

Heckington Fen Solar Park

EN010123

Environmental Statement | Volume 3: Technical Appendices

**Appendix 6.6: Extract from the Landscape Character
Assessment of Boston**

Applicant: Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited

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February 2023





Landscape Character Assessment of Boston Borough

July 2009

*Prepared on behalf of
Boston Borough Council
by ECUS LTD*



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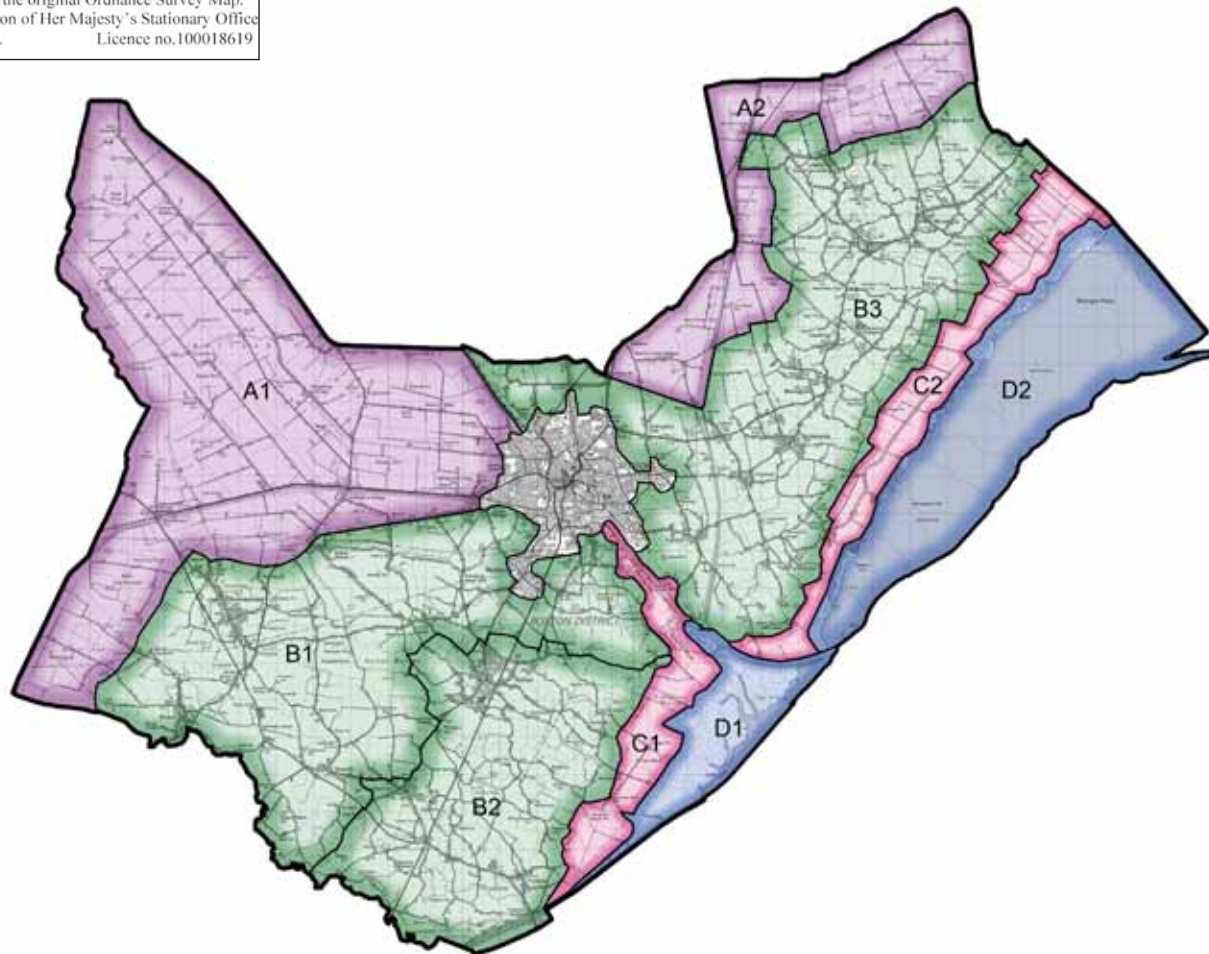
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Landscape Character Assessments

