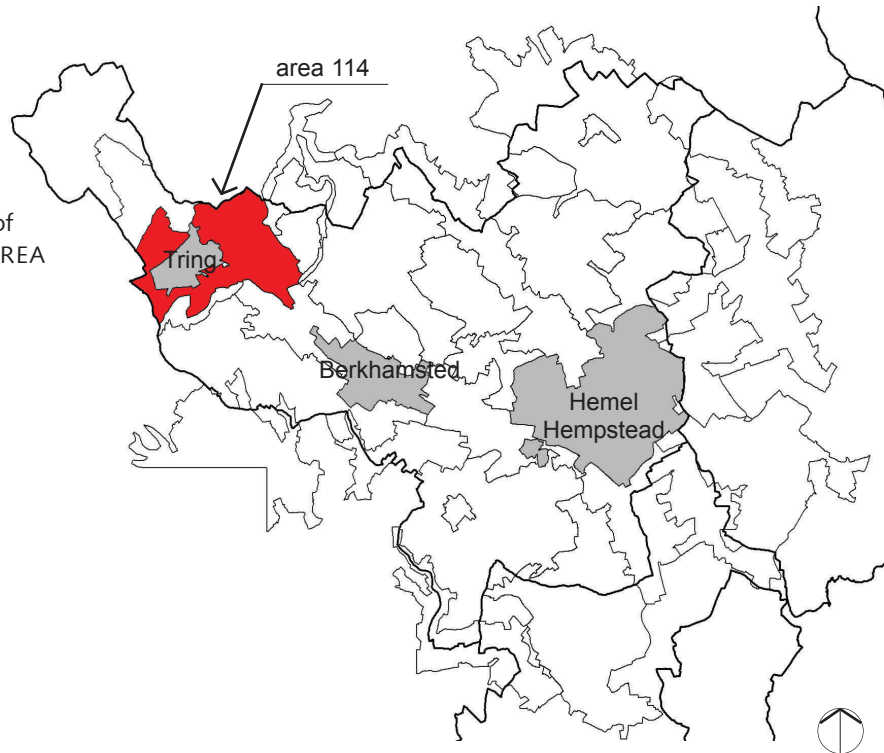


District Map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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 Dacorum Borough Council
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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

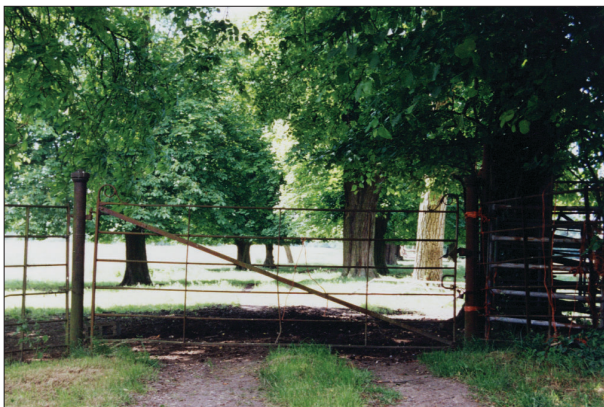
A transitional landscape between the low lying Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns. The landforms, based on the underlying chalk geology are generally gently undulating but with stronger local expressions, particularly at the interface with the elevated Chiltern escarpment. As its name suggests the area 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 Balk
- Areas of Archaeological Significance: Marshcroft Lane, Miswell Farm, Pendley Manor, Tring Station and West Leith

CONDITION

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

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

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

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

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)

