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03 February 2009

## Land at Icknield Way, Tring, Hertfordshire

### Landscape and Visual Appraisal

E3224C-L-3-1-1

#### Quality Assurance – Approval Status

This document has been Prepared and checked in accordance with  
Waterman CPM's IMS (BS EN ISO 9001: 2000 and BS EN ISO 14001: 2004)

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Approved CAJ

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CCFF Sent

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## Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Waterman Energy, Environment and Design Ltd (Waterman) (formerly known as Waterman CPM) have been instructed by Waterside Way Sustainable Planning Ltd to undertake a landscape and visual appraisal of land at Icknield Way, Tring, Hertfordshire, hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.2 This appraisal summarises the findings of Waterman's desktop review and site survey conducted in December 2008. It provides an overview of relevant designations and planning policies for the area, describes the landscape character of the surrounding area, assesses the visibility of the Site from surrounding environs and identifies representative viewpoints from publicly accessible locations. Recommendations are also given in respect of design principles that would be appropriate given the landscape and visual constraints.
- 1.3 This appraisal considers two separate but inter-linked issues as follows:
  - Landscape Character Appraisal – The role and relationship of characteristics and features of the Site within the surrounding landscape (such as topography, land-use, vegetative cover) and their sensitivity to change; and
  - Visual Appraisal – The visibility of the Site in the surrounding landscape and its importance visually within views from adjacent environs.
- 1.4 The visual analysis is based on views from external spaces within the public domain and not from inside buildings or private spaces. However, where notable views from private properties are possible these have been recorded and comments made if appropriate. Photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (1600mm above ground).
- 1.5 As an assessor grade member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Waterman has experience in considering the landscape and visual effects associated with a variety of schemes. The methodology used by Waterman in the preparation of this appraisal has been tested through review and the inquiry process and developed from the following guidance:
  - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Second Edition, Landscape Institute (LI) and IEMA 2002; and
  - Landscape Character Assessment-Guidance for England and Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency, 2002.

### Site Description

- 1.6 The Site is approximately 9.5ha located to the north of Tring, Hertfordshire. It is bordered by Icknield Way (B488) to the south which lines the entire length of the Site's southern boundary. A short stretch of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal forms the Site's northern boundary, whilst undulating countryside adjoins the

Site to the west. Residential dwellings at Longbridge Close abut the Site's eastern boundary.

- 1.7 The Site itself consists predominantly of rough grassland enclosed by a mixture of gappy and dense hedgerows. The south-eastern section of the Site is occupied by the formal recreational football pitches of Tring Corinthians Football Club which are lined by a thin tree belt demarcating the western boundary. Patches of scrub line the eastern boundary and are also present in the vicinity of the Grand Union Canal. There is a pronounced slope from southwest to northeast across the Site as the topography descends from approximately 135m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Tring Corinthians Football Club to 125m AOD at its lowest adjacent to the Canal.

## Section 2 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The following extracts summarise planning policies relevant to landscape and visual issues and should be read in conjunction with **Plan 1: Planning Policy Context (3224/01)**.

### **National Policy Guidance**

#### **Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) - Delivering Sustainable Development**

- 2.2 One of the aims of PPS1 is to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment and the quality and character of the countryside. It stresses the importance of protecting the wider countryside and taking account of the impact of development on landscape quality and the preservation of the built and archaeological heritage. PPS1 recognises that character is a significant material consideration in planning policy formulation and development control decisions.

#### **Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2) – Green Belts**

- 2.3 PPG2 outlines the Government's land-use objectives for Green Belts, describing how Green Belts are designated and their land safeguarded. It sets out the Government's presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belts as part of the policy's contribution to sustainable development objectives.

#### **Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas**

- 2.4 PPS7 provides the Government's national guidance for development in rural areas. The guidance seeks to 'protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty.' However, it does not preclude development altogether within rural areas and encourages proposals that are of 'good quality' and that 'respect and where possible enhance the local distinctiveness, and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside.'

- 2.5 The Statement specifically addresses nationally designated areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Under this guidance AONBs are afforded the "...highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty', balanced with the need to support 'suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of these designated areas and their communities."

### **Regional Planning Policy**

#### **East of England Plan – Adopted May 2008**

- 2.6 Policy ENV1 relates to Green Infrastructure. It looks promote the retention, provision and enhancement of green infrastructure in the area, notably the Chilterns AONB along with other areas of landscape, ecological and recreational importance.
- 2.7 Policy ENV2 'Landscape Conservation' looks to afford the highest level of protection to the East of England's nationally designated landscapes, aiming to protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of the countryside.

- 2.8 Policy ENV7 relates to the quality of the built environment, stating that new developments should respect the character, quality and distinctiveness of the locality.

### **Local Planning Context**

#### **Dacorum Borough Local Plan (1991 – 2011) ('saved' policies) April 2004**

- 2.9 Until the adoption of the Local Development Framework (LDF) by Dacorum District Council, key policies within the Local Plan have been 'saved' beyond May 2007.

#### ***Landscape Designations Extant Upon the Site***

- 2.10 The Site is within Green Belt land designated under Policy 4 of the Dacorum Local Plan. This designation aims to protect the open nature of the urban fringe, and prevent the uncontrolled sprawl of urban areas. Inappropriate development will not be allowed within this designation unless 'very special' circumstances warrant it. No other landscape designations are extant upon the Site.

#### ***General Landscape Policies and Neighbouring Landscape Designations***

- 2.11 Policy 1 outlines the sustainable development objectives for development within the Dacorum Borough, which aim to 'conserve and enhance the countryside, in particular by maintaining the Green Belt and the landscape of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.'
- 2.12 Policy 96 relating to 'Landscape Strategy' acknowledges that an attractive landscape character is sought throughout the Borough and that 'measures to preserve and improve the landscape will therefore be promoted, secured and encouraged'. It states that 'all new development will be expected to make a positive contribution to the landscape and bring forward specific improvements wherever needed.'
- 2.13 The policy also states that 'special regard will be paid to the effect of development proposals on views, vistas and skylines and visual impact on the countryside will be minimised' and that 'proposals which are considered to be visually obtrusive will normally be refused.'
- 2.14 The Chilterns AONB abuts the Grand Union Canal to the north of the Site. Policy 97, relating directly to the Chilterns AONB, states that 'every effort will be made to discourage development and operations that would adversely affect the beauty of the area.' With regard to new buildings and other development, the Policy states that 'building, plant and structures must be sympathetically sited and designed, having regard to natural contours, landscape, planting and other buildings; there should be no adverse effect on skyline views.' The policy also aims to protect the traditional character of the area.
- 2.15 Policy 98 relating to 'Landscape Regions' states how that 'In considering proposals likely to have an impact on the visual or scenic quality of the Landscape Regions, the Council will take into account the degree to which the proposals protect and enhance the visual quality of the landscape by retaining, reinstating or managing desirable elements.' The Landscape Regions are defined within the County Council's Landscape Strategy described in detail within Section 3.

## **Designations and Covenants**

### **Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)**

- 2.16 There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) located within the site boundary (Confirmed by Dacorum Borough Council via email on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008). New Mill TPO (1963) covers a row of poplar trees to the rear of Longbridge Close, in the vicinity of the Site's eastern boundary.

### **Public Rights of Way (PRoW)**

#### *Within the Site*

- 2.17 A footpath follows the Site's eastern boundary adjacent to the ditch to the rear of Longbridge Close before meeting the Grand Union Canal and following its course westward. A number of unofficial paths used by local dogwalkers traverse the Site.

#### *Immediate Locality*

- 2.18 The Grand Union Canal Walk is a regional long distance path that follows the northern bank of the canal, adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of the Site.
- 2.19 Other local footpaths are present within the countryside to the west of the Site.

## **Conservation Areas**

- 2.20 The nearest conservation area to the Site is located approximately 500m to the south in Tring. Wilstone Conservation Area is located approximately 1.5km to the northwest of the Site.

## **Other Designations**

- 2.21 The wider study area contains four Grade II listed buildings or structures which lie between 100 and 700m to the east and south of the Site boundary (refer to Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assessment report ref: E3224C-H-1-1-1 also prepared by Waterman).

## Section 3 Landscape Character Appraisal

- 3.1 This section considers the existing landscape character of the Site and its environs and addresses their sensitivity and capacity in relation to potential development within the Site. The Section should be read in conjunction with **Plan 3: Landscape Character Assessment (3224/05)**.

### **National Character**

- 3.2 The Countryside Agency's Character Map of England identifies broad, strategic character areas for the whole of England. The Site lies within the Chilterns Character Area, identified as Area 110 (**Appendix 1**). This area is characterised by:

- Chalk hills and plateau with a prominent escarpment, extensive dip slope with numerous dry valleys;
- Remnants of chalk downland on the escarpment and valley sides. Extensive areas of downland invaded by scrub;
- The most extensive areas of beech woodland in the country on the plateau and in the valleys;
- Enclosed and intimate landscapes of the valleys contrasting with the open plateau top and extensive views from the scarp to the clay vale below;
- An agricultural landscape of small fields often dominated by trees, small woodlands and dense ancient hedges;
- Many surviving areas of semi-open common land on the plateau;
- Scattered villages and farmsteads displaying consistent use of traditional building materials including flint, brick, and clay tiles;
- Network of ancient green lanes and tracks including the Ridgeway linking numerous archaeological sites and settlements; and
- Grand country houses and designed landscapes occupying prominent positions on sloping valley sides.

- 3.3 The character of the Site and its surrounds generally exhibits these characteristics particularly the distinctive chalk escarpment dip slope of the Chilterns AONB and undulating rolling hills.

### **Regional Character**

#### **Landscape Strategy for Hertfordshire (2001)**

- 3.4 The Landscape Strategy for Hertfordshire identifies the Site within the Chilterns character area, and states that the region has a 'dramatic scarp face running between Tring and Hitchin, with a gentler dip slope to the Southeast towards

Welwyn, St Albans and Watford.' It notes that the area is characterised by 'rolling chalk hills (capped with clay with flints) and a lack of standing water.'