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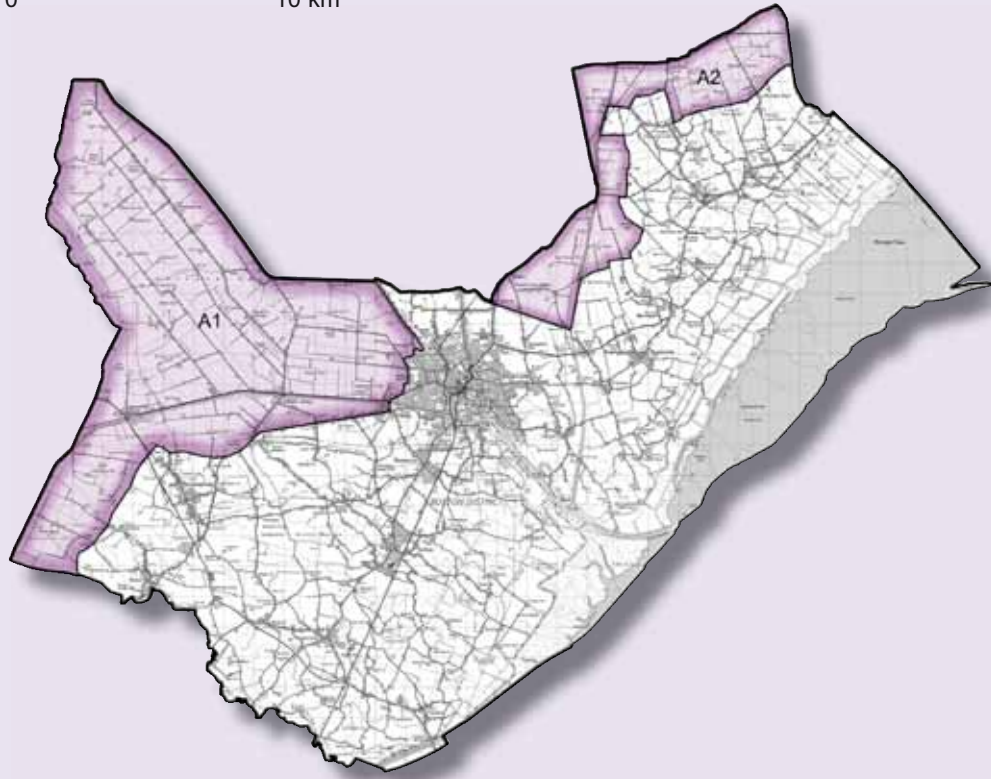
LEGEND

- A1** HOLLAND RECLAIMED FEN
- A2** WRANGLE COMMON TO FREISTON INGS RECLAIMED FEN
- B1** BICKER TO WYBERTON SETTLED FEN
- B2** FRAMPTON TO FOSDYKE SETTLED FEN
- B3** WRANGLE TO COWBRIDGE SETTLED FEN
- C1** WELLAND TO HAVEN RECLAIMED SALTMARSH
- C2** GLEBE FARM RECLAIMED SALTMARSH
- D1** WELLAND TO HAVEN WASH SALTMARSH
- D2** FREISTON LOW TO WRANGLE FLATS WASH SALTMARSH

A Reclaimed Fen Landscape Character Type

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0 10 km



Landscape Character Type Description

The *Reclaimed Fen* Landscape Character Type is located inland from the *Settled Fen* and lies to the south of the Borough boundary with East Lindsey and north of the *Settled Fen* character type.

The area is flat and mostly underlain by Jurassic clays. These are overlain by the Barroway Drove Beds of older marine and saltmarsh deposits which in turn are overlain by the fertile soils of pelo-alluvial gleys.

It is an open landscape with big skies and long distance views to the Lincolnshire Wolds in East Lindsey District to the north. These views are sometimes foreshortened by large flood embankments alongside major drains and canalised watercourses. This landscape is evidently man-made with the regular, geometric pattern and grain defined by the large water filled drains, dykes, and canalised rivers that cut across the character areas.

This is an intensively farmed arable landscape with a hierarchy of drains, dykes and ditches draining the largely open and predominantly arable fields. There are occasional large scale processing plants, poultry units, horticultural glasshouses, packing plants and a caravan park, which are all mainly towards the boundaries of the areas.

Tree cover is sparse with occasional small mixed woodland blocks, a few recently planted roadside trees and hedgerows. Most other mature trees are found as shelterbelts in and around the hamlets, farmsteads and dwellings.

The area is sparsely populated with widely dispersed farmsteads, occasional rows of former workers' cottages, hamlets and a few roadside dwellings scattered throughout alongside a grid of roads and tracks. A railway line runs across the area. There are a few long footpaths along embankments and shorter local links across fields.

It has a fairly remote feel in parts due to the partial enclosure and separation from the surrounding more settled areas by the large straight embankments, the sparse settlement pattern and the lack of through traffic.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen

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0 5 km



Key Characteristics

- Flat and low-lying reclaimed fenland.
- Open and expansive views with big skies and dark night skies with some views semi-enclosed at ground level by large embankments.
- More distant views to Boston Stump and to the Lincolnshire Wolds in East Lindsey District to the north.
- A man-made intensive arable landscape laid out in a regular, geometric pattern with narrow roads and trackways alongside drains, dykes and ditches.
- The large North Forty Foot Drain and South Forty Foot Drain are key dominating features of the area.
- Field boundaries are typically open with wet ditches, dykes and drains and the occasional hedgerow.
- Occasional large scale horticultural glasshouses, and packing or processing plants occur near the southern boundary of the area.
- Sparsely populated with occasional small hamlets, scattered farmsteads, and occasional rows of former workers' cottages.
- Occasional derelict farm cottages and field buildings.
- Sparse tree cover confined to shelterbelts, with occasional hedgerows and small blocks of mixed woodland with shrubby edges.
- Bicker windfarm and large scale pylons on the south western tip are modern landmark features.
- A semi-remote, tranquil and intact working agricultural landscape.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Landscape Character Description

