

**Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB  
Historic Landscape Characterisation Project**

**HISTORIC LANDSCAPE TYPE  
DESCRIPTION:**

**TYPE 7 RECREATION**



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ENGLISH HERITAGE

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## Recreation in the AONB: An Introduction

*“Those who made their way to the seeming obscurity of Tollard Royal and nearby Farnham could certainly look forward to a day of varied pleasures. If they wanted to picnic in one of the arbours at the Larmer Tree the General provided crockery, knives and forks, tables and chairs, and even cooking stoves and utensils. German skittles, bowls and swings were available in the shrubbery”*

(From Hawkins, D. (1980) Cranborne Chase. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd. Pg 143)

Since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB has been the focus for organised public recreational activity. The modern military camp at Blandford is situated upon the footprint of an 18<sup>th</sup> century racecourse, and, as described above, there were publicly open pleasure gardens at the Larmer Tree which people flocked to from 1880 onwards.

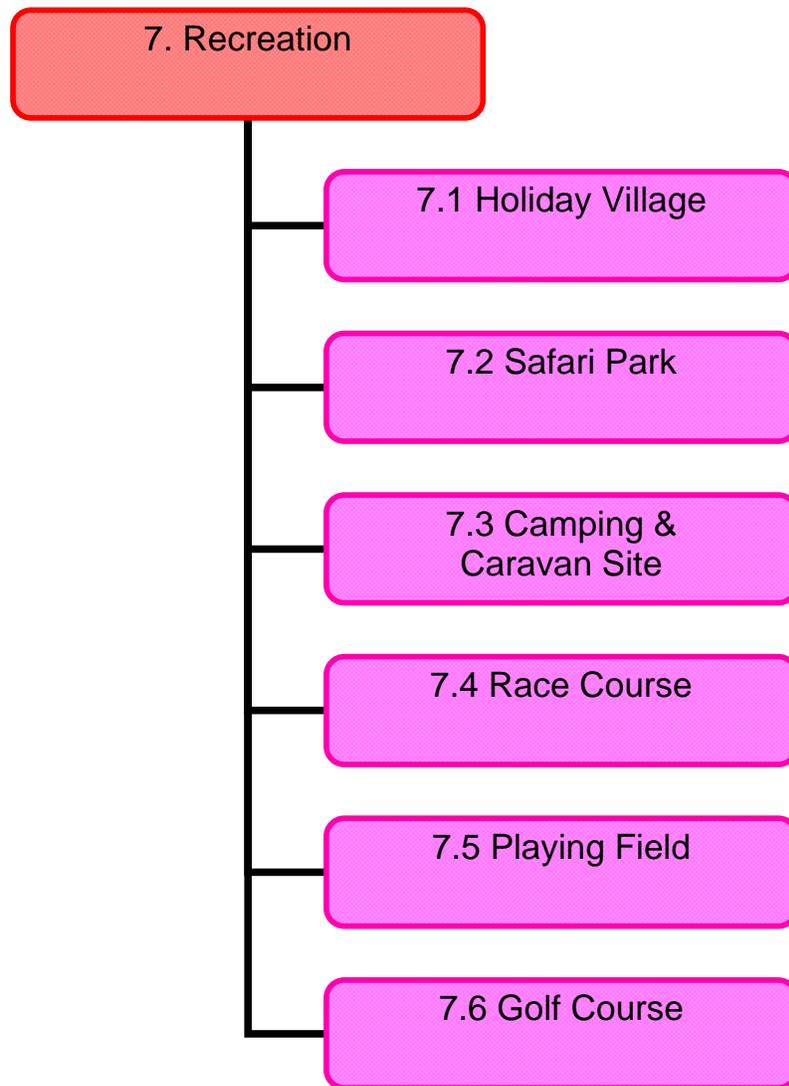
It is not until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, that the history of creating areas for purely recreational purposes has had a landscape scale impact upon the AONB. The creation in the modern era of a suite of recreational facilities, including holiday villages, safari parks, golf courses, caravan sites and playing fields has, in some respects, transformed the way that many people, especially visitors, interact with the landscape of the AONB.

The impact of these new types of facilities, however, is low as they tend to be small scale and scattered across the AONB. The exception is the complex of attractions that are focused on Longleat in the north-west corner of the AONB, where the creation of a landscape for public enjoyment is well under way. This process is built upon the establishment of the less egalitarian landscaped park, created there in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

