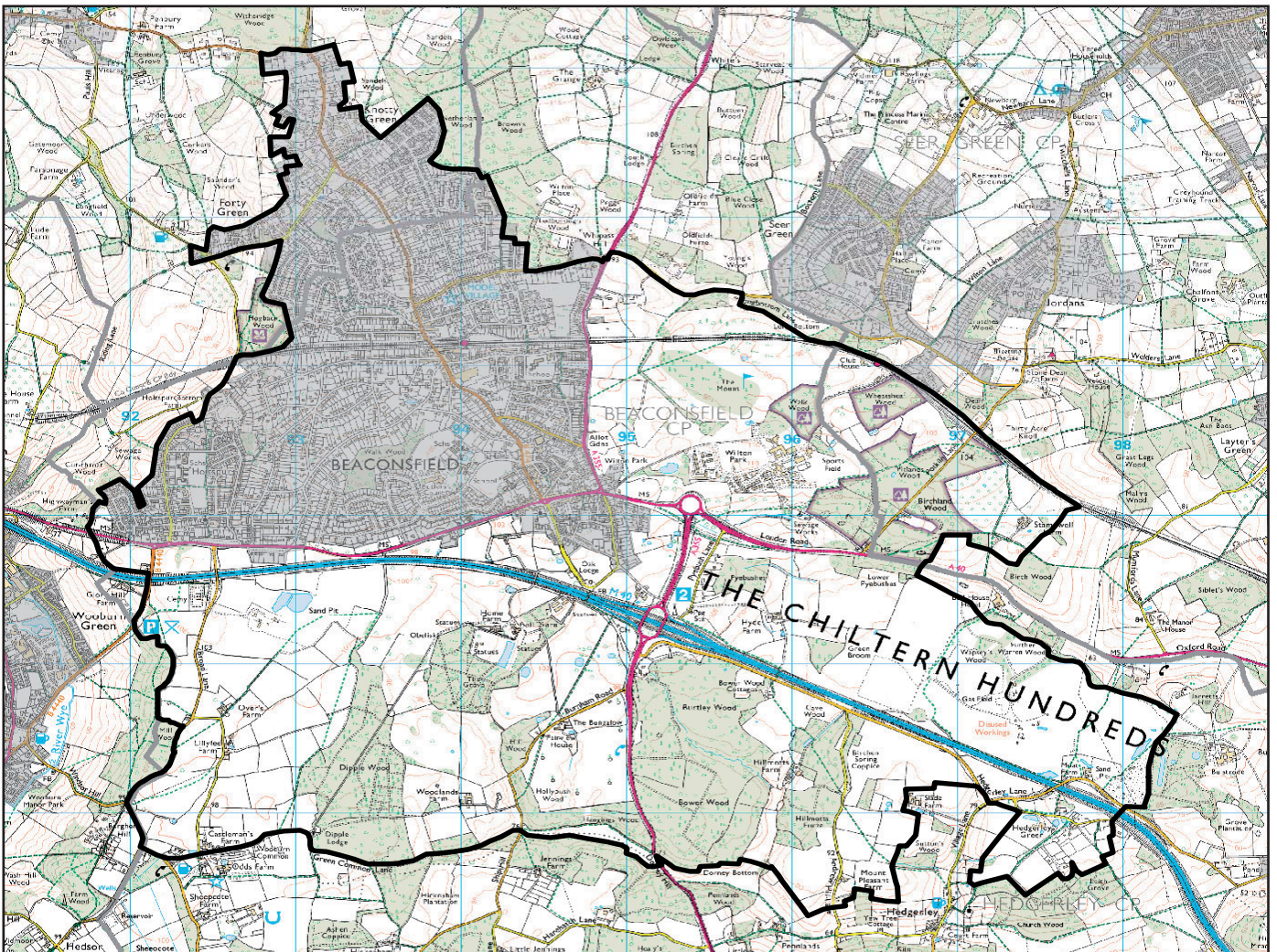
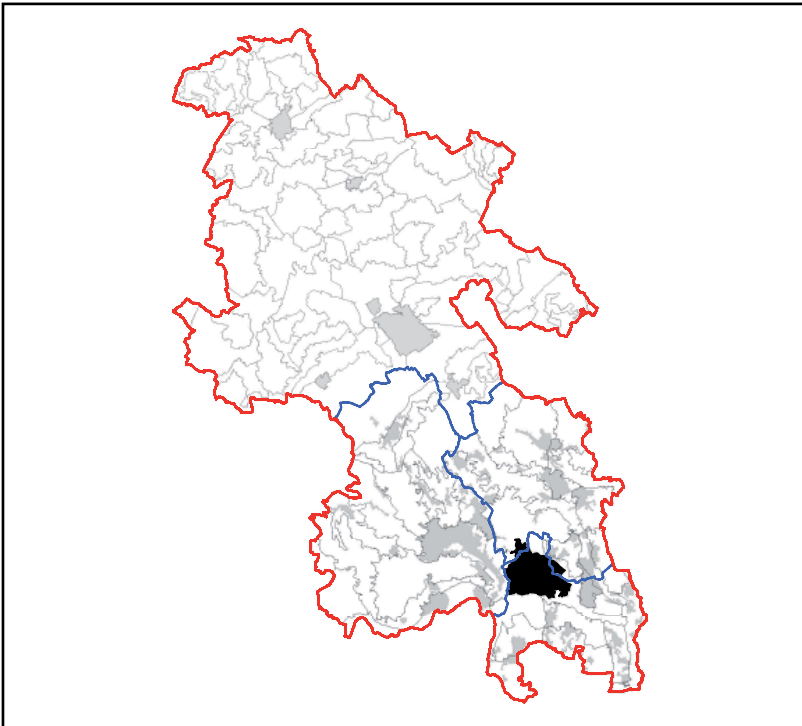


