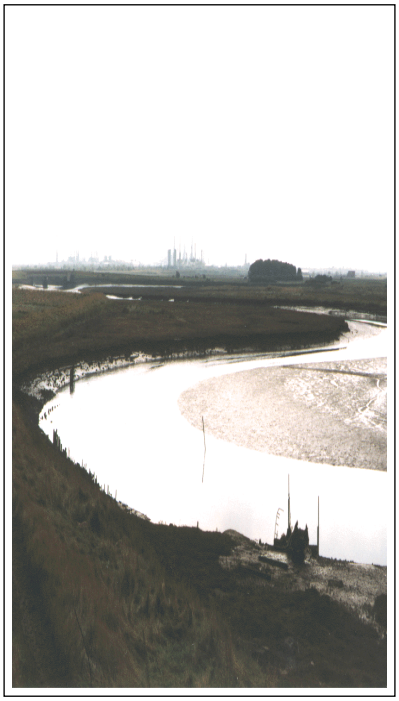
Woodland cover across the Borough is limited, and mainly consists of small, scattered plots of tree growth and tree belts interspersed with the existing arable land. Notable exceptions to this are the wooded areas that run along Thorpe Bulmer Dene, to the north of the Borough, and the forested area at Wynyard in the southwest.

Considerable areas of natural and semi-natural open water; marshland and mudflats exist around the Seaton on Tees channel and Greatham Creek, along the southern district boundary. Additionally, the Hartlepool coastline features considerable areas of sand dunes and maritime grassland. Wide sandy beaches are interrupted with rock outcrops that are exposed at low tide.

Photograph no. 9

Climate: The Hartlepool climate is affected by prevailing westerly and northern winds, and the 'rain shadow' created by the Pennines and Cleveland Hills. These factors contribute towards a low rainfall and generally dry climate. The Coastal influence also moderates winter temperatures but produces the salt-laden winds that blow across from the eastern coastline to exacerbate climatic characteristics, making it difficult for many plant species to establish.

Land use: Land use across the Borough is divided into a small number of distinct areas. The majority of the western half of Hartlepool is working farmland, interspersed with a small number of village settlements and scattered farmsteads.



Photograph no. 10

Towards the southwest of the Borough the landscape becomes more dominated by forest plantations. These are generally commercial plantations and largely inaccessible to the public, however they are a prominent feature, being highly visible along transport routes in and out of the Borough and largely defining the landscape in this area.

To the south, areas of rough pasture lie between the estuarine mudflats and waterways, and the northern fringes of the Teesside industrial complex. The natural landscape in this area contrasts sharply with the surrounding heavy industry, which is dominated by Hartlepool Nuclear Power station and adjacent chemical and oil refineries.

In the east of the Borough lies the main urban area of Hartlepool, which extends in most areas right onto the coastal fringe. Coastal land uses include golf courses in the north and south of the Borough, urban green space and natural coastal landscapes, encompassing dunes, coastal grasslands and beaches. Additionally, the harbour area incorporates a man-made coastline and marina area, with residential, leisure and mixed-use development.

Natural history: There are a considerable variety of designated sites of landscape and ecological importance in Hartlepool, including 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and 25 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI's). Within the rural landscape of the Borough there are two special landscape areas (SLA's), at Thorpe Bulmer Dene to the north, and between Newton Hanzard and Crookfoot Reservoir, along the west/south western edge of the District. Together, these sites encompass the majority of woodland cover in the Borough.

Photograph no. 11

Within the expanse of agricultural land to the west of the Borough are several SNCI's, for example at Dalton Piercy and Elwick villages. A significant proportion of the other SNCI's within the western half of the Borough are concentrated along the western and south western Borough boundary, within the Newton Hanzard/Crookfoot SLA. In addition to these, an SNCI exists within the Thorpe Bulmer Dene SLA, along Hartlepool's northern boundary.

Further SNCI's are found along the western fringe of the urban area of Hartlepool, notably at Hart reservoir and at Naisberry Quarry. Additionally, extending from within the urban area itself are a handful of green wedges and landscaped corridors, which provide green 'breathing spaces' within the built-up area. Strategic and Local Wildlife Corridors have been identified throughout the Borough, although these are afforded a much weaker level of protection in the Local Plan than the designated sites detailed above.

To the south of the Borough lie designated sites of ecological importance, notably Greatham Creek and Seal Sands SSSI's, and the related SNCI's that border these areas. These estuarine landscapes are particularly valuable and are covered by the Tees Estuary Management Plan, one of a number of estuary management projects undertaken as part of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. These areas provide habitats for birds and waterfowl populations of national and international importance and also support a small breading colony of Common Seal, a species also covered by the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Much of the Hartlepool coastline falls under a patchwork of environmental designations, incorporating SSSI's, SNCI's and national and local nature reserves at Seaton dunes and common. This maritime landscape provides an important habitat for a variety of flora and fauna.

Drainage: The natural drainage system within the Borough follows a small number of Beck valleys, running from the north and northwest, towards the eastern coastline and into the tidal creeks that flow into the Tees river basin to the south.

Settlements: Settlements across the Borough consist of one main urban settlement-Hartlepool, and the five satellite village settlements of Hart, Elwick, Dalton Piercy, Newton Bewley and Greatham. Additionally, there are a large number of different sized farmsteads scattered across the western half of the Borough.

Photograph no. 12

3.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

Photograph no. 13

National Planning Guidance: Current Central Government policy on planning matters is expressed through Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPG's). PPG7 refers to the countryside and environmental quality, and sets out the broad approach to be taken in terms of pursuing sustainable development. The guidance places emphasis on the importance of strong development plan policies, with particular emphasis on the need for sound information to inform these policies. In terms of new development, the document states that it should be *sensitively related to existing settlements patterns and to historic, wildlife and landscape resources.*' Specific reference is made to the role of locally based assessments, such as landscape assessments, in the role of guiding change and informing the preparation of development plan strategies to achieve this end, amongst others.

Regional Planning Guidance: Regional Planning Guidance for the North East states that environmental standards must be maintained, and where possible raised. Strong protection should be given to nationally important coastal areas. The natural environment also needs to be protected and improved to maintain bio-diversity and to enhance existing landscape character.

Statutory plans: The statutory plans for the study area are the Cleveland Structure Plan (Alteration No.1), adopted in 1995, and the Hartlepool Local Plan, adopted in 1994. These plans provide coverage to the years 2006 and 2001 respectively. The broad aims of the policies within these plans, which are of relevance to the context of the assessment, are set out below.

Additionally, new draft documents have emerged as part of the development plan review process. These are the Consultation Draft Tees Valley Structure Plan (1999), and the Hartlepool Local Plan Issues Report (1999). Although these documents were only at the Consultation stage at the time of the assessment, they provide a good indication of the likely future direction of planning policy. The documents suggest that stronger weight will be given to the importance of the environment, with an particular emphasis on sustainability.

Cleveland Structure Plan 1995: This document sets out strategic environmental and amenity improvement policies, for example increased tree planting through the Tees Forest scheme. Policies of particular relevance to this study are briefly summarised below:

- (ENV2) Open areas, to be protected from development, linking unused land to parks, green spaces and wedges, together with areas where environmental improvements are required, should be shown in local plans.
- (ENV3) The environment of the countryside adjacent to urban areas will be improved by; (i) allocating land for open space uses between housing development and farmland, where possible, and (iii) giving priority to the conservation and protection of farmland in areas experiencing problems from nearby urban development.
- (ENV6) Woodland and trees will be retained wherever possible. The planting of broad-leaved trees and the use of small woodlands for amenity and wildlife conservation will be encouraged and the scope for planting new commercial mixed woodlands will be evaluated.

Tees Valley Structure Plan (Consultation Draft 1999): The overall aim of this document is to promote sustainable development, described in the plan as being *'to meet the economic and social needs of the present generation, in a quality environment, without denying future generations of at least the same opportunity'*. With specific regard to the natural landscape, the plan states that its broad aims are to *'protect, sustain and enhance the best of the countryside, coastline and urban environment, improve degraded areas and ensure that new development contributes to environmental quality'*. Policies of particular relevance to this study are briefly summarised below:

- (ENV2) The quality of Special Landscape Areas will be protected and enhanced. Any new development should contribute to local character and minimise impact on landscape and amenity.
- (ENV3) The character of the undeveloped coast will be protected and enhanced.
- (ENV5) Development proposals that threaten Sites of Special Scientific Interest will not be permitted unless sufficient material considerations exist to override the nature conservation interest.
- (ENV6) Development proposals that threaten Sites of Nature Conservation Importance will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site.
- (ENV8) The integrity of Strategic Wildlife corridors *(at The Coastline and Greatham Creek to Crookfoot Reservoir)* will be maintained. New development should contribute to the nature conservation interest.
- (ENV10) The archaeological interest of the Tees Valley will be maintained by protecting relevant sites from development.
- (ENV13) Continuous urban development extending into the countryside will be strictly controlled. Limits to development around the main towns and villages will be maintained and reviewed to take account of future development requirements.
- (ENV14) Green Wedges *(at How Beck, Burn Valley and Owton Manor)* will be retained for open land uses.

Photograph no. 14

- (ENV15) Open areas outside the main built up area will be maintained between North Billingham/Newton Bewley, Hartlepool/Billingham, Greatham/Hartlepool, Hartlepool/Hart, Hartlepool/Elwick and Hartlepool/Dalton Piercy, to retain the individual physical identity of these areas.
- (ENV16) Woodlands, trees and hedgerows will be protected wherever possible.
- (ENV18) The environment of urban fringe areas will be improved
- (ENV19) The character, appearance and amenity of the countryside will be improved.
- (ENV20) The best and most versatile agricultural land will be protected from irreversible development wherever possible.

Hartlepool Local Plan 1994: This document states that its overall aim is *'to improve the quality of life in Hartlepool'*. Policies aim to *'secure lasting improvements in the physical environment'* and *'to secure a sustainable, clean, healthy, safe and attractive environment for the people of Hartlepool.* Policies of particular relevance to this study are briefly summarised below:

- (Re6) A network of footpaths lining areas of interest within the urban area of Hartlepool will be developed.
- (En1) New development ...will not normally be permitted in the Green Wedges delineated on the proposals map.
- (En2) The appearance of Green Wedges will be enhanced by landscaping and tree planting.
- (En4) The loss of public open space will normally be resisted.
- (En6) The Borough Council will...pursue the reclamation and re-use of derelict and disused land. Reclamation schemes will include landscaping and tree planting along road and rail corridor frontages.
- (En12) Strategic landscaping schemes will be undertaken along the main approaches to the Town Centre, the Headland
- (Ru1) The spread of the urban area into the surrounding countryside and undeveloped areas of coast beyond the urban fence line...will be strictly controlled. Development other than that related to countryside activities will not normally be permitted
- (Ru2) Expansion beyond the defined village envelopes around Hart, Greatham, Elwick, Dalton Piercy and Newton Bewley will not normally be permitted.
- (Ru5) The highest quality agricultural land will, as far as practicable, be protected.
- (Ru12) Proposals for outdoor recreational developments in rural areas will only be permitted where (i) the development does not detract from the open nature of the countryside.
- (Ru13) Rights of way will be improved to form a network of leisure walkways, linking areas of recreational or natural interest, the villages, the coast and the urban area.
- (Co12) Development proposals which will adversely affect the site and setting of a scheduled monument will not normally be permitted.
- (Co13) The Borough Council may require that archaeological sites affected by development are evaluated and examined and in special circumstances are preserved in-situ.
- (Co14) Development having a significant effect on the natural habitat or wildlife of SSSI's will not normally be permitted.
- (Co15) The Borough Council will, where appropriate enhance the quality of SSSI's.
- (Co16) The Borough Council will seek to establish a Local Nature Reserve at Seaton Dunes and Common and declare other local nature reserves as appropriate.
- (Co17) Proposals for developments likely to have a significant detrimental affect on sites of nature conservation importance, not otherwise allocated for a particular use in the local plan, will not normally be permitted.
- (Co18) Protection of wildlife corridors.
- (Co19) The Borough Council will promote and encourage the creation of new wildlife habitats which may lead to the creation of new wildlife corridors.

Hartlepool Local Plan (Issues Report 1999): The new draft plan states that its objective is *'To continue to regenerate Hartlepool securing a better future for its people by seeking to economic and social needs in a sustainable manner'*. The protection of the natural environment, and where possible, its enhancement form part of the core principles of the plan strategy. This consultation document considers the policies and proposals contained within the current Local Plan together with additional matters that are proposed to be included in the new plan, which will be published in early 2000 for formal objection and representation.

Major development sites: The development plan identifies a number of major development sites within the Borough that are relevant to the context of this landscape assessment; and would

potentially impact upon the natural landscape. These are set out below.

Wynyard Business Park: land to be developed as a business park, within which a golf course is to be accommodated.
Wynyard Hall Estate: 15ha residential development (currently underway).
Warrior Park: 11.8ha residential development (currently underway).
Middle Warren: 78ha residential development.
Clavering West I: 7.1ha residential development.
Clavering West II/High Springwell: 5.1ha residential development } completed
High Springwell: 2.3ha residential development.
Queens Meadow Business Park.

Photograph no. 15

Designated sites: In addition to environmentally designated sites discussed above, the Hartlepool Local Plan identifies a number of additional sites of historical, landscape, archaeological and amenity importance. The location of these sites, and their designations, are set out below.