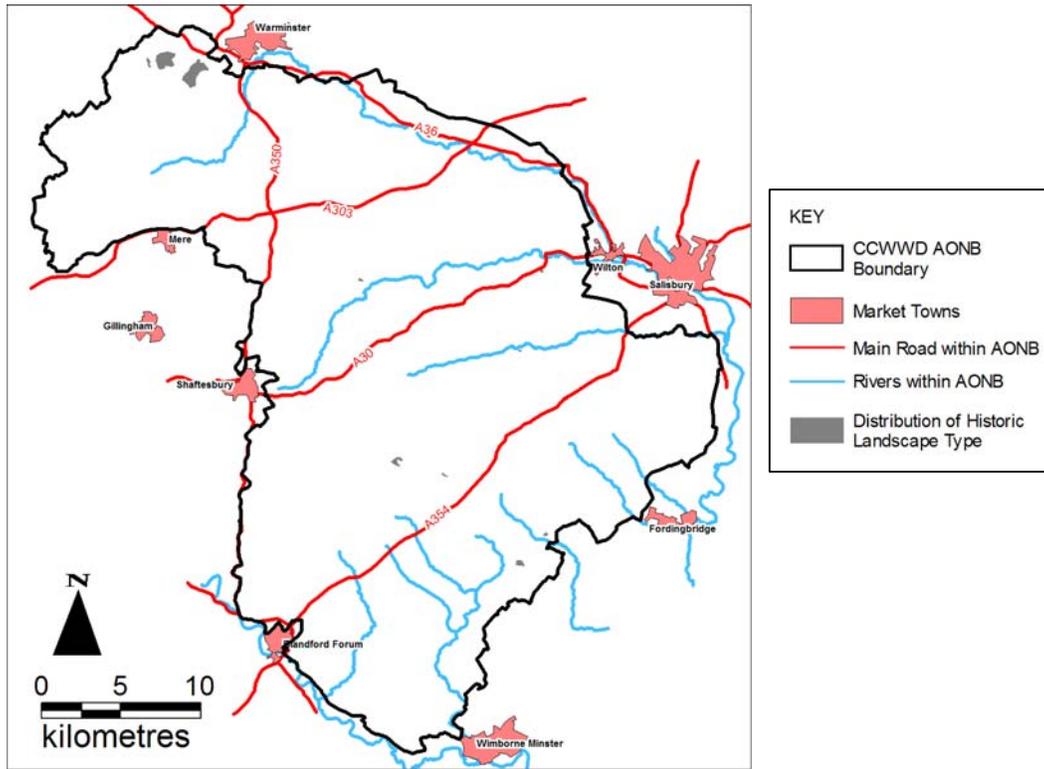


Ansty Band

Organisation Chart illustrating nested Historic Landscape Types



## Type 7 Recreation in the AONB



### Introduction

Land created for recreational purposes within the AONB. These have to be of sufficient scale to be included within this survey and have to include features which have had a significant impact on the landscape. They account for 313 hectares, or 0.32%, of the AONB. The types of recreational uses which have been recorded include holiday accommodation (camping, caravan, purpose built villages), sport facilities (golf courses, playing fields, tourist attractions e.g. Longleat Safari Park). These all date to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. These are documented on the modern day Ordnance Survey map and aerial photographs.

The one exception to this pattern is the disused 18<sup>th</sup> century racecourse at Blandford Camp which has been recorded as a previous type only, due to its concurrence with the position of the modern military camp.

The nature of the HLC dataset means that linear routeways are not included. This section does not therefore document the recreational Rights of Way in the AONB which were created from local routes across the landscape after the passing of the 1968 Countryside Act.

### Distribution

This type has a very limited but widespread distribution. In general, recreational land is small in size and is spread throughout the AONB, often adjacent to villages. However, there is a cluster of recreational land centred around the historic Longleat Park.

## Principal Historical Processes

These are landscapes created for the primary purpose of recreation. Some of them represent very modern phenomena, such as holiday villages and safari parks, while some have a longer more established history, such as golf courses or race courses. In general terms, the creation of areas set apart for recreation is a relatively recent phenomenon which charts a change in the way that people view and interact with the landscape.

## Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

Recreational land often completely transforms the landscape introducing alien or unfamiliar features such as bunkers and winding route ways. They are usually physically separated and divorced from the wider landscape through the establishment of high fences and hedges, though this also means that they are often shielded from view. They are places which can only



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be accessed by certain people through membership of a club or society, or through payment of a fee. There is a strong tendency for recreational land to be associated with ancillary buildings, such as kiosks and club houses.

## Rarity

These are scarce within the AONB and are also scarce nationally.

## Survival

This type represents the most recent phase of activity in this area in the landscape.

## Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type is very recognisable and has highly legible forms which are not specific to the AONB. Most are still operational and therefore well-maintained.

## Past interaction with other types

These tend to be new impositions on the landscape, with a new layout and form. They are often associated with villages, but often show no interaction with other types. The one exception is in the area of Longleat where the Safari Park, Centre Parcs, Holiday Village, the Camping and Caravan Park, along with the historic house, gardens and 18<sup>th</sup> century Landscape Park, all form a large and integrated recreational complex.

## Evidence for time-depth

This type can contain some vestiges of previous land uses especially in the retention of ground cover or trees. For example, Longleat Safari Park retains aspects of the 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park within which it is constructed. The boundaries of these areas can also respect earlier land uses, as is the case with Broad Chalke playing fields which have been created within the boundaries of a pre 1800 field.

## Contribution to the present landscape character

This type can have a detrimental effect on the landscape character as recreational land is often divorced from its surroundings, and involves the imposition of unfamiliar features and the creation of ancillary buildings and other features such as car parks. They have a tendency to attract large number of people into the landscape. In general however they are low impact features which are spread throughout the landscape and are very small in size, as for example with playing fields associated with individual villages. Only in the area around Longleat has recreational land use had a large scale impact on the landscape.

In terms of landscape being a function of perception, it can also be suggested that these recreation complexes are the means by which large numbers of people enter, experience and enjoy the wider landscape of the AONB. They therefore contribute to the landscape's appreciation and increase the extent to which it is valued.

## Key Statistics

Total Area:	313.93 hectares, 0.32% of the AONB
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 13 polygons, 0.29% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 24.15 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Scarce.
Previous Coverage:	313.93 hectares, 0.32 % of AONB was Recreational Land at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 566.77 hectares, 0.58 % of the AONB.