# LCA 22.1 BEACONSFIELD MIXED USE TERRACE





## LCA 22.1 BEACONSFIELD MIXED USE TERRACE

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Raised, gently undulating plateau, with a mosaic of land cover and land uses, creating a highly varied landscape.
- Extensive river terrace deposits gives rise to slowly permeable, loamy/clayey soils, more centrally, which results in scattered ponds and seasonal waterlogging.
- Agricultural use is predominately regularly patterned, medium to large arable fields with some smaller fields of rough grazing and paddocks associated with individual farmsteads. Pre 18<sup>th</sup> century irregular field patterns predominate, in many cases with extended field boundaries, as a result of extensive field boundary loss. Some evidence of pre 19<sup>th</sup> century co-axial field enclosures.
- Woodland blocks and smaller wooded areas are interspersed across the plateau, creating a contrast to the more open landscape which predominates, providing areas of enclosure.
- Sparsely populated with a small number of isolated settlements and intermittent properties. The town edge of Beaconsfield permeates the north west of the character area.
- Historic parkland at Hall Barn, covers a significant proportion of the landscape, with a mix of open undulating grassland with scattered trees, and woodland blocks.
- Several industrial workings including a large scale mineral extraction area, sand and gravel pits and recycling and refuse tip, all contribute to the mixed and disparate landscape.
- Cut by several major transport corridors, including the M40, which fragments the landscape, having a strong visual and audible influence on the central part of the area.
- Occasional long views across open fields, to a wooded or open skyline. In more enclosed areas, views are short, and contained by woodland.
- Varying levels of tranquillity, with transport corridors being a dominant source of noise, movement and disruption, contrasting with quiet, calm pockets, associated with woodland.
- The variety of land uses and land cover creates a landscape which is visually busy and lacks unity.



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### DESCRIPTION

**Location and Boundaries:** *Beaconsfield Mixed Use Terrace* is largely situated with South Bucks District, with the north eastern part located within the Chiltern District. A very small part of the character area crosses the boundary into Wycombe District (approximately 1%). The character area occupies the higher ground above the Alder Bourne River valley to the east and the River Wye valley to the west. To the south of the character area, the landscape is visually and experientially distinct, with a heavily wooded and enclosed character. The town of Beaconsfield lies along the north western edge of the character area.