Conservation areas
Six conservation areas exist across Hartlepool, at Seaton Carew, Church Street, the Headland, the Park area, Elwick and Greatham. Of these, the Church Street conservation area does not impact upon any of the sites surveyed in the study.

Important Archaeological Area
Sites of confirmed or potential archaeological value exist at the Headland, Hart, Elwick, Dalton Piercy, Greatham and Newton Bewley.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments
There are six sites within Hartlepool scheduled as Ancient Monuments and one protected wreck, under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. These are the Claxton medieval moated site, Hartlepool town wall and Sandwell Gate, the site of Manor House at Hart and Low Throston medieval village, High Burntoft medieval farmstead and open field system and Elwick Hall fish pond. The protected wreck is a Colliery Brigg which lies off Seaton Carew.

Recreational Land
A number of sites within the urban area are designated as recreational land, either as neighbourhood parks, outdoor or quiet, informal sites. Sites are identified at Clavering, Middle Warren, Central Park, Catcote Road, Land West of Brenda Rd., How Beck, Seaton Park, Seaton Grange/North Works and Greatham Beck.

Green Wedges and Landscaped Corridors
Green Wedges are designated on three sites, at How Beck, Burn Valley and Owton Manor within the urban area of Hartlepool, to provide green space and improve environmental quality, wildlife potential and recreation opportunities within the Borough.

Photograph no. 16

Walkways
A network of footpaths, linking areas of interest within the Borough, is proposed in the Local Plan. The initial steps towards this aim have been taken by the designation of walkways at Seaton Lane, West Park-Burn Valley, in addition to the coastal walkway and the Hart-Haswell walkway.

Cycle Routes
The Local Plan proposes a comprehensive network of cycle paths across the Borough, these being between the Town Centre/north west Hartlepool, the Town Centre/south east Hartlepool, Hartlepool Marina/Headland, Hartlepool Marina/Seaton Carew, and the Town Centre/Burn Valley/Ward Jackson Park.

SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology devised by the Landmark Partnership for this study was based on an adaptation of the recommendations contained in the Countryside Commission's 1993, 'Landscape Assessment Guidance' and follows the recommended systematic approach to landscape assessment. However, the adopted method represents a somewhat radical departure from the established approach, and from previous known landscape assessments, in that it has been enhanced by the incorporation of a number of new principles, such as an evaluation of amenity value and enhancement potential, as described in the Introduction to this report.

The assessment methodology was undertaken in four Stages:

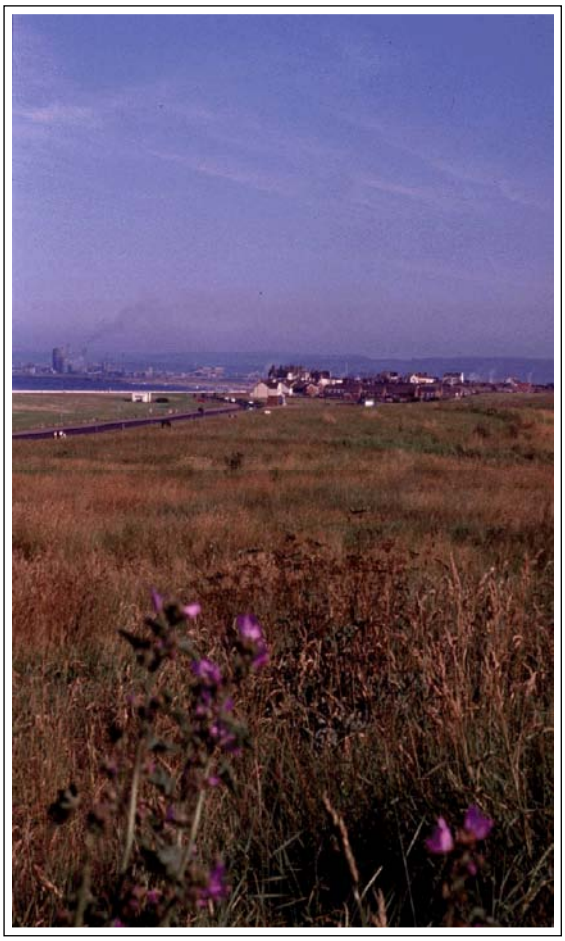
Stage 1: Desk study
Stage 2: Field survey
Stage 3: Landscape analysis
Stage 4: Landscape evaluation

Detailed descriptions of each stage are given below:

4.1 STAGE 1: DESK STUDY

The desk study involved the detailed analysis of the local landscape based on literature, maps and interview data. (Sources used are attached as Appendix 1). This information was used to build up a picture of the landscape, as it exists today, and also an awareness of the physical, historical and cultural factors that have shaped it.

The purpose of the desk study was to identify the broad ***landscape types*** (see Chapter 5) that could be found across the District, and highlight the particular qualities and features that were inherent in or defined these landscapes. Landform (topographical) and land cover analysis maps were produced from published mapped information and supplemented with other data to establish the different landscape types present within the study area.



Photograph no. 17

Additionally, the desk study served to identify any special conditions affecting sites within the Borough, for example those sites which were covered by planning designations, or which were earmarked for development in the near future. Where a site was subject to an outstanding planning permission for major development, it was removed from the consideration of the survey.

Following the desk study stage, information was then translated into a working map of landscape character areas, for use as the basis for Stage 2 of the assessment.

Photograph no.18

It should be noted that the classification of different types of landscape is important in terms of maintaining a clear and objective assessment of *relative* landscape quality during the study. Without such a distinction being made, it would be likely that conflicting or misleading results would be obtained when comparing the value of sites of a different nature. For example, a rural fringe site might tend to score more highly than an estuarine site purely because the rural fringe site contained a larger number of scored elements, and therefore as a whole scored more highly.

Taken at face value, this could give the misleading conclusion that 'rural fringe' sites were generally more valuable than 'estuarine' sites, due to their higher scores, and the assessment would not have highlighted or taken account of the relative importance of the estuarine landscapes.Some assessments have tried to overcome these problems by applying numerical weighting to different landscape types according to their perceived value, however, in practice this is not very satisfactory and leads to highly subjective judgements on the relative value of different landscapes.

Finally, the desk study phase involved the preparation of survey data sheets, designed for use in the field survey stage of the assessment. These pro-forma sheets made provision for assigning scores for landscape quality and amenity value to individual sites, to provide the basis for identifying the relative quality of each site within a particular landscape type (a more detailed discussion of the scoring system used is contained within Chapter 6).

4.2 STAGE 2: FIELD SURVEY

Using the desk study as baseline information, the second stage of the assessment involved a comprehensive survey of the Hartlepool Borough area. As discussed in the Introduction, the survey was conducted at a high level of detail, with the standard landscape assessment unit comprising one field, or parcel of land as defined by existing field boundaries, edges of development, land use, or natural features such as streams and woodland. Over a period of 8 weeks between August and October 1999, close to 1000 sites were surveyed, and assimilated into a survey database. The field survey had four primary aims:

Photograph no. 19

1. Confirmation of desk study analysis: To check and confirm on-site the 'landscape type' classifications made in the desk study phase of the assessment, and where necessary, make refinements to ensure a accurate classification of the landscape.

2. Visual analysis: To undertake a broad visual analysis of the study area, to identify the principal view points and ridgelines which determine the visual influence of each site.

3. Photographic data collection: The survey served to produce a photographic record of important viewpoints, and to illustrate typical examples of the different landscape types. The photographic material also recorded special landscape features and offered visual evidence of factors that contributed to high and low scoring sites.

4. Survey data sheets: To accurately and systematically survey and record all landscape, visual and amenity factors that affect each site, noting special landscape features or sites of particular importance, and recording existing levels of land management as a means of identifying potential for enhancement.

The majority of the sites in the Borough were fully visually accessible, although approximately 200 sites were either totally or partly inaccessible from public land. Where this was the case, aerial photographic data for the Borough was employed as an integral support aid to give the most accurate analysis possible of the site. Where a site was partially visible, but due to undulation or obstruction by other features the site boundaries were not fully visible, the aerial data was used to confirm boundary limits. Where sites were totally inaccessible without trespassing on private land, a full analysis was carried out based on the aerial photograph. Wherever possible, knowledge gained from surveying the surrounding area was used to inform the analysis, as it would give a general 'feel' for the local landscape.

Photograph no. 20

It should be noted that, whilst the use of this photographic data to survey sites represents a limitation of the survey data, it is likely that a highly accurate assessment would be made from the aerial photographs. The aerial data, produced in 1992, is of a high quality. From each photograph it is possible to clearly define land cover and use, hedge and fence boundaries, tree layouts and other features such as earthworks, which may not be easily visible even at ground level. It is therefore considered that this survey tool provides the most accurate information possible, where public access to a site is not available.

4.3 STAGE 3: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The third stage of the assessment involved a review of the data obtained from the field survey. This was carried out in three sections. Initially, the scores assigned to the different survey units within the study area were analysed and compared, using a computer database designed specifically for this study. Scores for landscape quality, amenity value and overall site value were derived for each survey unit from the field survey sheet data, enabling sites of particularly high or low value, or sites incorporating special features to be 'flagged up' for more detailed analysis in the next stage of the assessment. The database system was used extensively during this phase of the study, to enable quick and accurate data analysis, and its potential role as an aid to future use of the survey is discussed further in Section 6.

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
SURVEY SHEET

Map Ref: _____
Brief Description: _____
Site No: _____ **Survey Date:** _____
Weather: _____ **Tide:** _____

Significance (S)		Quality (Q)	
Very significant	3	Excellent	+2
Significant	2	Good	+1
Low significance	1	Acceptable	0
No significance	0	Poor	-1
		Very bad	-2

(T) = (S x Q)

1. LANDSCAPE TYPE

COASTAL FRINGE [A]
- beach
- exposed rock
- sea cliff
- coastal dunes
- salt marsh
- coastal grassland
- man-made/coastal defence/harbour sea wall
- low tree/shrub cover

ESTUARINE [B]
- areas of semi-natural open water (tidal & fresh water)
- associated salt marsh/reed beds
- sand
- mud flats
- low lying agricultural land
- low tree/shrub cover
- coastal grassland
- land not exceeding 10.0 m AOD

UNDULATING FARMLAND [C]
- scattered farmsteads/villages
- small scale rural development
- sparsely wooded
- predominantly arable farmland
- areas of pasture
- minor beck valleys
- rounded hillocks
- land typically between 10.0 – 150 m AOD

WOODLAND [D]
- predominantly woodland/ plantation
- immature/emerging woodland

RURAL FRINGE [E]
- areas subject to litter/vandalism/tipping/ malicious damage
- unmanaged or poorly maintained land
- degraded boundaries
- commonly accessed
- adjacent but not enclosed by built development
- areas significantly affected/influenced by urban/industrial land use

URBAN GREENSPACE [F]
- land substantially enclosed by built development
- recreational, leisure and amenity land (informal and formal use)
- derelict/unused land

TRANSPORT CORRIDOR [G]
- major rail/road transport corridor and associated land
- major transport interchange
- railroad embankment

NOTES

Landscape type is based on an evaluation of the physical and visual characteristics of the survey area, adjoining land and the locality.

Include details of unusual features not listed above.

2. LANDSCAPE + VISUAL QUALITY

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

	S	Q	T
tree groups			
single trees			
woodland			
arable			
grassland/pasture			
marshland			
ornamental planting			
scrub/native shrubs			
hedges			
fences			
walls			
embankment/sea wall			
slope			
valley			
cliff			
rock outcrop			
river/stream/ditch			
pond/lake/reservoir			
mud flats			
dunes			
beach			
buildings			
ruins/derelict building			
industrial/agricultural/ marine artefacts			
roads/railways			
paths/tracks			
promenade/jetty/pier			
bridge			
masts/poles/pylons			
additional/special features			
.....			
views in			
views out			

AESTHETIC ELEMENTS

SCALE — Q
How appropriate is the scale of the landscape assessment unit (LAU) to the overall landscape?

ENCLOSURE
What is the quality of the contribution of the sense of the enclosure or openness to the landscape?

VARIETY/DIVERSITY
What is the quality of the contribution of the LAU to the complexity or simplicity of the landscape?

HARMONY/BALANCE
What is the quality of the harmony/ balance of the LAU?

MOVEMENT
What is the quality of the contribution of the visual sense of movement or stillness to the landscape?

TEXTURE
What is the quality of the contribution of the visual texture of the LAU to the landscape?

COLOUR

What is the quality of the contribution of the colours, individually and in combination, to the landscape?

TOTAL

NOTES

3. AMENITY VALUE

RESOURCES

	S	Q	T
historical site			
natural history			
natural landscape			
designed landscape			
cultural			
organised recreation			
informal recreation			
special landscape feature			

FACILITIES

car parking			
toilets			
refreshments			
educational info			
.....			

ACCESS

walking/cycling/bridleway			
public transport			
car			
disabled access			

VIEWS

views in			
views out			

MANAGEMENT

TOTAL

NOTES: include suggestions for enhancement.

SUMMARY

1. LANDSCAPE TYPE
2. LANDSCAPE + VISUAL QUALITY
3. AMENITY VALUE
4. SPECIAL LANDSCAPE FEATURE .....
5. SPECIAL DESIGNATION .....

Using the scores recorded on the survey sheets, a grading system was then devised and applied to the survey units to give a clear indicator of the relative value of each site within the same landscape type.

Finally this information was translated into a working plan form, to give an accurate visual representation of landscape types and relative quality across the Borough. This information was then used to facilitate Stage 4 of the assessment.