Holland Reclaimed Fen forms part of the agricultural fenland that surrounds The Wash. It includes Algarkirk Fen, Great Fen, Holland Fen, Maryland, Pelham's Lands, Hart's Grounds, Amber Hill, Bicker Fen and Wyberton Fen. The area is bounded to the north by the canalised River Witham and the East Lindsey District boundary, to the south by New Hammond Beck and *Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen*, and to the west by North Kesteven District boundary. Boston town lies to the east.

The area is mostly underlain by Jurassic clays and overlain with the Barroway Drove Beds of older marine and saltmarsh deposits which has produced the fertile pelo-alluvial gley soils.

The landform is flat and low-lying and views are simple and semi-remote. There are expansive and peaceful panoramas across seas of cereal crops, and big skies. These views are sometimes foreshortened by large drain embankments. Longer views include those to Boston Stump to the east, and views to the rising edge of the Wolds in East Lindsey to the north. The windfarm near Bicker in the south west corner of this area creates a distinctive landmark on the Borough boundary with North Kesteven.

This area was artificially drained and apportioned to landowners to enable food production during the agricultural and industrial revolutions and is still an extremely productive landscape today. A hierarchical grid layout of straight, open, deep drains is crossed by frequent bridges which allow access to the adjacent dwellings and farmsteads. Drain and dyke banks are well maintained in most parts with limited riparian vegetation. The mown flood defence embankments alongside the River Witham, South and North Forty Foot Drains are prominent in the landscape. Gill Syke is the one remaining more natural, meandering watercourse which contrasts with the dominant geometric pattern in the landscape.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Agriculture is almost exclusively arable with crops such as wheat, and brassicas. These medium to large scale fields of crops fit with the strong geometric pattern of drains, dykes and ditches. Some small fields of pasture with grazing cattle and horses are still found around hamlets such as Amber Hill. There are occasional large scale processing plants, poultry units, horticultural glasshouses, packing plants and also a caravan park which are located mainly towards the boundaries of the area.

Occasional small blocks of woodland are edged with shrubs to provide cover for game birds and there are occasional tree clumps in some field corners near road junctions. Otherwise tree cover is sparse and confined to mature tree shelterbelts around settlements, farmsteads and dwellings. Very few remnant hedgerows remain along with occasional avenues of trees along farm entrance tracks. There has been some more recent shelter planting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees alongside some exposed raised roads.

After the area was reclaimed it was laid out in a large scale and regular pattern, with each farm being allotted a certain amount of reclaimed fen. This has resulted in the widely dispersed pattern of farmsteads and dwellings which we see today. There are also occasional rows of workers' cottages, hamlets, and occasional dwellings scattered throughout. Most are found immediately adjacent to the grid network of drainage, raised roads and tracks. They have a mix of architectural styles and ages, and the materials used for their construction are also mixed with the most traditional being red brick with pantile roofs.

The main A1121 road links Boston to the A17 and Sleaford. The road alongside the North Forty Foot Drain is the other road running through the area to Coningsby in the District of East Lindsey. This road is also part of the National Cycle Route, which at this location is described as being free from traffic and alludes to the relatively tranquillity of this area. Other minor roads and tracks form a discrete network just linking locations within the character area. This separates the area from its surroundings and adds to the sense of remoteness. A public right of way runs along the top of the River Witham embankment into Boston town, but otherwise there are a very few public footpaths. The Boston to Sleaford rail link runs along the top of the South Forty Foot Drain embankment.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Heritage features include the drainage system itself which is frequently crossed by bridges of varying styles and ages including an iron bridge at Langrick. Rows of leaning small scale telegraph poles allude to the softness of the ground beneath. There are also a few listed buildings and some derelict field and farm buildings, which are a reminder of past times when they were used to house the greater number of people needed to work the land and animals grazing before the intensive mechanised methods of farming in use today.

Some urban influences are evident in the south east corner of the area towards the outskirts of Boston. These include views to some new unscreened housing developments, the Pilgrim Hospital and Boston Stump. Other developments in this area include Bicker windfarm to the south western boundary, commercial sheds, small industrial sites, Boston Sports Arena and other small scale leisure complexes including fishing ponds.

