

# Luppitt Landscape Character Assessment

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on behalf of

**Luppitt Parish Council**

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*The River Love valley as seen from Greenway Lane*

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Luppitt Parish

Luppitt is located in the south-west of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The parish is a diamond shape, covering 4730 acres and containing four historic hamlets (Luppitt, Beacon, Wick and Shaugh) as well as many farms and outlying houses. It encompasses land in the valleys of the River Love and the River Otter, separated by the ridges of Hartridge, Dumpdon Hill and Luppitt Common.

The topography creates an extra-ordinary sense of seclusion, particularly in the River Love valley. It is an outstanding example of a quintessential Devon landscape, much appreciated by the early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century painter Robert Bevan, who lived here from 1920-1925. The landscape has changed little since, and many of the Luppitt scenes which he painted are still recognisable today. One of the most distinctive features of the parish is Dumpdon Hillfort, crowned with a clump of beech trees, which forms a prominent landmark over a wide area. A splendid patchwork of ancient, irregularly-shaped hedged fields extends over the valley sides, and contrasts with the later, more geometric fields on the ridge-tops.

Luppitt has a long history of settlement, with three of its farms (Shapcombe Farm, Mohuns Ottery and Greenway Manor) recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. Narrow, winding lanes and tracks link historic farms and houses, including many examples of medieval/ post medieval Devon longhouses. These were constructed of the locally-available materials of chert stone, cob and thatch. There are also fine examples of the traditional symmetrical 'Blackdown Hills houses' of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, as well as some Victorian and later properties. Numerous springs issuing at the base of the Greensand rock feed tributary streams of the Rivers Love and Otter, and provide water supplies for people and animals.



As well having an exceptionally rich historic environment, Luppitt is also abundant in wildlife. Woodland (some ancient), copses, hedgerows, trees, meadows, heaths, mires, streams, verges and banks support a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

Luppitt's scenic quality, and the importance of its heritage and biodiversity, are reflected in the various designations found within the parish. Its lack of main roads and through traffic means that much of the parish is exceptionally quiet and tranquil.

*Ancient beech hedgebank at Hense Moor SSSI*

## 1.2 Purposes of the *Luppitt Parish Landscape Character Assessment*

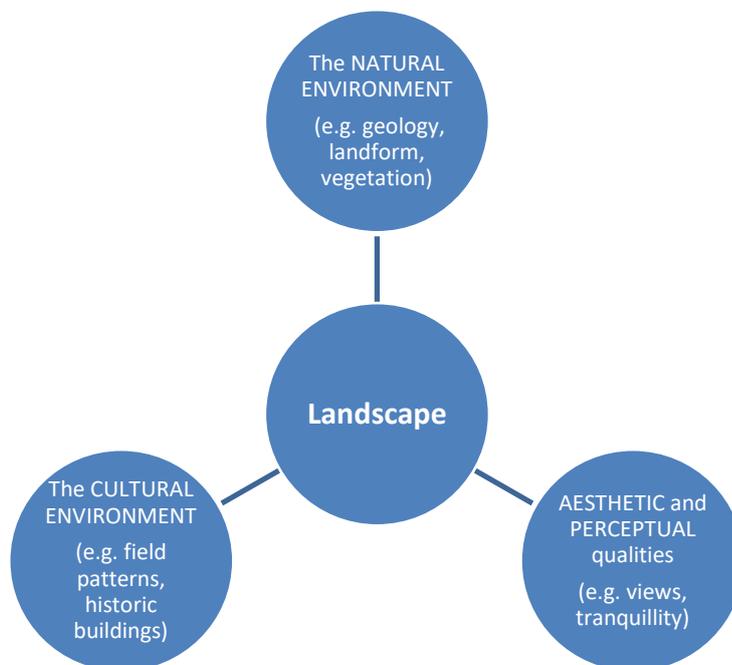
The *Luppitt Landscape Character Assessment* has been prepared to inform the Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan. It identifies the special qualities of Luppitt's landscape which contribute to its 'sense of place' and should therefore be protected and enhanced through positive planning and management. All landscapes are dynamic, affected by changes which may be natural or man-made. It is therefore not the intention of this document to preserve Luppitt's landscape 'in aspic'. Rather it should be seen as a tool to guide positive landscape change and decision-making, and to help ensure that any changes contribute to its distinctive character rather than undermining it.

## 1.3 Principles of Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment is *the processes of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) which make landscapes distinctive. This process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment*<sup>1</sup>.

Landscape as a planning term can be defined as *an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/ or human factors*<sup>2</sup>.

Landscape Character Assessment therefore considers the natural, cultural and perceptual qualities of landscape. It provides a framework for people to think about what gives their area its unique 'sense of place'.



<sup>1</sup> *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* Natural England, 2014, Glossary

<sup>2</sup> *European Landscape Convention* (Council of Europe, ratified by the UK in 2006, and not affected by Brexit)

## 1.4 Terminology

Landscape Character Assessments identify and map distinctive Landscape Character Types and/or Areas.