**Landscape Character:** A large scale, mixed use, elevated plateau (up to 100m) with a varied and diverse landscape. A mosaic of open farmland (predominately arable cultivation), undulating parkland and woodland, which is interspersed, and at times dominated, by development, including industrial workings and transportation corridors. Despite this, settlement density is low and highly dispersed, comprising isolated farmsteads and intermittent properties. Large scale open fields, generate occasional long views, which contrast with areas of enclosure associated with woodland. The area is cut centrally, by several major transport corridors, which fragment the landscape and have a strong visual and audible impact. Away from these areas, a tranquil and calm landscape exists. This is a highly varied and disparate landscape, the contrasting land uses and land cover, creates a landscape which lacks unity and is visually busy.

**Geology:** Underlying geology is dominated by Ancestral Thames River Terrace Deposits, with overlying soils comprising of a mix of freely draining, slightly acidic, loamy soils throughout, and slowly permeable, seasonally wet, loamy/clayey soils located more centrally within the character area.

**Topography/Landform:** An elevated, gently undulating plateau landscape, raised above the Alder Bourne Valley, with large areas of flat, open landscape. Topographical variation is limited, ranging between 90m and 100m overall.

**Hydrology:** Numerous ponds are scattered within the central part of the character, as a result of the slowly permeable, loamy/clayey soils. Water bodies are often associated with farms or disused gravel pits.

**Land Use and Settlement:** The predominant agricultural use is arable, with some small parcels of rough grazing and paddocks associated with individual farmsteads. Fields are generally medium to large and open, with managed hedgerows and some wooden post and wire fencing.

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The large scale parkland, Hall Barn, covers a significant proportion of the landscape, immediately south of Beaconsfield, stretching south towards the character area boundary. This is an historic designed landscape, with varying degrees of enclosure, associated with open grassland and woodland blocks, including remnant original broadleaved woodland. Some public access to this landscape is possible, through a small network of footpath, however this is limited, and otherwise the area is not obviously used for recreational purposes, with no specific recreational facilities.

The settlement pattern in this area is characterised by a low density of highly dispersed settlement of isolated farmsteads and intermittent properties. Building materials are typically red brick, with the exception of Wilton Park (an army accommodation block and Defence School of Languages), located in the north of the character area. The town edge of Beaconsfield filters in to the north west boundary of the character area, with a more modern development character.

The plateau is cut laterally by the M40 and A40, and the A355 crosses the landscape in a north south direction, which results in a high level of movement and noise. Despite this, the rest of the character area remains relatively inaccessible, with only very few small rural lanes. Public footpaths are also relatively limited, with rights of way largely confined to woodland areas. A well used footpath cuts across the landscape in the north, from Beaconsfield to Seer Green and Jordans. A railway line cuts across the northern tip of the character area.

There are various industrial workings, some currently in use and others disused, including gravel and sand pits. A large scale mineral extraction area, is located immediately south of the M40 in the west of the area. A large area stretching between the M40 and the A40 in the east of the character area is a recycling centre and refuse tip. A large golf course is located in the northern section of the character area.

**Tree Cover:** Large blocks of woodland, and smaller wooded areas are located throughout the plateau. Mixed woodland plantation and coniferous plantation predominate, with smaller patches of broadleaved and yew woodland scattered in between. Despite the significant tree cover, the character remains relatively open and permeable. Varying enclosure occurs within woodland blocks and the surrounding landscape. Some trees act as field boundaries, but this is limited. Small pockets of ancient woodland are located in the south and in the north east. A grouping of National Trust woodlands are located in the north east, comprising coniferous, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland types.

**Perceptual/ Experiential Landscape:** This is a large scale landscape, with open, extensive arable fields, extensive parkland and several large tracts of woodland. There is a varying sense of enclosure, with a significant contrast between the wooded parts, which convey a strong sense of enclosure and open, expansive fields, which allow for long vistas across the character area.

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A significant intrusion to this landscape is the M40 and other A roads which cut through the character area, forming a dominant source of noise, movement and disruption. Within the rest of the character area, there are few other roads and limited access. A railway line however, dissects the area in the north. The area has varying levels of tranquillity, with the intrusive transport corridors contrasting with, and quiet areas associated with woodland. Despite the developed character in parts, settlement densities remain low and is characterised by scattered farmsteads.