Photograph no. 21

4.4 STAGE 4 : LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

The evaluation stage required the distillation of the statistical data gained in Stages 1-3 into map form, with the following plans being prepared to graphically illustrate the analysis of the field study results.

- *Visual analysis (ridgelines & viewpoints)*
- *Visual quality*
- *Amenity value*
- *Total landscape value (combined visual/amenity)*

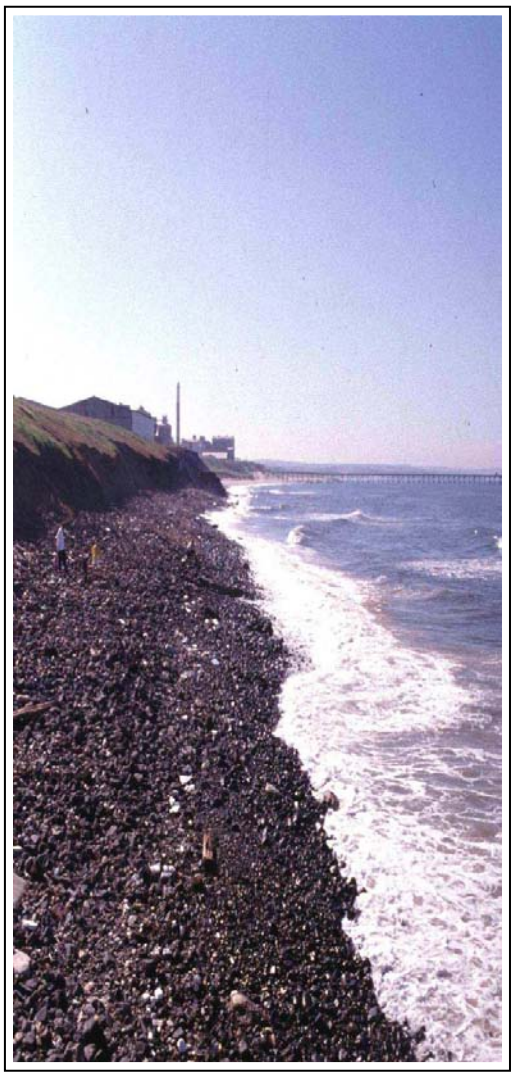
The purpose of these plans was to clearly illustrate the relative values attached to particular areas within the Borough, highlighting differences in landscape and visual quality and amenity value. This could then inform and illustrate the recommendations of the report, and ensure that future land use decisions could be based on a reliable and up to date source of information.

Photograph no. 22

Additionally, a fifth plan was prepared which displayed the enhancement potential of certain sites within the Borough. Following on from the preparation of the value-based plans as set out above, a further analysis was made of sites where improvements in management would be likely to enhance visual quality and amenity value. Using the detailed survey sheet information, collected during the field survey stage of the assessment, and collated in the survey database referred to above, it was possible to identify sites where poor maintenance and associated factors were responsible for the site underscoring from its potential, and by applying a basic method of calculation, predict the likely effect of improvements in management on the relative value of the site amongst similar landscape types.

This aspect of the landscape assessment therefore represented a useful first step in the actual application of the survey data, towards engineering improvements in the Hartlepool landscape. A more detailed explanation and breakdown of the system used is contained within Chapter 6 of this report.

5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



Photograph no. 23

The primary aim of the desk study was to define and identify the specific landscape character areas across the Borough, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this report. This provided essential baseline data for the later stages of the assessment, as it allowed all sites of a similar landscape character to be evaluated and compared. Using information derived from the desk study and from site visits carried out in the early stages of the field survey, seven distinctive landscape types were identified within the Hartlepool area. The exact boundaries of these areas were verified and, where necessary, refined on site during the field survey.

The seven landscape types identified within Hartlepool are set out below.

a) Coastal Fringe

The coastal fringe area to the east of the Borough encompasses not only the beach area itself, but also those adjoining areas of land which can clearly be seen to have been influenced by or be part of the maritime ecosystem.

This character area, for the purposes of the study, extends to the normally exposed tidal beach, exposed rock and sea cliff areas, and also man-made features such as coastal defences, harbour or sea wall installations. In addition to these features are the fringe elements normally found adjoining the coast itself, these being defined as coastal dunes, coastal grassland, salt marshes or areas of low tree and shrub cover.

b) Estuarine

The estuarine area lies in the southeast and eastern fringe of the Borough. Typically it is defined by flat, featureless plains, which are permeated by or in close proximity to estuarine water bodies.

This definition includes areas of semi-natural open water (tidal and fresh), associated salt marsh, reed beds, sand and mud flats. These areas also typically include low lying agricultural land, low tree and shrub cover and some coastal grassland. Estuarine land characteristically does not exceed 10 metres AOD.

Photograph no. 24

c) Undulating Farmland

The bulk of the western half of the district is covered by undulating farmland. This land lies typically between 10 and 150 metres AOD.

The undulating farmland classification encompasses predominately arable farmland, areas of pasture, minor beck valleys, rounded hillocks and sparsely wooded areas. Scattered farmsteads and other small-scale rural developments are also found within this character area.

Photograph no. 25

Photograph no. 26

d) Woodland

The woodland landscape is defined by areas of predominate tree cover.

This landscape type includes mature and semi-natural woodland, woodland plantations, and immature/emerging woodland.

e) Rural Fringe

Of all the landscape character areas in the study area, this is probably the most difficult to define. The rural fringe refers to those areas adjacent or in close proximity to the urban environment, which typically have either lost or had the rural character influenced by adjacent urban development (consequently, the Rural Fringe boundary extends along the edge of the built area of Hartlepool, and surrounds the built edge of the outlying village settlements.)

Such areas are often subject to litter/vandalism/tipping or malicious damage, and include sites that are unmanaged or poorly maintained or enclosed within degraded boundaries.

Photograph no. 27

f) Urban Greenspace

This landscape type refers to open land within the built up area. This definition encompasses open land that is substantially enclosed by built development, for example recreational, leisure and amenity sites (both formal and informal) and derelict or unused land within the built up area.

Photograph no. 28

g) Transport Corridor

The final category incorporates major transport corridors, which owing to their nature and potential to influence the location of new development, are considered as separate landscape entities.

This landscape type includes major rail/road transport corridors and associated land (such as grass verges extending to the corridor boundary), major transport interchanges and railway or road embankments.

Photograph no. 29

6.0 LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the completion of the desk study, and the identification of landscape types, the Landmark Partnership devised a survey data sheet to verify landscape character throughout the study area, and to allow a score to be attached to each site based on an assessment of landscape, visual and amenity quality. The value of a pro-forma record of landscape quality is emphasised in the Countryside Commission guidance, and was considered to be vital in terms of maintaining consistency and accuracy throughout the report.

6.2 FIELD SURVEY

The field survey stage of the assessment was carried out according to the techniques described in Chapter 4 : Methodology, using detailed on-site observation and analysis, and the supplemental use of aerial photography to complete survey data sheets for each site. The assessment team consisted of two surveyors, as recommended by the Countryside Commission guidance document; this allowed for practical navigation and mobility, and also facilitated discussion of potentially contentious assessment issues on site.

Of additional importance to the survey technique was the make-up of the survey team, which comprised of a town planner and a landscape architect. By drawing on a broad and complimentary professional skill base, the team was able to bring a more balanced perspective to the assessment.

During the course of the survey, an important question arose in terms of the likely level of illegal access to urban greenspace sites. School playing fields may often represent a potentially attractive amenity space to local residents, especially if they feature facilities such as goalposts, sports pitch markings etc. Following office discussions, it was resolved that the surveyors should assume that reasonably accessible school playing fields are used for recreational and amenity purposes outside of school hours by local residents. The relevant sites were therefore scored as such, taking into account their potential amenity value.

The survey was conducted during August and September, during generally good weather. On the few days on which the weather was inclement, surveying was restricted to a minimal level. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the possible influence of varying weather conditions upon the outcomes of the survey is unlikely to have had any effect, and would therefore not distort the results.

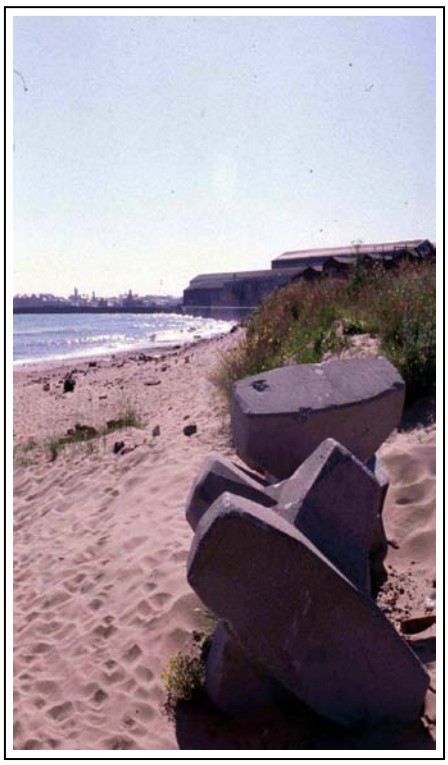
Photograph no. 30

6.3 VISUAL ANALYSIS

An assessment of the visual quality of each site required a judgement to be made on the extent and quality of views, both in and out of each survey area. In order to accomplish this, a visual analysis was undertaken throughout the study area to identify principal viewpoints, visual corridors, ridgelines and edges of development, which would determine the visual influence and envelope around each site.

In this way, it was possible for the surveyors to gain an accurate appreciation of the visual importance of certain sites, both in terms of visual prominence and the contribution of the site, either positively or negatively, within the wider landscape.

This information was presented in the form of a Visual Analysis Plan, which supplemented the field survey assessment and allowed a wider appreciation of the potential value of particular sites.



Photograph no. 31

6.4 SURVEY DATA SHEET

The survey data sheet was initially based on the recommendations given in the Countryside Commission guidance document, but also drew upon the scoring technique employed by Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council in their 1992 landscape assessment. However, none of these methods were able to meet all of the requirements of the Hartlepool assessment, and indeed, most of these assessments, except for the Gateshead Study were fairly limited in their scope, being primarily aimed at landscape classification rather than assessing relative values of different landscape areas. A revised and considerably enhanced scoring sheet was therefore developed specifically for the Hartlepool Landscape Assessment, which tried to address some of the problems and limitations of previous assessment work, and also overcome potential inconsistencies in the survey technique. Of particular importance, in terms of differences between this study and the Gateshead methodology, is the elimination of the assignation of points to those factors that define landscape type, since it was considered that by scoring these features, an unfair weighting would be given to landscape types that characteristically possess more features, such as the Rural Fringe.

The revised survey sheet also identified separately the total scores for landscape / visual quality and amenity value. In this way, the assessment could highlight those sites which have a community value in terms of local amenity, but which were not necessarily valued for their landscape or visual quality. This was considered particularly important in the assessment of urban greenspace and the rural fringe, where poorly maintained or semi-derelict land may well be highly valued by the local community and should be safeguarded from development.

The purpose of the survey data sheet was threefold: firstly, it was used to verify the landscape type that a particular site belonged to; Secondly, it was used to score each landscape assessment unit (LAU) against a number of elements in respect of landscape/visual quality and amenity value, and thirdly, it was used to provide a quick and efficient method of referencing sites in the Borough. This last function was particularly important, as with close to 1000 survey sites, it was important to be able to retrieve information on any one site on demand.

Photograph no. 32

The survey data sheet was applied to each individual site, normally using field patterns to define each LAU, as discussed in Chapter 4. These units were then recorded on a map during the assessment.

Application

The survey data sheet was designed to take account of the individual qualities of each site, whether in terms of physical characteristics, such as tree and hedge cover, or less tangible and subjective elements such as the degree of harmony present within the landscape.

The survey sheet worked on a tick-box and points rating system, and was divided into four sections:

Photograph no. 33

Section 1: Landscape Type: Presents a list of broad landscape character areas derived from the desk study. The surveyor verifies the landscape type on site using the descriptive criteria on the survey sheet, and noting any special or unusual features that may be outside the scope of the checklist data.

Section 2: Landscape and Visual Quality: Presents a number of criteria, to which scores are assigned on site, assessing physical and aesthetic elements within the landscape:

Section 3: Amenity Value: Presents a number of criteria to which scores are assigned, relating to local amenity and landscape management.

Section 4: Summary: Presents the total scores for each of the above sections of the survey sheet, along with a summary of special landscape features and any particular designations which may affect the site in question.

The reference number system used to catalogue each LAU was based on O.S. map grid squares, and consists of a four- digit grid reference followed by an individual site number. The surveyed sites within each grid would always begin with number 1, and progress upwards. The sites were numbered within their individual grid squares as they were surveyed, and referenced on an ordnance survey plan.

A detailed description of each section is given below:-

Section 1: Landscape Type

The seven landscape types established in the desk study, and set out in Chapter 5, formed the basis for comparing the value of the survey sites within broadly similar landscape character areas. Taking account of the surrounding features and character, the survey team was able to classify each individual site into one of the categories.

The purpose of this section of the survey sheet is to verify the boundaries of the various landscape types across the study area, and thereby confirm the desk study assumptions in order to create a detailed map of landscape types across the Borough.

It is important to note that the survey sheet does not assign any scores to the landscape types, as this would, in effect, apply an arbitrary weighting to landscape character, which would influence the total score for each surveyed site.