**Landscape Character Types (LCTs)** are generic types of landscapes which can occur in different places. They have similar characteristics wherever they occur, and are called by a descriptive name which often relates to geology, topography or land use (e.g. Valley Floors; Plateaux).

**Devon Character Areas (DCAs)** are geographically-unique areas, each with a distinctive ‘sense of place’. They are called by a descriptive place-based name (e.g. Blackdown Hills; Axe Valley).

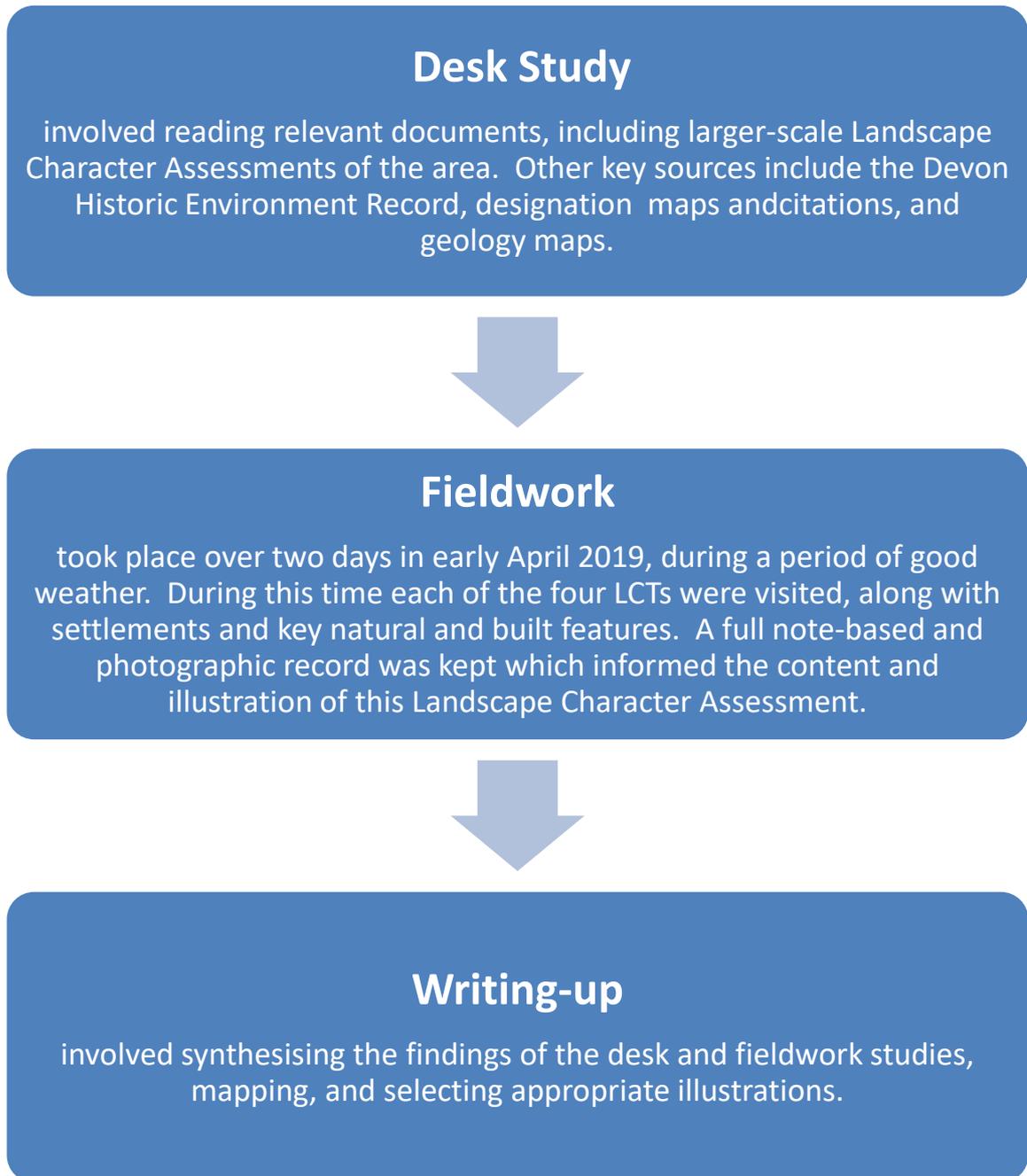
Landscape Character Assessments can be undertaken at a range of scales from national to local. As the area covered gets smaller, then the level of detail of the Assessment increases. This is shown in the table below, which sets out the Landscape Character Assessment context for Luppitt Parish.