Overall this character area can be described as an intact, large scale, semi-remote and intensively farmed landscape.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Forces for Change

- Bicker windfarm and large scale pylons are modern and large scale additions to the landscape.
- Agricultural intensification has led to the amalgamation of fields for the large scale production of arable crops.
- Some recreational developments have been introduced such as Boston Sports Arena, some small scale fishing ponds and holiday parks.
- Expansion and modernisation of the infrastructure associated with intensive agriculture.
- Recent commercial, housing and recreational developments on the outskirts of Boston.
- Recent roadside planting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Countryside and Environmental Stewardship Schemes, affecting the appearance of buffer strips around arable field edges and dyke vegetation, through changed farming and management practices.
- The Fens Waterways Project, as described in more detail in the Planning Context section, is likely to enhance the area around the South Forty Foot Drain in the future. It is anticipated that it will increase marine traffic and encourage more tourism in the area.

A1 Holland Reclaimed Fen



Landscape Sensitivity

Holland Reclaimed Fen is a very distinctive, homogenous, intact and rural landscape with few detractors. The aspect is largely open and flat and so the small number of tree shelterbelts and occasional hedgerows and hedgerow trees provide only a very limited degree of enclosure. Views towards any new developments would be difficult to restrict from the small number of sensitive viewers within the landscape. There is some potential for reducing landscape and visual impacts as described below.



The design and location of any new development should take into account the homogenous nature, geometric pattern, scale and rural characteristics of the area including the sense of remoteness, scarcity of built elements, the linear format of the landscape and the importance of the drainage network. Any new developments should be positioned carefully to use existing and new screening without impacting upon the open character. Location of future developments should be limited and concentrated around existing developments and settlements whilst still retaining the existing dispersed pattern of farmsteads, dwellings, rows of workers' cottages and hamlets. Further development on the edge of Boston would result in an encroachment of urban character within the area thereby reducing its size.

The overall landscape character sensitivity of *Holland Reclaimed Fen* is considered to be **moderate to high**.

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LEGEND

-  Boston Borough Council Boundaries
-  Mean Low Tide Level

Data Source:
Lincolnshire County Council

*Boston Borough Landscape
Character Assessment*

Figure 1. Aerial Photograph

January 2007

ECUS Ref:
DW/612/01

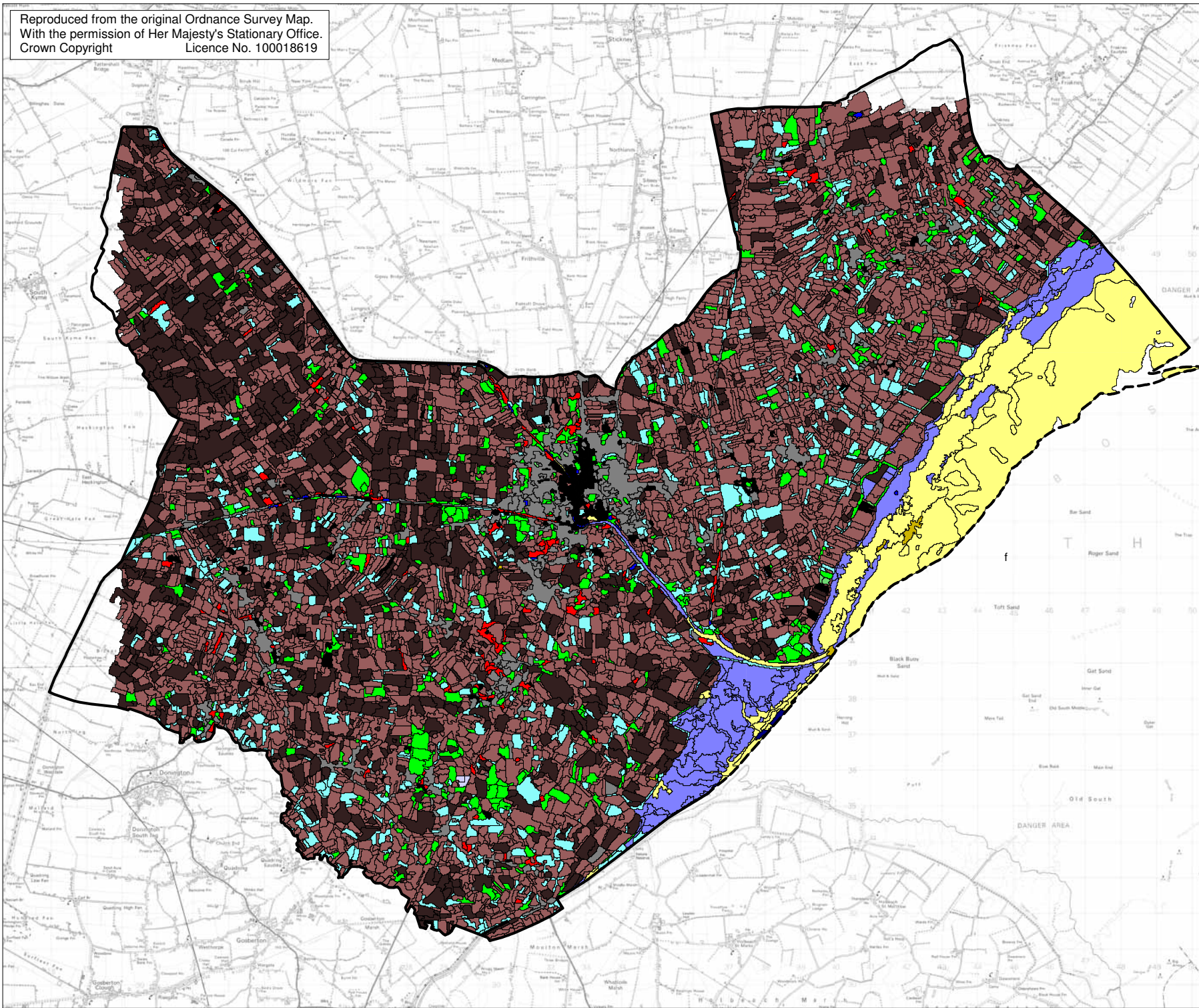
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- LEGEND**
- Boston Borough Council Bounda
 - Mean Low Tide Level
 - Land Cover Data**
 - Broad-leafwood (1.1)
 - Coniferous woodland (2.1)
 - Arable & horticulture (4.1)
 - Arable & horticulture (4.2)
 - Improved grassland (5.1)
 - Neutral (6.1)
 - Calcareous (7.1)
 - Standing water (13.1)
 - Inland rock (16.1)
 - Built up areas, gardens (17.1)
 - Continuous urban (17.2)
 - Supra-littoral sediment (19.1)
 - Littoral sediment (21.1)
 - Saltmarsh (21.2)
 - Sea & estuary (22.1)