Section 2 : Landscape and Visual quality

This section of the form is divided into two parts. The first of these assigns scores to ***Landscape Elements*** such as trees, hedges, cliffs and bridges in terms of their significance and quality. A similar assessment is also made of the views, both in and out of each surveyed site. The second part of this section deals with ***Aesthetic Elements***. In all, a total of seven elements are considered including, scale, harmony and enclosure. Detailed descriptions of the criteria used to evaluate each of these factors are given in the report appendices.

Of note here is the scoring of ***views in*** and ***views out*** of each survey unit. Views out of the site are assessed by a 360° analysis of views over the surrounding land from each survey unit. Views into the site, being somewhat more complicated in terms of making an accurate judgement, are assessed by two different methods.

Initially, a judgement is made from within the survey unit itself of likely views into the site, based on an objective analysis of the extent of the view out, taking account of the surrounding topography and obstructing features. Then, after the survey units within the Borough have been assessed individually, and a good working knowledge of the study area has been developed by the survey team, a second assessment is made based on views from surrounding *publicly accessible* vantage points. This involves the preparation of **a Visual Analysis Plan** for the whole study area, highlighting the primary visual corridors from public roads, footpaths etc, which either overlook or allow views across the Borough landscape (drawing information from the topographical analysis carried out during the desk study).

Using the Visual Analysis plan, the survey team can re-visit the relevant vantage points and adjust the 'views in' score for individual sites as necessary.

The second half of this section of the survey sheet deals with ***Aesthetic elements***. This incorporates seven elements, which are given a single score based on the quality of their contribution to the landscape. It should be noted that, whilst the Landscape elements above are scored in terms of their impact on the assessment unit itself, the Aesthetic elements are assessed in terms of their impact on the surrounding landscape in general.

The seven aesthetic elements are set out below. Detailed descriptions of the criteria used to evaluate each of these factors are given in the report appendices.

- ***Scale***
- ***Enclosure***
- ***Variety/Diversity***
- ***Harmony/Balance***
- ***Movement***
- ***Texture***
- ***Colour***

Photograph no. 34

Section 3: Amenity Value

The third section of the checklist is used to evaluate the existing amenity value of the landscape. Again this aspect of the survey method represents an expansion upon that set out by the Countryside Commission guidance and previous known assessments, in that it works towards an indication of possible measures that can be taken to enhance the amenity value of the landscape.

Amenity is assessed in terms of five factors; the natural ***Resources*** present on site, the ***Facilities*** present on site, the ***Access*** means available to the site, ***Views*** of the site and the quality of ***Management*** of the site. A brief description is given below for each of the five categories.

- *Resources*

  Under this category, scores are assigned for what the site can offer in terms of amenity. Provision is also made for the registration of special landscape features, which may be important for amenity as well as visual terms. The category encompasses the following aspects:

- *Historical site*
- *Natural history*
- *Natural Landscape*
- *Designed landscape*
- *Cultural*
- *Organised recreation*
- *Informal recreation*
- *Special landscape feature*

Photograph no. 35

- *Facilities*

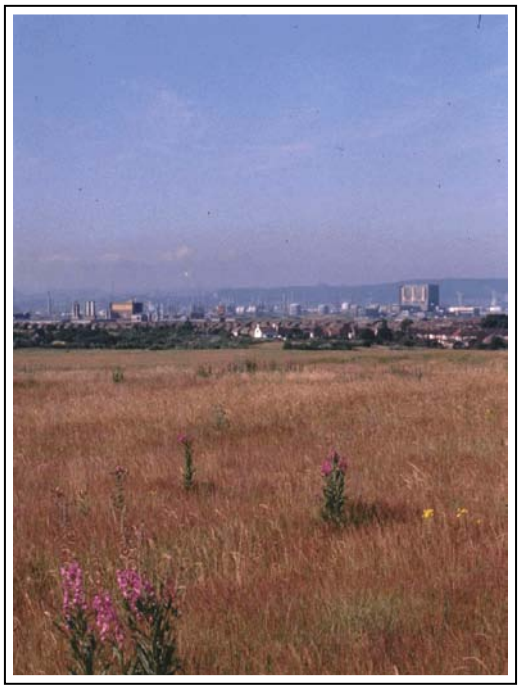
  The facilities provided on a particular site can considerably affect the level of use possible by various groups, for example families with children, and also the value of the site to the local community. Four elements are incorporated into this category, in addition to a blank space to record any unusual or site-specific facilities.

  - *Car parking*
  - *Toilets*
  - *Refreshments*
  - *Educational information*

- *Access*

  Access is regarded as being of particular importance to the amenity value of a site. Logically, it is the ease with which a particular site can be accessed which largely defines amenity potential, as if it is not possible to get onto the site it will not be possible to use the land. In terms of assigning values to these scores, account would be taken of the following:

  - *Walking/Cycling/Bridleway*.
  - *Public Transport*
  - *Car*
  - *Disabled access*



Photograph no. 36

- *Views*

The fourth category is assessed on an identical basis to the views category included in Section 2 of the survey sheet, detailed above. This aspect is scored a second time due to the inherent role that views play in amenity value.

- *Management*

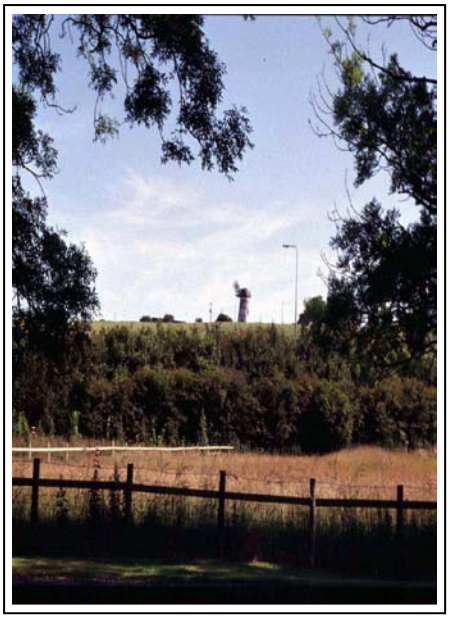
The final category provides an opportunity to assess not only the existing management of the site, but also its potential for improvement which is extremely important in terms of the final amenity values assigned to different parts of the landscape. For example, if an area of scenic, accessible beach was also used for unsightly fly tipping, the management score might rate that the management of the site was very significant, but highly undesirable in its current state. This would flag up an area where amenity could be vastly improved by enhanced management or maintenance regimes and the checklist therefore incorporates a ***notes*** section whereby specific factors relevant to site management can be listed.

Section 4: Summary

The end product of the checklist is the Summary section in the lower right hand corner. This lists landscape type, and the total scores for each site, one for landscape/visual quality, and the other for amenity value. Additionally, there is a space where the presence of any special landscape features can be noted, and also provision for noting any particular designation the site may have, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Special landscape features

In addition to scoring common elements within the landscape, the survey sheet includes a blank line for recording additional or special features. These are noted in the Summary and also scored separately in Sections 2 and 3 of the checklist. The purpose of this is twofold. Firstly, it allows the surveyors to describe and score any special features outside the normal checklist. Secondly, and most importantly, it ensures that, regardless of total score, the presence and special value of such a feature is always brought to the attention of the surveyor during the data analysis process. The site is then dealt with on a flexible and adaptable basis, outside the standard scope of the assessment technique. A prime example of a special landscape feature would be Hart windmill. Such a feature, even if given the highest score possible (Significance 3 x Quality 2) would still only register 6 points. It is unlikely that the difference that this would make to the overall score for that site would be proportionate to or reflect the importance of such a feature. In such cases and where necessary the final ranking of the survey site may be adjusted to accurately reflect its special status.



Photograph no. 37

6.5 SCORING SYSTEM

The scoring system essentially follows a refined format of the methodology applied by Gateshead Borough Council. This technique involves scoring various landscape, visual and amenity factors present in each surveyed site in accordance with their significance and quality. A detailed description is given below: -

Significance is registered in the first column, and is scored as follows: -

Very significant	**3**
Significant	**2**
Low significance	**1**
No significance	**0**

According to this method, the importance of a landscape feature to the view is taken into account. For example, a single tree might be extremely significant (scoring 3) on an otherwise featureless landscape, whereas in a dense forest it might lose its individual significance (perhaps scoring 1).

Alternatively, a cornfield that forms part of a sprawling landscape of similar cornfields would score highly in terms of Significance; since land-use and vegetation cover in this instance are the defining factors in the classification and character of this agricultural landscape.

Quality is scored in the second column, as follows: -

Excellent	**2**
Good	**1**
Acceptable	**0**
Poor	**-1**
Very Bad	**-2**

This enables a landscape element to be rated in terms of its quality contribution to the landscape. For example, an attractive area of parkland may be significant (scoring 2) and of excellent quality (scoring 2), whereas an industrial installation in a field may be significant (2) and of very bad quality in terms of its contribution to the landscape (-2).

The significance and quality ratings are multiplied together to give a total value for each landscape element (third column), which is then tallied with any other scores to give a ***Total*** for that section. In the example given above therefore, the area of parkland would score 4 points, whilst the industrial installation would score –4 points. Correspondingly, the total value of those particular landscapes would be increased or diminished to reflect the presence of these features.

A basic principle, established early on in the survey, was that the land cover on a site (i.e. arable, pasture, grassland etc.) would normally be given a maximum rating of 3 for 'Significance' on the checklist. Additionally, land cover would also normally receive a score of 1 (Good) for 'Quality', if it were of a normal and reasonable quality within the landscape. Therefore, a standard arable field would receive 3 points in the arable section of the Landscape elements checklist.

	S	Q	T
arable	3	1	3
grassland/pasture	-	-	-
marshland	-	-	-

Figure 2: Standard arable field rating

Photograph no. 38

By using a standardised scoring system for land cover (the most basic of landscape elements), a greater degree of accuracy was ensured between individual site assessments. The standard scoring unit also acted as a benchmark against which to assess other sites, which perhaps merited higher or lower marks dependant on quality.

A standardized form of scoring was also created in terms of views in and out of a site. Views in to sites would normally score a 2 in terms of Significance if adjacent to (and/or easily visible from) a transport corridor or footpath. This could then be adjusted as necessary to take into account importance of the view to the context of the visible landscape. A quality score of 1 was assigned to the average field, in that it was assumed to form a pleasant and important part of the wider landscape. This number was then used as a benchmark against which to assess the importance of more contentious sites.

Views out of a site could only be assessed where the site was publicly accessible. Where this was not the case, Significance was rated as 0, with a subjective estimate being made as to the likely Quality of the view based on the surveyor's appreciation of the surrounding area.

In terms of the amenity resources of a site, a standard score of 'Significance 1/Amenity 1' for 'natural landscape' was normally applied to rural fields and other natural sites such as undeveloped coastal land. This took account of their value to the wider landscape context. Higher values for this, and also the natural history category tended only to be applied in exceptionally attractive natural areas, and in specially designated areas such as SSSI's.

In terms of recreational amenity land, a standardised value of 'Significance 3/Amenity 2' was applied to most areas of primarily recreational land, under the relevant formal or informal recreation category.

With regard to access, sites adjacent to transport corridors were normally assigned a standard score of 'Significance 1/Amenity 1' for access by car, to take account of visual access by drivers and passengers from adjacent public roads. Where access by vehicle was possible onto the site, or was proportionately more relevant or important to the nature of that site, the score would be altered, again using the standard score as a benchmark.

6.6 SURVEY DATABASE

The creation of a computer database, as discussed in Chapter 4, was essential to the manipulation of the survey data. The database enabled accurate comparison and analysis of individual sites, and also facilitated informed assumptions on the potential for improving the value of sites, discussed in paragraph 6.7 below. The advantage of this system of data recording is that, in addition to analysis of existing site values, it allows for easy updating of records as time progresses, and ensures that the working life of the landscape assessment can be considerably enhanced. The database, constructed in Microsoft Works[1], accompanies this report, and is intended to assist and enhance the use of the study as a planning tool. Full instructions for the use of the database are included on the CD Rom that accompanies the assessment package.

6.7 ENHANCEMENT POTENTIAL

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this report, a specific requirement of this assessment was the development of a survey and analysis methodology that would identify enhancement potential, in order to highlight those sites that would significantly benefit from improved management and conservation.

Photograph no. 39

This analysis of site potential was derived from an assessment of the current number of points scored for a particular site on the survey data sheet, and a subsequent judgement of the potential score that could result from improvements in site management. By assessing the potential points increase in the numerical score for individual sites, it would then be possible to assess whether the site would increase in terms of its overall value in comparison to other sites within the same landscape category.

In applying such a system, measures had to be taken to ensure that a strict degree of uniformity existed across the predicted improvements, and that individual sites were not subject to inaccurate or subjective judgements on the likely level of improvement that could be gained. Therefore, the assessment of enhancement potential operated on three core principles.

[1] Database constructed using Microsoft® Works version 4.5a for Windows '95

a) ***Landscape types:*** Of the seven landscape types identified within the study area, only five were assessed for enhancement potential. These were the Transport Corridor, Urban Greenspace, Rural Fringe, Coastal Fringe and Estuarine areas. Site within the Undulating Farmland landscape type were not assessed, due to the fact that improvements to land management were unlikely to have a significant effect on the overall landscape and amenity value of these sites using the employed scoring system as the methodology was specifically developed to assess the impact of changes in the quality of management on existing landscape features and does not consider any enhancement potential brought about by the introduction of new landscape elements such as tree planting and hedgerows.

b) ***Scored features*****:** Where a landscape feature received a negative score, in either the visual quality or amenity value categories, the score would be increased to the level whereby a score of 0 points (acceptable) would result. For example, if a fence scored 'Significance 1/Quality –2' (thereby receiving a total of '-2' points for that feature, the negative portion of the score would be increased to '0'. This would result in a total score of 0 points for the fence (an improvement). This principle is based on the assumption that the enhancement of landscape or amenity features to an 'acceptable' level (in terms of points scoring) is not unreasonable. (In the example above, the repair of a dilapidated fence might be required, or a simple but reasonable quality new fence installed.)

c) ***Management:*** In all cases, the management ratings of each site were increased to gain the maximum possible score of 'Significance 3/Quality 2', giving a total score of 6 points.

