Landscape Character Type 18:

Upland Footslopes
LANDSCAPE TYPE18: UPLAND FOOTSLOPES.
Rising ground in East Cheshire

UFS1: Mow Cop
UFS2: Dane Bridge
UFS3: Higher Disley
UFS4: Kettleshulme
UFS5: Langley
UFS6: Kerridge

Key Characteristics:

- Upland inclines and undulations, steep slopes c100 – 370m AOD
- Wooded steep sided stream and river valleys – large proportion of which is ancient woodland
- Small surviving patches of heathland
- Dense network of streams and tributaries
- Dispersed settlement - farms and houses
- Stone built houses, structures and boundary walls
- Gritstone exposures in quarries
- Medieval field patterns with hedgerow boundaries surviving on the lower slopes
- Areas of semi-improved and unimproved neutral and acid grassland
- Extensive views dependent upon the location
- High rainfall – reservoirs, open and covered
- Follies and distinctive land marks
General Description:

This type is an upland area defined by its steep slopes. It provides an intermediate zone between the *Higher Farms & Woods* type and the greater elevations of the *Upland Fringe*. It is in many ways a buffer between the urban areas e.g. Macclesfield, Bollington and Poynton and the more isolated greater upland massif.

Typical features include quarries and reservoirs – both exploiting the natural resources of the area – sandstone and gritstone and high rainfall. Most quarries are now disused but leave a distinctive pattern in the landscape as well as providing important wildlife habitats.

Both medieval and post-medieval enclosure is evident with hedgerow and dry stone wall boundaries. The latter is typical of late enclosure from the moor.

At the higher altitudes there are fabulous views of the surrounding landscape. This type also has a number of significant landmarks – White Nancy and Mow Cop, which can be seen from a great distance.

Visual Character:

This is an upland landscape characterised by undulating slopes and steep-sided valleys with a scale ranging from small to medium, dependent upon field size and local variations in field boundaries. Stone walls can be found throughout the area but hedgerows form the visually dominant boundaries in most locations due to their height and the abundance of hedgerow trees. Many areas appear to be extensively wooded due to a combination of intact, closely spaced hedgerows and numerous linear woodlands following minor valleys and water courses. In such areas views can be severely restricted by trees, high hedges and the local topography to create a small-scale landscape with a strong sense of enclosure. Elsewhere larger fields and more open slopes can provide extensive views out to the adjacent lower lying areas. The extent and availability of views reflects the location of this type at the transition between landscape types of differing topography. In particular the more elevated vantage points on west-facing slopes enjoy far-reaching panoramic views over the *Higher Farms & Woods* type to the *East Lowland Plain* beyond. Views to the east can include dominant skylines in adjacent landscape types at higher altitudes such as *Moorland Plateau* and *Upland Footslopes*.

A number of reservoirs provide points of interest in the valley bottoms. Certain locations reflect their close proximity to urban areas, with an increase in the density of development, adaptation and conversion of farm buildings and changes in land use to former agricultural land. However in general terms the landscape has a very rural feel, with small and winding country lanes connecting isolated farmsteads and settlements.
**Natural Influences:**

This type is underlain by a complex banding of sandstones e.g. Milnrow and Helsby formation; lower and middle Pennine coal measures, shale, conglomerations of mudstone, siltstone, millstone grit; and sandstone e.g. the Morridge Formation.

Soils are typical brown earths, which despite the high rainfall are well drained given the underlying geology. This is suited to grassland with dairying on the lower slopes, rising to sheep pasture on the higher ground. Topography ranges from c 100 – 370m AOD, one of the highest elevations being The Cloud, which is a distinctive landmark in eastern Cheshire, from which extensive views of the county and beyond are possible.

The character type is defined by upland slopes including steep-sided, densely wooded river and stream valleys. Woodland in the type, which is of a greater density than the county average, includes a high proportion of ancient woodland – which is predominantly riparian, such as in the Dane Valley and along Clough Brook. Indeed there is a dense network of rivers and streams in this character type. Rowan and birch predominate on the higher elevations, oak on the lower slopes.