- 3.5 The document states that within this region are 'varied landscapes containing some of the best scenic tracts with the most extreme relative topography in the County.'

### **Local Character**

#### **Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment**

- 3.6 In February 2000 Hertfordshire County Council commissioned a local authority scale landscape character assessment and evaluation of the southern part of the county. In February 2002 an extension was agreed to provide complete coverage to include Dacorum Borough. This was adopted as SPG within the Local Plan in May 2004.
- 3.7 As a result of the 2002 extension study, the Site has been classified within the Tring Gap Foothills, character area 114 of the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment (**Appendix 2**). This area is characterised by:
- Views to the Chilterns escarpment;
  - Framing and containment by wooded scarp slopes;
  - Arterial transport corridor including; west coast main line, A41, Grand Union Canal and Akeman Street;
  - Mixed open farmland;
  - Parkland landscapes at Tring Park and Pendley Manor;
  - Urban fringe influences around Tring including; residential sports pitches and a garden centre; and
  - Recreational routes including the Grand Union Canal Walk and the Ridgeway.
- 3.8 Tring Park is also noted as a prominent feature of the landscape.
- 3.9 The Site and its immediate environs demonstrate the above characteristics including views to the Chilterns escarpment, the Grand Union Canal and urban fringe elements such as Tring Corinthians Football Club.
- 3.10 Immediately abutting the Site to the north is character area 113: Tring Reservoirs (**Appendix 3**). This is an area characterised by:
- Grand Union Canal (Aylesbury Arm), including bridges and canal architecture;
  - Regulating reservoirs for the Grand Union Canal; and
  - Long established settlement with varied building vernacular.

- 3.11 The above characteristics are vividly demonstrated at Marsworth, Tringford and Startop's End Reservoirs to the north of the Site. The Grand Union Canal acts as a distinct physical boundary to this character area.
- 3.12 The LCA also provides details for managing change in the area. Strategic aims include the enhancement and restoration of diversity of planting and built structure within the landscape with emphasis on the historic character of the area.
- 3.13 Furthermore, the LCA looks to 'promote awareness and consideration of the setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering development and land use change proposals on sites adjacent to the AONB.'

### **Waterman Landscape Character Assessment**

- 3.14 The Site falls within the Tring Gap Foothills as identified within the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment (**Appendix 2**) that encircle the Tring urban area. Tring Gap Foothills is characterised by undulating topography as a result of the underlying Chalk geology, creating a contrast between the secluded valley bottom and open, rolling hill summit. Land use is predominantly arable with a network of medium to small scale fields although many of the hedgerows that demarcate them are gappy and thin. Woodland blocks are generally absent within this character area but where they are present, are usually small coppices in contrast to the larger woodland blocks and treebelts associated with Tring Reservoirs.
- 3.15 Immediately to the north of the Site, is the Tring Reservoirs, Grand Union Canal and woodland block character area. A small area of the southern section of this character area (encapsulating Tringford, Marsworth and Startop's End Reservoirs and their immediate environs) is included within the Chilterns AONB (refer to **Plan 1: Planning Policy Context (3224/01)**).
- 3.16 This character area is heavily influenced by aquatic features such as the Canal and Tringford, Marsworth and Startop's End Reservoirs and provides a contrast to the character of Tring Gap Foothills. Despite the predominance of water, there is still great variation within this character area, for example between the intimate towpaths and bridges associated with the Grand Union Canal and the wide open aquatic expanses of the Reservoirs. The vegetative network is more developed within this area to that of the Tring Gap Foothills with a number of large woodland blocks and tree belts (usually associated with the Reservoirs) present within the landscape. Mid-scale arable fields are predominant land-uses between the expanses of open water. The Grand Union Canal acts as a distinct physical feature demarcating the boundary between Tring Gap Foothills character and Tring Reservoirs character to the north.
- 3.17 To the south of the Site is the urban area of Tring, which consists of a plethora of building styles and vernacular. Abutting the Site's southern and eastern boundary are the suburbs of Tring which consist of detached and semi-detached residential dwellings with modern vernaculars. New residential suburbs at Longbridge Close to the east and Chapel Meadow and Icknield Green to the south are representative of these developments. This character area is juxtaposed to the neighbouring Tring Gap Foothills character of the Site and wider countryside to the north.

- 3.18 Dissecting the Tring urban and suburban character area are areas of Intimate Natural Corridor character. These are natural areas, often wooded and verdant in nature that follow the course of streams or brooks, meandering through the surrounding urban environment and serving to break up areas of built form. Their wooded nature creates intimate character with limited views within them, in contrast to the open countryside of the Tring Gap Foothills. This character area is closely associated to that of the built form of Tring and not the wider countryside to the north.
- 3.19 Punctuating the Tring urban and suburban character area are areas of Open Formal Recreation character. These are managed open recreational spaces such as school playing fields and public recreation grounds and provide an open character in contrast to the surrounding built form. These areas are well within Tring urban area and are not influenced by the Site or wider countryside.

### **Site's Relation to Statutory Landscape Designations**

- 3.20 The Site is within Green Belt land as designated within the Dacorum Local Plan under Policy 4. However due to its aspect, which slopes north-eastwards toward Tring's suburbs, and proximity to the settlement, being abutted by built form on its southern and eastern boundaries, the site is more closely associated with Tring's urban form rather than that of wider countryside to the west and north. These characteristics, along with its limited visual envelope (refer to **Plan 4: Visual Envelope (3224/15)**) limit the Site's contribution to the overall quality of the landscape character which is individual within the Green Belt. It should be noted that the Green Belt designation encompasses the whole of Tring's periphery and any future expansion of Tring will result in the encroachment of built form in to the Green Belt designation.
- 3.21 The Chilterns AONB is located adjacent to the Grand Union Canal immediately to the north of the Site. The Grand Union Canal acts as a natural demarcation of the AONB and physically separates the Site from the designation. The Site's sloping topography is distinctly different from the flat landscape characteristic to the north within the AONB causes the site to be more closely associated with the settlement of Tring. For these reasons the Site's contribution to the setting of the AONB and the AONB's overall intrinsic value is limited.

### **Interim Summary**

- 3.22 The character of the Site is typical of the undulating countryside synonymous with the Tring Gap Foothills that surround Tring. Contrast exists within the Site between its relatively open summit in the southwest and the more intimate and secluded character encountered at its lowest point along the Grand Union Canal in the northeast. Vegetative cover is not a prominent feature within the Site although areas of scrub are present in the northeast corner adjacent to the confluence of the grand Union Canal and ditch running southeast.
- 3.23 As a result of the proximity of the Site to the urban edge of Tring and the aspect of its slope, built form is visible from within the Site (Photoviewpoints 1 and 2). This visual connection to the existing urban context causes the Site to be more closely associated with the rural fringe of Tring rather than that of the wider undulating

countryside to the north and west. As such it has little intrinsic value in the setting of the Chilterns AONB located to the north and does not play a significant role in the overall landscape character and visual amenity of the Green Belt surrounding Tring as a whole.

## Section 4 Visual Appraisal

- 4.1 The following section examines the visibility of the Site with reference to certain representative views from within the Site, and towards it from the surrounding area. The appraisal is based on the findings of the GIS analysis (refer to **Plan 2: Topography and GIS Visual Analysis (3224/02)**) and has been refined and verified through field assessment in December 2008. The extent of the visual envelope is shown within **Plan 4: Visual Envelope (3224/15)** which should be read in conjunction with this section.
- 4.2 During the field survey representative views of the Site from a variety of receptors in the local area were identified. The identification of views has been carried out from external spaces within the public domain, and not from buildings or private spaces. However, where notable views from private dwellings are possible these have been recorded. The location of the viewpoints is illustrated on **Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations (3224/07)** and represented in the Photoviewpoint Sheets.

### Existing Visibility of the Site

#### Views From Within the Site

- 4.3 Photoviewpoint 1 is taken from within the Site looking north-east. It is taken from the central area of the Site, on high ground before the land slopes down towards the northeast and represents one of the long distance views out of the Site. This raised location affords panoramic views towards the wooded ridges of Pitstone and Steps Hills within the Chilterns AONB. The view is split into three distinctive areas; the foreground containing the Site; the middle ground containing suburban residential areas of Tring; and the background with the prominent Chilterns escarpment. Heygates Flour Mill is a prominent landmark in the middle distance to the left of the view. Scattered tree planting helps to blend the transition between the built form of residential areas at Longbridge Close and Bushel Wharf to the backdrop of the Chilterns AONB beyond.
- 4.4 Photoviewpoint 2 represents the long distance view obtainable from within the Site looking southwest. Rising topography south west of the Site screens views of Little Tring Road from this location, although glimpses of properties on Icknield Way (B488) are possible. The wooded tops of distant hills within the Chilterns AONB form the backdrop to the scene. The Site itself is prominent within the foreground with the Tring Corinthians Football Club pitch being a notable feature, the goal posts of which stand out from the surrounding vegetation. Dense mixed woodland at Dundale near the junction of Little Tring Road and Icknield Way frames the view to the left.

#### Views Toward the Site

- 4.5 Photoviewpoint 3 is located at the entrance to Chapel Meadow from Icknield Way looking southwest and represents the view of the Site when approaching from the south on Icknield Way. Built form is a prominent feature of the view being visible both to the right and left of the composition. Only partial views of the Site are afforded from this location due to intervening vegetation along Icknield Way and the screening effect of the dwellings of Longbridge Close to the right of the view.