By applying these principles to all sites within the aforementioned categories, it was possible to flag up sites where scope for major improvements existed, and also to highlight general issues relating to site management that could be applied to broad areas or landscape types as a whole. (The detailed breakdown of projected scores resulting from site improvements is contained within the survey database that accompanies this report.) This information was then illustrated in map form on the Enhancement Potential Plan.

SECTION 3: LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

7.0 LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

Following the completion of the field survey stage, the survey data was assimilated into a database format to provide a quick and efficient means of reference. Using the database, it was possible to identify the range of scores present within each band, for visual quality, amenity value and total value. Using this information, a grading system was devised to enable each site to be ranked in respect of these three values.

7.1 SITE SCORING RANGE

The chart below sets out the range of scores found within each landscape type.

Landscape Type	Landscape/Visual Quality	Amenity Value	Total Value
Coastal Fringe	-11 to 28	-1 to 39	-12 to 53
Estuarine	3 to 19	-2 to 18	3 to 37
Rural Fringe	-3 to 29	-13 to 53	-16 to 76
Transport Corridor	-2 to 19	-1 to 18	-2 to 37
Undulating Farmland	-9 to 27	-2 to 19	-11 to 45
Urban Greenspace	-19 to 57	-5 to 56	-23 to 113
Woodland	7 to 33	2 to 32	9 to 65

Figure 3: Range of scores in landscape types

To enable a comparison to be made between sites within each landscape type, the range of scores within each of the above categories was divided into 4 bands, each band representing 25% of the total sites within that landscape type.[2] A four-way division was used because it facilitated an easy applicable and user-friendly, recognisable division of scores.

Unsurprisingly, the table indicates that the range of scores for each landscape type varies a great deal. The highest scoring sites are found within the Urban Greenspace and Rural Fringe categories, as these sites tend to contain the most scored elements, whether these are visual or amenity factors. This reinforces the point, discussed in the report methodology, that it is impossible to compare sites of a different landscape type on the basis of total points scored on the survey sheet. Land in the uppermost 25% of 'Urban Greenspace' sites will always score more highly than the equivalent sites in the 'Estuarine' landscape type, although this does not indicate that the urban sites are more valuable *per se.*

Photograph no. 40

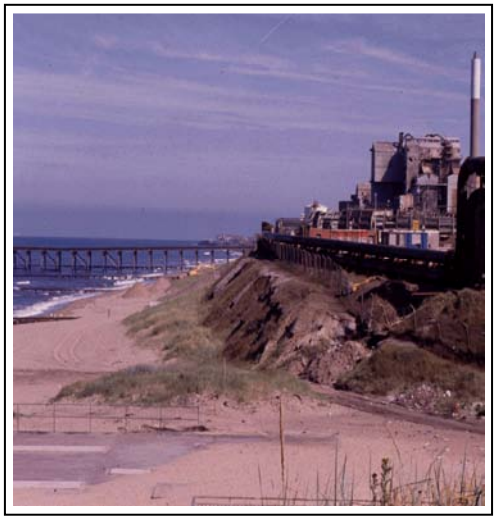
The 25% ranking system presents a useful and tangible method of classifying each individual site according to its relative value within its landscape type. Site value can be measured in terms of total value, or to enable more specific comparisons to be made between sites, the total value can be split into its component parts: visual quality and amenity value. In this way, the assessment can be used to highlight those sites that may have a relatively low landscape and visual value but otherwise are important in terms of local amenity, and should be safeguarded from development.

[2] Where applied at strict 25% intervals, this system would invariably result in sites with identical scores being assigned to different categories, thereby giving inaccurate results. Where the 25% band would have split sites of the same value in this fashion, the category was extended down the list to the nearest site featuring a different score. Therefore, in some cases some bands contain a slightly greater or slightly fewer than 25% of sites within the relevant category.

7.2 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Following the assessment of the survey data, it was possible to make broad analyses of the landscape types, highlighting the main issues relating to landscape, visual and amenity value within each. Using the system of site ranking described above, it was additionally possible to assess the issues that were specific to the higher and lower scoring sites within the landscape types.

7.3 COASTAL FRINGE



Photograph no. 41

The Coastal fringe area is of a generally high quality toward the northern and southern ends of the study area, with a marked decline in quality along the coastline adjoining parts of the main urban area.

The defining features of the coastal landscape are the dunes and coastal grassland to the North and South of the Borough, and the maintenance of these areas should be of paramount importance. Furthermore, the presence of the coastal fringe presents an important and valuable natural and visual resource, and its potential in softening the impact of the built up area of Hartlepool upon the coastline should be maximised. In a number of cases, simply clearing the excesses of litter and fly-tipping could make a marked difference to the visual quality and potential of this landscape area.

Positive factors:

- High visual quality of beach and sand dunes to north; largely unspoilt landscape (SSSI/SNCI designated) is vital to creating a sense of 'wilderness', in conjunction with open views out to sea.
- High visual quality of North Gare/Seaton Sands to south; attractive dune landscape coupled with panoramic views out to sea.
- Natural barrier formed by beach area adjoining Seaton Carew town centre; important in softening impact of development along coastline, in addition to defining character of Seaton Carew.

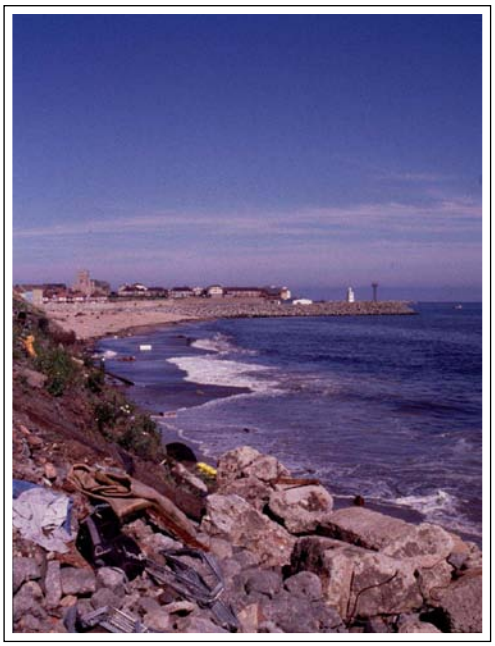
Negative factors:

- Highly intrusive industrial development along North Sands beach area; overwhelming visual damage caused by abandoned plant area and associated local decline, fly tipping, vandalism etc.
- Poor maintenance of coastal strip around West Harbour area; visually bland and becoming degraded.
- Visually intrusive effect of coal deposits along Carr House sands.
- Intrusive impact of Teesside industrial conurbation on southern coastal fringe area.

Survey analysis:

Sites within the upper 25% of the Coastal Fringe landscape type are evenly distributed along the coastline, to the north of Hartlepool (SSSI), the rocks at Hartlepool Headland, and at Seaton Sands. These sites score reasonable highly in both visual and amenity categories, although the latter two sites owe their total score more to their high amenity value, in contrast to the very high visual quality of the beach and sand dunes along the northern Borough coastline.

The lower scoring sites are again dispersed along the coastline, with no notable concentrations. Predictably, the sites adjacent to industrial installations (at North Sands and Hartlepool Nuclear Power Station) received low scores, whilst the Harbour area and Headland breakwater also scored badly due to the overwhelming negative influence of the surrounding man-made development on the coastal fringe in these locations.

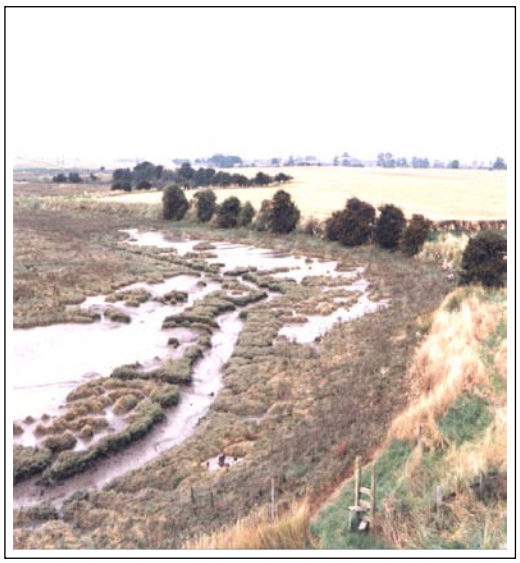


Photograph no. 42

Enhancement potential:

- Preserve and maintain quality of beaches and sand dune/coastal grassland at northern/southern ends of coastal fringe; Litter problems should be fully addressed and monitored.
- Promote clean-up operations around Steetley Magna works site at North Sands; overwhelming negative impact of privately owned derelict site onto public beach area significantly degrades landscape value.
- Address maintenance issue around West Harbour/North Hartlepool Bay area; clean up beach areas, improve maintenance of promenade and associated features.
- Consider possibility of improving visual impact of sea wall/embankment around West Harbour. The existing view introduces an industrial looking feature into what would otherwise be an interesting and aesthetically pleasing view, in close proximity to a residential development and amenity area.
- Address litter and related public hygiene issue on Seaton Sands

7.3 ESTUARINE



Photograph no. 43

The Estuarine landscape occupies a small but visually unique area of the study area, which suffers due to its proximity to the adjacent oil storage depot, BNFL power plant and Tioxide works. On a broader scale, the visual backdrop created by the Teesside industrial complex has a strong visual influence on the general landscape, an influence that is unfortunately exacerbated by the flat, low-lying nature of the surrounding landscape.

Hartlepool's estuarine sites represent just a small part of the 500ha of inter-tidal land that comprises the Tees Estuary. However, whilst the visual quality of the landscape is immediately compromised by the presence of heavy industry, this landscape type has considerable natural and ecological value. This is reflected in the SSSI and SNCI designations that classify 4 of the 9 estuarine sites, and the internationally important species of wetland wildfowl and seal that inhabit the area.

In spite of this, there are few facilities or amenities to encourage public enjoyment of these resources, with no educational or designated car parking for example.

Whilst it is acknowledged that little can be done to ameliorate the impact of industrial development on this area of Hartlepool, it is considered important to capitalise on the inherent natural value of the landscape by ensuring its continued protection and conservation for future generations.

Positive factors:

- Unique aesthetic value of natural marsh landscapes to Hartlepool; extremely important in terms of nature conservation against highly developed backdrop of Teesside.

Negative factors:

- Generally flat, featureless appearance of landscape set against heavy industrial backdrop creates a visually barren impression, especially in terms of views across the estuary from surrounding areas and transport corridors.
- Overwhelming concentration of electricity pylons in some areas; Visual impact on views out of the estuary towards Hartlepool created by corridors of pylons.

Survey analysis:

The Estuarine landscape type encompasses only a few sites, and so there are correspondingly few in each scoring band. The highest scoring sites were the Estuarine Marshes and inland waterway, which are both designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The lowest scoring sites within the Estuarine landscape were estuarine farmland, which scored poorly due to their close proximity to industrial development.

Enhancement potential:

- Ensure continued special protection, and conservation, of valuable estuarine marshes
- Supplement the protection of the landscape through the promotion of the estuarine marshes as a visual, ecological, historic and educational resource: improve access and information facilities and car parking.
- Promote general clean-up operation of accumulated debris on sites surrounding marshland.

7.4 UNDULATING FARMLAND

The farmland landscape covers the majority of the western Borough area, and largely defines the rural area of Hartlepool. Undulating farmland sites are by far the most numerous in the Borough. Within this landscape type it is possible to identify some distinctive areas, where sites of higher or lower value are clustered together.

Most notably, sites of lower value exist around the High Volts Farm area, where field boundaries have been removed on a considerable scale. In some cases up to six fields have been amalgamated into one unit, which presents a sprawling and disproportionate field unit in the wider rural landscape. This phenomenon also occurs in isolated areas around the Borough.

The higher value farmland is found in a small number of clusters, for example around the Coal Lane area to the North of Crookfoot reservoir. The field units here have generally retained their original form and layout, and are extremely visually attractive, with surviving examples of ridge and furrow evident in some locations.

Positive factors:

- Appropriate and aesthetically pleasing sense of scale and enclosure created by hedgerow boundaries and field patterns.
- Boundary hedgerows and tree belts create visual interest and provide a rich tapestry of varied field patterns that contribute positively to the overall character and value of the landscape.
- Generally pleasant view across sprawling, largely unspoilt rural landscape; natural landscape division between urban area and outlying settlements.

Negative factors:

- Removal of hedgerows, and subsequent field enlargement, in some locations disrupts aesthetic sense of scale and enclosure, and introduces barren, industrial element into the rural landscape.
- Industrial farm buildings extremely prominent in many areas, with little or no attempt to ameliorate visual impact.

Photograph no. 44

Survey analysis

Owing to the vast number of sites within this landscape type, it was possible to identify various clusters of sites scoring similarly across the Borough. These are set out below.