Level of local detail	Extent of Assessment	Findings	Where to find more information
Low	National	The ‘Character of England’ identifies 159 distinctive National Character Areas (NCAs) across England. Luppitt is within NCA <i>147: Blackdowns</i>	<a href="https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6512963443752960">publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6512963443752960</a>
Medium	County	The Devon Landscape Character Assessment describes the 68 distinctive Devon Character Areas (DCAs) within Devon. Luppitt is within the <i>Blackdown Hills DCA</i> .	<a href="https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment">https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devons-landscape-character-assessment</a>
Medium	District	The East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment identifies 13 Landscape Character Types (LCTs). Luppitt contains 4 LCTs: <i>1A Upland Planned Plateaux; 2A Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes; 3A Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes and 3C Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors</i> .	<a href="http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2816886/lca_complete_final_march-2019_low-res.pdf">http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2816886/lca_complete_final_march-2019_low-res.pdf</a>
High	Parish	The four LCTs identified within Luppitt Parish in the District-level Assessment (see row above) are described in detail with reference only to Luppitt Parish	This document

Table 1: Landscape Character Assessments covering Luppitt Parish

## 1.5 Methodology

The methodology for this Landscape Character Assessment is in line with current best practice<sup>3</sup>. There are three key phases to its preparation, as shown in the diagram below. It has been prepared by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute with extensive professional experience in undertaking landscape character assessments. The author also wrote the 2018 *East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment*, as well as the *Blackdown Hills What Makes A View?*, and therefore has a good understanding of the area's landscapes.



<sup>3</sup> *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* Natural England, 2014

## 2.0 Special Qualities of Luppitt Parish's landscape to be protected and enhanced through the Neighbourhood Plan

- A variety of topography including plateau tops, steep scarps, valley sides and valley floors. These are reflected in the diversity of Landscape Character Types (LCTs).
- A rich historic landscape containing designated and non-designated assets, including prehistoric hillfort and barrow, and ancient field patterns, farms, lanes and woodlands. Many features of the landscape are unchanged since medieval times, and three surviving farms were recorded in the Domesday Book.
- A landscape forming the setting for a rich collection of historic buildings (including farms, cottages and church) within a surviving historic settlement pattern. Numerous Listed Buildings include several fine examples of medieval Devon longhouses.
- A strong sense of tranquillity and of history.
- Dark skies, particularly from lower parts of the parish where higher land blocks light pollution from surrounding settlements.
- Undeveloped and distinctive skylines and horizons, including Dumpdon Hill and the ridge tops of Hartridge and Luppitt Common.
- Rich biodiversity and a range of semi-natural habitats, including woodlands, copses, grassland and springline mires. Several are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or County Wildlife Sites (CWS). Banks, verges and meadows support an outstanding range of flora.
- A network of lanes, paths and tracks, many of which are ancient in origin.
- Outstanding and distinctive field patterns, with a patchwork of small, irregular medieval fields on the valley floors and sides, and larger, more geometrically-shaped 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Century fields on the ridge tops.
- Dumpdon Hill forms a particularly distinctive landmark and aids orientation.



*Footpath through valley-side woodland at Hense Moor SSSI*

### 3.0 Landscape Character of Luppitt Parish

The East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment identifies four distinctive LCTs within Luppitt Parish. These are shown on Map 1, and comprise:

