

Area of LDU within AONB: 93.1 hectares

% of LDU within AONB: 82%



Date surveyed: 25 February 2010

Survey Points: SS477380, SS470387 (from within LDU 403)

Summary of landscape character

This arc-shaped LDU forms the steep southern slopes of the gently undulating, elevated downland which encircles Croyde (LDU 403.) The steep landform joins the lower agricultural fields of LDU 399, which gently slopes to form a transition with Braunton Marsh and beyond to Braunton Burrows and Saunton Sands. This LDU also forms part of the backdrop to the western edge of Braunton (the LDU extends beyond the AONB boundary to wrap along northern edge of the town). The slopes are characterised by rough pasture associated with the small hamlets of Lobb, North Lobb and Knills farm. Its sparse settlement pattern and extensive seaward views give this landscape a strong sense of place, contributing to feelings of tranquillity and remoteness. The landscape forms an important backdrop to the Taw & Torridge Estuary when viewed from southern parts of the AONB.

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

LANDFORM / TOPOGRAPHY

Landform description	Steeply sloping undulating hillside stretching east-west before curving south beyond the hamlet of Lobb to form a gentle arc shape.
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LAND USE AND PATTERNS

Agriculture	<i>Main agricultural land use</i>	<i>Other agricultural land use(s)</i>	
	Pasture and rough grazing.	Some pony paddocks are found on the southern fringes of the LDU along the boundary with LDU 399. Arable fields on higher slopes form the transition with the elevated downland of LDU 403.	
Field patterns and boundaries	<i>Field patterns and origins</i>	<i>Size (note variations)</i>	<i>Boundary type / description</i>
	Regular pattern of fields mainly of recent origin, with some medieval fields with curving	Variable field sizes (generally small to	Fields are bounded by low hedgerows or closely cut Devon

	boundaries surviving around Lobb.	medium), becoming larger on upper slopes where the landscape takes on a more intensively farmed downland character at its transition with LDU 403.	hedgebanks, with few hedgerow trees. Pony paddocks on the boundary with LDU 399 are fringed by white tape or post-and-wire fencing. High hedgebanks along roadsides restrict views,
Other land uses (e.g. recreation)	This is a strongly agricultural landscape – there is a disused quarry in the west of the LDU and parkland grounds associated with Saunton Court.		

WOODLAND AND SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS

Trees / woodland cover	<i>Size and distribution within landscape</i>	<i>Type and species(broadleaved / conifer)</i>
	A band of woodland fringes a spring and disused quarry in the west (along Hannaburrow Lane). Woodland also provides a setting to Saunton Court on the southern LDU boundary. Otherwise, tree cover is limited to small groups associated with farms and the landscape's hamlets. Remnant traditional orchards are associated with Knills Farm.	Broadleaved, with ornamental species associated with Saunton Court and fruit orchard trees at Knills Farm.
Semi-natural habitats	<i>Description and location within landscape</i>	
	Spring-side woodland and patches of heath in the west form the main area of semi-natural habitat within the LDU. Hedges often contain scrubby vegetation enhancing their wildlife interest, and traditional orchards provide additional farmland habitat.	

SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Settlement pattern	<i>Settlement size, type, density and relationship to landscape</i>
	The small clustered hamlets of Lobb and North Lobb, along with Knill Farm, are nestled into folds in the landform in the east, sheltered by woodland. Saunton Court is the only other building within the LDU, also framed by woodland at the base of the slope in the west.
Transport pattern	<i>Road pattern, character and relationship to settlement / landscape</i>
	A narrow winding lane links the settlements and farms in the east of the LDU, traversing steeply to form the eastern LDU boundary. The western part of the LDU only contains the unmarked track of Hannaburrow Lane (also a bridleway). A footpath links North Lobb with Lobthorn Stile (in

	LDU 403). The South West Coast Path forms part of the south western LDU boundary around Saunton Court.		
Local vernacular styles and materials	<i>Predominant traditional building materials</i>	<i>Any local variations</i>	<i>Other built features reflecting vernacular</i>
	Local stone, some buildings with red brick detailing; cream render with slate roofs.	Lobb farm includes some Georgian farm buildings.	N/A
Modern development styles / materials	Farmstead groups include a mixture of building styles, including modern farm buildings (such as barns constructed from rusting corrugated iron and red brick). Lobb hamlet includes some modern bungalows.		

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Key historic features visible in the landscape	<i>Description</i>
	The 15 th century Saunton Court in the west is a Grade II* Listed Building surrounded by gardens and ornamental grounds (on the English Heritage register). Just outside the AONB boundary is Fairlinch Farm, also a Grade II* listed building comprising a cream-rendered Georgian farmhouse.

VIEWS / PERCEPTUAL QUALITIES

Views	<i>Key views / landmark features</i>	<i>Intervisibility with LDUs</i>	
		<i>From this LDU</i>	<i>To this LDU</i>
	Extensive open views south towards Braunton Marsh, Braunton Burrows and the sea where gaps in the hedgerow network permit. Hartland Point is visible on the distant horizon.	403 (elevated downland to the north and west)	403 399
	The rural landscape forms an important backdrop to the Taw/Torridge Estuary when viewed from southern parts of the AONB.	399 (lower slopes to the south)	358 360
	The masts on Long Lane (within LDU 403) to the north are dominant features in views to the north and west.	358 (Braunton Burrows) to the south	088 398
		360 (Saunton Sands to the south west)	
		088, 398 (Braunton Marsh & Great Field to the south)	
		693 (Clovelly	

		coast) 694 (Hartland Point to the south west)	
Perceptual qualities (description)	This is a relatively tranquil landscape owing to its largely unsettled character.		

LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Number	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Listed Buildings	1 (grade II*)	
Registered Parks & Gardens	1	2.55%

UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

UK BAP Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LDU land area
Traditional Orchards	3.87	4.16%

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LANDSCAPE CONDITION

Perceptual qualities	The close proximity of Braunton and associated development impacts on far reaching views to the east, diluting the sense of remoteness felt within the LDU.
Views	Polytunnels within Braunton Marsh (LDU 88) and masts at Long Lane to the north (LDU 403) form prominent features within views.
Land use	This is a strongly pastoral landscape, although some more intensive arable fields form the transition with the downland landscape above (LDU 403). Horsiculture on the boundary with LDU 399 detracts from traditional land uses.
Field patterns	Field sizes are larger and more regular on higher slopes (reflecting recent enclosure), diluting the traditional sinuous medieval field patterns of the area. Sparse and closely cut hedgerows also reduce the visibility of field patterns in more intensively farmed areas.
Field boundaries	Hedges are gappy and fragmented, particularly on higher slopes; whilst scrub growth gives an unkempt appearance to boundaries on the border with LDU 399.
Trees and woodland	No issues noted in the field.
Semi-natural habitats	No issues noted in the field.
Settlement and development	No issues noted in the field – settlements are small and clustered and well integrated into the landscape due to their location within folds in the landform, shielded by woodland.
Local vernacular	Modern bungalows on the fringes of Lobb detract from the traditional vernacular of the historic hamlet.