- 4.6 Photoviewpoint 4 demonstrates the view available from the roundabout junction between the B488, B486 and Tring Ford Road, looking south-west. Notable features in the view include the roundabout, tall lampposts and residential dwellings adjoining Icknield Way. Views to distant hills within the Chilterns AONB on the horizon are also obtainable. Despite the raised viewpoint location, intervening built form and vegetation restrict views of the Site to its upper reaches although glimpses of the Site are afforded through a gap in between built form along Icknield Road (B488).
- 4.7 Photoviewpoint 5 is a view from the Grand Union Canal Walk (a designated regional trail) aligning the north bank of the Grand Union Canal adjacent to the north-eastern border of the Site looking southwest. The Grand Union Canal is an attractive feature within the composition affording open views along its course. The Site is clearly visible in the middle ground as a result of its proximity to the viewpoint location, standing out from the surrounding landscape due to its colouration. The upper storeys of built form along Icknield Way are also visible lining the southern boundary of the Site. Occasional blocks of scattered vegetation punctuate the foreground. Due to the rising topography, views to the football pitch located in the south of the Site are not possible although the top of the treebelt that lines the western boundary are visible. Longer distance views beyond the Site are also not possible due to intervening topography.
- 4.8 From Photoviewpoint 6, taken on the Grand Union Canal Walk footpath looking east, the Site is not clearly discernible due to the aspect of the topography and the hedgerow network that extends along the western Site boundary. However views across the Site to the rooflines of properties on Icknield Way (B488) are possible. Heygates Flour Mill is a prominent feature to the left of the view, despite vegetation filtering much of its bulk. Rooflines of the suburbs of Tring are also visible nestled amongst vegetation. Views over these dwellings to the distant hills of the AONB in the background are also afforded from this location.
- 4.9 Photoviewpoint 7 is taken from the bridge over the Grand Union Canal on Little Tring Road, looking east. Due to the undulating topography in this view, the Site is not discernible. Views of the Site from the footpath below are further shielded by tall, dense vegetation that lines the canal. The canal and canal boats are features of value in this view whilst the sloping field towards the right of the view provides an important physical barrier in blocking views of the Site and the suburbs of Tring from this location.
- 4.10 At Photoviewpoint 8, taken from Little Tring Road through a gateway in the hedgerow looking northeast, the hedgerow lining the western boundary of the Site screens views into the football pitch in the Site's south-eastern corner. The remainder of the Site is not visible due to the topography which slopes away from the viewpoint. The treebelt lining the football pitch filters the largely uninterrupted panorama of the Chilterns AONB on the horizon. A row of telegraph poles also punctuate the composition in the foreground. To the left of the view, Heygates Flour Mill is a noticeable feature, whilst built form along Icknield Way and vegetation at Dundale is prominent to the right.
- 4.11 Photoviewpoint 9 is a view looking northwest towards the Site from the junction of Icknield Green and Icknield Way and is representative of views of the Site from properties along Icknield Way. Heygates Flour Mill is a dominant feature to the right of the view, despite the filtering effects of surrounding vegetation, being taller than the adjacent residential suburbs. Long distance views over the Site to the north and

views east to residential areas in the middle-ground are obtainable from this location. Due to the sloping topography of the Site, only areas close to the southeast boundary of the Site are visible as the land dips away from the viewpoint location. Views to the Site are further disrupted by the hedgerow lining the road. It should be noted that many properties along Icknield Way to the southwest of this viewpoint are one storey and do not have extensive views over the Site.

- 4.12 Photoviewpoint 10 represents a view from across Marsworth Reservoir within the Chilterns AONB looking south towards the Site. The view is dominated by Marsworth Reservoir creating an open and expansive view. However, as a result of the flat topography and intervening vegetation, the Site is not visible from this location.
- 4.13 Photoviewpoint 11 represents a long distance view from the Ridgeway Path at Pitstone Hill (approximately 2.5km away) within the Chilterns AONB looking west. The location affords panoramic views over the valley floor across Tring to the escarpment beyond. The settlement of Tring is discernible nestled at the foot of the scarp slope whilst reservoirs to the north of the settlement provide key landmark features within the landscape. The Site is visible but not clearly discernible from this location as it blends into the surrounding landscape at this distance. The abundance of vegetation in the form of hedge-lined fields, treebelts and other scattered vegetation along with pockets of built form further assimilate the Site into its surroundings.
- 4.14 Photoviewpoint 12 is taken from the Ridgeway Path within the Chilterns AONB northeast of Wigginton looking northwest, approximately 2km away from the Site. This is an isolated view through scattered tree planting. The Site is not clearly discernible from this location as it blends with the built form and vegetation that occupy the valley floor. Further views west along this footpath are restricted by treebelts that line its course in this area.
- 4.15 Along the Icknield Way footpath, between Bull's Wood and Bishop's Wood within the Chilterns AONB, views north towards the Site are restricted by tall mature trees and dense vegetation that line the path. Photoviewpoint 13 represents a rare view out through a gap in this network of vegetation. From here Heygates Flour Mill is visible beyond The Mansion in Tring, which is a prominent feature in the middle-ground of the view. Views to the Site itself are screened by vegetation within the valley floor.

### **Interim Summary**

- 4.16 The visibility of the Site is restricted largely to its immediate surrounds (refer to **Plan 4: Visual Envelope (3224/15)**) as a result of its aspect and surrounding undulating topography and built form. Open views of the Site are obtainable from Icknield Way along the Site's southern boundary and from a small stretch of the Grand Union Canal path in the vicinity of the Site's northern boundary.
- 4.17 Views further north are limited by the flat topography and screened by intervening vegetation. To the east and south, the intervening built form of Tring's suburbs and vegetation blocks views of the Site whilst views from the west are restricted by the undulating topography.

- 4.18 Views of the Site from within the Chilterns AONB to the north are screened by intervening woodland blocks and hedgerows and truncated by the flat topography. Long distance views from the AONB to the south and east of the Site are at such a distance that the Site becomes indiscernible amongst the existing built form and vegetation within the valley floor.

## Section 5 Recommended Landscape Development Principles

- 5.1 This section sets out landscape principles that are recommended to inform the design of development on the Site. The Section should be read in conjunction with **Plan 5: Indicative Landscape Strategy (3224/06)** which provides a pictorial representation of guiding principles from a landscape perspective. The principles outlined below draw on the findings of the landscape and visual appraisal and seek to aid the assimilation of any potential development on the site into the existing landscape context.
- 5.2 The indicative landscape strategy indicates seven separate character areas to guide the nature of development from a landscape perspective, restricting greater massing and taller buildings to those areas of the Site closely associated with the existing urban form of Tring.
- 5.3 The area of the Site adjacent to the Grand Union Canal provides a real opportunity to create a high quality recreational experience along the Site's north-eastern boundary. It also offers the ability to mitigate views into the Site from the canal-side path located within the AONB.
- 5.4 The opportunity to retain the formal public open space to the south of the Site would avoid placing built form in the most elevated and visible areas of the Site.
- 5.5 The ridge to the west of the Site is an important topographical feature forming a natural barrier in blocking views of the Site from the northern end of Little Tring Road where it passes over the Grand Union Canal. It is recommended this ridgeline is not breached by the development roofline.
- 5.6 Detailed design should also seek to enhance the connectivity of the Site to existing green infrastructure resources. These opportunities include the footpath that runs alongside the culvert adjacent to Chapel Meadow, Dundale woodland (earmarked within the Dacorum Local Plan under Policy L3 as an ecological park) and the footpath that runs westward along the southern bank of the Grand Union Canal.
- 5.7 Given the topography of the Site, it is recommended that aspects such as height and massing are sensitively considered. In particular, the extent to which the development will be prominent on the skyline should be thoroughly addressed. It is recommended that proposals reflect the existing topography.

## Section 6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 Waterman Energy, Environment and Design Ltd (Waterman) (formerly known as Waterman CPM) have been instructed by Waterside Way Sustainable Planning Ltd to undertake a landscape and visual appraisal of land at Ickneild Way, Tring. A summary of the findings is presented below.

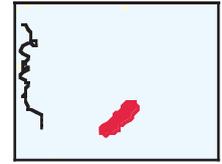
### **Landscape Character**

- 6.2 The Site's topography, proximity to Tring's suburbs and separation from the Chilterns AONB to the north by the Grand Union Canal result in a close association between the Site and the urban form of Tring rather than that of the wider countryside to the west and north.
- 6.3 Due to the Site's sloping topography, association with Tring and separation by the Grand Union Canal it is not considered to be integral to the setting of the Chilterns AONB to the north, which is distinctly different in character to that of the Site itself.

### **Visual**

- 6.4 The visual envelope is restricted to the immediate environs of the Site. Open views of the Site are only obtainable from Ickneild Way (B488) abutting the southern boundary and from a short stretch of the Grand Union Canal Walk (within the AONB) abutting the north-eastern boundary.
- 6.5 The undulating topography and mature hedgerow lining Little Tring Road to the west of the Site limit views from the wider countryside, whilst views into the Site from the east are screened by the built form of Tring's suburbs and vegetation. Intervening woodland and treebelts to the north limit views from within the Chilterns AONB immediately to the north.
- 6.6 The Site becomes indiscernible in long distance views from the Chilterns AONB to the south and east, blending amongst the urban form and woodland within the valley.
- 6.7 For the reasons outlined above, the Site is therefore considered to be an acceptable location for development at Tring on landscape and visual grounds. Guiding principles have been prepared from a landscape perspective to aid the assimilation of potential development on the site into the existing landscape context.

Appendix 1 Countryside Agency Character Area No. 110:  
Chilterns



# Chilterns

## Key Characteristics

- Chalk hills and plateau with a prominent escarpment in many places, and extensive dip slope with numerous dry valleys.
- Remnants of chalk downland on the escarpment and valley sides. Extensive areas of downland invaded by scrub.
- The most extensive areas of beech woodland in the country on the plateau, and 'hanging' woodlands in the valleys.
- Enclosed and intimate landscapes of the valleys contrasting with the more open plateau top and extensive views from the scarp to the clay vale below.
- Small fields and dense network of ancient hedges, often on steep ground. The agricultural landscape often dominated by hedges, trees and small woodlands.
- Many surviving areas of semi-open common land on the plateau.
- Scattered villages and farmsteads, some of medieval origin, displaying consistent use of traditional building materials including flint, brick, and clay tiles.
- Network of ancient green lanes and tracks including the Ridgeway which links numerous archaeological sites and settlements.
- Frequent grand country houses and designed landscapes occupying prominent positions on sloping valley sides.