Unimproved and semi-improved acid and neutral grassland is a feature of the type, but is not a dominant characteristic. The largest area of unimproved acid grassland is on Kerridge Hill where the pasture is herb-rich with some uncommon species such as adder’s tongue and moon wort.

There is a light scatter of isolated areas of heathland across the type, e.g. on Bakestonedale Moor and at Kettleshulme Quarries. Typical species include heather and wavy hair grass. Due to the inevitable concentration of wildlife sites on areas of undulation topography that have escaped agricultural improvement, this landscape type includes 60 SBIs.

Many of the quarries in this type have fallen into disuse and have subsequently become important wildlife habitats e.g. Billingsley Hill.

There are also a number of geological sites that have been designated as Regionally Important Geological & Geomorphological Sites (RIGGs), the largest of which are the quarries on Kerridge Hill.

**Cultural Influences:**

This character area was once part of the extensive Royal Forest of Macclesfield which effectively came to an end with the acquisition by Lord Derby in 1684 of all the grazing and pasture which he had previously rented. Macclesfield was one of four large forests existing in Cheshire in the medieval period (Delamere, Mondrem and Wirral were the others). The medieval forest of Macclesfield covered a vast portion of Cheshire, considerably larger than the coniferous plantations that today are referred to as ‘Macclesfield Forest’.

*Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment - November 2008*
Settlement within this character type is predominantly dispersed with occasional hamlets and small villages. In close proximity are large urban centres – Stockport, Bollington, Macclesfield and Congleton, which have an impact upon the character type. From the higher elevations for example, they form distinctive aspects of the surrounding views.

Quarries are a common feature throughout this type. The underlying gritstone has proved to be a valuable building material and both disused and active quarries are evident. Two large areas of quarries are Kerridge and Billingsley.

Fields are a combination of medieval and post-medieval enclosure e.g. new intakes from the moor. They are small-medium (up to 8ha) and irregular to regular in form. Field boundaries comprise hawthorn hedgerows and dry stone walls.

This is an area with a high annual rainfall and given the low population levels of this upland area, it became an attractive location for the construction of reservoirs. Across the type are a number of reservoirs e.g. Bosley as well as covered reservoirs.

The neighbouring towns have a rich cotton and silk industry past and this has in parts spilled over into this character type. As such there are a handful of mills that survive today e.g. Ingersley Vale Mill near Rainow. Other industrial sites include coal pits near Pott Shrigley and Disley.

Canals and railways cross the character type. Some major roads e.g. the A6 also intersect the type but mainly this has a minor road network.

The upland nature of this type with steep sided slopes lends itself to the construction of follies. In this type there are two – Mow Cop and White Nancy, both built for affluent families to be visited from their neighbouring halls. Today these sites provide striking land marks and form part of the identity of these areas. They are both accessible to the general public and provide popular visitor locations, not least because of the views of the surrounding area.

The visibility afforded by the upland is also utilised by prehistoric features such as the scheduled Bridestones Neolithic chambered cairn.

**Issues affecting the Upland Footslopes landscape character type**

1. **Continued pressure for mineral extraction:** Current and future operations may present a threat to habitats and the historic environment but also provide opportunities for habitat creation.

2. **Wind Turbines are likely to target this area** given the elevated topography and average wind speeds
3. **Recreational pressures:** This type includes very popular recreational areas with visitor pressure at certain locations, leading to loss of tranquillity, loss or fragmentation of habitats, erosion of road verges, visual intrusion of car-parks or stationary vehicles and demand for additional facilities.

4. **Increased demand for visitor facilities** such as holiday cottages, caravan parks and holiday cabin developments.

5. **Loss of historic field pattern** due to decline in hedgerow management and disrepair of dry stone walls, with resulting increase in use of fencing.

6. **On-going decline in traditional woodland management practices** leading to under management of farm woodlands, coverts and copses leading to general deterioration. Many hedgerow trees over-mature and in decline.

7. **Ancient and semi-natural woodlands are often inappropriately managed:** Over the years some areas may have been felled and replanted with non-native conifers. Mismanagement can prevent natural regeneration, e.g. stock grazing. Some sites have had inappropriate species introduced, such as rhododendron.