- Amerston Beck/Pudding Poke Farm
- Land between Naisberry/Mayfield
- Wynyard (extreme west of Borough area)
- Red Lion farm/High Stotfold
- West of Greatham
- Amerston Hill

Photograph no. 45

These sites score highly due to a number of factors. In some cases, for example at Amerston Beck/Pudding Poke Farm, the landscape is of a very high quality in visual terms, with good footpath access across some fields. Other areas tend to benefit more from their visual score, for example sites between Naisberry Farm and Mayfield, which undulate and permit an aesthetically pleasing view over the surrounding countryside, town and coastline. Within the Undulating Farmland landscape type it is also possible to identify areas where footpath access is of a good standard, as this tends to create linear bands of higher scoring sites, such as exists between High Stotfold and Amerston Hill.

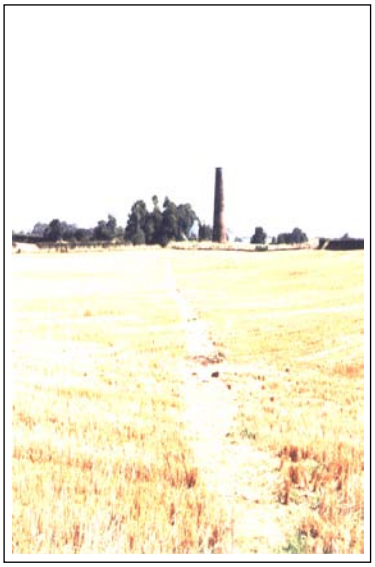
The following clusters can be identified among the lower scoring undulating farmland.

- Southern (central and eastern) Borough boundary (adjacent industrial land)
- North of Elwick
- Northern Borough (amalgamated field boundaries)
- Land between Brierton and Middle Stotfold
- Low Burntoft/Middle Burntoft

These groupings tend to reflect areas where the visual quality of the landscape is impaired by intrusive factors such as the view out to surrounding industrial land, the view of, or direct effect on-site of electricity pylons. Additional factors that push sites into the lower scoring bands are the removal of hedgerows, as this has a damaging effect on the proportion and scale of farmland sites within the wider rural context. Visual inaccessibility may also reduce the value of sites, as will the incidence of blocked or un-maintained footpaths.

Enhancement potential:

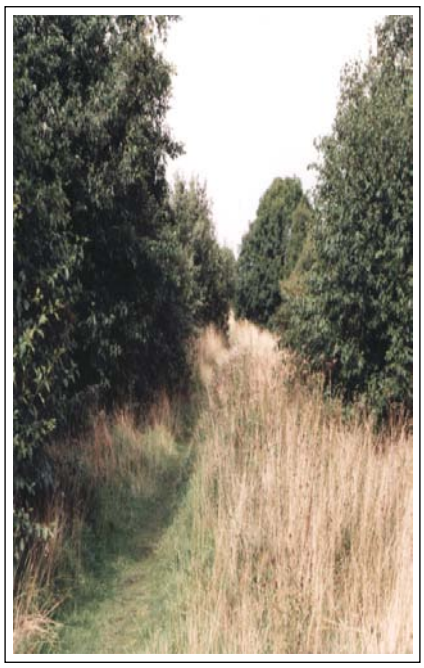
- Encourage retention of hedgerow boundaries, and consider strategies to encourage their reinstatement where large-scale removal has occurred.
- Consider appropriate measures to minimise further negative impact of farm buildings, through stronger plan policies and landscaping strategies.



Photograph no. 46

7.5 WOODLAND

Woodland occupies a fairly small percentage of the Borough, and is mainly concentrated in the Special Landscape Areas at Wynyard, to the southwest, and Thorpe Bulmer Dene, to the north. It should be noted that wooded areas outside of the SLA's tend to be fairly isolated, and therefore are extremely valuable scenic elements, in terms of the variety and visual interest that they introduce into the surrounding landscape.



Photograph no. 47

A number of areas have been subject to tree planting schemes under the Tees Forest programme notably the Summerhill Woodland Adventure Park. However, these projects are in their infancy, and at present there is often little to visually distinguish the emerging woodland sites from rough pasture or scrubland.

The mature woodland landscape within Hartlepool is of a generally high quality. However, its value is somewhat compromised by a lack of public accessibility to the majority of forested sites. The aforementioned immaturity of community-oriented forest schemes means that there is limited opportunity within the Borough at present for public enjoyment of this landscape type, although this will obviously improve with time.

Positive factors:

- High visual quality, diversity and accessibility of Thorpe Bulmer Dene woodland.
- Visual contribution and variety introduced by presence of tree belts along beck valleys.
- Visual contribution of forest belts along Wynyard transport corridor.
- New tree planting schemes (Summerhill/Tees Forest).

Negative Factors:

- Inaccessibility of majority of woodland landscape.

Survey analysis

The highest scoring Woodland sites are unsurprisingly located within Hartlepool's two Special Landscape Areas, at Thorpe Bulmer Dene and the Newton Hanzard/Wynyard area. These sites score highly due to their visual importance in the landscape, and also due to their accessibility, which is somewhat unique amongst the largely inaccessible mature woodland landscape of the Borough.

Lower scoring sites in the Woodland landscape are spread around the Borough, and owing to their small number do not form any notable concentrations. A significant proportion of the lowest scoring woodland areas tend to be recently planted, as in the early years of growth there is little to distinguish these sites visually from scrubland. In comparison to mature woodland therefore, these sites receive low scores, although this would be likely to change with the forthcoming maturity of the wooded landscape.

Enhancement potential:

- Ensure protection of emergent woodland landscapes, particularly at Summerhill site; clearly define boundaries on all sites and ensure adequate fencing protection is afforded and maintained to saplings.

7.6 RURAL FRINGE

The Rural Fringe encompasses a wide variety of sites, in terms of visual and amenity value, and it is perhaps somewhat impractical to make general comments about this landscape type. However, the majority of Rural Fringe sites are in a generally good or acceptable condition, with only one very low scoring, anomalous site.

The majority of sites within this landscape type are of a rural nature, with a scattering of amenity land uses incorporated amongst these. It is considered likely that amongst the areas identified as Rural Fringe are those that, by the nature of their location, would fall under the most pressure for development.

Photograph no. 48

Positive factors:

- Generally rural fringe sites are of a high visual quality; adverse impact of urban area limited to a small number of sites
- Visual quality of view across rural fringe from built up area of Hartlepool and surrounding villages.

Negative Factors:

- General neglect and littering in some areas

Survey analysis:

The Rural Fringe landscape contains a few notable clusters of high scoring sites, which are set out below.

- Throston Grange
- Summerhill Country Park
- North Hart village
- South & South west Elwick

These sites tend to derive their high scores due to a combination of good visual and amenity ratings. Summerhill, being a country park, has exceptionally high amenity scores due to good accessibility throughout the site. The remaining areas have good footpath access, which permits physical and visual access to the aesthetically pleasing rural landscape.

The lower scoring sites within the rural Fringe can again be seen to form a small number of clusters, which are set out below.

- North west fringe of Hartlepool (caravan park surrounds)
- East of Greatham
- South of Dalton Piercy
- North east Elwick
- Newton Bewley

Owing to the fact that many of these sites are in use as farmland, the factors that push them into lower scoring bands tend to be similar to those responsible for low scores in the undulating farmland landscape type. Views of industry or associated development such as cable and pylon networks, the removal of hedgerows and poor maintenance of footpaths all contribute to low scores in the Rural Fringe. A factor of particular note is the level of abuse of rural fringe sites deriving from their proximity to the urban area. Extremes of tipping and other anti-social factors was limited to a handful of sites, and was not a characteristic feature in the Hartlepool Rural Fringe as defined in this assessment.

7.7 URBAN GREENSPACE

The Urban Greenspace category encompasses the highest and lowest scoring sites within the Borough landscape. A wide variety of sites, totalling 100 in number, were assessed within this category. These included urban parks, playing fields, derelict sites, play areas and general open spaces.

Whilst it is difficult to make generalised comments about the Urban Greenspace sites due to their varied nature, there are a number of points that can be made about sites found within the category.

Photograph no. 49

Positive factors:

- High quality of Ward Jackson park
- High aesthetic value of village green sites
- Generally good maintenance of school playing fields

Negative factors:

- Dilapidated and poor quality buildings, sheds and boundary fences within majority of allotment sites: these can impose upon and detract significantly from the surrounding view.
- Inadequate attention to planting beds and general maintenance in several urban parks: anti-social factors, especially a lack of litter bins, and the resulting high level of littering, are a particular problem.
- Limited provision and maintenance of children's play equipment in many residentially based amenity areas.

Survey analysis

The individual nature of Urban Greenspace areas meant that there is no clear relationship between the locations of similarly scored sites. Predictably, the highest scoring sites tend to be those that display a combination of high visual and amenity scores, such as Ward Jackson Park, however there are a number of sites towards the lower end of the top 25% that compensate for low visual quality scores with very high amenity value. This is unsurprising, considering the potential value of a piece of un-landscaped, rough grassland within the heart of a residential area, which may not be particularly visually impressive but which may be of enormous importance to local residents, especially families with children.

The lower scoring Urban Greenspace sites encompass the minority of sites where litter, tipping and vandalism are either becoming or have become serious problems. Additionally, the effect of unsightly allotment buildings is highlighted by a high proportion of these types of sites in the lower end of the scoring band. School fields also figure prominently in the lower scoring sites. This is not on the whole due to any mismanagement, rather it is simply because these sites are not designed for public recreation and therefore tend to lack any special features, being included in the survey due to their potential for illegal access for recreation.

Enhancement potential:

- Devote greater attention to urban park maintenance: several sites are in decline due to neglect.
- Provide litter bins on urban amenity sites: there is a noticeable correlation between excessive litter and lack of bin facilities on a number of sites
- Address allotment buildings issue: many of these feature prominently as undesirable visual landscape elements.

7.8 TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

The Transport Corridor landscape type covers a small number of sites, 19 in total, dispersed across the Borough, but surprisingly contains a wide range of scores. Scores for these sites tend to be strongly influenced by encroaching views of the surrounding landscape, and in many cases this may restrict the potential for improvement, except perhaps where rail or roadside planting schemes or other environmental improvements can be effected along the transport corridor.

Photograph no. 50

Positive factors:

- Tree belts, grass verges and ornamental planting along parts of A689 through Hartlepool town.
- High quality of rural panorama along A689 through Wynyard.
- Visual contribution of trees along A1086 to North of Hartlepool
- High quality panoramic view approaching Hartlepool along A179

Negative factors:

- Excessive litter and fly-tipping along A689 lay-by approaching Hartlepool

Survey analysis

The highest scoring Transport Corridor sites are those which permit aesthetically pleasing views out, such as the A1086 approach road to Hartlepool passing through Thorpe Bulmer Dene SLA, or which within urban areas feature good quality landscaping, tree and ornamental planting, such as the A689 in South Hartlepool.

The lower scoring Transport Corridors are typically found where there is a strong visual dominance of industry within the landscape. Notably, these encompass the railway and Stockton Road, which lead south from Hartlepool towards the direction of Teesside.

Enhancement potential:

- Instigate clean-up operation at A689 lay-by
- Maintain existing planting and increase/expand where possible, in particular through built up areas.

7.9 SUMMARY

The study carried out by The Landmark Partnership was based on a methodology developed specifically to evaluate the relative landscape value of undeveloped land within the Hartlepool Local Plan area. The methodology concentrates exclusively on the value of the landscape in terms of its visual and amenity-based characteristics, and this should be borne in mind when using the study data. Other factors, such as strategic planning objectives, the potential visual impact of development on sites, and ecological importance are not taken into account by the survey technique, and this may in some instances lead to contradictory guidance between this and other documents, or land-use designations. For example, undeveloped sites located close to the main urban area of Hartlepool may in some cases be rated highly in visual and amenity terms. These factors may have to be reconciled with the fact that some of these sites may be eminently suitable for housing development, especially in terms of promoting more sustainable housing locations, which capitalise on existing development infrastructure. In other instances, low-rated sites may have special ecological importance that has not been taken into account by the study. Indeed, certain brownfield or developed sites may have been excluded from this study, due to the physical and visual characteristic of the land i.e. large scale industrial complex's, but which may otherwise contain areas of high ecological value. This study, therefore, should be considered alongside other existing detailed survey information including known historical, archaeological or ecological data.

This landscape assessment represents a significant step towards a detailed analysis of the Hartlepool landscape, and provides a sound and reliable tool that can assist in the process of well-informed decision making, particularly in respect of the current Local Plan Review and on development control matters. With this in mind, this study should prove to be extremely useful in the evaluation and guidance of the future pattern of development in Hartlepool, in addition to ensuring that the Borough's most valuable sites are protected and conserved for the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: REFERENCES
Appendix 2: SURVEY DATA SHEET: DEFINITIONS
Appendix 3: SITE SURVEY: EXAMPLE ASSESSMENTS
Appendix 4: DATABASE (C.D. ROM)
Appendix 5: LANDSCAPE VALUE PLAN
Appendix 6: SITE REFERENCE PLAN

APPENDIX 1 : REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES

Plans

- 1:25,000 O.S. pathfinder series (No's 582,591).
- O.S. agricultural land classification.
- 1:10,000/1:2500 Hartlepool Borough Local Plan Map.
- 1:10,000 Hartlepool Green Plan.

Published Documents

- Cleveland County Council *et al* : Cleveland Coastal Zone – Management Strategy.
- Countryside Commission (1993) : Landscape Assessment Guidance.
- Countryside Commission (1998) : Countryside Character : Volume 1 – North East.
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- Gateshead MBC 1992, Landscape Assessment Methodology.