## Constituent Types

[7.1 Holiday Village](#)

[7.2 Safari Park](#)

[7.3 Camping and Caravan Site](#)

[7.4 Race Course \(previous type only\)](#)

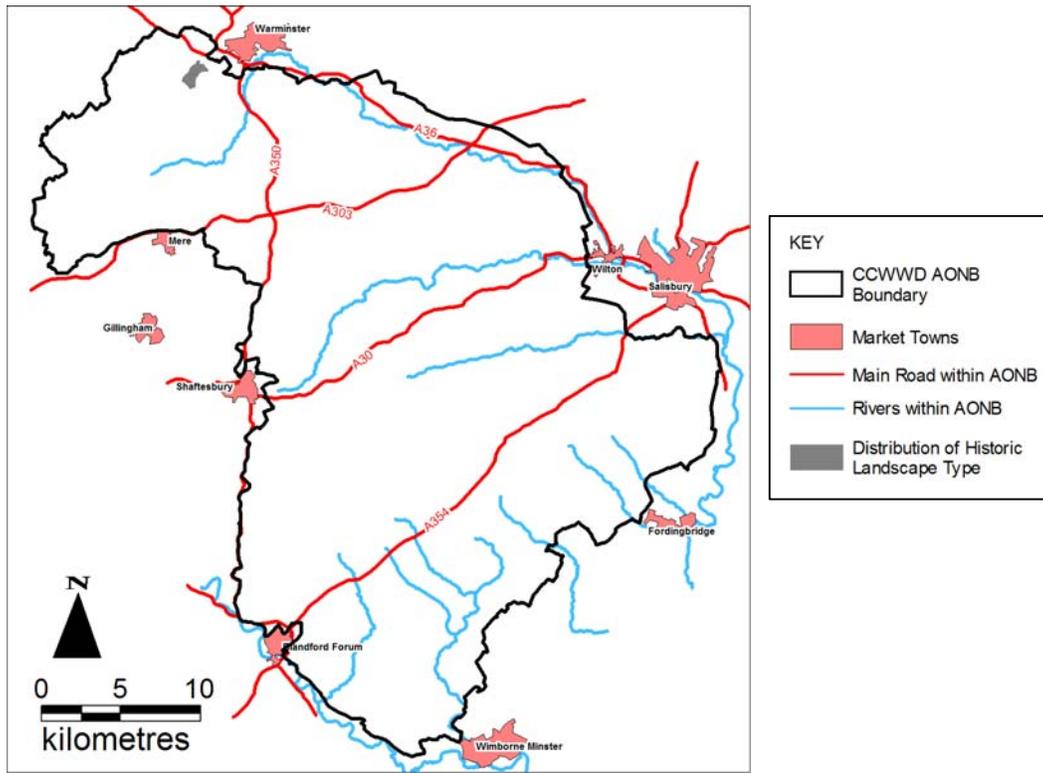
[7.5 Playing Field](#)

[7.6 Golf Course](#)

## Parent Type

None

## Type 7.1 Holiday Village



### Introduction

Holiday Village created in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century documented on the modern day Ordnance Survey. Centre Parcs, Longleat is the only holiday village present in the AONB and covers an area of 133 hectares or 0.14% of the AONB.

### Distribution

This type is only found in one location, immediately to the west of Longleat Park in an area which was formerly 19<sup>th</sup> century woodland.

### Principal Historical Processes

This village forms part of a new 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon of purpose built recreational escapes. It allows people to access the great outdoors, the countryside and take part in outdoor leisure activities in a controlled and sanitised manner. The concept was conceived in 1967 by Diet Derksen as a “villa in the forest” offering an escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and an escape back to nature. This particular Centre Parcs at Longleat was opened in July 2004 and can now accommodate up to 3956 guests per break (i.e. at any one time). This potentially could swell the population of the AONB by around 13% in the summer season.

## Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

The Holiday Village has a formalised layout. It is set in an area of woodland with winding tracks, dispersed through the area there are a series of 713 villas and 60 apartments. The site features a water sports lake, and a central area with restaurants and shops. Many of the areas are themed and these are often alien and divorced from the surrounding landscape.

### Rarity

This is the only complex of its kind within the AONB and is rare.

### Survival

This type represents one of the most recent phases of activity in this area in the landscape. It is operational and well maintained.



### Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type is very recognisable and has a highly legible form.

### Past interaction with other types

The type is divorced from its surroundings, and with the history of landscape in this area. From a distance, however, the area maintains much of its 19<sup>th</sup> century wooded characteristics and place names such as “hanger” do survive.

### Evidence for time-depth

This type preserves evidence for previous land uses, including the new woodland which was planted here in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Contribution to the present landscape character

This type has a detrimental effect on the landscape character as it is divorced from its surroundings. However, this is mitigated by the fact that the Holiday Village is hidden in the trees and is not observable from the outside.

### Key Statistics

Total Area:	133 hectares, 0.14% of the AONB
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 1 polygon, 0.02% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 133.39 hectares in size.

Occurrence: Rare.

Previous Coverage: 133 hectares, 0.14 % of AONB was Holiday Village at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.

Total Recorded Coverage: The total recorded coverage of this type is 133 hectares, 0.14 % of the AONB.