**LCT 1A:** Open inland planned plateaux

**LCT 2A:** Scarp slopes

**LCT 3A:** Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes

**LCT 3C:** Sparsely settled farmed valley floors

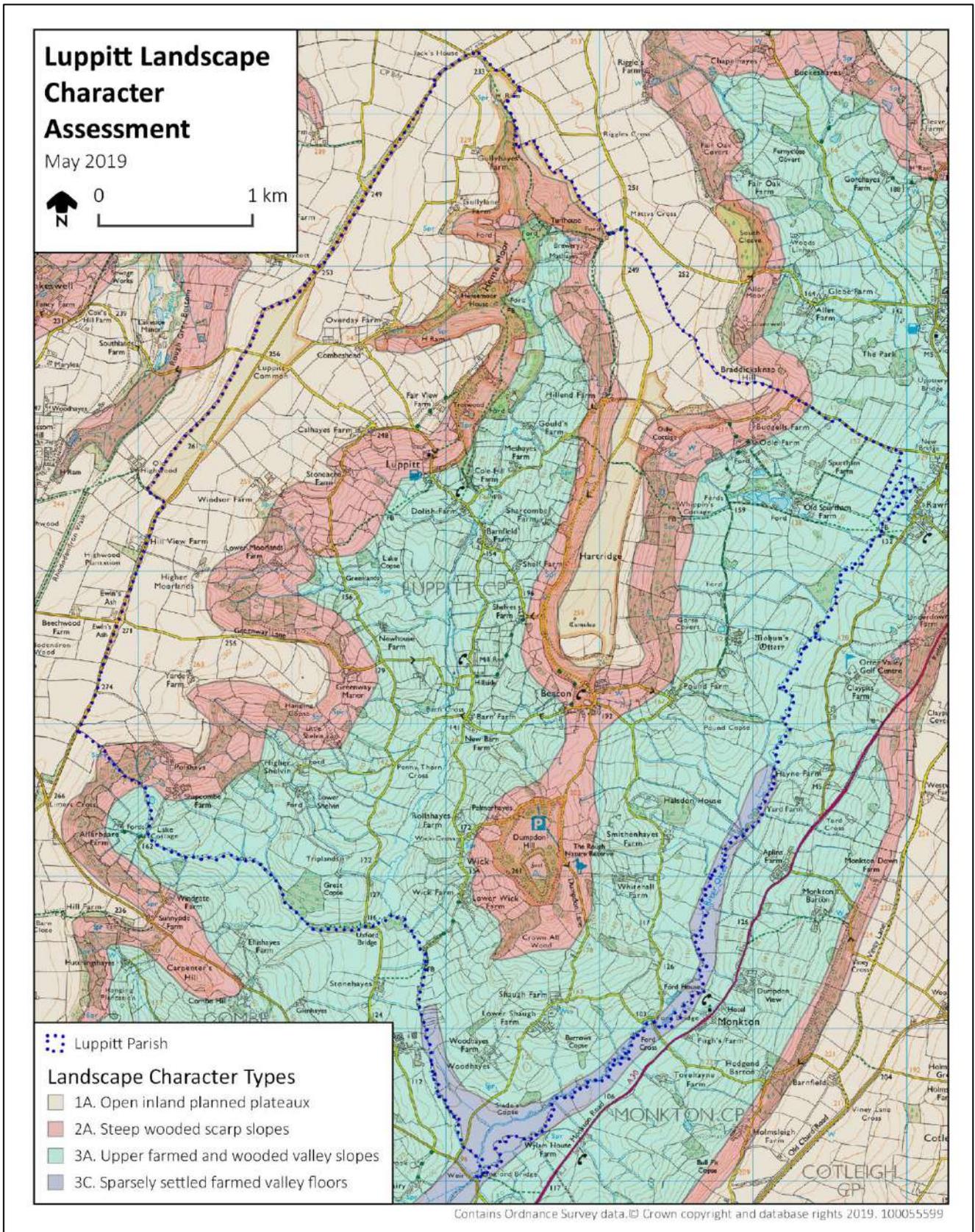
These four LCTs are described in the following pages, with particular reference to how they appear in Luppitt Parish. The descriptions include their location and context, a photograph of a typical scene within that LCT, and explanations of their characteristic natural features, cultural features and perceptual qualities.



*Drone image from Dumpdon Hill showing typical field patterns*



*Dumpdon Hill from Hartridge*



**Map 1: Landscape Character Types within Luppitt Parish**

The map is an extract from the 2018 East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment

## LCT 1A: Open Inland Planned Plateaux

### Location

This LCT comprises the highest ridge-tops of Luppitt Common and Hartridge, and forms north-south spurs in the west and centre of the parish.



*A typical Luppitt scene within LCT 1A, looking south along the lane to Gullyhayes Farm*

### Natural features

- Underlying geology of clay-topped Greensand, supporting heavy clay soils which are relatively difficult to plough.
- Spurs of high land with flat tops, which extend southwards from the main Blackdowns Ridge at 'Jack's House'.
- Little surface water due to permeable geology.
- Lines of trees along roads and hedgerows, creating silhouettes when viewed from below and across valleys.
- Semi-natural habitats include hedgerows and verges.

### Cultural features

- Land use predominantly pastoral agriculture on heavy clay soils, with occasional arable crops.
- Fields are generally medium size and regular in shape, with straight hedged boundaries reflecting their relatively late enclosure. Areas of common land survive at Luppitt Common and Hartridge.
- A landscape strongly influenced by 18<sup>th</sup> Century Parliamentary Enclosure, when open land was divided up by surveyors into plots owned by individual farmers. Regular-shaped fields, straight roads and farmhouses generally date from this period.

- Bronze-Age barrow on Hartridge is a Scheduled Monument and a relic of a much older ritual landscape on high land.
- Settlement is limited to occasional isolated farms, often relatively recent in origin. Ridge top roads are generally straight and tree-lined, but there are more winding lanes running up to them.

### Perceptual Qualities

- A relatively linear and simple landscape with strong horizontal elements: flat horizons, straight roads and field boundaries.
- Vertical features such as lines of roadside trees and electricity/ telephone poles are particularly noticeable.
- Long views out from the edges of the plateaux, including views across to adjacent ridges (Dunkeswell to west and Stockland to east) and sudden, spectacular views over surrounding valleys from the plateaux edges.
- The LCT forms the horizon in views from other plateaux and from lower land.
- An open and expansive feel compared to the more intimate and enclosed feel of the settled landscapes below.



