

Area of LDU within AONB: 67.8 hectares

% of LDU within AONB: 100%



Date surveyed: 4 March 2010

Survey points: SS238225, SS236227, SS234228, SS230231, SS228232, SS227233

Summary of landscape character

A small, steep-sided combe stretching south-east from the coast at Speke’s Mill Mouth. Narrow wooded valleys characterise the east of the combe, whilst woodland persists in the centre surrounding valley-bottom pasture before opening out into scrub/grass-covered slopes in the west, where a riparian strip traces the line of the stream to the coast. Footpaths cover most of the area, and levels of tranquillity are high throughout.

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

LANDFORM / TOPOGRAPHY

Landform description	A small steep-sided combe running inland from the coast, with a wider valley bottom in the west narrowing into three small valleys at the south-eastern end.
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LAND USE AND PATTERNS

Agriculture	<i>Main agricultural land use</i>	<i>Other agricultural land use(s)</i>	
	Rough pasture along the valley bottom in the centre/west, with parts of more intensive pasture fields overlapping onto the upper slopes throughout.	Some encroachment of arable onto the upper slopes further east.	
Field patterns and boundaries	<i>Field patterns and origins</i>	<i>Size (note variations)</i>	<i>Boundary type / description</i>
	Fields of medieval origin occur along the valley bottom in the centre, while the edges of predominantly medieval fields cross over into the LDU along	Medium-sized pasture fields.	Post-and-wire fencing in front of scrub / woodland.

	the upper slopes. Unenclosed rough grazing land characterises the west of the LDU.		
Other land uses (e.g. recreation)	Docton Mill gardens – small ornamental gardens set within woodland in the centre of the LDU.		
WOODLAND AND SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS			
Trees / woodland cover	<i>Size and distribution within landscape</i>		<i>Type and species(broadleaved / conifer)</i>
	Broadleaved woodland dominates the narrow upper valleys and encloses pasture fields across the central section, resulting in a well-wooded character.		Oak-dominated broadleaved woodland.
Semi-natural habitats	<i>Description and location within landscape</i>		
	Unimproved grassland along the valley bottom in the central/western half of the LDU (including areas of Culm grassland), plus internationally-important areas of maritime scrub, grassland and heath in the west (part of the Marsland to Clovelly Coast SAC & SSSI), along with the woodland itself (including riparian wet woodland), with Docton Wood in the south east designated as a County Wildlife Site.		
SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT			
Settlement pattern	<i>Settlement size, type, density and relationship to landscape</i>		
	Sparsely settled, with dispersed housing located along the valley bottom in the central/eastern part of the LDU.		
Transport pattern (including Public Rights of Way)	<i>Road pattern, character and relationship to settlement / landscape</i>		
	A few rural roads cross the combe in the east, otherwise the western part of the area is accessible along its length by public rights of way.		
Local vernacular styles and materials	<i>Predominant traditional building materials</i>	<i>Any local variations</i>	<i>Other built features reflecting vernacular</i>
	Whitewash walls with grey slate roofs and thatch at Lymbridge (e.g. Speke's Valley cottage).	Weatherboarding (e.g. Warrior's Lodge), plus exposed stone (e.g. at Docton Mill).	Traditional stone bridges e.g. at Docton Mill
Modern development styles / materials	Creamy-yellow render occurs on some modern buildings/restorations.		
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT			
Key historic features visible in the	<i>Description</i>		
	Docton Mill (Grade II listed) can trace its origins back to Saxon times,		

landscape	probably before the Norman Conquest, while traditional stone bridges are an important feature, as is Milford Mill.		
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>
Perceptual qualities (description)	Views in the west are afforded to the coast and back inland over the combe and its southern finger (of open grass/scrub slopes), whilst more limited views in the centre occur through woodland over valley bottom pasture.	694 (coast) 684 (surrounding elevated land)	694 684

LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Number	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
NATURE CONSERVATION		
SAC	1	20.73%
SSSI	1	20.73%
County Wildlife Sites	2	13%
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Listed Buildings	4 (grade II)	

UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

UK BAP Priority Habitat	Area (ha)	% of LDU land area that is within the AONB
Lowland heathland	13.97	20.61%
Maritime cliff and slope	13.97	20.61%

KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING LANDSCAPE CONDITION

Perceptual qualities	Levels of tranquillity remain high throughout the area.
Views	Views are largely unspoilt, with a traditional character retained throughout the combe.
Land use	Some edges of arable fields cross over into the LDU boundary on upper slopes in the east (though this does little to affect the predominant character of the combe).
Field patterns	Parts of modern enlarged fields occur in a couple of instances on the upper slopes, but this does not have a significant impact on landscape character.
Field boundaries	N/A
Trees and woodland	The designation of Docton Wood as a County Wildlife Site suggests it is in favourable management, with no obvious signs to the contrary noted in the field for undesignated woodland.
Semi-natural habitats	Continued extensive grazing is required to maintain rough pasture along the floodplain and in the west.
Settlement and development	N/A
Local vernacular	Creamy-yellow render is found in a couple of instances on more modern houses, though is not an overtly prevalent feature.