

5. B: TRIBUTARY FARMLAND

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

- 5.1. The tributary farmland occupies a large extent of the South Norfolk landscape occurring across the whole of the district. It is a broad transitional landscape type defined by the plateau uplands and river valleys, lying between 20m and 50m AOD.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Shelving and gently undulating landform** created by small tributary valleys, with tributary rivers cutting through the glacial till to create a landscape of restrained variety.
- **Transitional landscape** occupying the mid ground between the upland plateaux and the main river valley landscapes providing opportunities for long and framed views.
- **Tamed and peaceful farmland** with scattered small farm woodlands creating a quiet rural landscape.
- **Dispersed but evenly distributed settlement pattern** of small, nucleated villages and small farmsteads, occasionally with large agricultural sheds.
- **An intricate network of narrow, winding rural lanes** often bounded by banks or ditches with a sense of impenetrability.
- **Tributaries elusive** - evident but usually hidden within the landscape by topography or trees.
- **Medium to large-scale arable farmland** of cereals and sugarbeet and occasional fields of sunflowers or other crops with sparse and/or overgrown hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- **Remnant parkland**, which sometimes relates to former deer parks, plus areas of common land.
- **Mixed architectural character** comprising modern bungalow development and traditional vernacular architecture with gable ends (predominantly stepped) and other vernacular influences such as brick and flint and isolated churches.
- **High proportion of important ecological assemblages** protected as SSSIs including woodland, and wetland habitats.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

- 5.2. The majority of the Tributary Farmland is formed of the chalky Glacial Till known as Lowestoft Till. However, this glacial till has been incised by the tributary valleys,

which have deposited thin linear bands of sand and gravels and alluvial deposits. The Tributary Farmland lies predominantly between 20 and 40m AOD and this landscape type is more topographically diverse than other areas in the district because, in addition to the overall gentle incline between the plateaux and the valleys, the shallow tributary valleys have created gentle, more localised, undulations and minor watershed 'ridges' with a slightly 'domed' appearance. Despite this, overall the landscape appears fairly flat to gently sloping. At the periphery the horizons of the area are framed by views to the plateau uplands or into the valleys below. The numerous tributary streams and small upper reaches of rivers that occur in this area are responsible for much of the local character. However, because the watercourses are very small, the water is frequently not visible. Therefore, these are mostly indicated by the presence of vegetation, including lines of willow, alder and ash; by landform; and/or the occasional ford or bridge crossing. The 'wet' habitats associated with the tributary streams are often ecologically important, particularly the wet meadows and consequently this landscape type includes a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

- 5.3. In common with most of the rest of Norfolk the predominant land use is arable farming, particularly of cereals and sugar beet, which occupy large fields often with denuded boundaries. Occasionally this expansive landscape is punctuated by smaller strips of other crops such as sweetcorn or sunflowers, which add variety and colour to the landscape. The soils are Grade 4 or 3 and are a combination of stagnogley soils in the more elevated areas and argillic brown earths. Associated with the tributary valleys there are some small areas of pasture which are used for cattle grazing. However, these are infrequent and would not appear to be a consistent aspect of landscape character.
- 5.4. The open arable landscape is broken by deciduous woodland blocks, particularly following the tributary corridors, which impart a semi-wooded, semi-enclosed character to much of the area. The wooded areas include ancient woodland and areas of remnant hornbeam coppice. Hedgerows are sparse, particularly in the north of the district, but are occasionally varied and overgrown containing hawthorn, hazel, field maple, blackthorn and dog rose. There are also a small number of remnant hedgerow trees, usually oak, woodland tree belts, and tree-cover around the settlements. There was once a high amount of common land in areas near to the villages, allowing villagers the right to free grazing. Few of these commons now remain although there are some remnants within this landscape type, now generally used for rough grazing land with tethered ponies or horses.
- 5.5. The tributary farmlands were one of the first areas to be settled and by Roman times the area appears to have been extensively settled - a general trend which continued with the Saxons. By the Medieval period these areas were also the most associated with deer parks, particularly the Waveney tributaries in the south of the district. Few of these survive in any meaningful form although there are some later parklands remaining e.g. at Langley and there are a small number of country houses with associated parkland.
- 5.6. There are numerous Scheduled Ancient Monuments within this landscape type, for example at Denton, which is the only place in South Norfolk known to have had a

castle (no longer present) and also there are a number of the moated sites which are commonly found in Norfolk. Today, dispersed residential settlement is characteristic comprising small, nucleated villages and isolated farmsteads. Brick buildings, particularly with stepped gables, are the most common vernacular style of note. The farmsteads often include large industrial agricultural buildings, which can disrupt the small scale and the unity of the landscape. Likewise pylons and poles interrupt the landscape wherever they are present, notably towards the northern part of the district.