8. **Reduction, fragmentation and deterioration of habitats:** Loss of ponds through drainage and in-fill plus nutrient run-off from surrounding farmland. Decline in species rich hedgerows at some locations. Intensification of grassland management leading to loss of species-rich acid grassland.

9. **Erosion of built environment character through incremental development:** This may lead to loss of historic buildings and vernacular character; the suburbanisation of rural properties and their curtilage; pressure for expansion of existing settlement, ribbon development and in-fill.

10. **Standardisation of roads:** Upgrading of lanes and minor roads leading to increasingly suburban character of the countryside.
UFS1: Mow Cop Character Area.
Including Roe Park woods, Cheshire Close & the Cloud.

This character area extends along the county boundary from The Cloud where it reaches a maximum elevation of 343m AOD, south as far as Mere Lake.

Both the Cloud and Mow Cop are very prominent hill and ridge features dominating the lower lying character areas of Lower Farms & Woods and Higher Farms & Woods immediately to the west. This upland landscape is characterised by strongly undulating slopes and steep-sided valleys and exhibits a range of scales. There are a number of intimate small-scale wooded valley bottoms and elsewhere there are medium-scale landscapes with a strong element of enclosure provided by woodland and high hedgerows. By contrast large scale landscapes are found on the elevated open slopes, with weak field boundaries and very extensive panoramic views. Views from the Mow Cop area extend over the Cheshire Plain as far as the Sandstone Ridge and the Welsh Hills beyond. Vantage points on the Cloud enjoy views in all directions over lower ground in both Cheshire and Staffordshire. In the north east these views extend to the rising ground of the Upland Footslopes landscape type and the even higher ground of the Upland Fringe landscape type, crowned by the Croker Hill telecommunication mast.

There are a number of rock outcrops along the length of the gritstone ridge, at Rainow Hill, Congleton Edge and at Mow Cop. In some areas the ridge is quite densely wooded. Large woodland blocks of oak occur on the slopes below Mow Cop, with birch, holly and rowan appearing on the high ground.

Settlement includes the small villages of Mow Cop and Timbersbrook and hamlets along the ridge. Generally the area has a strong rural character with narrow winding lanes linking dispersed settlements. Stone structures are typical, with dry-stone field boundaries at the higher levels. However in certain localities the close proximity of the Congleton urban area, and to a lesser extent Mount Pleasant, has had a strong influence upon landscape character.

Fields are small-medium (up to 8ha) and comprise a mix of medieval fields and post-medieval enclosure. The latter is the result of enclosure of the former open moor. Unimproved pasture is enclosed in dry stone walls and hawthorn hedges. On the higher slopes in the south, field boundaries have been replaced with post and wire fences, but neglected stone walls combined with poor grazing to convey an atmosphere of a deteriorating landscape.

Limeworks and coal pits are features of the area’s industrial past, e.g. air shafts and disused pits located in the vicinity of Limekiln Wood. There is also a covered reservoir. A section of the Macclesfield Branch of the Trent and Mersey Canal passes through the character area. The South Cheshire Way and the Staffordshire Gritstone Trail intersect at Mow Cop.
Roe Park includes an area of broad-leaved ancient woodland designated as a SSSI for its large size, acidic heath ground flora and woodland community types rare in the county. Gorse scrub, acid grassland and heath are located along the ridge. There are five areas of dry heath around the summit of Mow Cop and two areas of heathland mosaic further down the ridge towards Dales Green that are included in an SBI. All are on thin soil associated with the gritstone ridge that runs from here to Congleton Edge. Congleton Edge is a gritstone outcrop that has been modified by numerous small quarries – now disused. Vegetation is typical of upland heath with developing birch and sessile oak woodland. Species include cow-wheat, bilberry, heather and crowberry.