*View west from the edge of Hartridge over the River Love valley, with Luppitt Common forming the skyline*



*Luppitt Common*



*Straight, tree-lined ridge-top road, Hartridge*

## LCT 2A: Steep Wooded Scarp Slopes

### Location

This LCT forms a narrow 'ribbon' which runs around the tops of the valley sides. It comprises the steep slope between the valley sides and the plateaux. It includes land to the east of Luppitt common, land to the east and west of Hartridge, and also Dumpdon Hillfort.



*A typical Luppitt scene within LCT 2A, looking west from the Hartridge Scarp. From this viewpoint (marked with a bench) heath and woodland vegetation form the foreground, and Hense Moor can be seen across the valley*

### Natural features

- Underlying Greensand geology (permeable by water) overlying impermeable mudstone.
- Steep topography forming the transition between plateaux and valleys, with 'fingers' extending as promontories over surrounding valleys, such as Dumpdon Hill.
- Numerous springline springs at base of Greensand, feeding mires and streams. Extensive woodland, particularly on land too steep to plough, with Designated Ancient Woodland at Crown All Wood and Shapcombe Copse. Hedgerow trees, field trees and copses add to the wooded appearance of the LCT.
- Rich biodiversity within a range of semi-natural habitats, including lowland heath, springline mires, grasslands, woodlands, streams and ponds. Hense Moor is an SSSI, and several other habitat sites are County Wildlife Sites.

### Cultural features

- Mixed land use, comprising pastoral farmland with patches of woodland and unimproved grassland.
- Outstanding prehistoric archaeology at Dumpdon Iron-Age hillfort (a Scheduled Monument in National Trust ownership).

- Historic irregular field patterns, including medieval enclosures.
- Settlements include the upper part of Luppitt village, Beacon, and several historic farms nestled into valley sides.
- Narrow winding lanes with well-treed banks, often running at an angle to the slope.
- A rich historic landscape with an unchanged feel, containing numerous deep lanes, paths, manors, farms and church, which have been part of the landscape for centuries.

### Perceptual qualities

- Dumpdon Hill forms a key landmark visible from across the parish and beyond. From Dumpdon Hill there are outstanding views out over the surrounding lower land.
- Further spectacular views can be enjoyed from other parts of the LCT. Views from Dumpdon Hill, from the scarp on the western side of Hartridge, and from Luppitt Village looking south were identified as favourite views in the *Blackdown Hills What Makes a View? Study*.
- Dramatic appearance as a steep ridge at the tops of valley sides, creating a seasonally-changing backdrop to the valleys below.
- Seasonal changes in colour and texture from deciduous trees, bluebell banks, gorse, autumn leaves etc.
- A strong sense of tranquillity and changelessness over much of the LCT.



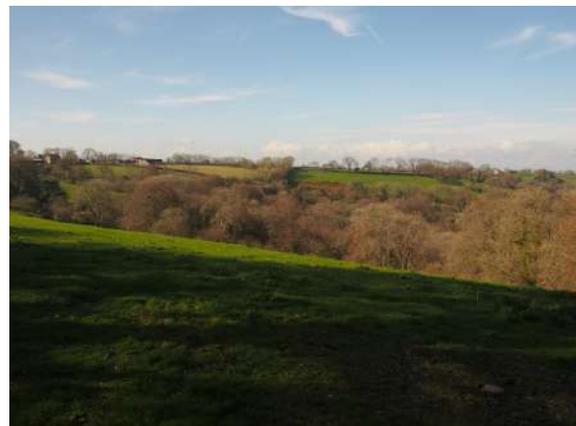
*Hense Moor SSSI from near Combeshead*



*Springline Mire County Wildlife Site, Little Shelvin Farm*



*Dumpdon Hill from Hartridge*



*Well-treed scarp seen from Greenway Lane*

## LCT 3A: Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes

### Location

This is the most extensive LCT within Luppitt Parish, and includes the slopes of the River Otter and River Love valleys. The settlements of Wick and Shaugh, the lower part of Luppitt village, and many of the farms are located within this LCT. It is an ancient and settled landscape with a timeless quality.



*A typical Luppitt scene within LCT 3A, looking north-west from Barn Cross*

### Natural Features

- Undulating and often steep valley side slopes, with some V-shaped valleys in the highest parts.
- Underlying bedrock geology of mudstone and sandstone, with some superficial deposits of sand, gravel and (in river valleys) alluvial material.
- Watercourses include the River Love and the upper parts of the River Otter, as well as many tributary streams and occasional springs and pools.
- Numerous small copses and patches of woodland, including wet woodland, and many hedgerow and roadside trees (mostly oak and ash). Together they give an impression of a well-wooded landscape. Great Copse and Post Hackley Copse are Ancient Woodland.
- A range of other semi-natural habitats, including grassland, mires, hedgerows, river channels and river banks. Part of the Hense Moor SSSI is within this LCT, as are a small number of County Wildlife Sites.
- Meadows, banks and verges support a rich diversity of flora, including ferns, snowdrops, primroses, wild daffodils, violets, campion, foxgloves, rosebay willow herb and orchids.