- 5.7. The roads and narrow winding lanes are often bounded with banks and ditches and because of the dispersed nature of the settlement and absence of key destinations within the area, the road network can appear dense and impenetrable.

LANDSCAPE ASSETS

✓✓✓ very characteristic/important ✓✓ characteristic/important ✓ noticeably present/important

– Asset not present or present but by virtue of extent or quality does not contribute significantly to landscape character

ASSET/LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE		NOTES
NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL:		
Nationally important ecological assemblages	✓✓	Wide variety of different habitat types
Presence of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	✓	Most SAMs in this landscape type make a limited contribution to the visible landscape
Presence of round-towered churches	✓✓	
Presence of isolated churches	✓✓	
DISTRICT/COUNTY:		
Strong regional vernacular character	✓✓	Stepped gables most characteristic
Important Views that provide sense of place	✓✓	Important views from character areas around Norwich and/or of Norfolk Broads and valley landscape
Presence of historic parkland particularly EH listed.	✓✓	
Wooded appearance	✓✓	
Distinctive valley landform	✓	
Waterways within the landscape	✓✓	Streams are a key characteristic of the landscape
Watermills present	✓	
Windmills present	✓	
Moats present.	✓✓✓	Important scheduled moats present
LOCAL:		

Pastoral Farmland with grazing animals.	✓	
Willow pollard and/or poplar-lined watercourses	✓	
Drainage ditches	✓✓	
Wide grass verges alongside roads	✓	
Good hedgerow network	✓✓	
Mature hedgerow trees	✓	
Presence of river crossings	✓	Stream crossings low-key
Sunken Lanes	✓	-
Water bodies	✓✓✓	Number of farm ponds high.
Distinctive plateau landscape	-	
Area of or including significant strategic breaks between settled areas	✓	Role general rather than specific. No particularly vulnerable areas.

See summary table for greater explanation of Landscape Assets

CHARACTER AREAS

- 5.10. The boundaries and character of these are subject to more detailed analysis and definition. The main subdivisions are anticipated to be:

Norwich Policy Area (See Volume 2 for more details)

- Tas Tributary Farmland (B1)
- Tiffey Tributary Farmland (B2)
- Rockland Tributary Farmland (B3)

Outside Norwich Policy Area

- Yare Tributary Farmland
- Chet Tributary Farmland
- Waveney Tributary Farmland



- There are some attractive villages and market towns associated with Rural River-Valleys, in particular the Waveney Valley, as demonstrated by Denmark Street, Diss.



- The river flood-plains are often quiet pastoral landscapes as demonstrated by these cows grazing the Waveney Valley near Earsham.



- Wide fords crossing the river valleys are a feature of the Rural River-Valley Landscape Type, such as this impressive ford in the Tas Valley near Shotesham.



- Sunken lanes with wide vegetated verges are characteristic of the cross-valley lanes such as this example from the Tas Valley.

Figure A: Landscape Type A - Rural River Valley



- Tributary Farmland is characterised by a flat to undulating shelving landform as demonstrated in this example close to Carleton St Peter.

- The watercourses and their valleys are not prominent features in the landscape as illustrated by the upper reaches of the River Chet at Bussey Bridge, near Chedgrave.



- Areas of parkland occur within the landscape as indicated by these impressive gate lodges related to Langley School.



- Round-towered churches occur either isolated or associated with settlement, particularly in the east of the district, such as here at Woodton.



- Large agri-industrial buildings occur within this landscape, such as Simpson's Malt near Tivetshall.

Figure B: Landscape Type B - Tributary Farmland