**Constituent Types**

None

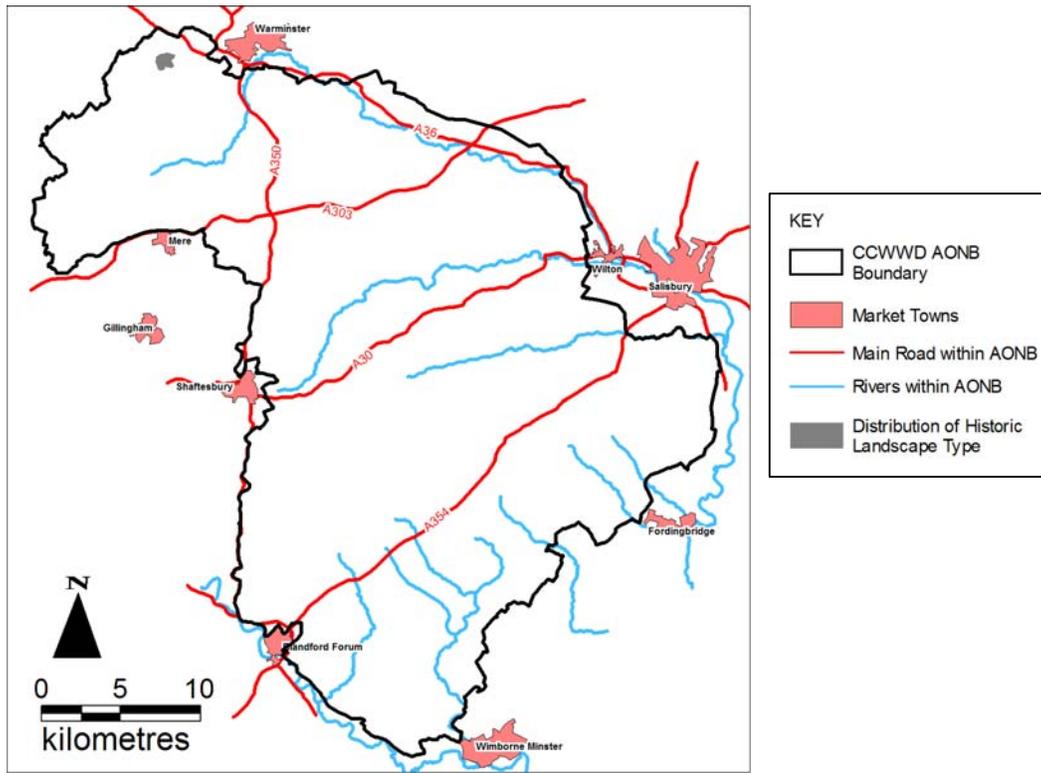
**Parent Type**

[7. Recreation](#)

**Suggested Sources**

Centre Parcs Website <http://www.centreparks.co.uk> [last accessed 31.03.2008]

## Type 7.2 Safari Park



### Introduction: Defining/distinguishing Criteria

Safari Park created in the 1960s documented on the modern day Ordnance Survey map and aerial photographs. It is the only Safari Park present in the AONB and covers an area of 102 hectares or 0.10% of the AONB.

### Distribution

This type has a very limited distribution and is only found in the grounds of Longleat Park.

### Principal Historical Processes

Longleat Safari Park was opened in 1966 and was the first drive-through safari park opened outside of Africa. This Park therefore holds a unique place in the history of zoological collections<sup>1</sup>, marking a significant change in the way that captive animals were kept. This was linked to the greater emphasis placed on wildlife conservation by zoological parks in the modern era. The Park features over 500 different animals and forms part of a suite of leisure attractions centred on Longleat House. These attract on average 450,000 visitors a year. The Safari Park itself has had the biggest impact on the designed 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park within which it was built, although characteristics belonging to the landscape park do remain.

## **Typical Historical/Archaeological Components**

The Safari Park has a formalised layout. It consists of a series of snaking tarmac roads which crisscross through a series of fenced animal enclosures. These contain various exotic mammals and birds. The animal compounds are associated with ancillary buildings, including accommodation for the animals' kiosks and shops. The grass parkland in which the Park is constructed maintains vestiges of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century landscaped park.



## **Rarity**

This is the only complex of its kind within the AONB and is rare. It is also rare nationally.

## **Survival**

This is a very robust type representing the most recent phase of activity in this area in the landscape. It is operational and well maintained.

## **Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components**

This type is very recognisable and has a highly legible form.

## **Past interaction with other types**

The type is divorced from its surroundings, and with the history of landscape in its area. However, it is within an area of 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park which would have traditionally been enjoyed by taking a carriage ride and enjoying the curiosities within it, a past time which in some respects continues unabated today, although now the numbers who enjoy the attractions are vastly greater than the household and guests who once enjoyed the country park.

## **Evidence for time-depth**

This type preserves evidence for previous land uses, including features such as stands of trees which form part of the landscape park within which the Safari Park sits.

## **Contribution to the present landscape character**

In some respects this type has a detrimental effect on the landscape character as it is divorced from its surrounding. It attracts large numbers of visitors per year. However, the Safari Park is not visible from outside the confines of the landscaped park as a whole, and is surrounded on all sides by belts of woodland. Many people who visit Longleat also explore parts of the AONB. It, therefore, contributes to communal perceptions of the wider area.

### **Key Statistics**

Total Area:	102 hectares, 0.10% of the AONB
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 2 polygons, 0.05% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 50.78 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Rare.
Previous Coverage:	102 hectares, 0.10 % of AONB was Safari Park at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 102 hectares, 0.10 % of the AONB.