NOTE
 Numbers in brackets refer to
 Land Cover Map 2000
 Broad Habitat Codes
 (Read in conjunction with:
 [Redacted])

Data Source:
 Land Cover Map 2000 Data

**Boston Borough Landscape
 Character Assessment**

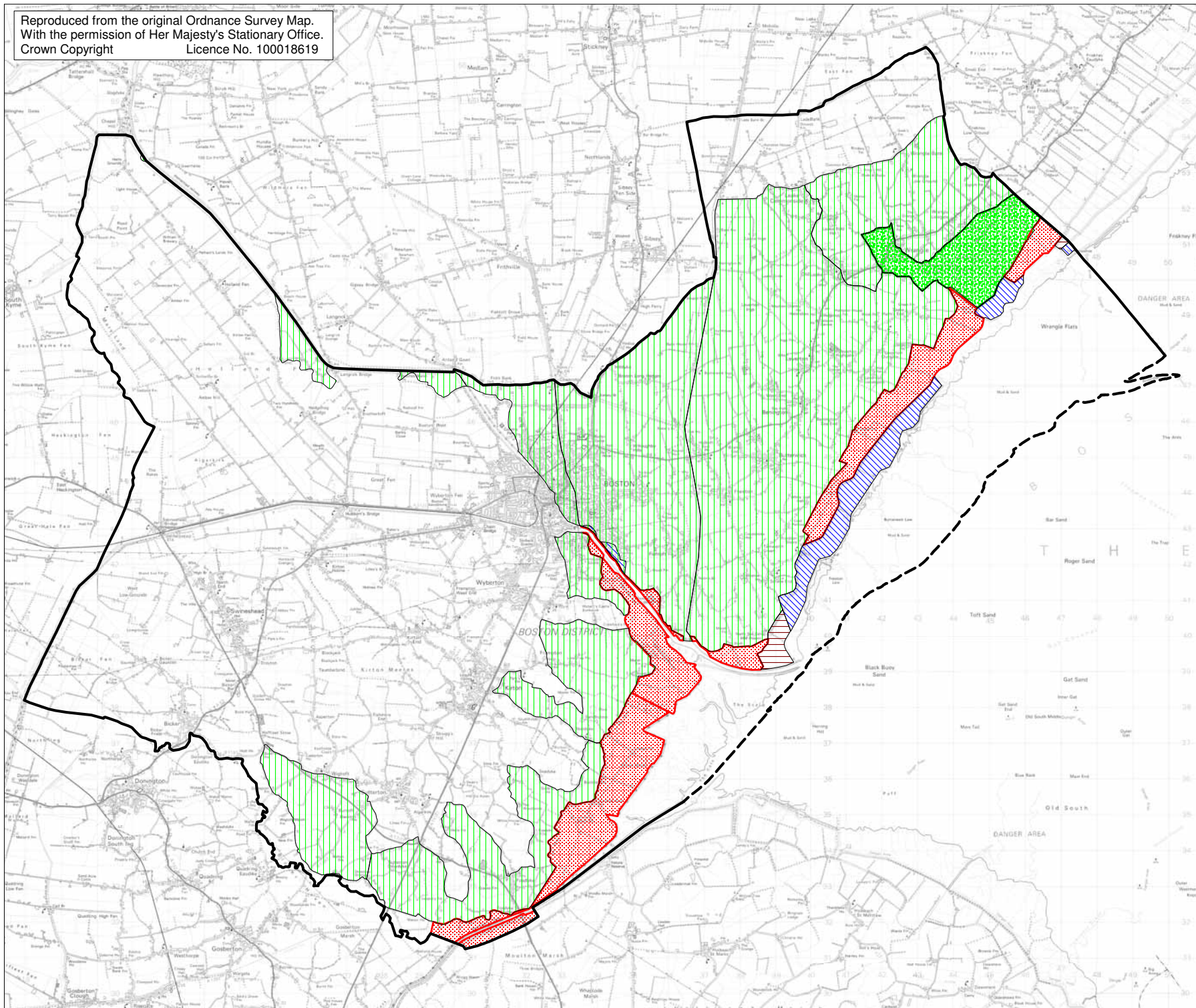
Figure 2. Land Cover

January 2007	ECUS Ref: DW/612/02
Scale:	1:100000 at A3



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LEGEND

- Boston Borough Council Boundary
- Mean Low Tide Level

Reclamation

- Saxon Drainage (probably)
- 1307 to 1700 Reclamation
- 1800 to 1900 Reclamation
- 1900 to 1949 Reclamation
- 1950 to 1983 Reclamation