## Landscape Character

The Chilterns rise to just over 900 feet and stretch from the Thames in Oxfordshire across Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire to Bedfordshire. The area includes the lower-lying substantial settlements of Luton, Dunstable, Hemel

Hempstead, Berkhamstead, Chesham, Amersham and High Wycombe, as well as a section of the M40 and M1 motorway corridors. The Chilterns rise above Aylesbury Vale to the north, abut the East Anglian Chalk to the north-east and slope into the Hertfordshire Plateaux and River Valleys, and the Thames Valley to the south-east. The Berkshire and Marlborough Downs form the western boundary to the Chilterns.



JEFF PICK/COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

Chalk streams with their associated waterside landscapes remain an important, if localised, landscape feature. Most of the chalk streams are affected, to some degree, by decreased flow.

The hills are formed by an outcrop of Chalk, overlain by clay with flints, up to a depth of four metres on the north-western side of the London basin. The Chalk strata have been tilted to create a dip slope that rises so gently towards the north-west that it generally has the character of a plateau. However, it ends abruptly in a steep scarp slope which forms the more dramatic north-western face of the Chilterns above Aylesbury Vale. The plateau is cut by a series of through-valleys that divide it into roughly rectangular blocks with many branching dry valleys further dividing these blocks and thereby creating a varied mix of landscapes. As well as the distinctive landform, the scarp is



characterised by fragmented and occasionally substantial areas of unimproved chalk grassland with a uneven texture and colour. The influences of the underlying Chalk are apparent in the smooth, rounded sides of the numerous valleys that incise the dip slope. Most of the valleys were formed by glacial melt water but a small number of them support spring-fed streams. In recent years they have all been affected by drought and some by over abstraction. There are many coombes and dry valleys hidden away in the folds of the hills, sometimes giving rise to bournes (streams which flow intermittently).

The extensive areas of woodland dominated by beech on the plateau and the 'hanging' woodlands of the Chalk valleys are

a characteristic feature of the area and make the Chilterns one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England. Beech was selectively encouraged by management because of its value in the 18th and 19th century furniture industry. Today, the extent of the woodland and the grandeur of the 'cathedral-like' beech woods in particular, dominate the landscape and distinguish the Chilterns from other chalk landscapes such as the more open Berkshire and Marlborough Downs immediately to the south-west of the area.

The south-western boundary is formed by the river Thames as it flows past Wallingford, Henley and Marlow. Although part of the Chilterns, this belt of countryside is dominated by the river and its floodplain rather than by the Chiltern Hills.





MARTIN TRELAWNEY/COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

The escarpment, with its distinctive form, varies in character from the wooded scarp and gentler landform of the west, to the steep dramatic grassland scarp of the north east.

The escarpment varies in character with the more wooded scarp and gentler landform of Oxfordshire giving way to the more dramatic steep grassland scarp face of Buckinghamshire to the north-east. Sheep grazing is common on the improved chalk grasslands with remnants of species-rich pasture on the steeper valley slopes and scarp face. Scrub is invading chalk downland following cessation of large scale sheep grazing earlier this century and the effects of myxomatosis on rabbits more recently. Much of the largest area of surviving species-rich chalk grassland has been designated as an SSSI or National Nature Reserve. Many of these valuable sites are in public ownership.

Towns and villages of medieval origin are found throughout the Chilterns, the oldest are located in valleys with reliable water supplies. Most of these ancient villages boast Norman churches, village greens and ponds. From the mid-19th century, scattered linear villages have developed on the

plateau, usually around commonland. During the 20th century there has been large-scale development along major road and rail corridors, typified by development along the Metropolitan line from the 1930s onwards. The result is that most Chiltern villages have grown rapidly during this century and house styles from the previous 300 years can be found in most of them.

Designed parklands and large gardens associated with grand historic houses make a dramatic contribution to the local landscape. The designed woodlands, tree clumps, parkland trees, lime avenues, houses and related buildings are distinctive in the Chilterns landscape and often occupy prominent positions on sloping valley sides. Designed landscapes such as Shardeloes, Tring Park, West Wycombe Park, Wycombe Abbey, Park Place, Remenham and Ashridge demonstrate the 18th century design of Bridgeman, Brown and Repton for which the Chilterns are particularly renowned.

Overall, the area has a predominantly quiet and prosperous farming character. The beech woods, the distinctive relationship between the Chalk scarp and the clay vale below, and the traditional villages are all significant characteristics of the landscape. When perceived from the extensive network of sunken lanes and tracks the landscape often feels hidden, enclosed and ancient. This give the Chilterns its special sense of place.

### Physical Influences

The Chilterns are formed by chalk, which creates the smooth rounded forms so typical of downland scenery. The chalk is exposed along the steep escarpment and along valley sides throughout the area. The dip slope is overlain



SIMON MELVILLE/ENGLISH NATURE

The Chilterns escarpment includes substantial areas of species-rich chalk grassland and scrub creating uneven texture and colour.

by clay with flints which supports extensive woodlands, medium-grade farmland and even remnant heath.

The valleys were primarily formed by glacial melt waters and are now dry. The main rivers are the Wye, Gade, Ver, Bulbourne, Chess and Misbourne. The Wye flows directly into the Thames whilst the others flow into the river Colne before joining the Thames. Small brooks known as 'bournes' flow in several valleys, fed by springs which periodically dry up.



STEVE RODRICK/CHILTERNs AG/GB

A network of sunken lanes, known locally as hollow ways, are found on both the plateau and valley bottoms helping to link scattered settlements and woodlands.

### Historical and Cultural Influences

The area has been continually influenced by human settlement since early Palaeolithic times. Neolithic clearance of woodland for agriculture and the development of an important Roman communications network established a settlement pattern still evident today and set the scene for the emergence of a distinctive wood-based industry and agricultural change in medieval times.

The earliest archaeological evidence of human activity in the area comes from Caddington where extensive flint working sites dating from the early Palaeolithic period (125,000 - 70,000 BC) have been discovered. Evidence of flint implements are common and widespread from the Mesolithic period (10,000 - 4,000 BC). The local importance of flint from the Chalk is still evident in today's landscape with the use of flint with brick in the walls of buildings and garden boundary walls.

The Neolithic period (4,000 - 2,000 BC) saw a dramatic period of landscape change when the introduction of agriculture to Britain led to the widespread clearance of woodland from much of the Chalk escarpment and river valleys. During this period and into the Bronze Age (2,000 - 750 BC) the Icknield Way was in use as a trackway along the scarp of the Chiltern hills and is associated with evidence of burial mounds on the adjacent higher ground. Evidence from the Iron Age (750 BC - 43 AD) confirms the developing importance of the Icknield Way as a major

line of communication and demonstrates the territorial nature of this period in the history of the Chilterns. Earthworks of former defensive hillforts and dykes to control trade are found along the scarp and also along the Thames Valley to the south. Their presence also probably defined tribal boundaries in the area.

The appearance of the landscape during the Roman period (43 AD - 410 AD) may not have been radically different to that of the Chilterns in the early 19th century. Small towns linked by a system of roads, a mosaic of small fields interspersed with large blocks of woodland, rough grazing on what was then the marginal plateau soils and a more intensively farmed arable landscape on the lighter soils of the valley bottoms. The pattern of settlement as we know it today evolved during this period with many late Iron Age farmsteads developing into Roman masonry villas distributed at regular intervals along the spring line and river valleys. These developed into small towns linked by a system of roads including the establishment of Watling Street and Akeman Street, two major lines of communication that became the A5 London to Dunstable and the A41 St Albans to Aylesbury roads. The presence of extensive areas of woodland provided the charcoal necessary for the emerging iron slag industry which was one of the earliest non-agricultural industries to exist in the Chilterns.

The period from the 5th century through to the Tudors saw a major change in the agricultural land use of the Chilterns. From the early 5th century onwards farmers in the Chilterns returned to subsistence agriculture as a result of the collapse of their markets and a reduced population due to the depredations of the Saxons. Marginal fields on the plateau were abandoned or maintained as rough grazing and, as a result, woodland cover saw an increase during this period. The landscape, as indicated in Domesday Book, appeared to be similar to that of today. The woodlands have never been cleared to the same extent as other areas and the current cover of approximately 20 per cent remains a high figure by UK standards. The Oxfordshire Chilterns has a woodland cover exceeding 30 per cent. The boundaries of woodlands are known to have changed significantly, reflecting constantly fluctuating agricultural and forestry economics.

Settlements were predominantly scattered in farmsteads and hamlets, a pattern still found in the Chilterns today, although much of the land on the plateau had still not been reclaimed for cropping. As the population increased, the pressure on the land led to an expansion in agriculture indicated by the creation of strip lynchets on steeper slopes. New farms and settlements were established on the plateau and new small fields were carved out of the extensive common woods that covered the ridges and allocated to a particular tenant.

## Buildings and Settlement

The most notable feature of the vernacular buildings, both in villages and elsewhere, is the consistent use of materials especially the flints that occur in both the Chalk strata and the overlying clay-with-flints. In many places, flint is combined with brick both in the walls of older buildings and in the boundary walls around gardens. Most vernacular buildings also have tiled roofs, with the tiles often having been made from local iron-rich clay. Thatch has been used less, with notable concentrations in the Oxfordshire part of the Chilterns. The use of brick, flint and tiles is particularly characteristic of many of the historic farmsteads. The oldest farm buildings are commonly characterised by large timber-framed barns clad with black, horizontal weather boarding, brick and flint gable walls, which sometimes incorporate vertical ventilation slits and an owl hole. The consistent range of traditional building materials used in different combinations throughout the area contributes greatly to the distinctiveness of the landscape.