The Cloud is an open access area that is in the guardianship of the National Trust, the summit being covered with the largest area of heathland in Cheshire. There is also a plantation of scots pine. Boundaries and earthworks on The Cloud have been identified as potentially belonging to field systems, their date is undetermined but this is likely to have been a place of activity since prehistory. There has been extensive gritstone quarrying in the area. The Old Man of Mow is a pillar of stone that was left as a remnant of a former quarry, today it provides a striking land mark as does the Mow Cop Folly. This is an early example of a castle folly built in 1754 by Randle Wilbraham to be viewed and visited from Rode Hall.

A disused flooded quarry is located at Limekiln Farm – its steep sides and nearby spoil heaps are densely wooded. Sycamore, ash and mature hawthorn dominate the canopy. Ground flora includes cowslips, bluebells and celandines. Patches of semi-improved and unimproved grassland survive on the slopes such as at Cheshire’s Close where there is acidic, semi-improved upland grass dominated by wet rushy fields.

An outstanding example of a Neolithic monument in the northwest is the Bridestones chambered tomb, located close to the county boundary. This monument was once 100 metres long, but much of it was destroyed when stones were removed for road building, leaving the chamber inside.
**UFS2: Dane Bridge Character Area.**
*Including Shell Brook and Winkle Grange.*

This small character area extends from Lower Minnend in the west to Dane Bridge in the east. It is an area of small-medium scale landscape under a combination of woodland and pasture, occupying a predominantly south facing slope, rising in elevation from 186m AOD on the county boundary to 330m AOD in the north.

The wooded River Dane, with its flat valley bottom, provides the southern boundary of the character area, and its tributaries together make-up an extensive drainage network in the area. Two ancient woodlands lie on the steep slopes of the River Dane valley. Timberhurst comprises mostly wych elm and a diverse ground flora, separated from Little Barnfield Wood by an area of scrub and bracken. In the south of the character area, a vast mosaic of ancient woodland and unimproved acid grassland cloak the steep valleys of the Shell Brook and its tributary streams. Much of this is young trees due to war-time felling; however there is a broad diversity of species. It is of great ornithological interest and an important refuge for approximately 50 red deer. A significant proportion of this riparian woodland is ancient and is designated as an SBI.

The range in altitude accounts for a variety of visual characteristics. The Dane Valley and its tributaries are strongly enclosed by high ground and steep, wooded slopes, preventing any inter-visibility with surrounding areas. By contrast, more elevated locations amongst the fields towards the northern edge of the character area enjoy extensive views out over the surrounding countryside. The higher locations are characterised by pasture enclosed by dry-stone walls, isolated farmsteads and extensive views. The higher *Upland Fringe* landscape type can be seen in a number of directions. The open ground of Sutton Common and the Croker Hill communication mast are visible on the skyline to the north-west, whilst views to the north-east extend into the Wildboarclough valley and beyond to the *Moorland Plateau* type. The higher ground to the south lies outside the area in the Staffordshire Peak District.

In the east this character area includes the village of Wincle, with attractive vernacular buildings in local stone, connected to the surrounding areas by narrow tortuous lanes between dry stone walls.
UFS3: Higher Disley Character Area.
Including Lane Ends & Gritstone Trail.

This small character area is located in the far north-eastern corner of the
county. The county boundary follows the River Goyt, parallel to this runs the
Peak Forest Canal. There is an increase in elevation – rising from c 120m at
the county boundary to 350m AOD in the south of the area.

Much of the area exhibits a very strong urban influence associated with the
settlement of Disley. The concentration of major roads and railways in the
Goyt Valley has had an inevitable adverse impact upon the landscape.
However areas of open pasture can be found within a relatively short distance
of the developed areas. Visually dominant stone walls, enclosing sloping
fields of varying size, combine with modest stone buildings on the edge of the
settlement to create a very distinctive character. As altitude is gained the
views become more distant and panoramic. From the elevated ground in the
south of the character area there are views down onto the rooftops of Disley
and Newtown, and views along the Goyt Valley in both directions. New Mills
is very prominent to the north east. The nearby urban centres feature
prominently in all distant views, as do the high moors of the Pennines further
north. The Manchester conurbation is visible to the west with High Lane in
the foreground.