Data Source:
 Boston Borough Council

**Boston Borough Landscape
 Character Assessment**

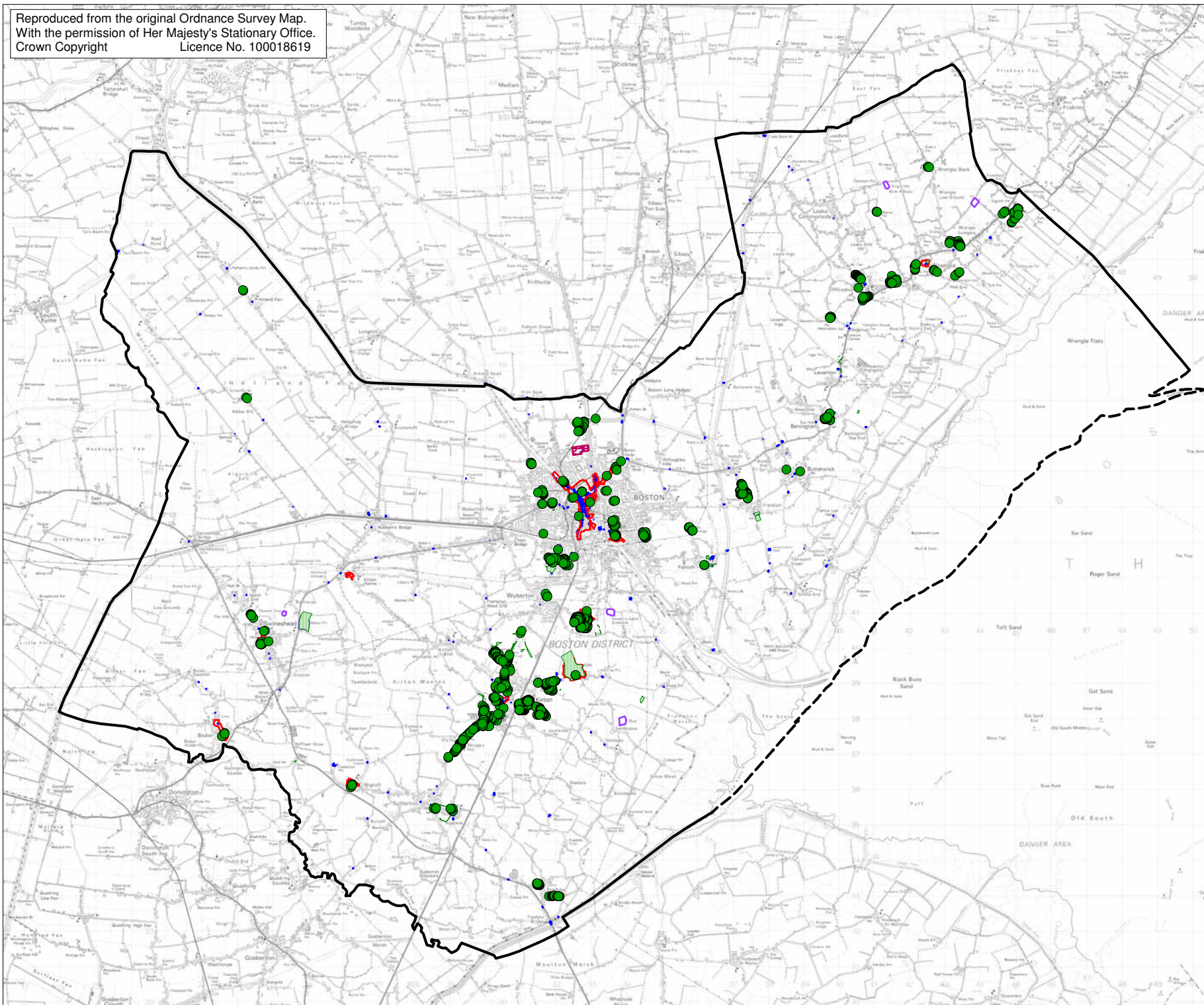
Figure 3. Land Reclamation

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- LEGEND**
- Boston Borough Council Bound
 - Mean Low Tide Level
 - Cultural Designations Data**
 - Conservation Areas
 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments
 - Listed Buildings
 - Parks of Special Historic Interest
 - Tree Preservation Orders
 - Tree Preservation Orders

Data Source:
 Boston Borough Council