Settlements are linked by a network of ancient, commonly sunken lanes, some running straight along valley bottoms or ridge-tops while others wind up the scarp or valley sides. The sunken lanes pass through woodland, creating an enclosed landscape with an over-arching canopy of trees. On plateau areas and in some valleys the lanes can be lined with species-rich ancient hedges, the height and dense nature of which offer only limited views into the fields beyond. Much of the wider landscape is 'hidden' from the user of these lanes.

Along the loop of the river Thames, the towns of Marlow, Henley and Cookham expanded greatly in the 19th century. River frontages are characterised by ribbon development of summer homes.

## Land Cover

Woodlands are a significant and characteristic feature in the landscape and occur throughout the area. Broadleaved trees dominate the Chilterns woodlands and include the grand beech woods and wooded commons of the plateau and the hanging woodlands of the scarp and valleys. It is the extent of woodland in general, and of the beech woods in particular, which distinguishes the Chilterns area from other chalk landscapes which are often more open in character. The unnaturally high incidence of beech owes its presence to the furniture making industry. A considerable amount of ancient woodland with a much greater variety of trees and shrubs, including oak, birch, holly, hazel on the more acid plateau and ash, wych elm, field maple and cherry on the escarpment. The favourable growing conditions for cherry helped to support widespread orchards, especially in the central part of the Chilterns. These orchards are no longer commercially managed and are now disappearing rapidly.

Juniper heath also survives in some places and very rare natural box woods can be found on the scarp. The woods also add significantly to the ancient feel of the landscape and to its intimate and hidden character.

The Chilterns are dominated by Grade 3 soils which are capable of growing cereals but with limited yields. The result is a mixture of dairying and sheep and arable farming. The mixture at any one time depends upon the economics of each type of farming. More recently, set-aside has become a notable landscape feature.

The type of crops grown are generally winter wheat and barley. Spring sown crops are now rare so there is little winter stubble which has consequences for many bird species formerly characteristic of the Chilterns.

The Chilterns landscape is dissected by transport corridors which run across rather than along the escarpment. Major roads, railway lines and canals are a major feature within the area the majority of which tend to follow the arterial valleys (the M40 is a clear exception). The Thames valley at the western end of the Chilterns is dominated by the river with its associated floodplains.



STEVE RODRICK/CHILTERN'S AGNB

The extensive areas of ancient woodland, secondary woodland and plantations make the Chilterns one of the most richly wooded lowland landscapes in England.

## The Changing Countryside

- New commuter housing development and expansion of settlements by infilling leading to erosion of the traditional Chiltern's building style and adverse changes in the overall character of settlements. Recent developments on the edge of scarp-foot historic market towns are particularly intrusive. Suburbanisation through small scale but inappropriate development design.
- New road construction and road 'improvements' are a significant pressure on the small scale road network of the area.
- Intensification and changes in agricultural practice including the loss of characteristic chalk grassland on escarpment and valley sides because of scrub invasion and a cessation in

traditional sheep grazing regimes. The loss of winter stubble means that fields are now green in the winter months. Increasing number of new crops appearing.

- Cumulative effect of localised removal of field hedgerows and an associated lack of appropriate hedgerow management. The reduction in the quality of hedgerows is considered to erode the character of many Chiltern valleys.
- Increase in horse-related land uses and development of new golf courses on former agricultural land.
- Elements of ancient countryside within the Chilterns, such as narrow winding lanes, organic field patterns and mature tree specimens, are particularly vulnerable to change.
- Remnants of parkland within the agricultural landscape are gradually disappearing.
- Increasing number of telecommunication masts on the skyline.

### Shaping the Future

- The character of the transitional landscape between town and countryside needs attention.
- Management of popular recreational landscapes and sites would avoid environmental damage or deterioration.
- Schemes to re-establish characteristic chalk grassland at suitable locations, and to conserve those areas that remain, should be considered.
- Appropriate management would improve the quality of existing woodlands.

- Management and restoration of wooded commons would re-establish acid grassland.
- Landscape features which are remnants of ancient countryside including characteristic hedgerow patterns, old trees and lanes need positive management and conservation.
- The design of future development should reflect and help restore and reinforce a typical Chilterns character.
- Public transport, green lanes and quiet ways might be promoted to encourage people to visit the countryside without their cars.
- Many historic parklands are in need of conservation and management.

### Selected References

Countryside Commission (1992), *The Chilterns Landscape CCP 392*, Countryside Commission, Cheltenham.

Hertfordshire Planning and Environment Department (1995), *Pre-Draft of Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy*, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire.

Richards Moorehead and Laing Ltd, (1989), *Buckinghamshire Trees and Forestry Strategy: Volumes 1, 2 and 3*, Richards Moorehead and Laing, Clwyd.

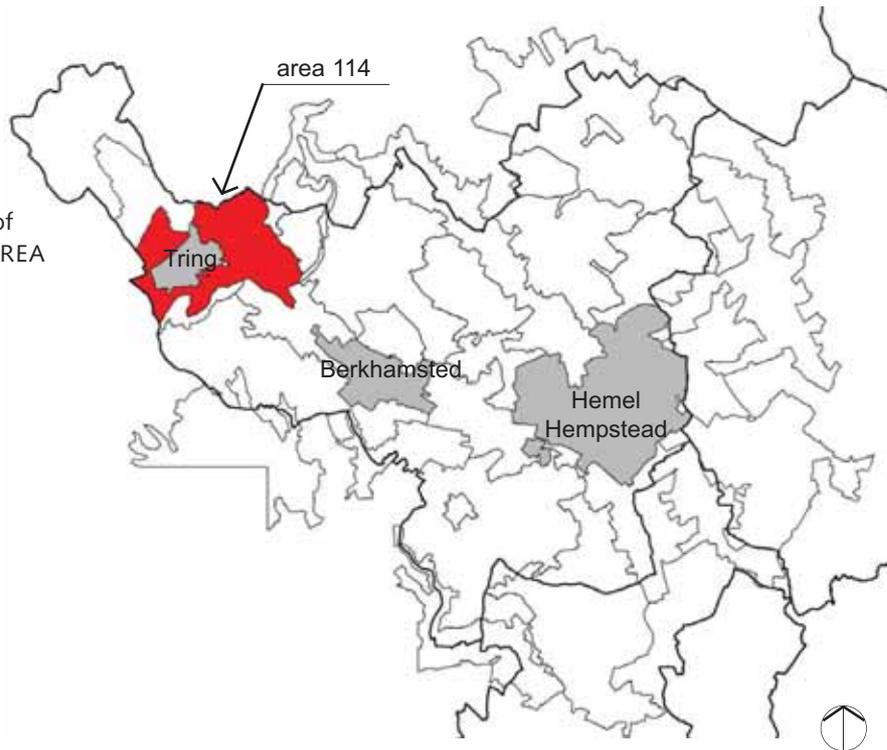
Reed, M (1979), *The Buckinghamshire Landscape*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.

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Appendix 2 Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment  
Character Area No. 114: Tring Gap Foothills

District Map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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 Dacorum Borough Council  
 100018935 2004



**LOCATION**

The area lies between the Tring Reservoirs to the north west and the Chiltern escarpment to the south east. The area includes the town of Tring and extends to the head of the River Bulbourne at Cow Roast.

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

A transitional landscape between the low lying Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns. The landforms, based on the underlying chalk geology are generally gently undulating but with stronger local expressions, particularly at the interface with the elevated Chiltern escarpment. As its name suggests the area is also the focus of a number of key communication corridors including; canal, road and rail. The town of Tring is centrally located within the area.

**KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- views to the Chilterns escarpment
- framing and containment by wooded scarp slopes
- arterial transport corridor including; west coast main line, A41, Grand Union Canal and Akeman Street
- mixed open farmland
- parkland landscapes at Tring Park and Pendley Manor
- urban fringe influences around Tring including; residential sports pitches and a garden centre
- recreational routes including the Grand Union Canal Walk and the Ridgeway

**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES**

- brick and flint estate walling and Victorian lodges to Tring Park
- Tring Park Mansion
- Tring Park grasslands
- Pendley Manor/Farm and parkland
- Pitstone Hill chalk pit
- disused Wendover Arm of Grand Union Canal



• Tring Park (J. Billingsley)

## PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

**Geology and soils.** This area is notable geologically, as it has resulted from the severe erosion of the Tring Gap during the Pleistocene ice incursion. The result is a complex of low, uneven hills on Middle Chalk, especially in the south west of the area, and extensive areas of calcareous gravels etc. forming outwash/moraine deposits towards the north. Tring town although excluded from the area is geologically part of this pattern. Soils vary within the area. To the north west they are well drained calcareous silty soils, (Wantage 1 and Andover 1 associations), while to the south east they are flinty and fine silty, (Charity 2 association).

**Topography.** Generally, the topography is gently undulating, but locally is more pronounced such as at Tring Park south of the A41. In contrast between the canal and railway cutting, around Marshcroft Lane, the landform is almost completely flat and more related to the Bulbourne Valley floor from which it extends.

**Degree of slope.** Gradients vary across the area. East of Tring around Marshcroft Lane the area is almost flat, being less than 1 in 100. In contrast over Tring Park slopes are typically around 1 in 20. Elsewhere they range between 1 in 40 and 1 in 70.

**Altitude range.** Levels in this transitional area vary from 105m north of Tring to 150m at the foot of the true Chiltern scarp slope.

**Hydrology.** The watershed between the Bulbourne and Thame catchments occurs at Marshcroft Farm. The former source of the River Thame was at Bulbourne Farm, but this was tapped to support the Grand Union Canal, which also runs in parallel with the River Bulbourne to the south east, (see Area 117). Apart from the canal, the remnants of the River Bulbourne, and the cut-off section of the Bulbourne spring, there is little surface water, as the former wetlands at Marshcroft Farm have long since been drained. The dry chalk valley in the lower area of Tring Park is the spring head for a stream which flows through Tring town to Tringford Reservoir. At Miswell, there is a semi-natural spring-fed pool. Man made features include the Grand Union Canal and the chalk pits for the former Pitstone Cement Works.

