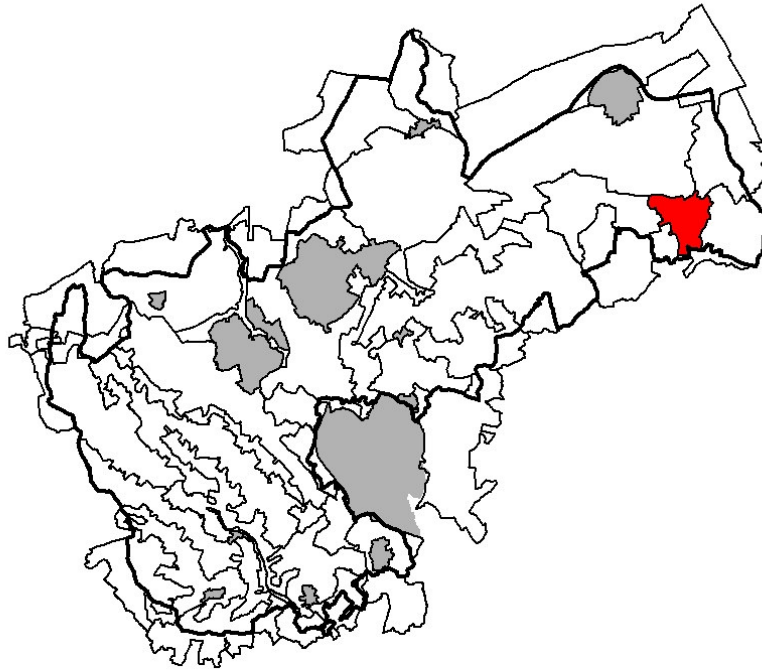


<b>location</b>	assessment	evaluation	guidelines	<b>BARKWAY PLATEAU</b>	Area <b>230</b>
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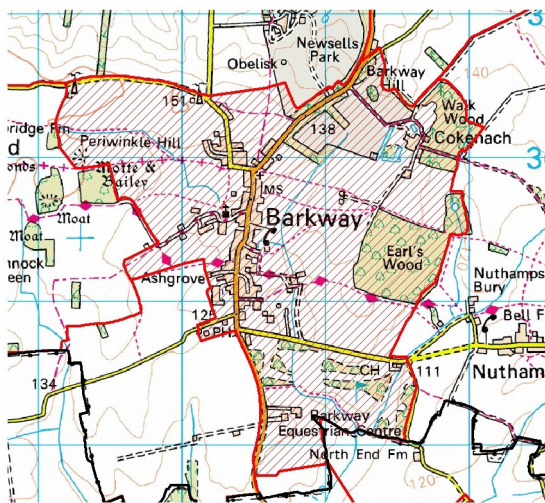
## LOCATION



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### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Character Area is focused on the settlement of Barkway which is strung out along a north-south alignment along the B1368, London Road, which runs between Barley to the northeast and Hare Street a settlement that lies within the Quin valley to the south.



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### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling landform falling gently towards the Quin valley to the south. Predominantly arable land use but with pockets of grazing land adjacent to settlements. Well wooded in the north but less so in the south. To the north regular pattern of rectilinear fields with curving boundaries set within an earlier organic pattern of lanes and primary boundaries. Field pattern breaks down to the south of the settlement with extensive open fields and remnant field boundaries.

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently rolling landform
- Arable land use
- Regular pattern of field boundaries
- Ribbon development following B1368 London Road

### DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Telecommunications masts in the north
- Equestrian centre south of the settlement

**ASSESSMENT****PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Predominantly Boulder Clay over Chalk with limited Clay-with-Flints. Damp calcareous clay soils.

**Topography**

Gently sloping plateau falling towards the south.

**Degree of slope**

Typically 1:40.

**Altitude range**

110m to 150m.

**Hydrology**

Network of local streams which often disappear into the chalk. Numerous ponds around the settlement. Artificial lakes at Cokenach Park.

**Land cover and land use**

Predominantly arable land use plus other areas of grazing land. Golf course to southeast of Barkway.

**Vegetation and wildlife**

Rokey Wood is an ancient ash and maple woodland typical of other boulder clay woods to the west. In common with these woodlands it has a varied ground flora.

An abundance of ancient oak, ash and maple woodlands are centred around the Cokenach Estate. Examples include Wynnd's Grove and Doctors Grove and Earls Wood and Walk Wood former coppice-with-standards woodland now partly ornamental.

Herb paris and various orchids are recorded from the woodlands where fallow deer are also a feature.