### **Constituent Types**

None

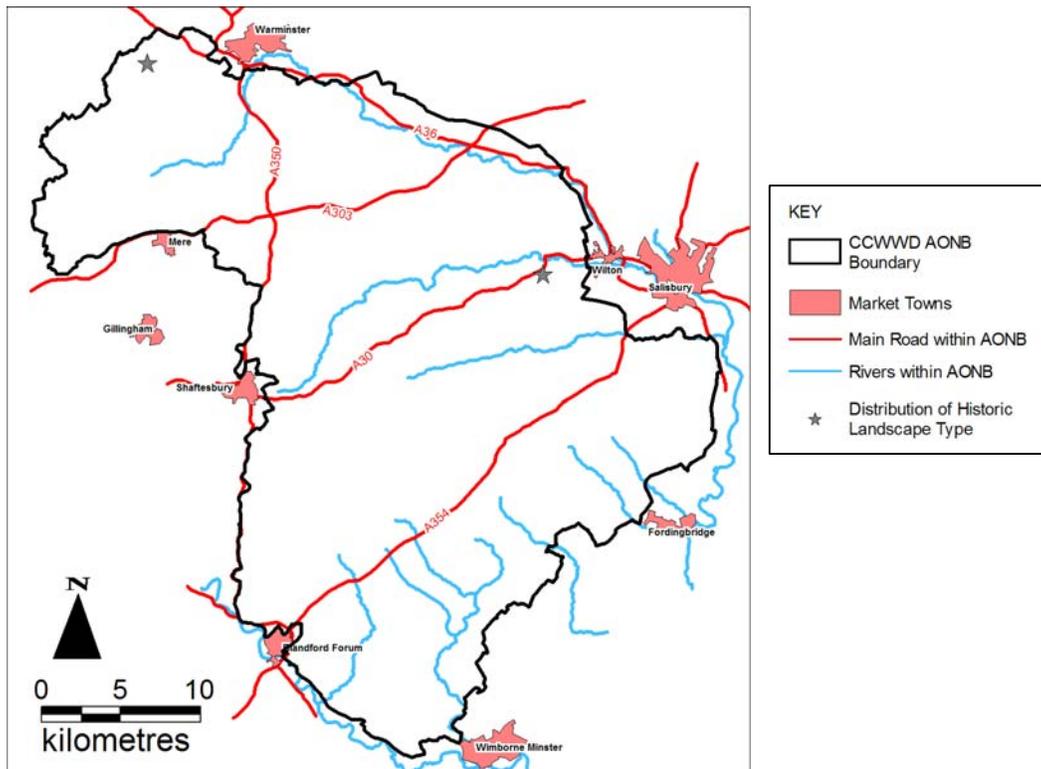
### **Parent Type**

### [7. Recreation](#)

### **Suggested Sources**

Longleat Website <http://www.longleat.co.uk/safari-park.html> [last accessed 31.03.2008]

## Type 7.3 Camping and Caravan Park



### Introduction

Camping and caravan parks within the AONB, including mobile home parks. These have to be of sufficient scale to be included within this survey and have to include features which have had a significant impact on the landscape. Only two caravan sites are included here, which cover an area of 17.46 hectare or 0.02% of the AONB. They are all late 20<sup>th</sup> century in date and are documented on the modern day Ordnance Survey map and aerial photographs.

### Distribution

This type has a very restricted but widespread distribution.

### Principal Historical Processes

The first park recorded is Heath Farm Mobile Home Park which consists of 70 mobile homes and associated ancillary buildings. These are permanently occupied and form a retirement village exclusively for the over 40's. In contrast, the other site recorded at Longleat has no permanent occupation but consists of over 50 temporary pitches for caravans, motor home and tents. Both of these are late 20<sup>th</sup> century in date and offer an affordable escape to the country. These are not the only camping and caravan parks within the AONB but are the only two which are sufficiently large to make an impact on the AONB at a landscape scale.

## Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

These typically consist of an enclosed area within which is a network of tarmac roads, with hard concrete standings and associated amenity points. Such sites are associated with ancillary buildings which provide additional amenities, such as shops, leisure facilities and washing facilities.



Other campsites and caravan parks within the AONB are much smaller and more transitory. These include Summerlands Caravan Park in Coombe Bissett, the camping facilities at the Larmer Tree and the camping site at Sixpenny Handley. These maintain the main features of the fields in which they are situated.

### Rarity

These are rare within the AONB.

### Survival

This is a very robust type representing the most recent phase of activity in this area in the landscape.

### Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type is very recognisable and has a highly legible form.

### Past interaction with other types

Both of the recorded examples are divorced from their wider landscape, separated by a boundary. They contain little trace of previous land uses.

### Evidence for time-depth

This type preserves no evidence of previous land uses, beyond grassy landcover inherited from previous farmland.

### Contribution to the present landscape character

In some respects this type has a detrimental effect on the landscape character as it is divorced from its surroundings. The area that they cover, however, is relatively small so they have no large scale impact on the landscape. Presumably many people who stay in such complexes do so in order to explore parts of the AONB. They, therefore, contribute to generally positive communal perceptions of the wider area.

### **Key Statistics**

Total Area:	17.46 hectares, 0.02% of the AONB
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 2 polygons, 0.05% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 8.73 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Rare.
Previous Coverage:	17.46 hectares, 0.02% of AONB was Camping and Caravan Parks at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 17.46 hectares, 0.01 % of the AONB.