### Cultural features

- Predominant land use is pastoral agriculture, with occasional arable.

- Distinctive patchwork patterns of small irregular fields, often with medieval origins.
- Numerous historic farms and cottages (many of which are Listed Buildings) and the hamlets of Shaugh and Wick.
- An ancient network of distinctive winding lanes, often running between banks, which can be topped by trees or hedgerows. Banks often support ferns and/or wildflowers.
- A rich historic landscape, some elements of which appear unchanged for several hundred years.

### Perceptual qualities

- Outstanding irregular patchwork patterns created by hedged fields create a quintessential Devon landscape.
- Remote and tranquil, with little obvious modern development, a changeless feel and a very strong sense of history.
- The topography and vegetation can give the landscape an intimate and enclosed feel, with occasional longer views, which are often glimpsed.
- This LCT forms the views from surrounding higher land, including Dumpdon Hillfort, Hartridge, and Luppitt Village (all identified as favourite views in the 'What Makes a View?' study). It is also the landscape setting for numerous Listed Buildings and Dumpdon Hill Scheduled Monument.



*Field patterns in the River Love valley*



*View of the River Otter valley, looking north from near Beacon*



*Ford over the River Love, near The Mill*



*Detail of flower-rich hedgebanks, River Otter valley*

## LCT 3C: Sparsely Settled Farmed Valley Floors

### Location

Luppitt Parish contains only a small area of this LCT, which comprises the unsettled lower valley floors and floodplains of the Rivers Otter and Love. It is located in the south-eastern part of the parish.



*A typical Luppitt scene within LCT 3C, looking north from Ford Bridge*

### Natural features

- Underlying mudstone geology overlain with alluvial deposits, creating relatively fertile soils.
- Comprises the lowest-lying land in the parish, at approximately 100m AOD. It is relatively flat, and confined to valley floors.
- It includes the meandering channels of the lower part of the River Love, and part of the River Otter (which forms the parish boundary).
- Vegetation includes riparian trees (particularly alder) along watercourses, and occasional hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Semi-natural habitats include river banks and river channels, and some wet meadow and wet woodland.

### Cultural features

- Land use of pastoral agriculture in semi-regular fields which are a mixture of medieval and modern enclosures.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century bridge at Ford Bridge (Listed Grade 2)
- Unsettled and with few roads, due to tendency to flood and limited bridging points.

### Perceptual qualities

- Views dominated by expansive foregrounds, often with valley sides forming backdrops. Some longer views along valleys, framed by the valley sides.
- Lack of public access and roads mean that there are few people.
- Tranquillity is high but can be locally impacted by traffic on the nearby A30.
- A relatively open landscape with a simple pattern.
- Seasonal/ weather-based changes, particularly during times of flood.



*Alder trees line the River Love as it flows through open fields near its confluence with the River Otter*



*Wet woodland around the River Otter near Ford Bridge*



*The 19<sup>th</sup> Century stone Ford Bridge (Listed Building) over the River Otter*

## 4.0 Settlements and vernacular buildings within Luppitt Parish

### 4.1 Introduction

Settlement within Luppitt Parish comprises numerous scattered farms and houses, plus four distinct hamlets (Luppitt, Beacon, Shaugh and Wick). This section provides a short description of these settlements and how they relate to the surrounding landscape. It includes photos of examples of the ‘typical vernacular’ style within Luppitt Parish – buildings which contribute to the parish’s distinctive sense of place. The vernacular buildings found within Luppitt are typical of those found more widely within the Blackdown Hills, and are described more fully in the *Blackdown Hills AONB Design Guide for Houses*.

At present there are no ‘housing estate’ type developments within Luppitt Parish. Nor are there many properties which do not fit the traditional settlement pattern (an exception being the 1950s council houses at Mill Rise). The relative lack of modern housing layouts is one of the characteristics of Luppitt Parish’s settlements.



*Palmerhayes Farm, constructed of local chert stone, with thatched/ corrugated iron roofs*



*Vernacular cottages (the Old Post Office) in Luppitt Village*



*Old and new thatch at Barn Farm, Barn Cross*

## 4.2 Farms and houses

Scattered and grouped farms and houses occur throughout the parish. Many are of considerable age, having medieval/ post-medieval origins as Devon longhouses, and are often nestled in sheltered hollows on valley sides. They may be built of stone (sometimes rendered) or rendered cob. Roofs were traditionally thatched, but may now be of slate or corrugated iron. Hipped roofs often suggest that a roof was originally thatched, and incorporated smoke vents which were necessary before the use of chimney stacks became widespread from about 1600AD.

Other houses are slightly more recent, dating from the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These include 'typical' Blackdown Hills houses, constructed of chert (sometimes rendered) with a symmetrical appearance, casement windows, a relatively shallow roof pitch and often a central porch. Roofs are generally of slate, with chimneys on the gable walls. These houses may sometimes be more prominent within the landscape, particularly those associated with farms on high land enclosed late through Parliamentary Enclosure.