This is a highly varied and disparate landscape. The contrast between human development, arable fields and woodland creates a landscape which lacks unity. The variety of land uses and land cover creates a landscape which is visually busy.

**Biodiversity:** Numerous woodland areas are located in the area, largely plantation, and a small number of ancient woodland sites, supporting a range of habitats. Burtley Wood and Bower Wood in the south comprise relatively large woodland areas, which are classed as a Local Wildlife Site, and notable for their ecological significance.

Further ecological features, include the numerous scattered ponds, and the relatively intact hedgerow network, providing important wildlife habitat and enhancing habitat connectivity within a predominately agricultural landscape.

**Historic Environment:** Large scale field boundaries, in the south west, show a distinct irregular pattern, with sinuous edges often associated with woodland edge. There is a lot of evidence of pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century irregular enclosures. There are also a lot of extended field boundaries, indicating extensive boundary loss, possibly through urban development or mineral extraction. Evidence of pre 19<sup>th</sup> Century co-axial systems, are also found in this area.

Two historic landscape parks are located in the area; Hall Barn, a late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed park, possibly former medieval deer hunting parkland; and Bulstrode Park, late 17<sup>th</sup>, early 18<sup>th</sup> century formal gardens and woodland estate land. The area contains some important archaeological features, often in relation to woodland, including; a nationally important moated site in Bower Wood, a Bronze Age moated fishpond, and a Bronze Age bowl barrow, near Beaconsfield.

### **Designations:**

- Chilterns AONB
- Scheduled Monuments: Bowl Barrow on Beaconsfield Golf Course, Moated Site in Bower Wood and Templer's site at Moat Farm
- Registered Parks and Gardens: Hall Barn, Grade II\*
- Archaeological Notification Sites: 10 No.
- Conservation Areas: Beaconsfield Old Town, Hampden Hill and Hedgerley Green

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- Biological Notification Sites: 32 No.
- Local Nature Reserve: 1 No.
- Local Wildlife Sites: 8 No.
- Priority BAP Habitats: 2 types.



## EVALUATION

### Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Potential landscape and visual sensitivities are:

- Mosaic of woodland, farmland and parkland.
- Small pockets of ancient woodland, and associated flora and fauna.
- The hedgerow network, which provides visual unity and a wildlife corridor, connecting fragmented habitats.
- The peaceful and tranquil pockets away from modern development, and associated with low, dispersed settlement.
- Open, long views over arable fields, within the area
- The small scale, low density of settlement, which is vulnerable to further expansion and over development.

**Strength of Character/Intactness:** Strength of character and intactness of *Beaconsfield Mixed Use Terrace* is **weak**. High presence of human development reduces the distinctive character of the landscape.

**Strategy/ Vision:** Conserve and protect the mosaic of woodland, open farmland and parkland, and to maintain the remaining areas of tranquillity.

### Landscape Guidelines:

- Conserve the woodland (including ancient woodland) which provide enclosure in the landscape and forms an important landscape pattern and feature, and invaluable biodiversity benefit.
- Promote appropriate management of arable farmland, to help generate a wildlife rich habitat, and visually attractive landscape.
- Conserve and manage hedgerow boundaries, which provide visual unity and intactness and increase biodiversity, linking areas of woodland and agricultural farmland.
- Consider opportunities for further tree and woodland planting to contain and reduce visual and audible impact of modern development, such as busy roads.
- Maintain open views across fields, and monitor the introduction of vertical infrastructure, which would adversely affect views within the landscape.
- Conserve the low density of dispersed settlement.
- Monitor the further development of busy transport corridors.
- Restoration of mineral extraction sites.



## LCA 22.1 BEACONSFIELD MIXED USE TERRACE



Large scale, open, flat arable fields.



Hall Barn - Historic parkland, open grassland with scattered trees, and woodland blocks in the distance.



Long views, with woodland block backdrop.



Small, winding rural roads, lined by trees and hedgerows, providing a sense of enclosure.