### **Constituent Types**

None

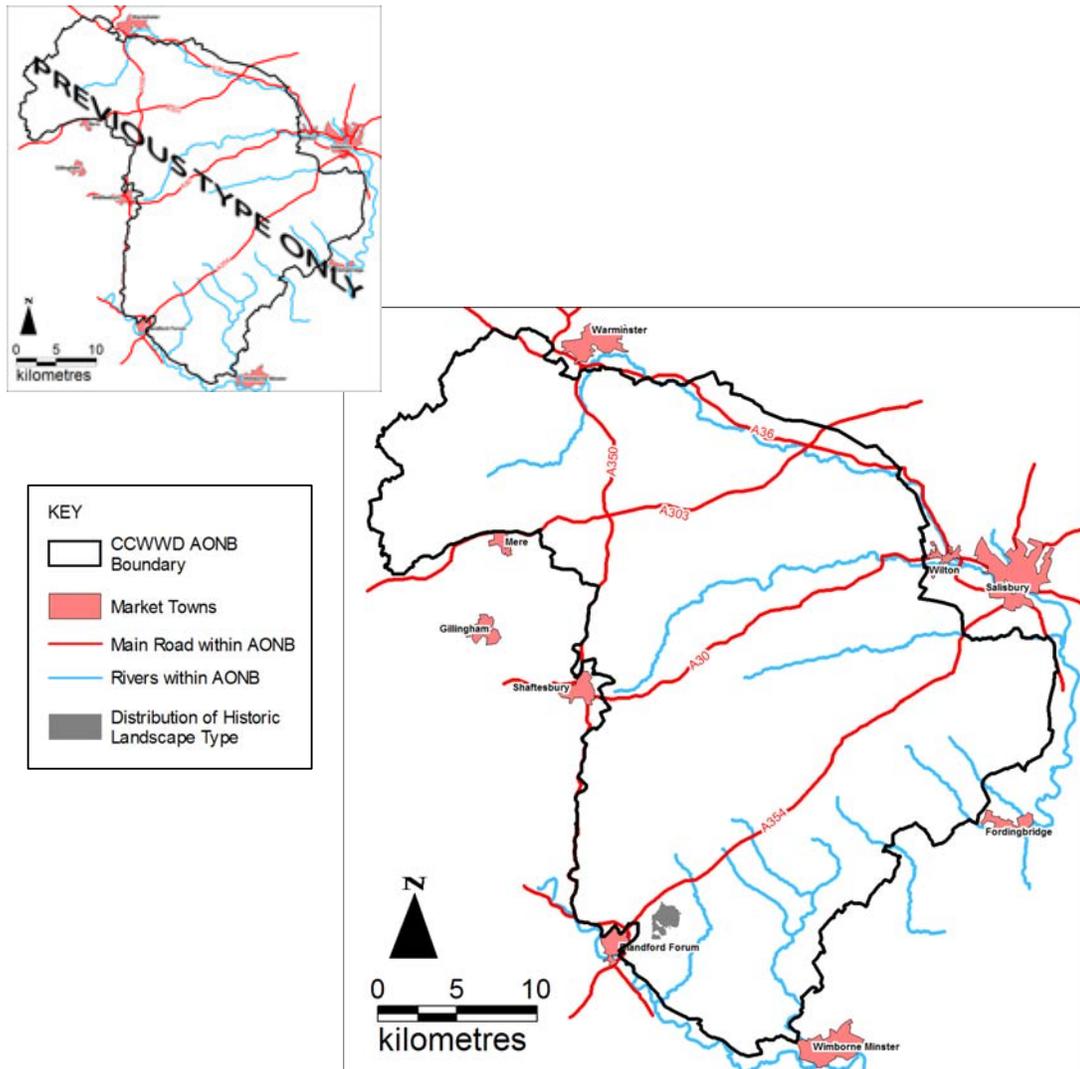
### **Parent Type**

[7. Recreation](#)

### **Suggested Sources**

For details of the Longleat Camp Site see the Caravan Club Website <http://www.caravanclub.co.uk/> [last accessed 31.03.2008]

## Type 7.4 Race Course



### Introduction

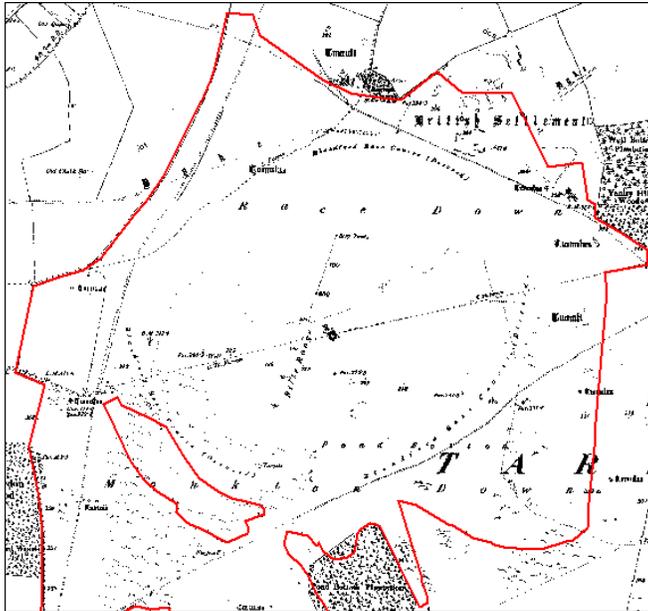
This type occurs only as previous type, meaning that it does not survive intact in the present day landscape. It represents an area of land which was previously a race course in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is marked as disused on the 1880s Ordnance Survey Map, but forms the area within which the military camp near Pimperne is now situated.

### Principal Historical Processes

The area of Blandford Camp follows the circuit of what was originally an 18<sup>th</sup> century race course. The history of organised, modern horseracing in Britain dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and enjoyed considerable royal patronage. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century horseracing became the first regulated sport, with the formation of the Jockey Club in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. The race course was disused by the 1880s.

## Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

The only traces left of this type are that it has influenced the position and shape of the military camp in Blandford.



The picture is a snapshot from the 1880's Ordnance Survey map which shows the location of the race course while the red line shows the location of the camp today. The map shows that there was already a rifle range across the centre of the race course by this date.

### Rarity

This is the only example in the AONB of an 18<sup>th</sup> century race course effecting later land use. There is another 18<sup>th</sup> century race course just outside the AONB boundary at Salisbury that is still in use today.

### Survival

N/A

### Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

N/A

### Past interaction with other types

This previous type is intrinsically linked with the more recent types which have led to its preservation.

### Evidence for time-depth

The race course at Race Down was intrinsically linked to the open chalk downland upon which it was made. When created it was in open downland near an important local town, with its inns presumably benefiting from the patronage of race-goers.

### Contribution to the present landscape character

N/A

### **Key Statistics**

Total Area: N/A

No. of Polygons: N/A

Av. Polygon Size: N/A

Occurrence: N/A

Previous Coverage: 252.8 hectares, 0.26% of AONB preserves traces of this type at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.

Total Recorded Coverage: The total previous recorded coverage of this type is 252 hectares, 0.26 % of the AONB.

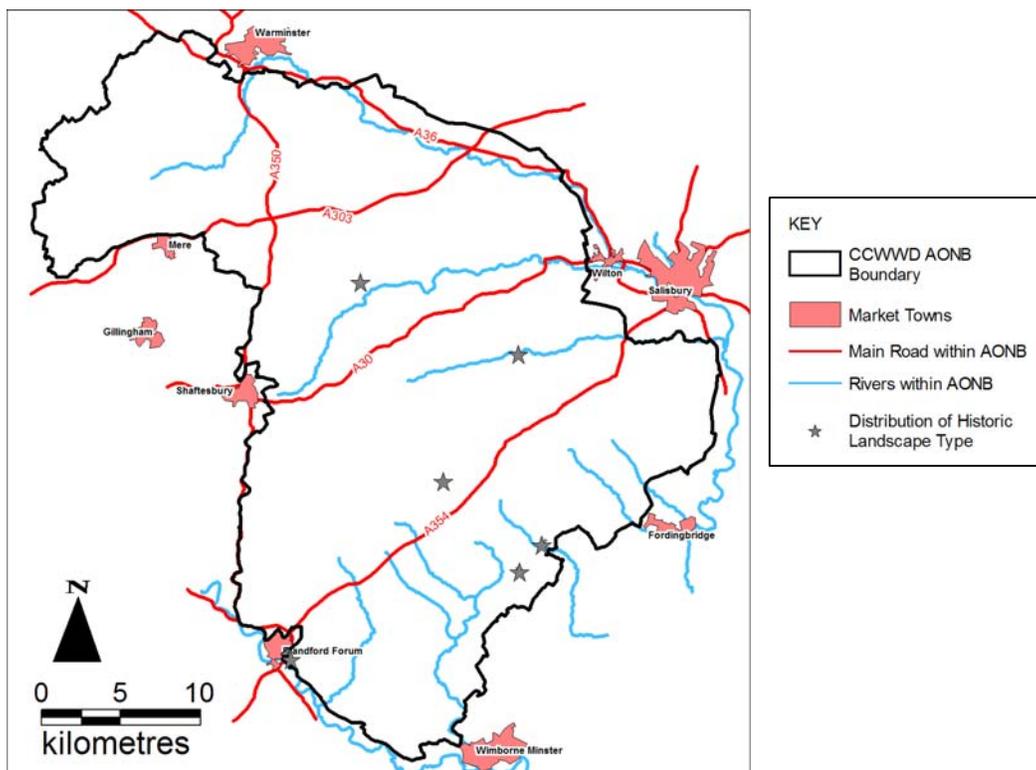
### **Constituent Types**

None

### **Parent Type**

[7. Recreation](#)

## Type 7.5 Playing Field



### Introduction

Playing Fields created for recreational purposes, including for football and rugby, and used by a wide cross section of the community, including schools. These have to be of sufficient scale to be included within this survey and have to include features which have had a significant impact on the landscape. Six playing fields are included here, which cover an area of 40.11 hectares or 0.04% of the AONB. They are all late 20<sup>th</sup> century in date and are documented on the modern day Ordnance Survey map and aerial photographs. Some playing fields, especially those belonging to schools, will have been subsumed into other types.

### Distribution

The type has a restricted but widespread distribution. The playing fields identified are situated at Broad Chalke; Cranborne; the edge of Blandford, Sixpenny Handley; Tisbury; and Wimborne St Giles. They are all late 20<sup>th</sup> century in date and are documented on the modern day Ordnance Survey map and aerial photographs.

### Principal Historical Processes

These playing fields were created for recreational use in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The majority are associated with schools but some form part of wider village based amenities.

## Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

These are typically rectangular in shape and are associated with wire fences and football and rugby posts. They often have ancillary features such as tennis courts, a club house or pavilion, and car parking.



### Rarity

These are rare within the AONB.

### Survival

This represents the most recent phase of activity in this area in the landscape. They are operational and well maintained.

### Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type is very recognisable and has a highly legible form.

### Past interaction with other types

These tend to be new impositions on the landscape, with a new boundary and form. They are often associated with other new 20<sup>th</sup> century types such as settlement.

### Evidence for time-depth

A few examples preserve evidence for the previous land uses. The playing field at Wimborne St Giles has been situated within the former landscape park while the playing field at Broad Chalke is situated in an area which was formerly pre 1800 fields.