Other residential buildings within Luppitt Parish include a former mill on the River Love, and more modern cottages and farm houses, many of which have been sensitively constructed using traditional styles and materials. There are no 'housing estates' in Luppitt, but the rendered Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century council houses at Hillside are of standard design with little screening, and are very prominent in views from the surrounding area.

Traditional farm buildings and yards are also a distinctive feature of Luppitt's built fabric. These are generally stone built (occasionally cob), with thatched or corrugated iron roofs. Often the backs of farm buildings back on to roadsides, containing the farmyard and providing separation from passing traffic. Traditionally, the largest building was usually the barn, with the remaining sides of the yard taken up with byres, stables, cart sheds, cider houses etc. Over time, farm buildings have become larger as animal husbandry practices have changed. Many traditional farm buildings have been converted to residential accommodation or alternative uses, or have become derelict.



*Former mill on the River Love, constructed of stone with slate roof*



*Carefully extended typical Blackdown Hills house with symmetrical frontage, casement windows, shallow roof pitch and gable chimneys.*

### 4.3 Luppitt Village

Luppitt Village is located towards the north-west of the parish. It is a linear settlement, with the Square-towered Church of St Mary (Grade 1 Listed Building) towards the top of the hill, and houses following the steep lane down the scarp slope into the valley below. The top part of the village is in LCT 2A, and the lower part is in LCA 3A. Some of the older properties are constructed of chert (including the Luppitt Inn – a Listed Building), whilst others are rendered. There are a few thatched properties, but most are roofed with slate. There a couple of Victorian villas which are of different proportion and fenestration to traditional properties. Victorian properties may also use more elaborate detailing (such as carved bargeboards) and imported materials (such as brick). Occasional modern properties include rendered bungalows with large windows and concrete tile roofs, which do not reflect local character, and do not tend to fit as comfortably into their landscape context as the older buildings.



*Luppitt Village in its landscape setting*



*Former school, thatched cottages and C.18<sup>th</sup> Century inn in Luppitt Village, all constructed of local stone*



*Vernacular cottages and farmhouses at the southern end of Luppitt Village*

#### 4.4 Beacon

Beacon is located roughly in the centre of the parish, and comprises a cluster of houses and farms (five of which are Listed Buildings) at the junction of several roads. It is located on a saddle of high land between Dumpdon Hill and Hartridge, within LCA 2A. It is at the base of the Greensand, so there are several springs within and around Beacon. Most of the buildings are chert, with some rendered (occasionally coloured). Roofs may be thatch, slate or corrugated iron. Buildings include farms, detached houses and also a terrace of properties. There is a former chapel, now in residential use. Dumpdon Hill dominates views to the south, and Hartridge dominates views to the north. Both add to the strong sense of place.



*Beacon in its landscape setting, with Hartridge behind*



*Traditional farm buildings (mainly converted as tourist accommodation) in the centre of Beacon*



*Terrace of thatched cottages and former chapel in Beacon*

#### 4.5 Shaugh

Shaugh is located in the south of the parish, within LCT 3A, and comprises a linear group of houses and farms on the southern side of Dumpdon Hill. It looks over the River Otter Valley, and can be seen most clearly across the Otter Valley from the A30 south of Monkton. From here, Dumpdon Hill, with its beech clump on the summit, provides a strong and distinctive setting for the hamlet. Shaugh is a springline settlement, and contains a traditional Devon longhouse of cob and thatch (Listed Building), as well as a smaller thatched cottage, several stone-built farmhouses, a traditional farmyard stone with slate roofs, and larger modern farm buildings at Shaugh Barton.



*Shaugh in its landscape setting, on the southern slope of Dumpdon Hill as seen from the A30.*



*Traditional cob Devon longhouse, Shaugh*



*Stone farmyard (converted to residential use) and farmhouse, Shaugh*

## 4.6 Wick

Wick is also located in the south of the parish, but on the western side of Dumpdon Hill, on the boundary between LCT 3A and LCT 2A. It is a linear settlement which follows the contours around the side of Dumpdon Hill. It includes several very old thatched stone properties, as well as traditional and more modern farm buildings. Five of the properties/farm buildings are Listed Buildings. The placename suggests a Saxon origin, and it is another example of a springline settlement located at the base of the Greensand. In views from the west and south-west, Wick is seen in its landscape setting, with the well-treed slopes of Dumpdon Hill behind. From Wick, there are long views westwards towards the Luppitt Common ridge and St Cyres Hill.



