

LCA 22.4 IVER HEATH MIXED USE TERRACE

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Transitional lowland topography, gradually rising towards the north. A sloping landscape, ranging approximately between 40m to 70m.
- Underlain by Thames River Terrace Deposits, with Boyn Hill Gravel Formation covering the lower southern section.
- Mixed land cover highly influenced by development and dominated by settlement such as the villages of Iver and Iver Heath.
- Between settlements there are large open arable fields divided by a network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Smaller subdivisions are used for horse paddocks.
- Fields are 20th Century enclosures, and pre 18th Century irregular enclosure.
- Some dispersed archaeological remains include; a ploughed moat, Roman and Iron Age crop marks, and Thorney Lane Bridge (built 1835-38).
- The landscape is cut by roads including the M25 creating local audible and visual impacts with a strong sense of movement.
- Land use is varied with some industrial and business areas located in the south, a high voltage pylon line running along the railway line, and Pinewood Studios in the north, occupying the grounds of Heatherden Hall, a Grade II Victorian Country House.
- This is a discordant landscape which often lacks unity.
- Long extensive views across open fields, particularly south, over lower landscapes. Settlement sometimes limits and fragments views.

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DESCRIPTION

Location and Boundaries: *Iver Heath Mixed Use Terrace* lies entirely within South Bucks District. It occupies the transitional lowland area, rising up from the floodplain in the east and south and the Alder Bourne River valley in the north. The western boundary is largely delineated by the adjacent heavily wooded landscape of *Farnham and Stoke Common Wooded Terrace*.

Landscape Character: Sloping lowland topography, gradually inclining towards the north. A mixed use landscape, dominated by settlement, such as the villages of Iver and Iver Heath, and arable farmland. Settlement is spread continuously through the area, together with a strong transport network of roads, which create a busy and noisy landscape, with a high sense of movement. Arable fields in contrast are large and open, allowing for extensive vistas, particularly south, from higher ground. Historic interest includes Heatherden Hall, a Grade II Victorian Country House, and archaeological remains include a ploughed moat, Roman and Iron Age crop marks, and several undated cropmarks. The varied land use, and dominance of manmade features, creates a visually discordant landscape, however an extensive network of hedgerows helps to unify the area.

Geology: Ancestral Thames River Terrace Deposits underlay the majority of the area, with Boyn Hill Gravel Formation covering the lower southern section. Slowly permeable, seasonally wet, clayey and loamy soils cover the river terrace deposits and loamy soils with naturally high groundwater levels overlay the gravel formation.

Topography/Landform: Transitional lowland topography, gradually rising towards the north. A sloping landscape with little topographic variation, ranging approximately between 40m to 70m.

Hydrology: There are few hydrological features within this landscape. Occasional ponds are scattered across the area, usually closely located near farms and within golf courses. The Grand Union Canal cuts across the south section of the character area.

Land Use and Settlement: A mixed use landscape, largely dominated by settlement, which spreads continuously through the landscape, in a linear pattern along roads. The villages of Iver and Iver Heath are located centrally within this area, and are both dominant and compact settlements. Iver has a strong historic core, with Anglo Saxon origins. Smaller settlement clusters and individual farmsteads are dispersed across the landscape, with a strong interlinking road network. Several major A roads and B roads and the M25 pass through the area. A railway line also cuts through the south of the area, with a high voltage pylon line, running parallel. Two long distance footpaths cut through the area, namely, the Beeches Way and the Grand Union Canal Walk, however, elsewhere public rights of way are sparse. Agricultural land use is dominated by arable farming, within expansive, relatively large, open fields, with some smaller field subdivisions, used as paddocks. Fields are often bounded by a network of hedgerows and some hedgerow trees. Industrial and

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business areas are located in the south, such as the Ridgeway Trading Estate, a large industrial estate, situated immediately south of Iver village. Pinewood Studios is a dominant feature in the landscape, within the north of the area, with large scale buildings and grounds.

Tree Cover: Tree cover is sparse. Small pockets of mixed and broadleaved woodland are located close to settlement and trees (predominately deciduous) are dispersed along field boundaries. Some pockets of intensively managed orchards are scattered across the southern part of the area. In-field trees are also associated with former parkland areas e.g. Bangors Park Farm & Round Coppice Farm, which provide an important connecting function, linking with hedgerows to other areas of higher biological value.

Perceptual/ Experiential Landscape: This is a large scale landscape, with prominent development surrounded by large arable fields. Long vistas are possible across open fields, particularly south, over lower land. However, the dominance of settlement often fragments and limits views. The mix of land use and the dominance of human features create a discordant landscape, which often lacks unity. Busy roads, particularly the M25, create a busy and noisy character.

Biodiversity: Arable cultivation and grassland dominate, with limited biodiversity value. Hedgerows and scrubby boundaries provide wildlife corridors and valuable ecological benefits, which link in field trees, which are associated with former parkland areas to other areas of biological value. A relatively large area of scrub located in the south, which is designated as a Biological Notification Site. Two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, namely 'South Bucks Heath & Parklands' and 'Colne Valley' are located within the character area.

Historic Environment: Field systems are 20th Century enclosures, and pre 18th Century irregular enclosure, and some further subsequent Parliamentary field divisions. Heatherden Hall, a locally important Victorian Country House, with large grounds, is located in the north of the area, and within the grounds of Pinewood Studios. Since the 1930's, the historic house and gardens have been used for the settings of numerous films. Other historic and archaeological remains include; a ploughed moat, Roman and Iron Age crop marks, Thorney Lane Bridge (built 1835-38) and several undated cropmarks.

Designations:

- Archaeological Notification Sites: 14 No.
- Biological Notification Sites: 7 No.
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas: 2 No.
- Local Nature Reserve: 1 No.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Potential landscape and visual sensitivities are:

- The hedgerow network, which provides visual unity and a wildlife corridor, connecting fragmented habitats.
- In-field trees are also associated with relict parkland areas e.g. Bangors Park Farm & Round Coppice Farm, which provide an important linking function with other area of biodiversity value.
- Open, long views over arable fields, particularly south over lower land.
- Undeveloped spaces, in between highly developed areas.
- Grand Union Canal in the south, an important landscape and recreational feature.
- Archaeological remains and early field enclosures, which provide time depth and historic character.

Strength of Character/Intactness: The strength of character and intactness of *Iver Heath Mixed Use Terrace* is **weak**. Key characteristics are often fragmented by development, roads and unmanaged hedgerows.

Strategy/ Vision: The overall strategy for *Iver Heath Mixed Use Terrace* is to enhance the setting of the built environment and the character of the agricultural land.

Landscape Guidelines:

- 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, within an agriculturally dominant landscape.
- Consider opportunities for further tree and woodland planting to contain and reduce visual and audible impact of modern development, such as busy roads, and support biodiversity enhancements.
- Maintain open views across fields, and monitor the introduction of vertical infrastructure, which would adversely affect views within the landscape.
- Monitor the widening of transport corridors and seek appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.
- Conserve areas early 18th century irregular field enclosures and numerous archaeological remnants.

LCA 22.4 IVER HEATH MIXED USE TERRACE



Open arable fields, with long vistas. Pylons dominant in the distance.



Smaller paddock sub divisions.



Iver Heath houses from Pinewood Road south of the film studios.

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