**Boston Borough Landscape
 Character Assessment**

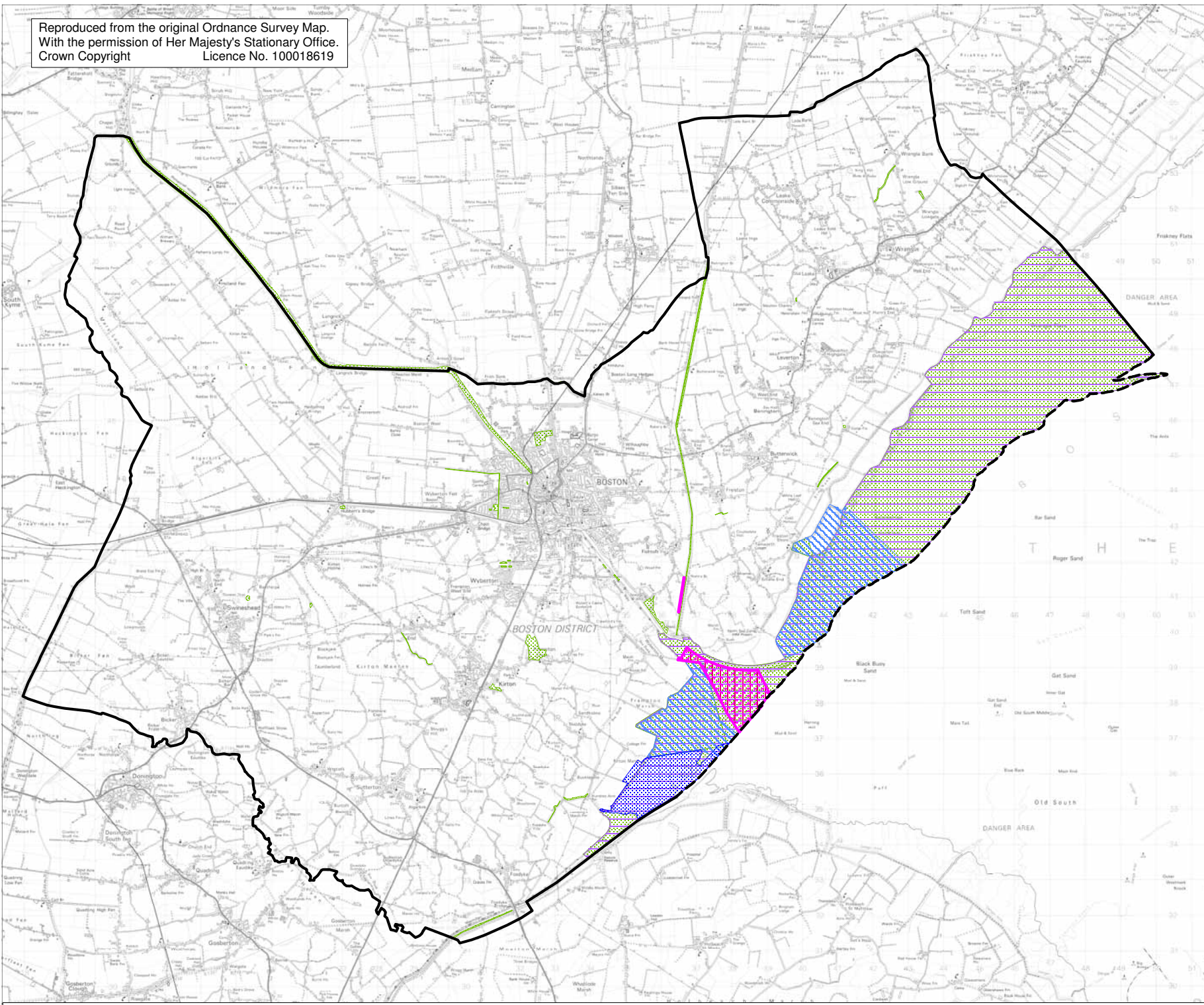
Fig 4. Cultural Designations

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- LEGEND**
-  Boston Borough Council Boundary
 -  Mean Low Tide Level
 -  Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves
 -  Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
 -  RSPB_SITES
 -  Ramsar Sites
 -  SSSI Sites
 -  Special Protection Areas
 -  Special Conservation Areas
 -  The Wash National Nature Reserve Boundary
 Natural England data OS licence number 100046223