Fields are small to medium and regular in form and relate to post-medieval
planned enclosure, with some surviving patches of medieval enclosure. Field
boundaries comprise dry stone walls and hedgerows.

In the south west elements of the adjoining Upland Estate landscape type are
visible. The monument at Cage Hill, set upon a hill top within the grounds of
Lyme Park, creates a local landmark. The Gritstone Trail recreational
footpath lies close to the southern boundary and provides views of two
reservoirs that lie beyond the character area boundary.

Two railway lines run east-west through the area. One line includes the Disley
Tunnel and is defined on the ground surface by air shafts. The A6 runs
through the area, other roads are mainly minor. The Peak Forest Canal
passes through the area in the north. Settlement within the area is largely
dispersed, with a concentration at Lane Ends. Building materials include
timber and local stone.
There are many wooded areas e.g. the large broadleaved Knat-Holes Wood which is a semi-natural deciduous wood with alder scattered throughout and unimproved grassland to the south-west. At Stanleyhall Wood on the county boundary there is pedunculate oak with a dense understorey of holly and rhododendron and ancient woodland indicator species are thinly scattered.

At Redmoor Farm is an area of unimproved grassland, which covers an old coal mining site. Species include birdsfoot trefoil, bitter vetch, devil’s-bit-scabious and pignut. There are also two large hay meadows, which are mostly semi-improved neutral with some unimproved acid grassland.

There are isolated, small patches of heathland that survive in this character area such as at Jackson’s Edge Quarry and Disley Golf Course.

There are a number of disused quarries, a reservoir near Moorwood Farm and also a covered reservoir. There were a small number of mills in this area in the 19th century; the site of a former cotton mill is now Disley Paper Mill.

The Peak Forest Canal is designated as an SBI, given the diverse and varied flora on either side of the tow path. Marginal vegetation includes yellow iris, greater tussock sedge and gipsy wort.
UFS4: Kettleshulme Character Area.  
Including Holm Wood, Browside Clough & Lumbhole Mill

This small character area includes the small village of Kettleshulme, with its many small-scale stone built structures, and a selection of dispersed farms on the valley floor and surrounding steep-sided slopes of Todd Brook at an elevation of 200–310m AOD.

The village of Kettleshulme lies on low, gently sloping ground within an isolated valley surrounded on all sides by higher and steeper ground. The visual character of the area is dictated by this dominant landform and use of the local gritstone in vernacular buildings and structures. The surrounding farmland is typified by small fields with high hedges and numerous hedgerow trees and there are a number of very narrow, steep and meandering lanes. Fields are predominantly small and irregular and semi-regular in form and are dated to the medieval period. These are likely to be the fields associated with the settlement of Kettleshulme, and are located on the lower more easily cultivated slopes.

There a number of locally dominant woodlands on steeper ground or following drainage lines, particularly along the western boundary. Many views from lower elevations are framed or filtered by trees, but in general, as altitude is gained there is an increase in the size of field enclosure and a reduction in tree cover. This is allied to an increase in the perceived scale of the landscape, progressing from the intimate small scale environs of the village to the large open fields in the outer reaches of the character area. A number of properties and farmsteads occupy prominent positions on the upper slopes, often sheltered by a stand of trees.

In the south and west the surrounding skyline becomes more elevated and much more dominant. This high level landscape is noticeably different from that of the valley floor and lower slopes as it is occupied by the large-scale landscape of the adjacent Upland Fringe type. This type is represented by large, regular open fields and low, unobtrusive field boundaries of stone walls and wire fences. The contrast between the two landscape types is easily observed from the lower ground and forms an essential component of the area's visual character. Within this neighbouring landscape there is a noticeable reduction in tree cover as altitude is gained, with the highest ridges being completely devoid of trees. To the south the skyline outcrop of Windgather Rocks forms a high level landmark on the county boundary.
There are two areas of broadleaved, ancient woodland located on steep slopes at Lumbhole and Holme Woods – both are designated as SBIs. There are also areas of unimproved acid and neutral grassland such as at Cornhill Farm and Cliff Farm where there is a large acreage of unimproved grassland, both acid and neutral on both sides of a small valley close to Whaley Brook. Also on adjacent south facing slopes is a traditional managed hay meadow with a range of species including hay rattle, meadow buttercup and yellow oat grass. Pasture near the disused Lumbhole Mill is species rich in places and there are small areas of neutral grassland and scrub.