### Contribution to the present landscape character

This type can have a detrimental effect on the landscape character as it is often divorced from its surroundings, although it is often considered to be a typical adjunct of modern settlement. The area that they cover, however, is relatively small so they have no large scale impact on the landscape.

### Key Statistics

Total Area:	40.11 hectares, 0.04% of the AONB
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 6 polygons, 0.14% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 6.69 hectares in size.

Occurrence: Rare.

Previous Coverage: 40.11 hectares, 0.04 % of AONB was Playing Fields at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.

Total Recorded Coverage: The total recorded coverage of this type is 40.11 hectares, 0.04% of the AONB.

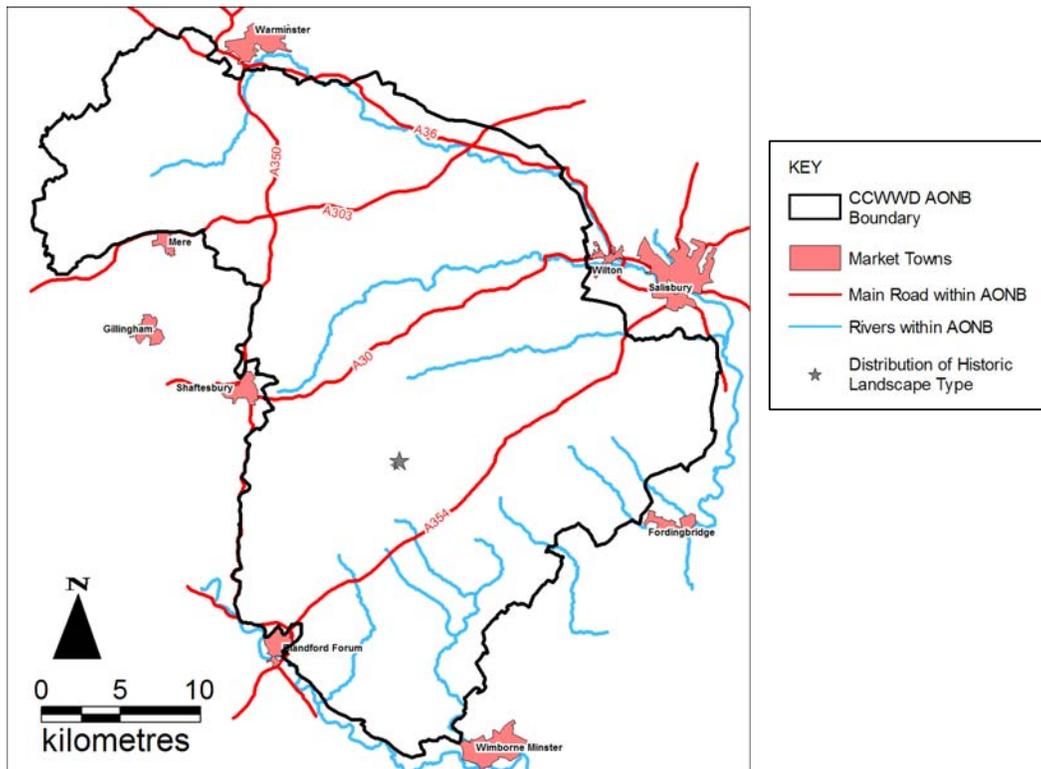
**Constituent Types**

None

**Parent Type**

[7. Recreation](#)

## Type 7.6 Golf Course



### Introduction: Defining/distinguishing Criteria

Golf courses created for recreational purposes. These have to be of sufficient scale to be included within this survey and have to include features which have had a significant impact on the landscape. One golf course is included here, which covers an area of 21.42 hectares or 0.02% of the AONB. This is situated at Rushmore on the outskirts of Tollard Royal, and is late 20<sup>th</sup> century in date. There is one other golf course in the AONB at Ashley Wood which dates from 1896, but does not have such a large impact on the landscape and so has not been recorded. These are documented on the modern day Ordnance Survey map and aerial photographs.

### Principal Historical Processes

This golf course was created for recreational use in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

These are created landscapes for the sole purpose of playing golf. They consist of grass drives and tees and are associated with bunkers, created water features and new areas of planting. They tend to be associated with ancillary features such as club houses and parking.

## Rarity

These are rare within the AONB.

## Survival

This type represents the most recent phase of activity in this area in the landscape. They are operational and well maintained

## Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components



This type is very recognisable and has a reasonably legible form, though the one at Ashley Wood is not sufficiently visually dominant to be recorded as such.

## Past interaction with other types

These tend to be new impositions on the landscape, with a new layout and form. This divorces it from its surroundings. Most golf courses do retain fragments from the previous landscape e.g. some trees or fragments of hedgerows.

## Evidence for time-depth

The Rushmore golf club is built within an area which was previously open land, covered in furze, with an area of common land. The rough ground on the edge of the golf course preserves some of the characteristics of this rough grazing.

## Contribution to the present landscape character

In some respects this type has a detrimental effect on the landscape character as it is divorced from its surroundings. The area that they cover, however, is relatively small so they have no large scale impact on the landscape.

## Key Statistics

Total Area:	21.42 hectares, 0.02% of the AONB
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 2 polygons, 0.05% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 10.71 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Rare.
Previous Coverage:	21.42 hectares, 0.02 % of AONB was Golf Courses at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 21.42 hectares, 0.02 % of the AONB.

**Constituent Types**

None

**Parent Type**

[7. Recreation](#)