Barkway Meadow is an example of damp, unimproved neutral grassland. Barkway is important for pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats.

**HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES**

Earthworks, which may represent the remains of a deserted medieval village, lie at Cokenach in the northeast. A motte and bailey castle lies to the northwest at Periwinkle Hill.

The medieval settlement of Barkway lies to the southwest of Cokenach and was recorded in the Domesday Book as Berchewig. The church of St Mary Magdalene, Cokenach, dates to the 13th century. A prehistoric ring ditch lies to the northwest of Barkway.

**Field Pattern**

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of, 20th century leisure use, 18th century and later enclosure, prairie fields – post 1950s boundary loss, post 1950s enclosure. Informal medieval parkland lies to the northeast, (Cokenach designated as an Historic Park and Garden). Ancient woodland and small areas of 19th – 20th century plantation to the west and unimproved rough pasture to the south.

**Transport Pattern**

The B1368 London Road runs down the centre of the Character Area.

**Settlements and Built Form**

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by the ribbon development of Barkway following the B1368, London Rd. Barkway High Street contains several buildings of note including a late Medieval Hall House, which has a jettied gable with entrance facing the street, The Red House a large 18th century house, now two dwellings, and a rebuilt Hall House of Wealden type.

**EVALUATION**

**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

Focused on the surroundings of the settlement of Barkway. There is a transition from the large scale open landscapes in the south to the more intimate smaller scale in the north.

**Rarity & distinctiveness**

Landscape type comparatively common within the District. Cokenach parkland in the north provides local distinctiveness.

**VISUAL IMPACT**

Local development and agricultural buildings feature at a local scale.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

Well covered by network of lanes, tracks and rights of way.

**COMMUNITY VIEWS**

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

**LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS**

LC2	Landscape Conservation Area
GD 1906	Cokenach

**EVALUATION**

**CONDITION**

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Widespread
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Interrupted
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	Low

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**Matrix Score:** **Moderate**

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**ROBUSTNESS**

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Apparent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Partial
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Frequent

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**Matrix Score:** **Moderate**

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<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	<b>MODERATE</b>	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	<b>POOR</b>	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		<b>WEAK</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>STRONG</b>
		<b>ROBUSTNESS</b>		

## EVALUATION

### INHERENT LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

#### Landscape Character Sensitivities

- The historic settlement pattern in the main settlement of Barkway is characterised by ribbon development along the B1368 and would be sensitive to inappropriate or unsympathetic development and any form of development not in scale with the village
- Traditional materials of black weatherboarding, painted render or pargeting, flint infill panels and thatch are common to buildings throughout the Character Area
- Abundant ancient oak, ash and maple woodlands around the Cokenach, which are vulnerable to lack of management, removal or introduction of non-native species
- Cokenach historic parkland is a registered garden that falls partly within this Character Area, which could be at risk from development pressure and inconsistent management
- Several areas of historic interest, particularly Periwinkle Hill motte and bailey castle and prehistoric earthworks, are vulnerable to loss
- Good public access through numerous rights of way, the Hertfordshire Way, lanes and tracks
- A small number of incongruous elements have been introduced into the Character Area, including telecommunication masts along 'The Joint' on the northern boundary of the Character Area and palisade fencing around a sewage works, which currently act as detractors

Overall Barkway Plateau is considered to be of **moderate sensitivity**. The settlement focused Character Area has a traditional ribbon development and a number of historic features that would be sensitive to the introduction of unsympathetic elements.

#### Visual Sensitivities

- Views within the Character Area are generally focused towards Barkway village
- Closer to the village views are more enclosed as the landscape is of a smaller scale
- The skyline when looking towards the Character Area from the north has already been in part degraded by telecommunications masts

In visual terms, Barkway Plateau is considered to be of **moderate sensitivity**. Views within the Character Area are relatively enclosed. However, some incongruous features have impinged on views into the Character Area.

#### LANDSCAPE VALUE

Overall Barkway Plateau is considered to be of **moderate landscape value**. Aspects of particular value within Barkway Plateau are the minimal number of incongruous elements, the uninterrupted views, the relative tranquillity and the presence of vernacular settlement that contributes to a distinctive sense of place.

**EVALUATION****CAPACITY TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT****Large urban extensions and new settlements (>5ha)**

This type of development would not be appropriate within this Character Area, due to its rural and small scale nature. It would introduce elements that would alter the character and affect the existing key characteristics such as the historic ribbon development form and the small scale regular pattern of field boundaries. Increased housing development would be likely to affect the existing minor roads, which could erode the character of the landscape. Extensive development could also disrupt the rights of way network and could reduce accessibility to the countryside.