**Land cover and land use.** Arable farmland occupies most of the land to the north and east of Tring. To the south of the town a mix of grazing and various recreational uses, including playing fields and sports clubs are more prominent. The parklands of Tring Park and Pendley Manor are distinctive landscapes and include a number of fine parkland trees. The associated land uses include grazing, equestrian and recreational activity. Woodland cover is generally restricted to parkland planting and linear belts along transport corridors.

**Vegetation and wildlife.** To the south of Tring the lower lying calcareous/neutral grasslands have largely been improved, but there are important remaining meadows at West Leith Farm, and Cow Lane Farm, with less diverse grasslands south of Tring itself, but Yellow Rattle is a particular feature. The chalk grasslands at Tring Park, (see also Area 111), are especially noted for their colonies of Chiltern Gentian and Chalk Eyebright.

Woodlands in the area are all likely to be secondary, but there appear to be remnants of older beech woodland at Pendley Manor to the east. Isolated copses occur at Marshcroft Farm, but are mainly secondary woodland. The canal banks also support secondary ash/sycamore woodland. The chalk banks of Tring railway cutting, along with some spoil banks from the canal, formerly supported calcareous grasslands, but these are now largely scrub-covered.

To the north of Tring town the open farmland around Miswell and Little Tring is of limited ecological interest, except for some reasonably rich hedges and scrub, especially associated with the disused Wendover Arm of the canal, although some of this has recently been removed. The spring-fed pool at Miswell is of local interest.

### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

At Tring Park there is a very strong sense of historical and cultural continuity, dating back to 1609. The Christopher Wren mansion, dating from the late 1680's, was heavily restored, reconstructed and extended by Lord Rothschild around 1915. As a result the original fabric is now encased in a French Second Empire style shell of red brick with extensive decorative stone work including coining pediments and a porte-cochere. The Rothschild family moved into the park in 1873. The second Baron Rothschild was renowned for his interest with exotic animals including zebras, kangaroos and ostriches which were allowed to graze in the park. The Zoological Museum in the town contains a remarkable collection of taxidermy. The park has many historic features of note including veteran parkland trees, both as singles and clumps and the monumental 1836 Lime Avenue, now violently dissected by the Tring Bypass. Other features include Nell Gwynn's obelisk and pavilion (see Area 111), which allude to the supposed visits of King Charles II. Other major cultural features of the area are Grand Union Canal and Tring Cutting for the London Glasgow West Coast Mainline Railway. The latter, a 2 mile long cutting was often marvelled over in the railway literature of the time.

**Field Patterns.** Apart from the parkland landscapes of Tring Park and Pendley Manor the majority of the area has a historic field pattern dating from the parliamentary enclosures from the 18th century. To the east along the Grand Union Canal corridor there are strong geometric shapes which date from the draining of the area and the construction of the canal and railway. Pockets of former common were also enclosed in this eastern part. To the west and north there has been further 20th century rationalization into larger units. Field boundaries are defined by medium sized hedgerows and fields are typically medium to large.

**Transport pattern.** A main feature of the area are the numerous arterial routes. The Roman Road - Akeman Street (A41), ran along the Bulbourne valley and then on to Aylesbury. The original route was superseded by the A41(T) Tring Bypass in the 1970's but caused great damage to the integrity of the historic Tring Park in the process. To the east the Grand Union Canal -1793 and the London to Glasgow West Coast Main Line both reach a summit at Tring Gap. The earthworks associated with both routes resulted in strong artificial linear features in the landscape. The local road network consists of a number of roads and secondary lanes. The now disused Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal crossed several significant level changes to the north of the area. This is evidenced in the substantial earthworks and the remains of an aqueduct. The route became uneconomic to maintain and is now empty along this stretch.

**Settlements and built form.** Outside the limits of the town settlement is sparse. Isolated buildings include the typical Rothschild Cottages (half timber with stucco), which relate to Tring Park. To the northern edge of Tring there are a few notable buildings including the Walter Rothschild Zoological Museum, built in the characteristic red brick 'Rothschild Vernacular'.

### OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature : SSSI notification  
 N.Pevsner: Hertfordshire - The Buildings of England  
 CMS: Management Plan for Tring Park  
 English Heritage: Registered Park and Garden citation  
 English Heritage: Schedule entry

- From Marshcroft Lane to Aldbury Nowers (A.Tempany)



**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

The area is widely visible from surrounding areas and in particular from the scarp slopes and plateau edge to the south. From Tring town there are some open views to the landscape. There is a variety in enclosure between the various sub areas, ranging from open to the east and north and more contained to the south around Tring Park. The presence of Tring town within the centre of the area and the associated urban fringe uses serves to disrupt the coherence of the area.

**Rarity and distinctiveness.** This is an unusual landscape type within the county. The localised situation within Tring Park where the parkland runs up into the Tring Scarp Slopes is unique within the county.

**VISUAL IMPACT**

Tring is locally intrusive to the north, through the presence of selected buildings e.g. the space age styled leisure centre and by the various sports facilities to the south east of the town. To the south vernacular properties sit easily with the adjacent pasture while Tring Mansion and the Zoological Museum create a distinctive interface with the park. In contrast the A41 Tring Bypass represents a major intrusion both through its presence and the damage caused to the parkland. This has been further compounded by an unsightly footbridge which severs the lime avenue. To the east the earthworks associated with the canal and railway are the only visible evidence of routes which pass in cutting through the landscape. The Pitstone Hill Chalk pits to the north east are reasonably large scale landscape elements, however they are only visible from the scarp Aldbury Nowers, (see Area 116), as the remaining boundaries are marked by woodland.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

There are a number of footpaths links from Tring outwards particularly to the south and west. Access to Tring Park is primarily for those arriving on foot which restricts a wider population using the resource despite good access within the park. There are waymarked routes along both the main Grand Union Canal and the dry/ disused section of the Wendover Arm. The Ridgeway Footpath crosses the area through Pendley Manor and past Tring Station. The Ridgeway footpath crosses the area connecting between the scarp slopes.

**COMMUNITY VIEWS**

This and the associated Tring Scarp Slopes form an area of landscape well regarded for its distinctiveness, particularly around Tring Park (C). "Tring Park is a lovely area" (2236) "The Wendover arm has now become established as valuable habitat. Brushland in the dry section supporting mammals nesting birds and insects" (2235).

"I hope whoever has charge of [Tring Park] will have seen it this summer in its prime, with the wild woods tumbling into the valley, and the owls beating over a mile of waving grass that looked less like tame old England than the Elysian plains of John Muir's California before the ranchers came" R.Mabey from "On the Sidelines" BBC Wildlife November 1993.

**LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS**

- AONB (south of Tring)
- SSSI: Oddy Hill and Tring Park
- SSSI: Tring Woodlands ( Grove and Stubbing Woods)
- Registered Park and Garden:Tring Park (Grade 2)
- SM: Stool Baulk
- Areas of Archaeological Significance: Marshcroft Lane, Miswell Farm, Pendley Manor, Tring Station and West Leith

**CONDITION**

<i>Land cover change:</i>	<b>localised</b>
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	<b>mature</b>
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	<b>scattered</b>
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	<b>good</b>
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	<b>interrupted</b>
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	<b>moderate</b>
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	<b>moderate</b>

**STRENGTH OF CHARACTER**

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	<b>apparent</b>
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	<b>apparent</b>
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	<b>apparent</b>
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	<b>widely visible</b>
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	<b>partial</b>
<i>Visual unity:</i>	<b>incoherent</b>
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	<b>unusual</b>

<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	<b>MODERATE</b>	Improve and reinforce	<b>Improve and conserve</b>	Conserve and restore
	<b>POOR</b>	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		<b>WEAK</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>STRONG</b>
<b>STRENGTH OF CHARACTER</b>				

## STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- promote the retention of the character of local minor roads by the management of hedgerows and verges. Where part of a hedge has been damaged or removed it should be replanted with a mix of indigenous species
- strengthen the setting of the scarp slopes by enhancing the landscape structure of the foothills by the promotion of the removal/screening of eyesores and the management/reintroduction of boundary features to reduce the scale and openness
- promote the survey, retention and restoration of the historic parklands at Tring Park and Pendley Manor through a range of initiatives including; tree planting, reversing arable to pasture. Restoration of structures should be historically accurate. At Tring Park measures to be in sympathy with existing CMS management strategies of ecologically sensitive sites. Develop a strategy to reduce intrusive features e.g. the A41 footbridge and provide enhanced access
- promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to conserve and where absent to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest and coppice with standards. To encourage replanting plantations with indigenous mixed broadleaves
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible avoiding agricultural improvements and to seek opportunities to restore and create new species rich grassland adjacent to existing chalk downland on the scarp slopes. Encourage traditional management by grazing
- develop a strategy for recreation and public access to the area. To include for interpretation of historic features and natural history and best use of car parking facilities. Include for enhancing links between Grand Union Canal, The Ridgeway and other recreational routes
- support a strategy to limit the impact of built development including Tring on the area. Ensure that development both in the area or adjacent to it are integrated through the use of native tree and shrub species and the creation of hedging and/or planting to the perimeter
- ensure that local highway improvements are sympathetic to the scale, pattern and character of the existing road network
- encourage the restoration of former mineral sites, including the chalk quarry south of the B488, for conservation benefits and to enhance the setting from the adjacent scarp slopes. Resist further quarrying for chalk
- conserve and enhance the distinctive character of settlements and individual buildings by promoting the conservation of important buildings and high standards of new building or alterations to existing properties, all with the consistent use of locally traditional materials and designed to reflect the traditional character of the area
- encourage the retention of the existing pattern of hedges and to create new features to further enhance landscape and ecological links between and to woodlands, canal corridor and parklands. Use old field boundaries where possible
- develop a strategy to mitigate the impact of the intrusive transport routes
- promote awareness and consideration of the setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering development and land use change proposals on sites adjacent to the AONB
- conserve and enhance the distinctive character of traditional settlements and individual buildings by promoting the conservation of important buildings and high standards of new building or alterations to existing properties, all with the consistent use of locally traditional materials and design to reflect the traditional character of the area