*Wick in its landscape setting, on the western side of Dumpdon Hill*



*Vernacular cottage (a rendered stone Devon longhouse) and farm buildings, Wick*



*Farm buildings converted into several cottages at Rollshayes, Wick*

## 5.0 Present and future forces for change affecting Luppitt's landscape

### 5.1 Farming and land management

- Changing agricultural practices (e.g. loss of dairy farming).
- Uncertainty over future agricultural funding and markets post-Brexit.
- Lack of grazing in the future could potentially result in establishment of scrub and bracken on heathland, unimproved grassland or mires.
- Abandonment of traditional farm buildings no longer used for their original purpose, and the construction of large farm buildings which are not of local character, and are highly visible in the landscape.
- Reduced grazing levels impacting on archaeological sites, particularly through bracken encroachment.
- Erosion of barrow on Hartridge through past ploughing.
- A reduced need for stockproof hedgerows may lead to a decline in hedgerow management and loss of landscape pattern and reduced habitat connectivity.
- Positive land management schemes, such as planned removal of bracken on Hartridge undertaken in agreement with Natural England.

### 5.2 Development and infrastructure

- Demand for improved digital communications and associated infrastructure.
- Demand for additional housing, particularly affordable housing for local young people and the elderly.
- Unsympathetic property frontages (gates, drives and garden planting) creating a suburban rather than rural character.
- Proposed road improvements (A30/ A303 upgrade) leading to greater visibility of the main road in the eastern part of the parish.
- Damage to narrow rural lanes and banks by wide vehicles and water runoff.

### 5.3 Natural processes and climate change

- Tree disease (especially ash dieback) and other pests will potentially have a significant impact on the appearance of the landscape.
- More frequent and intense storms will result in increased flooding and water run-off, and wind may also damage trees and buildings.
- Longer, hotter summers will result in drought, which is likely to impact on land uses, tree species and views (for example beech trees are intolerant to drought – if they are lost then the appearance of Dumpton Hill will change).
- Invasive species in water courses such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.
- Siltation from soil washing into rivers, causing increased flood risk, loss of soil fertility and poorer water quality.

## 6.0 Landscape Guidelines for Luppitt Parish

### 6.1 Protect

- Skylines, retaining their distinctive and undeveloped character, particularly where they form the backdrop to views from a wide area.
- Historic buildings and their settings, identifying sympathetic alternative uses for traditional farm buildings which have become derelict.
- Archaeological sites, particularly Dumpdon Hill which is such a distinctive characteristic of Luppitt, and continue management to keep it clear of bracken and scrub.
- The distinctive and varied field patterns which are a key part of Luppitt's character.
- Tranquillity and dark skies.
- Valued views, particularly those public views identified within the *What Makes a View? Project* (those from Dumpdon Hill, from the western side of Hartridge, and looking south-east from Luppitt village).
- Floodplains, allowing them to function as naturally as possible.

### 6.2 Manage

- Farmland, including grassland and heathland sites and commons, which require careful grazing or cutting to maximise their biodiversity value.
- Woodland and copses, aiming for a diversity of age and native species, and using traditional techniques such as coppicing where appropriate. Replace lost ash where necessary, using [\*Trees, Hedges and Woodland Guidelines from Devon County Council\*](#) to identify suitable species. Identify opportunities to extend and link woodland habitats, ideally using local seed.
- Hedgerows, using traditional hedgelaying techniques where possible, retaining hedgerow trees and allowing new hedgerow trees to replace those which have been lost.
- Roadside avenues, replacing trees where necessary to ensure their continuity in the landscape.
- Wetland and river-based sites, including mires, wet woodland and river banks. Aim to keep livestock away from river banks to avoid poaching and retain good water quality. Manage and plant riverside trees such as alder to keep river banks stable.
- Paths, public rights of way and viewpoints, enabling local people and visitors to continue to access and enjoy Luppitt's landscapes.

### 6.3 Plan

- Telecommunications infrastructure to avoid breaking skylines wherever possible. For example, site masts below the ridge (two may therefore be needed- one on each side of a hill) and preferably against a treed background.
- Avoid new development at the edges of the plateaux/ top of the scarp slopes where it is particularly visible.
- Ensure any new development is carefully and sympathetically integrated into the surrounding landscape using native species planting, traditional banks, hedgerows etc.
- Be mindful of the traditional settlement pattern (clustered or linear, for example) in order to enhance the settlement form, and avoid new buildings looking out-of-place.
- Consider the relationship of buildings with their surroundings and minimise their prominence in views from the surrounding area.
- Ensure any new development is of appropriate type, scale, massing and materials, and that it is sympathetic to its surroundings. Follow building design guidance from the Blackdown Hills AONB.
- Step roofs of large farm buildings to break up their appearance, and minimise use of cut and fill in their construction.
- Avoid suburban-style property frontages.
- Minimise signage and highways measures in order to retain the traditional character of rural lanes.
- Minimise lighting on new buildings, and encourage building owners to remove or shield bright lights in yards and farm buildings.
- Avoid development which may have harmful effects on the wider environment and/or biodiversity.
- Promote Natural Flood Management measures at all stages of watercourses from springs to the main river valleys.



*An example of good practice at a property boundary, with traditional earth bank and wooden gate*