APPENDIX 2 : SURVEY DATA SHEET DEFINITIONS

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY DATA SHEET DEFINITIONS

Section 1: Landscape Type

The seven landscape types established in the desk study, and set out in Chapter 5, formed the basis for comparing the value of the survey sites within broadly similar landscape character areas. Taking account of the surrounding features and character, the survey team was able to classify each individual site into one of the categories.

The purpose of this section of the survey sheet is to verify the boundaries of the various landscape types across the study area, and thereby confirm the desk study assumptions in order to create a detailed map of landscape types across the Borough.

It is important to note that the survey sheet does not assign any scores to the landscape types, as this would, in effect, apply an arbitrary weighting to landscape character, which would influence the total score for each surveyed site.

Section 2 : Landscape and Visual quality

This section of the form is divided into two parts. The first of these assigns scores to ***Landscape Elements*** such as trees, hedges, cliffs and bridges in terms of their significance and quality. A similar assessment is also made of the views, both in and out of each surveyed site. The second part of this section deals with ***Aesthetic Elements***. In all, a total of seven elements are considered including, scale, harmony and enclosure. Detailed descriptions of the criteria used to evaluate each of these factors are given in the report appendices.

Of note here is the scoring of ***views in*** and ***views out*** of each survey unit. Views out of the site are assessed by a 360° analysis of views over the surrounding land from each survey unit. Views into the site, being somewhat more complicated in terms of making an accurate judgement, are assessed by two different methods.

Initially, a judgement is made from within the survey unit itself of likely views into the site, based on an objective analysis of the extent of the view out, taking account of the surrounding topography and obstructing features. Then, after the survey units within the Borough have been assessed individually, and a good working knowledge of the study area has been developed by the survey team, a second assessment is made based on views from surrounding *publicly accessible* vantage points. This involves the preparation of a Visual Analysis Plan for the whole study area, highlighting the primary visual corridors from public roads, footpaths etc, which either overlook or allow views across the Borough landscape (drawing information from the topographical analysis carried out during the desk study).

Using the Visual Analysis plan, the survey team can re-visit the relevant vantage points and adjust the ‘views in’ score for individual sites as necessary.

Section 2b: Aesthetic elements

The second half of Section 2 of the survey sheet deals with ***Aesthetic elements***. This incorporates seven elements, which are given a single score based on the quality of their contribution to the landscape. It should be noted that, whilst the Landscape elements above are scored in terms of their impact on the assessment unit itself, the Aesthetic elements are assessed in terms of their impact on the surrounding landscape in general.

The seven elements are assessed as follows:

- ***Scale*** takes account of how appropriate the scale of the assessment unit is to the overall landscape, in terms of whether it displays a consistent and aesthetically pleasing relationship with its surrounds. Analysis of scale would take into account the degree of balance, proportion and enclosure present, and the main positions from which the site is viewed, as perceptions of scale would tend to decrease with elevation and distance.

  For example, a large and sprawling arable field, created by the amalgamation of smaller fields, might be acceptable in terms of its scale in an area of similarly sprawling fields. The site would correspondingly recieve either a neutral or positive score. However, in an area of smaller field units defined by the existing hedgerow boundaries, a larger field might receive a negative score if its scale was judged to be inappropriate to the overall landscape character.

- ***Enclosure*** takes account of the quality of enclosure or openness that the site contributes to the surrounding landscape. The sense of enclosure/openness would normally stem from the interaction between landscape elements present within the site in terms of height and distance between each other. Enclosure is closely related to scale as a result of this interaction.

  This could be illustrated by comparing an area of grassland enclosed by a wooded copse to an area of grassland largely enclosed by industrial buildings and artefacts. The former would score highly, as the sense of enclosure created by the tree cover would probably promote an aesthetically pleasing sense of enclosure to the site. The latter would recieve a negative score, as the sense of enclosure on site would be visually undesirable, and would detract from the value of the site in landscape terms.

- ***Variety/Diversity*** requires an assessment of the site on two levels. Initially, the visual variety present within the landscape would be considered in terms of the site area and its boundaries. Additionally, the degree of variety/diversity and the resulting contribution of the site to the overall landscape would be assessed.

  An area of non-descript grassland within a vista composed of similar field units might score 0 points (acceptable) in terms of variety contribution to the landscape, whereas the same site sandwiched between two derelict areas of land might provide a significantly high quality and diverse element in the landscape.

- ***Harmony/Balance*** refers to the relative quantities of different landscape elements within the site, and how they may have a contributory or negative effect on the overall character and quality of the surrounding landscape. Well balanced landscapes may not necessarily feature uniform quantities of similar landscape elements, rather the overall aim is to make a qualitative judgement of the aesthetic relationship between those elements present.

- ***Movement*** takes account of the visual movement inherent in the landscape in aesthetic terms, as opposed to the physical movement created by vehicles and human activity. Therefore, landscapes which contain elements, such as a winding river, well-defined edges of vegetation cover or topographical features which create visual movement are likely to score positively in terms of landscape movement.

- ***Texture*** is defined by land cover in general, whether by crops, field size, tree cover, size or species of tree present or other related factors. The texture of the land itself may vary across a wide range, from very coarse to very fine. When assessing texture here, the emphasis is not on the type of texture but on its quality contribution to the surrounding landscape.

  This analysis is based purely upon a qualitative judgement on site. The texture of one particular field may not correspond with that in the adjoining field, however this is not necessarily a negative factor.

- ***Colour*** is the final aesthetic element to be considered, and refers to the visual contribution of colours, both individually and in combination to the overall landscape character. This aspect of the survey is potentially problematic, as the colours present within the landscape may change, particularly in agricultural landscapes, and in accordance with the seasons.

  In assessing the aesthetic value of any landscape, the effect of temporal variations should be considered, although this is not always possible. In terms of agricultural landscapes, there is likely to be a certain amount of consistency throughout the year, in that most fields will be ploughed, seeded, and harvested on a similar time scale.

  The Hartlepool survey was carried out in late summer. Therefore, whilst arable crops were still very much evident in the landscape, there was no longer an overwhelming influence created by seasonal extremes, such as flowering oil seed rape and poppies growing around the boundaries of corn fields.

Section 3: Amenity Value

The third section of the checklist is used to evaluate the existing and potential amenity value of the landscape. Again this aspect of the survey method represents an expansion upon that set out by the Countryside Commission guidance and previous known assessments, in that it works towards an indication of possible measures that can be taken to enhance the amenity value of the landscape.

Amenity is assessed in terms of five factors; the natural ***Resources*** present on site, the ***Facilities*** present on site, the ***Access*** means available to the site, ***Views*** of the site and the quality of ***Management*** of the site. All five categories are scored in terms of significance and quality as above.

Resources

Under this category, scores are assigned for what the site can offer in terms of amenity. Provision is also made for the registration of special landscape features, which may be important in amenity as well as visual terms. The category encompasses the following aspects:

- ***Historical site*** assesses the importance of the site in terms of its historic and archaeological amenity value. A Saxon church, or a pillbox for example would be likely to score highly in terms of significance in this sense.

- ***Natural history*** takes account of the value of the site in terms of its natural flora and fauna, and its general ecological diversity. For example, a coastal area, which contained rockpools, might score in terms of natural history. Conversely an area of highly managed urban ornamental grassland might not score in this category.

- ***Designed landscapes*** are distinctly man-made landscapes. These account for many of the sites included within the urban green space and rural fringe categories and generally comprise formal recreation areas.

- ***Cultural*** resources take account of the value of a site in terms of its importance to local customs, tradition or folklore. For example, the association of a site with a famous local character, event, or traditional practices.

- ***Organised recreation*** assigns points to a site in terms of its use for activities such as sports matches, shows, special events etc.

- ***Informal recreation*** assigns points to a site in respect of its use for other leisure activities, such as walking, children's playing, informal sport and hobbies.

- ***Special landscape feature*** assigns points to special features in a similar fashion to the category contained in Section 2 of the survey sheet. In this section however, the amenity value of the feature is being assessed, as opposed to its value in terms of the visual landscape. This is an important distinction to make; for example, a historically important building may be in a visually prominent position in the landscape (scoring highly in terms of visual quality), but may be located on private land, and therefore inaccessible (scoring little in terms of amenity).

Facilities

The facilities provided on a particular site can considerably affect the level of use possible by various groups, for example families with children, and also the value of the site to the local community. Five elements are incorporated into this category:

- ***Car parking*** assigns points to the level or lack of parking provision on site, where relevant. If a site was not accessible by road for example, then it would not be realistic to assign a negative score for lack of parking.

- ***Toilets*** and ***Refreshments*** are largely self-explanatory. Again, a score would be assigned here depending on the likely need for and quality of any existing facilities.

- ***Educational information*** assesses the need for and quality of any information provided on site that might increase the enjoyment or utility of users. For example, information on flora and fauna at an important natural wildlife site would be likely to score in this category, depending on the quality and depth of the information presented.

Included in the facilities section is a blank space to record any additional facilities not covered by the above.

Access
Access is regarded as being of particular importance to the amenity value of a site. Logically, it is the ease with which a particular site can be accessed which largely defines amenity potential, whereby if it is not possible to get onto the site it will not be possible to use the land. In terms of assigning values to these scores, account would be taken of the following:

- ***Walking/Cycling/Bridleway*** takes account of the likely level of access possible by non-vehicular modes of transport. Factors such as the presence of designated non-vehicular routes, i.e. cycle and footpaths, would positively influence this score.

- ***Public Transport*** analyses the ease of access to the site by public transport. For example, a high quality score would likely be assigned if a bus stop served a particular site; whilst the score would be likely to diminish the further this facility was located from the site.

- ***Disabled access*****.** In terms of access for those with mobility problems, the survey was based on a reasonable premise, based on a sensitive common-sense approach. It was not considered to be practicable to expect surfaced footpaths in the open countryside for wheelchair users for example (and therefore the lack of such provision would be unlikely to score in terms of Significance). However, it was concluded that the presence of narrow gates and stiles could present extreme difficulties to the mobility impaired (and therefore would be far more likely to score in terms of Significance). This would also be likely to apply to parents with small children in prams and buggies. Whilst the scope and purpose of the study did not extend to further analysis of such issues, this approach was regarded as an important component of access as a whole in terms of local amenity.

Views
The fourth category is assessed on an identical basis to the views category included in Section 2 of the survey sheet, detailed above. This aspect is scored a second time due to the inherent role that views play in amenity value, in addition to inherent value of the landscape itself. As the 'Visual Quality' and 'Amenity Value' of each site are summarised in separate total values, this does not represent double counting in the survey.

Management
The final category provides an opportunity to assess not only the existing management of the site, but also its potential for improvement which is extremely important in terms of the final amenity values assigned to the study area. For example, if an area of scenic, accessible beach was also used for unsightly fly tipping, the management score would highlight that the management of the site was very significant, but highly undesirable in its current state. This would flag up those areas where amenity could be vastly improved by some form of improvement in site management and maintenance, and the checklist also incorporates a ***notes*** section whereby specific factors relevant to site management can be listed.

Summary
The end product of the checklist is the Summary section in the lower right hand corner. This lists landscape type, and two ratings for the site, one for landscape/visual quality, and one for amenity value. Additionally, there is a space where the presence of any special landscape features can be noted, and also provision for noting any particular designation the site may have, such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

APPENDIX 3 : SITE SURVEY : EXAMPLE ASSESSMENTS

APPENDIX 3 : SITE SURVEY : EXAMPLE ASSESSMENTS

The practical workings of the survey methodology can best be illustrated through two example assessments, using the data recorded for these actual sites within the Borough.

a) Site 4936/1 (Coastal Fringe)
Visual Quality: 28 Amenity Value: 24 Total Value: 52
(Survey sheet located on following page)

This site encompasses sand dunes adjoining the north eastern coastline. In terms of visual quality, the grass cover on the dunes has scored Significance 3/Quality 1, due to its dominance in the landscape (this being the standard scoring method adopted for land cover, as described above). The sand dunes themselves score Sig.3/Qual.2 in view of their high quality and pleasing aesthetic role in the landscape. The steep slope of the dunes down onto the beach generates a maximum score of Sig.3/Qual.2, due to its strong influence on the character of this site.

A special landscape feature on this site, namely a World War II pillbox is registered, but is not judged to have a significant impact on the site in terms of visual quality, due to its subtle positioning below the line of the dunes. Views in and out of the site are unsurprisingly scored fairly highly, reflecting the pleasant visual qualities of the site and its surrounds.

In terms of aesthetic elements, enclosure, variety/diversity and texture all score highly. The physical sense of enclosure provided by the dunes, the ecological diversity present on site in the form of various wild flowers and bird life, and the texture contrast provided by the sand and coastal grasses all contribute towards these scores.

The Amenity value of the site is reflected in high scores for natural history. This takes account of the presence of varied flora on site, and also the bird life, which can be found here, hence the area designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The inherent beauty of the dune landscape is considered to contribute towards the amenity of people visiting the site, hence a score of Sig.2/Qual.2 for natural landscape.

A score of Sig.1/Qual.1 is awarded for the pillbox on this site, to reflect its limited visual contribution and its more substantial amenity value both as an historical feature and as a focus for children's play.