Boston Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Fig 5. Nature Conservation Designations

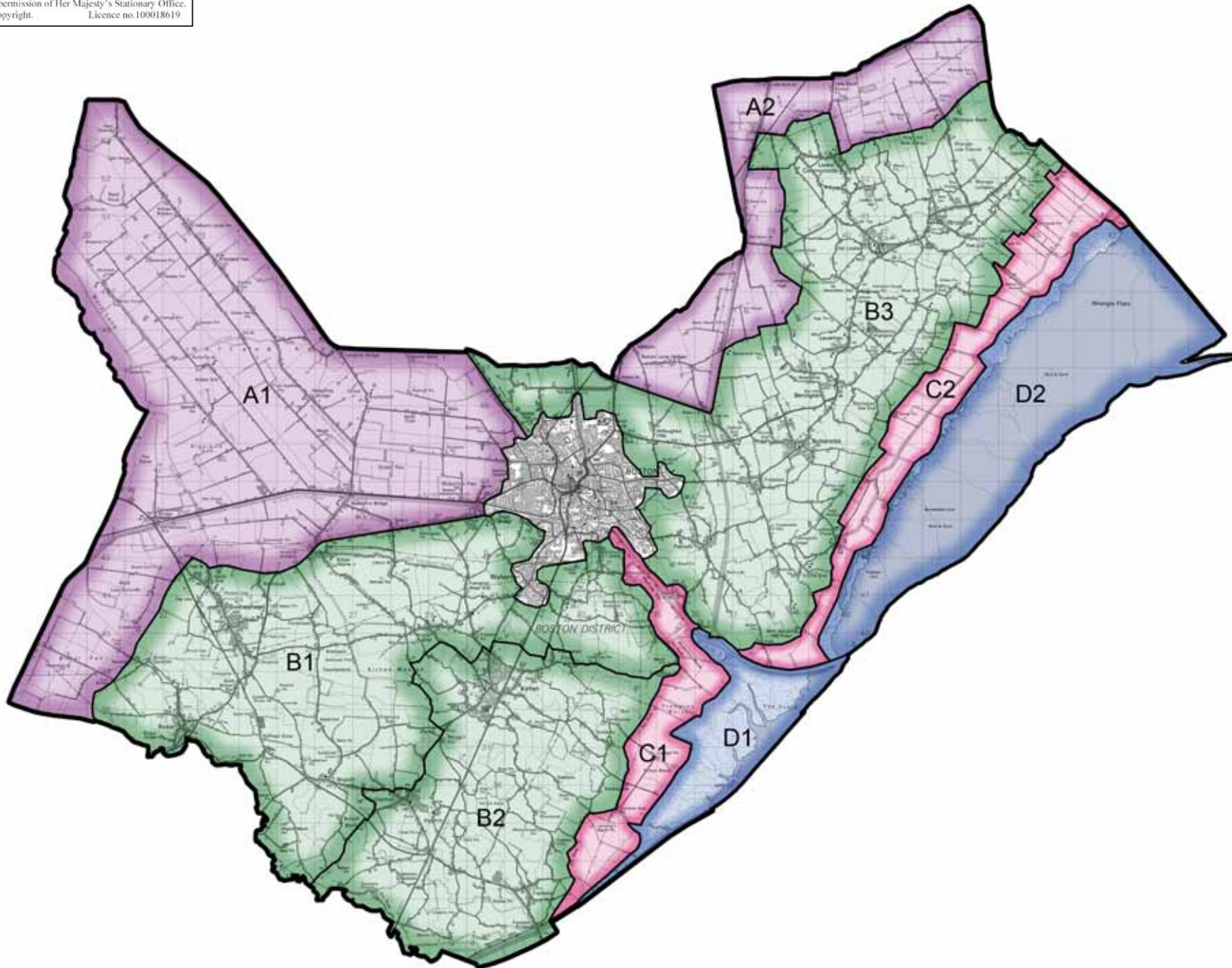
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KEY	
	Boston Borough Council Boundary
	Holland Reclaimed Fen
	Welland to Haven Reclaimed Fen
	Bicker to Wyberton Settled Fen
	Frampton to Fosdyke Settled Fen
	Wrangle to Cowbridge Settled Fen
	Welland to Haven Reclaimed Saltmarsh
	Glebe Farm Reclaimed Saltmarsh
	Welland to Haven Wash Saltmarsh
	Freiston Low to Wrangle Flats Wash Saltmarsh

Boston Borough Landscape Character Assessment

Figure 6: Landscape Character Types and Areas

Scale 1:100 000 @ A3

20th Nov. 2008	ECUS ref: MS/1965/06
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