

COUNTY: Norfolk

SITE NAME: HEDENHAM WOOD

DISTRICT: South Norfolk

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: South Norfolk District Council

National Grid Reference: TM 314946 Area: 34.03 (ha) 84.09 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 134 1:10,000: TM 39 SW, NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): N/A Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1988 Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:
A new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification:

Hedenham Wood is an ancient woodland situated at the head of a shallow valley on the South Norfolk boulder clay. Much of the wood comprises Oak standards over mixed Hornbeam coppice but the valley bottom contains wet Ash-Maple wood with stands of Elm. The ground flora is diverse and includes several uncommon species.

Heavy calcareous clay on the valley sides supports Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* coppice with Maple *Acer campestre*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Hazel *Corylus avellana* under large standards of Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash and Hornbeam. Other woody species include Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, Aspen *Populus tremula*, Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, Guelder Rose *Viburnum opulus*, Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and Midland Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*. On lighter soils Hornbeam and Ash coppice is almost pure. This is replaced by predominantly Ash and Maple in the valley bottom, with big, high-cut Elm *Ulmus procera* stools in the south. Suckering Elm covers the site of Hedenham Hall.

Where ground flora is not completely shaded out by the Hornbeam, Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* is generally dominant but Enchanter's Nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, Ramsons *Allium ursinum* and Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* are locally abundant. Overall, the wood's ground flora appears rather uniform but many species are present at low frequency, most notably Greater Butterfly Orchid *Platanthera chlorantha*, Herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia* and Stinking Hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, but also including Dewberry *Rubus caesius*, Hairy Wood-rush *Luzula pilosa*, Hairy St John's Wort *Hypericum hirsutum*, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris* and Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*.

Despite recent replanting (with Oak and Ash) in the north, and incomplete coppice recovery there, the vegetation types described above are still discernible. Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, Soft Rush *Juncus effusus*, Hairy St John's Wort and Selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* are more frequent there.

Where light penetrates to the rides the flora is fairly rich, including Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula*, Wood Sedge *C. sylvatica*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, Hybrid Avens *Geum x intermedium*, Yellow Pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum* and Yellow Loosestrife *L. vulgaris*.