

Area of LDU within AONB: 232.6 hectares

% of LDU within AONB: 100%



Date surveyed: 24 February 2010

Survey points: SS485463, SS482463

Summary of landscape character

This LDU comprises the branching valley of the Borough stream, which flows northwards to the coast at Lee Bay. The landscape also includes two short coastal combes which cut into the coastal headland west of Lee, characterised by their more open, elevated character with patches of heath, gorse scrub and bracken (particularly at Hillymouth and Damage Hue). This is a peaceful, tranquil landscape with a strong historic sense of place, owing to the strong local vernacular of Lee (a Conservation Area) and the western fringes of Lincombe. The Borough Valley is clothed in ancient semi-natural woodland and estate conifer plantings, with fast-flowing streams fed by springs contributing to the area’s rural character.

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

LANDFORM / TOPOGRAPHY

Landform description	Steep v-shaped branching coastal combes cutting through the landform to reach the north coast of the AONB.
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LAND USE AND PATTERNS

Agriculture	<i>Main agricultural land use</i>	<i>Other agricultural land use(s)</i>	
	Unimproved pasture, including meadows in combe bottoms.	Rough grazing in the west	
Field patterns and boundaries	<i>Field patterns and origins</i>	<i>Size (note variations)</i>	<i>Boundary type / description</i>
	The landscape is predominantly woodland, with unenclosed rough ground along its coastal margins. Where fields exist, they are largely regular and of modern or post-medieval origin – with some curving shapes	Medium to large scale or open (unenclosed) closer to the coast. Fields around Lee are smaller,	Devon hedgebanks with some gappy sections and lines of post-and-wire fencing, particularly in Lee. Slate walls sometimes form field boundaries

	remaining. More intricate medieval fields, based on former strips, are found to the east of Lee and around Hillymouth.	reflecting their historic origins.	in Lee.
Other land uses (e.g. recreation)	Woodland and forestry.		

WOODLAND AND SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS

Trees / woodland cover	<i>Size and distribution within landscape</i>	<i>Type and species(broadleaved / conifer)</i>
	<p>The Borough Valley is clothed in a continuous cover of woodland, whilst the coastal combes are more open with patches of scrub. Areas of woodland are also found at the head of the western-most combe valley at Damage Barton.</p> <p>Tree clumps are often associated with houses close to the coast.</p>	<p>Borough and Six Acre Woods are designated as a County Wildlife Site – comprising ancient semi-natural woodland (beech, with alder, ash, hazel and holly) with a fern-rich understorey and carpets of bluebells in spring. Areas of coniferous plantation are also found on the eastern slopes of the Borough Valley (Vollature Wood and Rooterden and Yessand Cleaves), on sites previously under ancient oak woodland.</p> <p>There is an important area of ancient semi-natural oak woodland at Wrinklewood, west of Lee.</p> <p>Mature pines are frequently associated with coastal properties around Lee.</p>

Semi-natural habitats	<i>Description and location within landscape</i>
	<p>As above – the Borough Valley is clothed in woodland, much of it of ancient origin, recognised on a county level for its nature conservation importance. Wetlands associated with streams and numerous springs also contribute to wildlife interest. The north coast and western combes are also of biodiversity value for their tracts of coastal heath, maritime grassland, unimproved acidic /neutral grassland and large areas of blackthorn scrub.</p>

SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Settlement pattern	<i>Settlement size, type, density and relationship to landscape</i>
	<p>The main settlement within the landscape is the historic village of Lee, located in linear form at the mouth of Borough Valley backing Lee Bay. It is known locally as the Fuchsia Valley based on the presence of the colourful flowers in and around the area. The western fringes of Lincombe also fall within the LDU, nestled in the far eastern combe</p>

	branch.		
Transport pattern (including Public Rights of Way)	<i>Road pattern, character and relationship to settlement / landscape</i>		
	There is one rural road traversing the Borough Valley to link Lincombe with Lee, including some very steep sections. This road bends around the coastline before heading south towards Borough Cross (LDU 853). Public footpaths follow combe bottoms, with the South West Coast Path and Tarka Trail tracing the northern coastline.		
Local vernacular styles and materials	<i>Predominant traditional building materials</i>	<i>Any local variations</i>	<i>Other built features reflecting vernacular</i>
	Exposed local stone and slate. Some Victorian properties with coloured render, whitewash and ornate brick detailing.	Large stone-built Victorian country houses at the coast (at least one is now a hotel).	Slate and quartz walls (often with quartz coping stones), in various patterns of construction, are strong features of the traditional vernacular in Lee (including Lee Chapel). Ornate lamp posts also reinforce historic settlement character.
Modern development styles / materials	There are some areas of modern housing on the eastern slopes above Lee – often of cream or white render with grey/brown tiled roofs and terracotta chimney pots.		

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Key historic features visible in the landscape	<i>Description</i>
	The Lee Conservation Area contains a number of Grade II Listed buildings (including the Church of St Matthew, Lee Manor and Southcliffe Hall) showcasing its varied building styles and strong local vernacular. Three standing stones on elevated land west of Damage Hue are Scheduled Monuments.

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>
	Views are generally limited within the combes because of their steep valley sides and dense woodland cover. Views open up in the north to allow glimpses along the AONB coastline.	578 (north coast) 853 (adjacent inland countryside)	578 853

Perceptual qualities (description)	<p>This is a strongly rural landscape with high levels of peace and tranquillity, particularly within the unsettled sections of the combes. Often the only sounds to be heard are the running water of the streams and birdsong. The coastal combes in the west evoke a remote and wilder character owing to their exposure to winds from the sea and absence of settlement. Perceptions of tranquillity are affected by the broader area's popularity as a tourism destination – access to the South West Coast Path and Tarka Trail is available from this LDU.</p>
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LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Number	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
NATURE CONSERVATION		
County Wildlife Sites	10	40.77%
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Scheduled Monuments	1	0%
Listed Buildings	9 (1 grade II* and 8 grade II)	

UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

UK BAP Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LDU land area
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	36.24	15.58%
Maritime cliff and slope	39.55	17.01%
Upland oakwoods	8.91	3.83%

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LANDSCAPE CONDITION

Perceptual qualities	This is a peaceful rural landscape with high levels of tranquillity and a strong sense of history associated with its villages. These perceptual qualities can be diluted during the peak holiday season, when more people and traffic are present within the landscape.
Views	Views are largely confined to the combes, but northern and western parts of the LDU afford glimpses of the spectacular coastline. There are no intruding elements in views from this LDU.
Land use	Predominantly woodland, forestry and rough grazing land – consistent with landscape character.
Field patterns	The majority of the landscape is under woodland cover or open coastal rough grazing land. Medieval field patterns persist around Lee, contributing to the settlement's historic character. Modern fields form the transition with the more intensively farmed landscape to the south (LDU 853).
Field boundaries	Gappy sections and the use of post-and-wire fencing in fields around Lee detract from landscape character and dilute the visibility of field patterns.
Trees and woodland	The past planting of coniferous plantations on former ancient oak woodland sites has decreased the biodiversity value of the landscape's woodlands. Issues relating to a lack of management include a spread of rhododendron and brambles, impacting on the diversity of the understorey and ground flora.
Semi-natural habitats	As above. Coastal habitats retain their open character – their favourable management is assumed due to much of the area's County Wildlife Site coverage.

Settlement and development	Settlement at Lee and Lincombe retains its historic form and landscape setting. Some recent housing has extended up the eastern slopes above Lee.
Local vernacular	Historic character is reinforced through the strong local vernacular, strongly displayed within Lee Conservation Area. Recent buildings tend to mimic traditional styles, utilising white wash or cream painted render and grey roofing tiles.