The landscape capacity for major urban extensions or new settlements is considered to be low.

**Smaller urban extensions (<5ha)**

This type of development would not be entirely appropriate within this Character Area, due to its rural and undeveloped character. Visual impacts could be moderate, due to the enclosed and focused views currently experienced. Some small scale expansion of Barkway, carefully designed and in keeping with the existing character of the village, could possibly be accommodated.

The landscape capacity for small urban extensions is considered to be moderate to low.

**Major transport developments/improvements**

This type of development would not be appropriate within this Character Area, due to the largely rural character of most routes at present. Upgrading of existing roads and lanes could erode the character of the landscape. Additional traffic would also affect the peace and tranquillity of the Character Area.

The landscape capacity for major transport developments/improvements is considered to be low.

**Commercial/warehouse estates**

This type of large scale development would not be appropriate in this character area. There are not currently any large scale developments of this type within the area. Existing minor roads would be inappropriate for any significant larger volumes of traffic and/or HGVs. Any upgrading of the existing network would cause damage to the landscape character. Extensive development could also disrupt the rights of way network and reduce accessibility to the countryside.

The landscape capacity for commercial/warehouse estates is considered to be low.

**Individual large/bulky buildings**

There may be some limited capacity for sympathetically located and designed individual large buildings, particularly if they were of an agricultural character and in keeping with the rural character. However, large buildings, if not carefully located, would erode the rural and intimate character of Barkway village.

The landscape capacity for individual large/bulky buildings is considered to be low to moderate.

**Large scale open uses**

The small scale of Barkway Plateau would make it more difficult to accommodate large scale 'open' uses without potential loss of mature vegetation in the form of hedgerows and woodland blocks. This would not be in keeping with the rural character of the area and could introduce new elements that would conflict with the existing characteristics. The minor roads are unlikely to have capacity to accommodate development or would need considerable upgrading to be able to accept larger volumes of traffic and/or HGVs, which would further dilute the landscape character. Extensive development could also disrupt the rights of way network and reduce accessibility to the countryside.

The landscape capacity for large scale 'open' uses is considered to be low.

**EVALUATION**

**Mineral extraction/waste disposal**

This Character Area is currently relatively rural in appearance with small scale linear development. Whilst some small scale mineral extraction could be accommodated with careful design and mitigation measures, larger scale extraction or waste disposal would not be in keeping with the character of Barkway. The minor roads would need considerable upgrading to be able to accept larger HGVs, which could further dilute the landscape character. Larger scale extraction could also disrupt the rights of way network and reduce accessibility to the countryside. Restoration proposals for any consented schemes should be mainly at grade and include for additional planting in character with existing patterns.

The landscape capacity for mineral extraction is considered to be low to moderate. Waste disposal would be a problem in all character areas due to the presence of aquifers.

**Incremental small scale development**

There may be some capacity for carefully located and designed small scale developments within the Character Area, particularly if they were of an agricultural nature and in keeping with the rural character. However, due to the existing small scale character any proposals would need clear justification to avoid the erosion of the contained character of Barkway Plateau.

The landscape capacity for incremental small scale developments is considered to be low to moderate.

**Utilities developments e.g. masts, pylons, wind turbines**

There are currently a small number of detractors in the areas. These include existing telecommunications masts, which are visible on the skyline in views into the Character Area from the north. Further utilities developments or structures such as masts or wind turbines are likely to have a major impact on the rural character of Barkway Plateau. Large scale tall elements such as these would be highly visible within the Character Area, as well as in surrounding Character Areas.

The landscape capacity for utilities developments is considered to be low to moderate.

**GUIDELINES****STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE****Strategy: Improve and Conserve****Landscape management guidelines**

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage the planting of new ash and maple woodlands and management of existing
- Encourage the development of new marshland/fen habitats on boulder clay
- Encourage the development and implementation of landscape management plans for historic parkland at Cokenach

**Built development guidelines**

- Conserve the traditional character of Barkway village, ensuring that any development within or located on the edge of the village uses appropriate vernacular materials and features
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Encourage the planting of appropriate broadleaved woodland and vegetation to mitigate new development
- Retain the rural character of Barkway Plateau, ensuring that any new development is appropriately sited and of a scale, form and style appropriate to the Character Area
- Avoid the location of new development in visual intrusive locations, such as on the edges of the plateau where it would be visible on the currently largely undeveloped skyline
- Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing woodland blocks or hedgerows
- Conserve Cokenach
- Ensure that lighting associated with new development does not create additional urbanising influences on the character Area