At Greenhead Farm is a traditionally managed hay meadow and the main part of this contains yellow rattle, meadow buttercup, tufted vetch and a wide variety of grasses. There is also a small area of exposed rock and a more herb rich area associated with this which contains species such as harebell, eyebright and devil’s-bit-scabious.

There is a surviving area of heathland on a very steep north-facing slope around the headwaters of Gnathole Brook. The steepest slope supports heather and bilberry heath, further down slope pasture is acid and unimproved. Flora is diverse close to the stream where marsh violet is locally abundant. Breeding birds include redstart and the invertebrate life is rich and varied.

Of interest is the enigmatic murder stone – a solitary standing stone that is thought to date to the Bronze Age. It stands on a long low hill and is visible from all directions except the north east. A Bronze Age round barrow is located near Charles Head Farm, which appears to be in good condition and is protected as a scheduled monument. Prehistoric flint scrapers have been found in the vicinity of the barrow. A Bronze Age cairn stands on Reed Hill.

Lumbhole Mill just to the north of Kettleshulme was a stone built mill used for cotton spinning. It was rebuilt in 1835 following destruction by fire, and the present structure is listed Grade II*.
UFS5: Langley Character Area.
Including the Hollins & Whitemoor Hill.

This character area extends from the Macclesfield-Buxton Road in the north as far south as Bosley Reservoir and Lower Minnend, with elevations up to 320m AOD (to the south of Langley).

The west facing slopes in the south of this character area form a distinctive component in many views from adjoining areas and more distant parts of Cheshire. These steep, partially wooded slopes appear to rise up from a gently undulating agricultural landscape and are widely perceived as the transition to the high ground of the Peak District. The topography is much more complex than it would appear from a distance. A number of minor valleys and past quarrying activities combine to produce a complex mix of scarred landscapes, steep wooded slopes and relatively open pasture land.

In the north the settlements of Langley and Sutton-Lane-Ends are served by a network of tortuous narrow lanes lined with stone walls. This is a relatively small-scale, enclosed landscape with a high density of trees and tall hedgerows. The walls and the many small-scale, stone built properties make an important contribution to the visual character of the area. To the north the high ground of Teggs Nose forms a recognisable landmark on this very dominant skyline. Further to the east the conspicuous conifer plantations of Macclesfield Forest define the edge of the character area.

In the centre of the area the Lowerhouse Valley penetrates further east into the higher ground of the Upland Fringe landscape type. At lower levels on the valley floor there are abundant hedges and tree-lined streams and a number of isolated farmsteads are quite prominent. On the intermediate slopes a number of individual properties are noticeable, often surrounded by a stand of protective trees

Settlement is dispersed with a number of nucleated villages – Langley and Dane Bridge. These are characterised by steep roads, stone built houses and stone flagged roadways. In the immediate vicinity are the towns of Bollington and Macclesfield.

Fields are enclosed with dry stone walls and hawthorn hedges. The lower slopes to the east of Macclesfield, surrounding Sutton Common comprise small to medium (up to 8ha) semi-regular and irregular fields that date back to the medieval period. These were the cultivatable areas on the valley floors and lower slopes. On Macclesfield Common fields date to the 18th and 19th century and are mainly regular in shape. Overall, boundary types are a mix of hedgerows and dry stone walls.
West and north of Gawsworth Common is Ratcliffe wood, a large broadleaved woodland which is partially ancient. Gawsworth Common itself has unimproved grassland and on Whitemoor Hill to the west is a small area of heathland. This is also an area of extensive quarrying – rock outcrops occur along the hillside.

Two RIGGS occur in this area: Rough Hay Quarry and a section of the Harrop Brook, on Gawsworth Common. Small patches of heath survive on Cliff Hill to the east of Macclesfield.