• Miswell Farm, Tring (J. Billingsley)



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**KEY**

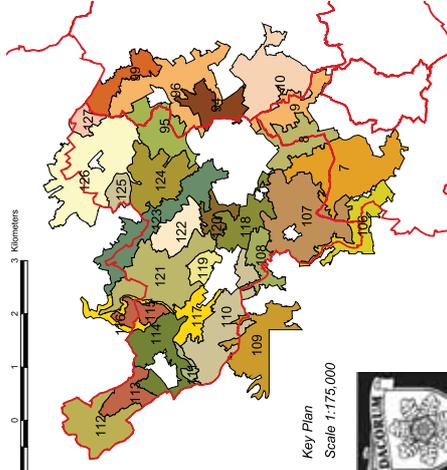


District Boundary



Character Area Boundaries >

- Area 7 Sarratt Plateau
- Area 8 Upper Gade Valley
- Area 9 Bedford Plateau
- Area 10 St Stephen's Plateau
- Area 04 Buncelield Plateau
- Area 95 Revel End Plateau
- Area 96 Upper Ver Valley
- Area 99 Rothamsted Plateau & Kinsbourne Green
- Area 106 Middle Chess Valley
- Area 107 Bowington & Chipperfield Plateau
- Area 108 Bourne Gutter & Hockering Bottom
- Area 109 Beilngdon & Hawridge Ridges & Valleys
- Area 110 Ashlins & Wiggington Plateau
- Area 111 Tring Scarp Slopes
- Area 112 Boursicot Vale
- Area 113 Tring Reservoirs
- Area 114 Tring Gap Foothills
- Area 115 Albury Scarp Slopes
- Area 116 Albury Scarp Slopes
- Area 117 Upper Bulbourne Valley
- Area 118 Lower Bulbourne Valley
- Area 119 Berkhamsted Castle Farmland
- Area 120 Little Heath Uplands
- Area 121 Ashridge
- Area 122 Nettleden Ridges & Valleys
- Area 123 High Gade Valley
- Area 124 Gaddesden Row
- Area 125 Beechwood Estate
- Area 126 Markyate Ridges & Valleys
- Area 127 Pepsal End Slopes



Key Plan  
Scale 1:175,000

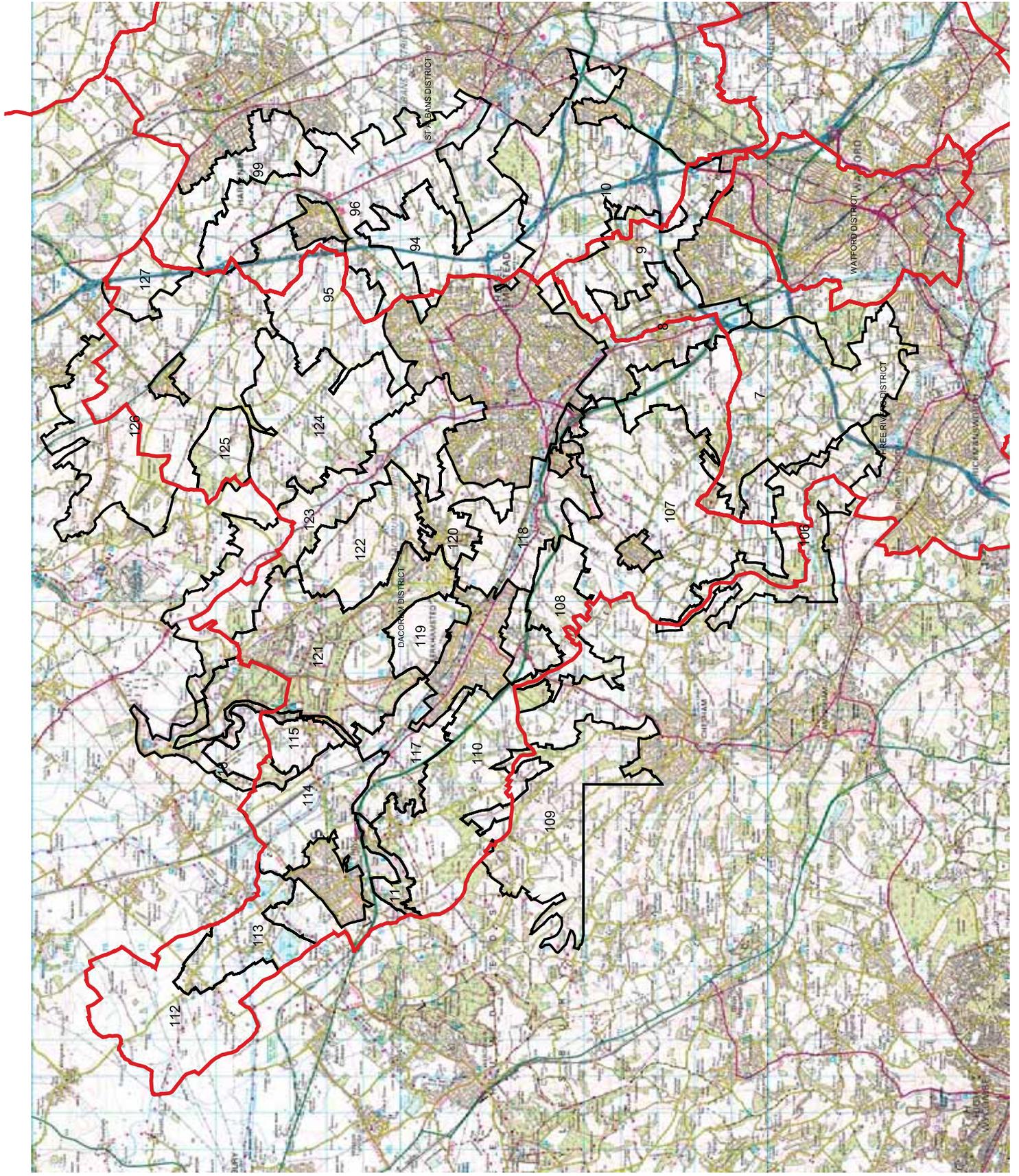


DATE	02/09/01
PROJECT	Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment
ISSUE	Appendix 6.4 - Landscape Character Areas
SCALE	1:50,000
DATE	May 04
DESIGNER	AL
CHECKER	JB



- HIGHWAYS
- FRESH WATER
- LONDON
- METROPOLITAN AREA
- STATION

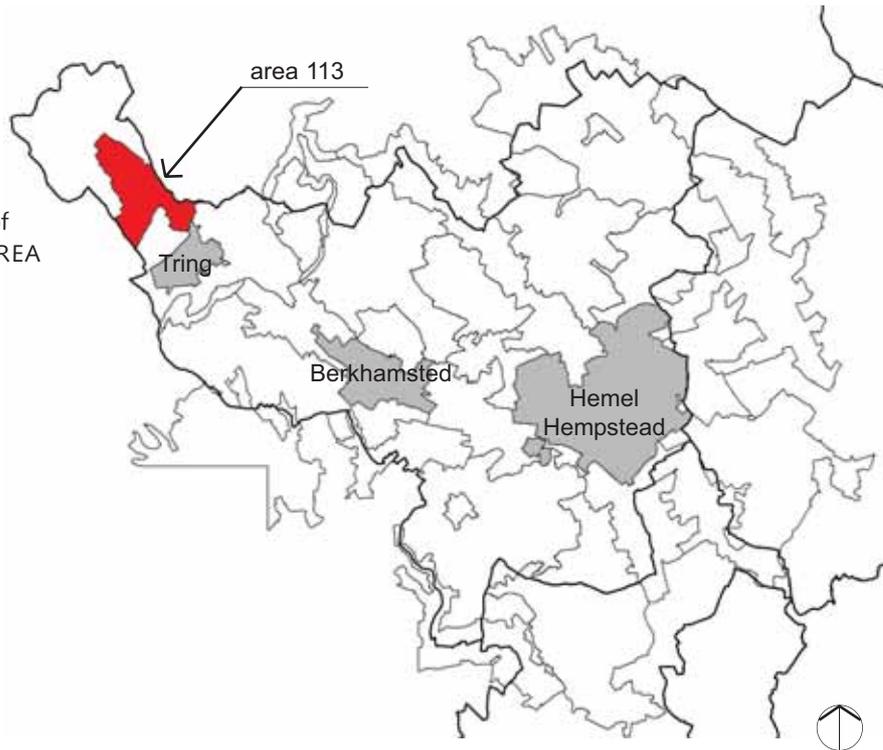
the landscape partnership  
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Appendix 3 Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment  
Character Area No. 113: Tring Reservoirs

District Map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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 100018935 2004



**LOCATION**

To the north of Tring urban area, and incorporating four balancing reservoirs for the Grand Union Canal, which runs through the area.

To the remainder of the area there is an emphasis on arable farming and a relatively dense settlement pattern centred around the villages of Long Marston, Wilstone, and Marsworth.

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

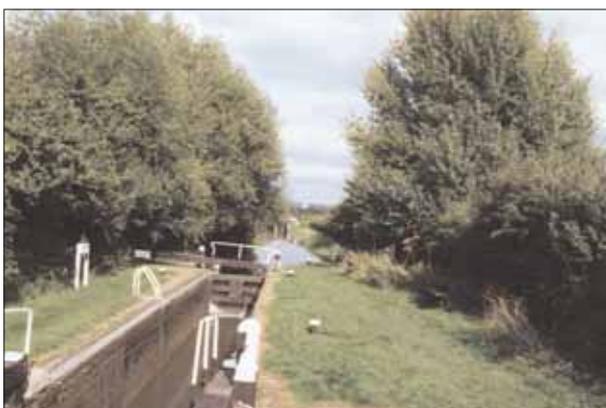
The Grand Union Canal infrastructure exerts a strong influence on the character of the area through the presence of the Aylesbury Arm and more significantly four substantial balancing reservoirs that lie at the base of the Chiltern foothills. The reservoirs are supported by large engineered bunds and flanked by hybrid poplars. Canal architecture, hump backed bridges and brightly painted barges provide further distinction to the area. The various canal related environments are popular for recreation. The reservoirs are designated Nature Reserves of some ornithological significance.

**KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- Grand Union Canal (Aylesbury Arm), including bridges and canal architecture
- regulating reservoirs for the Grand Union Canal
- long established settlements with varied vernacular building styles

**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES**

- Wilstone Reservoir and associated extensive bunding
- interesting thatched and half timbered cottages with brick infill at Long Marston
- ruined church and moat at Long Marston



- Grand Union Canal ( HCC Landscape Unit)

### PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

**Geology and soils.** In geological terms, the area is a mixture of Lower Chalk Marl surrounding the reservoirs, which supports well drained calcareous silty soils, (Wantage 1 association) and a lens of Pleistocene superficial outwash gravels and alluvium over Gault Clay around the villages of Long Marston and Wilstone to the north west, which supports permeable calcareous loamy soils, (Block association).

**Topography.** Generally gently undulating, although in localised areas strongly influenced by relatively recent man made features i.e. embankments for the Tring Reservoirs and banking for the canal.

**Degree of slope.** Typical slopes across the area vary between 1 in 60 and 1 in 70.

**Altitude range.** This ranges from 86m at Long Marston to 105m at the Tring gap foothills.

**Hydrology.** The hydrology of the area is particularly important. Calcareous springs from the underlying Totternhoe Stone are the source of the River Thames and its tributary ditches. They also supply the man made reservoirs and the canals which are prominent elements in the local landscape. The reservoirs were created for the Grand Union Canal from 1793. Shortly after the construction of the canal it became clear that there was insufficient water supplies at the Tring Summit and vast quantities of water were required to enable the boats to progress through the various locks. The first reservoir was built at Wilstone and water was pumped by steam engine to the canal. In 1817 two more reservoirs were built at Tringford and Startop End. Two arms of the Grand Union Canal - the Aylesbury Arm and the Wendover Arm (now partly disused) also run through the character area. To the north the area displays a commonality with Marstongate Vale, (Area 112), with wet ditches marking several field boundaries and numerous small ponds and several moats, particularly at Gubblecote.

**Land cover and land use.** The balancing reservoirs occupy a considerable proportion of the southern part of the area. Elsewhere there is a relatively high proportion of arable crops on the better drained brown earths. Pasture is more frequent in close proximity to the villages and there a few small relic orchards.

**Vegetation and wildlife.** The area is unique in Hertfordshire, owing to its nationally important series of ecologically rich wetlands. The principal habitats are: damp neutral/calcareous grasslands, fen and aquatic habitats. The only woodland is secondary willow woodland and scrub associated with the reservoirs. Apart from the reservoirs themselves and their marginal fens etc, important sites include old meadows at Astrope and Long Marston, the Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal and remnant (but partly severely degraded) fen meadows by Wilstone Reservoir (Rushy Meadow). Millhoppers Nature Reserve contains a mix of grassland habitats and some fine veteran black poplars.

The reservoirs provide habitat for a wide range of breeding aquatic birds of importance, including Grey Heron, various duck species, Great Crested Grebes, Little Ringed Plover, and occasionally the nationally rare Black-necked Grebe.

They are also highly important for migrant birds, such as Black, Arctic and Common Terns, various warblers, swifts and occasional rare vagrants. The surrounding fen habitats also support local bird species, such as Reed Warbler and Water Rail. Aquatic invertebrates are also important, the reservoirs having a large number of local and scarce species recorded from them.

The flora recorded from the area includes the only site in Hertfordshire for Shoreweed, as well as the very local Round-fruited Rush, and has two sites for the scarce Green-flowered Helleborine.

- Marsworth Reservoir (J.Billingsley)



### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The most prominent and distinctive historic and cultural features relate to the canal. The Grand Union Canal, built from 1793, provided a commercial transport link from London to Birmingham via Aylesbury and ultimately linked into Brindley's 'Grand Cross' canal network to the north.

The significant reservoirs are dominant landscape elements but are also culturally and historically significant, comprising a relict 'Industrial Revolution' working landscape.

Long Marston is known as the location of the last witch - lynching in England, where Ruth Osborne was captured and drowned in the village pond.

**Field Patterns.** The main historic field pattern dates from the 18th century parliamentary enclosures. Field sizes are variable with some small to medium pasture near the settlements and otherwise larger arable units. Hedges are medium height and generally in good condition. Black poplars form distinctive hedgerow trees.

**Transport pattern.** The area is served by a number of secondary and minor roads that connect the relatively dense settlement pattern. Verges are locally wide and contain wet ditches, however some of the lanes are narrow and subject to flooding e.g. 'Watery Lane.' The historic pattern of canals is also a key feature. These are generally straight where they cross the vale.

**Settlements and built form.** The area comprises a number of nucleated settlements interspersed with traditional farmsteads. The density of settlement is noticeably greater than Area 112 to the north due to the relatively better drained soils. Long Marston is centred around a crossroads where traditional dwellings combine a mix of stylistic elements including; weatherboarding, timber framing and thatch. These styles mingle with less harmonious modern properties. Long Marston also has a ruined 14th century church and several moated properties. Wilstone is a large hamlet centred on a wide main street.

### OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature : SSSI notification

- Manor Farm, Wilstone (J,Billingsley)



**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

The area can be seen from the distant views on the Chiltern escarpment and from some of the more local views north of the Tring reservoirs. Within the landscape the generally level topography and network of hedges mean that views are often more restricted. From within the area the reservoirs are only locally visible being contained by mature belts of vegetation. The canal environments provide a pleasing contrast to the adjacent agricultural land uses. Views to the Chilterns escarpment, Wingrave hills and the distinctive Mentmore Park to the north are a feature of the area.

**Rarity and distinctiveness.** This area is rare within Hertfordshire due to the number of large reservoirs.

**VISUAL IMPACT**

The three major balancing reservoirs create a significant impact on the area. Locally the associated earth embankments are visually intrusive, particularly where the water is not apparent e.g. north of Wilstone Reservoir. Other locally intrusive features include the sewage works.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

There is a good network of public footpaths throughout the settled agricultural landscape, along the Grand Union Canal Walk and around the balancing reservoirs which are popular for ornithologists and anglers.

**COMMUNITY VIEWS**

The reservoirs are highly valued, making this one of the county's most valued locations (A/B).  
 "These artificial sheets of water were formed amid picturesque surroundings, and with their reed-fringed and tree-bordered edges form a pleasant feature in the otherwise waterless landscape" A MacDonald from "That Tring Air" 1940.  
 "There are few pleasures to equal skimming over the ice on a winter afternoon, with the sun setting behind the black-etched elms on the far bank," P Slemeck in "The beauty of Tring's reservoirs" Hertfordshire Countryside v.21 No.87 July 1966.

**LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS**

Landscape Conservation Area :Wilstone Reservoir  
 Long Marston and Wilstone Conservation Areas  
 SSSI :Tring Reservoirs  
 Areas of Archaeological Significance:north of Tring Reservoir, north-east of Gubblecote Farm, north-west of Wilstone and around Long Marston

**CONDITION**

<i>Land cover change:</i>	<b>localised</b>
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	<b>mature</b>
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	<b>scattered</b>
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	<b>good</b>
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	<b>interrupted</b>
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	<b>low</b>
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	<b>low</b>

**STRENGTH OF CHARACTER**

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	<b>apparent</b>
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	<b>prominent</b>
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	<b>apparent</b>
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	<b>locally visible</b>
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	<b>contained</b>
<i>Visual unity:</i>	<b>incoherent</b>
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	<b>rare</b>

<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	<b>MODERATE</b>	Improve and reinforce	<b>Improve and conserve</b>	Conserve and restore
	<b>POOR</b>	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		<b>WEAK</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>STRONG</b>
<b>STRENGTH OF CHARACTER</b>				

**STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING****CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE**

- support conservation and development of the black poplar population, through survey, management of existing trees and new planting
- support a strategy to limit built development within the area or the impact of development that may affect the area from outside
- encourage the management and retention of the local pattern of open ditches as a characteristic drainage feature and wildlife resource. Monitor water quality
- support management initiatives for the reservoir sites and the protection/enhancement of their wildlife/wildfowl value. Explore multiple uses where compatible with wildlife interest
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible avoiding agricultural improvements e.g. use of fertilizers and herbicides, in order to maintain their nature conservation value. Encourage traditional management by grazing
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming where possible
- ensure that built development both in the area or adjacent is integrated through the use of native tree and shrub species and the creation of hedging and planting to the perimeter
- encourage the improvement and maintenance of existing ponds and the creation of new features
- conserve and enhance the canal environment including the locks and architecture
- develop a clear strategy for the improvement of car parking problems particularly around the reservoirs, by making positive provision and protecting verges from indiscriminate parking
- encourage the management of local pattern of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes, gapping up new planting to restore. To include black poplar, willows and ash as main hedgerow trees
- identify key public viewpoints to the Chilterns escarpment, Wingrave hills and Mentmore. Retain and enhance these views
- promote awareness and consideration of the setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering development and land use change proposals on sites adjacent to the AONB
- develop a strategy for reducing the visual impact of earth embankments associated with the reservoirs
- promote the retention and restoration of existing orchards and the creation of new orchards. Encourage the use of traditional varieties of fruit and minimise the use of herbicides and pesticides
- conserve and enhance the distinctive character of traditional settlements and individual buildings by promoting the conservation of important buildings and high standards of new building or alterations to existing properties, all with the consistent use of locally traditional materials and design to reflect the traditional character of the area
- Wilstone Reservoir (A. Tempany)