Further amenity scores are awarded on the basis of access to the site. Walking access receives a maximum score, as there are no obstacles to access on foot from the urban area (south) and caravan park (north). There is also a designated footpath along the dunes nearby. Public transport also receives a minor score, due to the proximity of bus stops in the adjoining urban areas. The quality of disabled access is considered to be acceptable, as there are no restrictive barriers to access. However, no special provision is made to facilitate easier access for wheelchairs onto the beach for example, so no higher scores are awarded in this category.

View in/out of the site receive the same score as in the visual quality section, as discussed in the methodology. The final aspect of the site to be scored is Management, which receives a Sig.1/Qual.0. Management of a 'wild' site such as this is not considered to be of particular importance, unless particular problems exist on site. In this case the management score is somewhat insignificant.

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
SURVEY SHEET

Map Ref: 492 365
Brief Description: DUNES
Site No: 4936/1 **Survey Date:** 09.09.99
Weather: SUNNY **Tide:**

Significance (S)		Quality (Q)	
Very significant	3	Excellent	+2
Significant	2	Good	+1
Low significance	1	Acceptable	0
No significance	0	Poor	-1
		Very Bad	-2

(T) = (S x Q)

1. LANDSCAPE TYPE

COASTAL FRINGE — A

beach
exposed rock
sea cliff
coastal dunes ✓
salt marsh
coastal grassland
man-made/coastal defence/harbour
sea wall
low treeshrub cover

ESTUARINE — B

areas of semi-natural open water (tidal & fresh water)
associated salt marsh/reed beds
sand
mud flats
low lying agricultural land
low treeshrub cover
coastal grassland
land not exceeding 10.0 m AOD

UNDULATING FARMLAND — C

scattered farmsteads/villages
small scale rural development
sparsely wooded
predominantly arable farmland
areas of pasture
minor dock valleys
rounded hillocks
land typically between 10.0 – 150 m AOD

WOODLAND — D

predominantly woodland/ plantation
immature/emerging woodland

RURAL FRINGE — E

areas subject to litter/vandalism/fly-tipping/ malicious damage
unmanaged or poorly maintained land
degraded boundaries
commonly accessed
adjacent but not enclosed by built development
areas significantly affected/influenced by urban/industrial land use

URBAN GREENSPACE — F

land substantially enclosed by built development
(recreational, leisure and amenity land (informal and formal use)
derelict/unused land

TRANSPORT CORRIDOR — G

major railroad transport corridor and associated land
major transport interchange
railroad embankment

NOTES

Landscape type is based on an evaluation of the physical and visual characteristics of the survey area, adjoining land and the locality.

Include details of unusual features not listed above.

2. LANDSCAPE + VISUAL QUALITY

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

	S	Q	T
tree groups			
single trees			
woodland			
arable			
grassland/pasture	3	1	3
marshland			
ornamental planting			
scrub/native shrubs			
hedges			
fences	1	0	0
walls			
embankment/sea wall			
slope	3	1	3
valley			
cliff			
rock outcrop			
river/stream/drain			
pond/lake/reservoir			
mud flats			
dunes	3	2	6
beach			
buildings			
farm/derelict building			
industrial/agricultural			
marine artefacts			
road/railways			
paths/tracks			
prom/esplanade/jetty/pier			
bridge			
masts/poles/pylons			
additional/special features			
PILL BOX	0	0	0
views in	3	1	3
views out	3	1	3

AESTHETIC ELEMENTS

SCALE: How appropriate is the scale of the landscape assessment unit (LAU) to the overall landscape? — Q: 1

ENCLOSURE: What is the quality of the contribution of the sense of the enclosure or openness to the landscape? — 2

VISIBILITY/VIEWS: What is the quality of the contribution of the LAU to the complexity or simplicity of the landscape? — 2

HARMONY/BALANCE: What is the quality of the harmony/ balance of the LAU? — 1

MOVEMENT: What is the quality of the contribution of the visual sense of movement or subtleties to the landscape? — 1

TEXTURE: What is the quality of the contribution of the visual texture of the LAU in the landscape? — 2

COLOUR

What is the quality of the contribution of the colours, individually and in combination, to the landscape?

TOTAL

NOTES

3. AMENITY VALUE

RESOURCES

	S	Q	T
historical site			
natural history	3	2	6
natural landscape	2	2	4
designed landscape			
cultural			
organised recreation			
informal recreation			
special landscape feature	1	1	1
PILL BOX			

FACILITIES

car parking			
toilets			
refreshments			
educational info			

ACCESS

walking/cycling/bridleway	3	2	6
public transport	1	1	1
car			
disabled access	3	0	0

VIEWS

views in	3	1	3
views out	3	1	3

MANAGEMENT

	1	0	0

TOTAL — 24

NOTES Include suggestions for enhancement

LITTER

SUMMARY

1. LANDSCAPE TYPE	A
2. LANDSCAPE + VISUAL QUALITY	28
3. AMENITY VALUE	24
4. SPECIAL LANDSCAPE FEATURE PILL BOX	
5. SPECIAL DENOMINATION SSSI	

b) Site 4933/5 (Urban Greenspace)
Visual Quality: -3 Amenity Value: -5 Total Value: -8
(Survey sheet located on following page)

This is a small area of ornamental parkland located in the urban area of Hartlepool. The park is located on a corner plot on a major route heading west out of Hartlepool, towards Hart, and is quite highly visible from this transport corridor.

The park is initially classified as being within the Urban Greenspace landscape type, owing to the built development, which dominantly encloses it. Of the more notable landscape features, ornamental planting receives a negative score of –3, owing to the fact that the planting has been long neglected and is in need of urgent attention. Likewise, the paths through the park are in a poor state of repair, with loose rubble littering the site. This also receives a negative score. The industrial chain-link fence along the eastern site edge receives a score of –2, due to the inappropriateness of this feature within the context of the ornamental park.

Aesthetic elements do not score exceptionally, as might be the case in a well-maintained park. Aspects such as colour, texture and variety/diversity are lacking due to the aforementioned neglected maintenance, both of tree growth, shrubs and planting beds.

The amenity value of this site is again compromised by extremely poor maintenance. This is reflected in the scores for the designed landscape and informal recreation scores, which are both negative. Access to the park scores positively, as there are no real problems in this area. The management score, in this case the lowest possible, summarises the assessment of this amenity site, and is accompanied by a list of factors that have influenced the survey team's decisions.

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
SURVEY SHEET

Map Ref: 494 332
Brief Description: PARK
Site No: 4933/5 **Survey Date:** 09.09.99
Weather: SUNNY **Tide:**

Significance (S)		Quality (Q)	
Very significant	3	Excellent	+2
Significant	2	Good	+1
Low significance	1	Acceptable	0
No significance	0	Poor	-1
		Very Bad	-2

(T) = (S x Q)

1. LANDSCAPE TYPE

COASTAL FRINGE — A
- beach
- exposed rock
- sea cliff
- coastal dunes
- salt marsh
- coastal grassland
- man-made/coastal defence/harbour sea wall
- low tree/shrub cover

ESTUARINE — B
- areas of semi-natural open water (tidal & fresh water)
- associated salt marsh/reed beds
- sand
- mud flats
- low lying agricultural land
- low tree/shrub cover
- coastal grassland
- land not exceeding 10.0 m AOD

UNDULATING FARMLAND — C
- scattered farmsteads/villages
- small scale rural development
- sparsely wooded
- predominantly arable farmland
- areas of pasture
- minor beck valleys
- rounded hillocks
- land typically between 10.0 – 150 m AOD

WOODLAND — D
- predominantly woodland/ plantation
- immature/emerging woodland

RURAL FRINGE — E
- areas subject to litter/vandalism/tipping/ malicious damage
- unmanaged or poorly maintained land
- degraded boundaries
- commonly accessed
- adjacent but not enclosed by built development
- areas significantly affected/influenced by urban/industrial land use

URBAN GREENSPACE — F
- land substantially enclosed by built development — ✓
- recreational, leisure and amenity land (informal and formal use) — ✓
- derelict/unused land

TRANSPORT CORRIDOR — G
- major railroad transport corridor and associated land
- major transport interchange
- railroad embankment

NOTES

Landscape type is based on an evaluation of the physical and visual characteristics of the survey area, adjoining land and the locality.

Include details of unusual features not listed above.

2. LANDSCAPE + VISUAL QUALITY

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

	S	Q	T
tree groups			
single trees	1	1	1
woodland			
arable			
grassland/pasture			
marshland			
ornamental planting	3	1	3
scrub/native shrubs			
hedges			
fences	2	1	2
walls			
embankments/sea wall			
slope			
valley			
cliff			
rock outcrop			
river/stream/ditch			
pond/lake/reservoir			
mud flats			
dunes			
beach			
buildings			
ruins/derelict building			
industrial/agricultural/ marine artefacts			
roads/railways			
paths/tracks	2	-2	-4
promenade/jetty/pier			
bridge			
masts/poles/pylons			
additional/special features			
views in	3	0	0
views out	2	0	0

AESTHETIC ELEMENTS

SCALE — How appropriate is the scale of the landscape assessment unit (LAU) to the overall landscape? — Q: 1

ENCLOSURE — What is the quality of the contribution of the sense of the enclosure or openness to the landscape? — 1

VARIETY/DIVERSITY — What is the quality of the contribution of the LAU to the complexity or simplicity of the landscape? — 1

HARMONY/BALANCE — What is the quality of the harmony/ balance of the LAU? — 1

MOVEMENT — What is the quality of the contribution of the visual sense of movement or stillness to the landscape? — 0

TEXTURE — What is the quality of the contribution of the visual texture of the LAU to the landscape? — 0

COLOUR

What is the quality of the contribution of the colours, individually and in combination, to the landscape? — 1

TOTAL — -3

NOTES

3. AMENITY VALUE

RESOURCES

	S	Q	T
historical site			
natural history			
natural landscape			
designed landscape	3	-1	-3
cultural			
organised recreation			
informal recreation	3	-1	3
special landscape feature			

FACILITIES

car parking			
toilets			
refreshments			
educational info			

ACCESS

walking/cycling/bridleway	0	2	0
public transport			
car	1	1	1
disabled access	3	0	0

VIEWS

views in	3	0	0
views out	2	0	0

MANAGEMENT

	3	-2	-6

TOTAL — -5

NOTES: Include suggestions for enhancement.
LITTER, VANDALISM, NO SEATING GRASS UNMOWN, PLANTING NOT MAINTAINED, FENCING INAPPROPRIATE

SUMMARY

1. LANDSCAPE TYPE — F
2. LANDSCAPE + VISUAL QUALITY — -3
3. AMENITY VALUE — -5
4. SPECIAL LANDSCAPE FEATURE .....
5. SPECIAL DESIGNATION .....

APPENDIX 4 : DATABASE (C.D. ROM)

APPENDIX 4 : DATABASE (C.D. ROM)

The landscape assessment was based on a detailed survey of sites within the Borough, using the survey data sheets described within the assessment report. The raw data contained on these survey sheets was subsequently transferred onto a database system, to enable easy use, manipulation and monitoring of information to suit the user's requirements.

The database is set out in Microsoft® Works version 4.5a for Windows '95.
Upon opening the Works application, the files 'HBC Landmark.Landscape' and 'HBC Landmark.Enhancements' will become available. The content of these files is set out below.

'HBC Landmark.Landscape' database file
This contains the complete raw survey data, for the 961 sites surveyed within Hartlepool. This information displayed is divided into 15 columns, containing information as follows.

1. Site No.
2. Grid Ref.
3. Date
4. Description
5. Landscape Type

} Basic site information

6. Visual Quality (Sets out points value as detailed within the report text)
7. Visual Band (Sets out scoring band as detailed within the report text)
8. Amenity Value (as no.6)
9. Amenity Band (as no.7)
10. Notes
11. Special Features
12. Designations

} Basic site information

13. Enhancements: Potential areas for improvement
14. Total Score: Total site value (combined visual/amenity)
15. Category: (Overall site category, based on total score)

Of the 15 columns, only the 'Total Score' column contains a formula, linking it to the 'Visual quality' and 'Amenity value' columns.

As with standard Microsoft® Works files, the database can be viewed in 'List View' or 'Form View'. List View displays the database information *en masse*, as a large block of text, whereas form view displays information for one site at a time, in a graphic format.

'HBC Landmark.Enhancements' database file

This database contains the modified survey data that relates specifically to the enhancement potential of each site within the Borough. As set out in the report text, the information contained within relates to the Coastal Fringe, Estuarine, Transport Corridor, Urban Greenspace and Rural Fringe landscapes only, covering 274 sites in total.

The enhancement database displays information in 18 columns, set out as follows.

1. Site No.
2. Description
3. Landscape Type
4. Visual Quality
5. Visual Band
6. V Potential (Potential points increase, via methodology set out in report text)
7. V Modified (Visual Quality + V Potential)
8. Amenity Value
9. Amenity Band
10. A Potential (Potential points increase, via methodology set out in report text)
11. A Modified (Amenity Value + A Potential)
12. Enhancements
13. Total Score
14. Category
15. T Potential (V Potential + A Potential)
16. T Modified (Total Score + T Potential)
17. Mod Category (Category modified to take account of potential points increase)
18. Value Up? (Displays 'Yes' or 'No', dependant on increase in overall site category following score modification)

Of the 18 columns set out in this database, four incorporate formulae. Column numbers 7, 11, 15 & 16 are all derived from formula links to the columns used to calculate their scores (i.e. Column 7 is derived from a formulaic addition of the values contained in columns 4 and 6). As with the HBC Landscape database, the information in this file can be displayed in list or form view, depending on user requirements.

APPENDIX 5 : SITE REFERENCE PLAN