There are numerous reservoirs in this character area – the long, thin Bosley Reservoir c 1km in length, is located at the foot of a steep slope and partially surrounded by trees: wych elm, wild cherry and willows. It is also important for neutral grassland. It has a varied bird community including a wintering population of goosanders. Bottoms reservoir and Teggs Nose reservoir are located at the base of the slope that leads up to Teggs Nose Country Park.

The Congleton and Macclesfield area is renowned for its textile industry heritage. Mills were once a common sight in this area and a number survive such as Ingersley Vale Mill and Gin Clough Mill, both former water powered textile mills. Of interest is a moated site and annexe at Ridge Hall, which is reputedly the highest moat in Cheshire.
UFS6    Kerridge Character Area.  
Including Stypson Park, Pott Shrigley & Rainow

This character area extends from the south of Disley through Kerridge south and east as far as the Macclesfield-Buxton Road. This ranges from 160m AOD up to 280m AOD at Nab Head.

This area has a complex landform that is reflected in widely differing visual characteristics. There are number of sharp ridges which provide a distinctive skyline to many vistas and dominate the surrounding lower ground. Kerridge Ridge is perhaps the best known because of the conspicuous landmark of White Nancy at its northern end. This wooded ridge is very prominent in views from the lower ground of the Higher Farms & Woods landscape type to the west. The ridge itself provides extensive and far-reaching views out to the west. Macclesfield Industrial Estate features prominently in the foreground, whilst the whole of Cheshire stretches out to the west.

A number of minor valleys converge near Pott Shrigley and much of the steeper ground is occupied by woodland. This creates a small scale, verdant landscape characterised by attractive stone buildings with glimpsed views out to the lower ground. This perception is reinforced by the network of narrow tortuous lanes passing between steep, vegetated banks where the tree canopies form continuous overhead cover.

Around Bollington the tree cover reduces and the scale of the landscape increases accordingly. On the upper slopes above the town a number of steep narrow lanes pass through enclosed pasture, and these enjoy extensive views to the west. The rooftops of Bollington occupy the immediate foreground, with large mill structures evident, and Wilmslow and the Manchester conurbation are visible beyond.

The village of Rainow lies within one of the valleys, surrounded by higher ground that forms a visually dominant skyline. The valley floor appears quite well-wooded and smaller scale due to the size of the field enclosures. Much of the more open high ground lies in the adjoining Upland Fringe landscape type. The contrast between the two landscape types is easily observed from the lower ground and forms an essential component of the area’s visual character.

North of Rainow, fields are post-medieval in date and character – dating to the 18th and 19th century and mainly regular in shape. These occur where either earlier field systems have been improved or where new areas have been taken into enclosure.
There are two RIGGS in this area – the largest being Kerridge Hill Quarry. Kerridge and Billinge quarries are also both designated as SBIs due to the habitats that have developed in these abandoned workings. Before transport was improved in the 19th century, Kerridge stone was used for roofing slabs. Nab Quarry continues to operate.

Kerridge Hill is covered with lightly grazed unimproved/semi-improved acid pastures on a steep east facing slope which has rocky outcrops in places. On the brow of the hill is a small strip of heathland while to the south dense scrub with a variable canopy occupies part of a disused quarry. The pasture is herb-rich with some uncommon species such as adder’s tongue and moon wort. The site is also of national interest for waxcap fungus.

There are various small heathland areas to the north and east of Bollington. There is also a covered reservoir at Kerridge End. Shrigley Hall was an area of former parkland, now the house is used as a hotel and the park has been converted into a golf course. There are a number of ponds in the grounds that survive from the ornamental landscape. To the west is Styperson Park, another wooded area with disused quarries.

Early activity in the area is indicated by a Bronze Age round barrow at Nab Head, although this has been greatly disturbed by quarrying. Coal pits and shafts are also recorded in the Higher Hurdsfield area. White Nancy provides a striking landmark in the Bollington area. This c 5m high conical shaped folly was built as a summer house for the Gaskell family at Ingersley Hall c 1815, possibly to commemorate Waterloo.