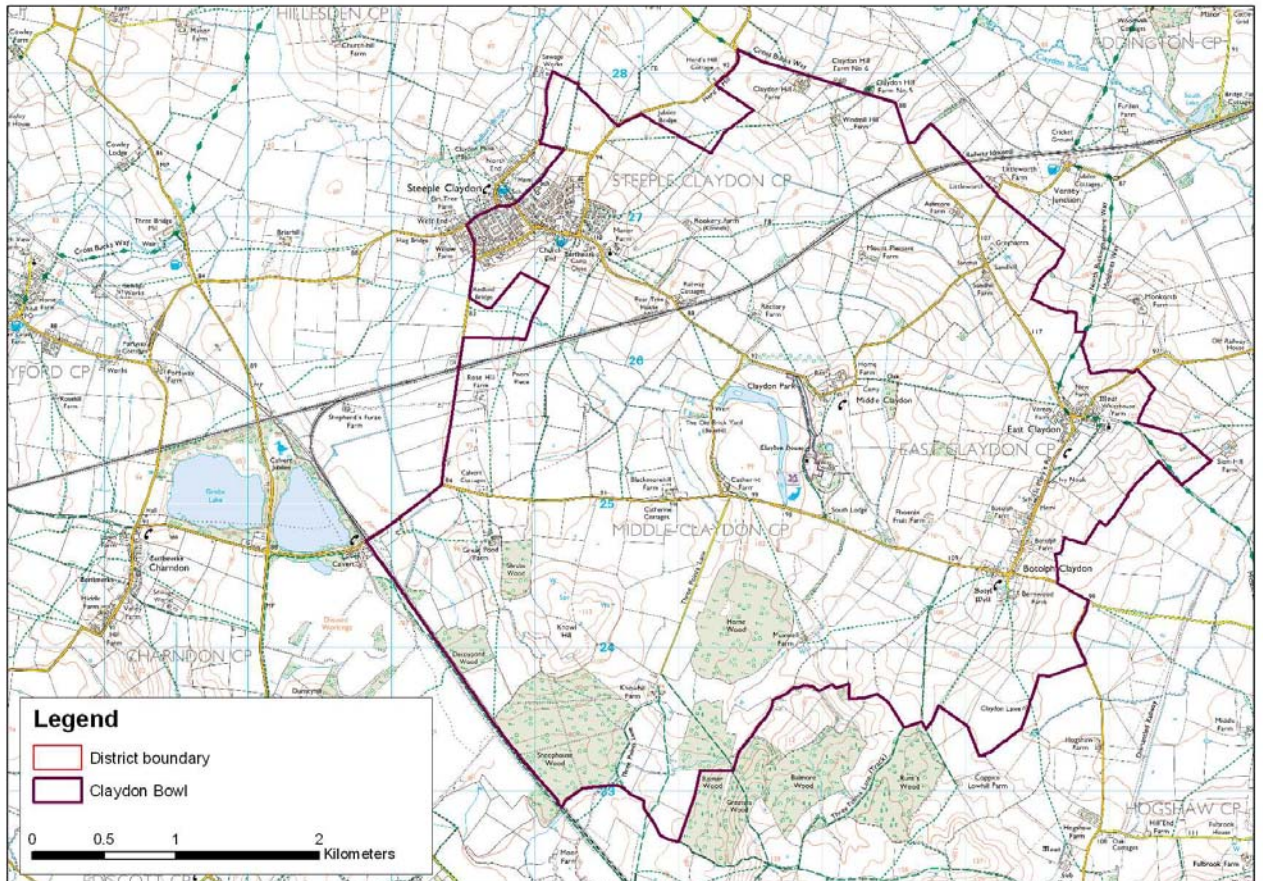
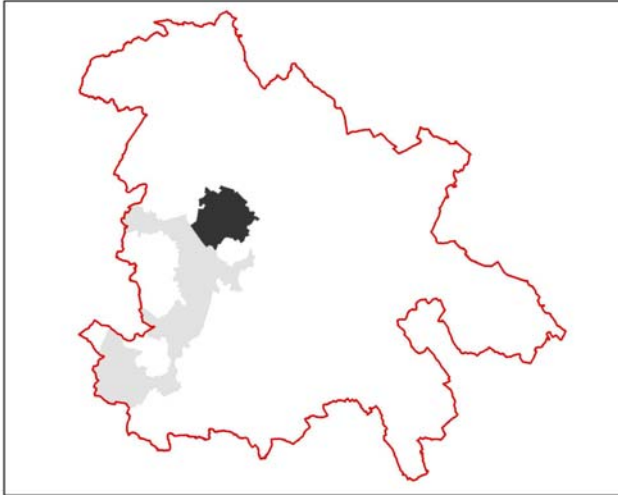


LCA 7.3 Claydon Bowl

Landscape Character Type: LCT 7 Wooded Rolling Lowlands



LCA 7.3 Claydon Bowl (LCT 7)

Key Characteristics

- Bowl with high ground around the edge
- Gently sloping ground
- Moderate level of woodland cover
- Mixed farming with slightly more arable
- Small straight lanes
- Settlement on high ground
- Claydon House and parkland
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Distinctive Features

- Ridge top villages
- Ponds in villages
- Vernacular buildings
- Traditional farm buildings
- Views to ridges and woodland to the south
- Plantation of mature poplars in grids
- St Michael's Church Steeple Claydon
- Large blocks of broadleaved woodland
- Parkland

Intrusive Elements

- Possible glimpses of landfill operations at Calvert

Location This area lies on the western side of the district south of Buckingham. Claydon House (National Trust) lies at its centre.

Landscape character A bowl with high ground on the edge and a gently undulating centre sloping from east to west. This is a transitional area between the wooded farmland in the south and Twyford Vale in the north. It is a lively and visually rich area with historic settlements running along the ridges and Claydon Park in the centre of the bowl. The influence of estate management goes beyond the parkland. There is generally more settlement and activity than in the surrounding low ground. The landscape character is that of a cohesive agricultural landscape with attractive historic settlements in prominent locations. The house and parkland with lakes lie at the centre of the area. The surrounding woodland and gateway are visible from the wider landscape. Views within the area tend to focus on the parkland, woodland on the southern edge and villages on the ridge.

Geology A complex area of transition, covered by three broad geological formations. Peterborough bituminous mudstones in the north, overlain locally by glacial till, Weymouth calcareous mudstones also overlain by an area of glacial till and an area of Stewartby calcareous mudstone across the middle of the LCA.

Topography The landform in this area has a ridge of higher ground around most of the edge and slopes towards lower ground in the centre. There are two gaps in the surrounding high ground where streams drain out to the northwest.

Hydrology There are no major watercourses. Streams drain the area from high ground on the edges to the northwest. The streams and ditches tend to be straight and follow field boundaries. On the high ground several wells are marked and one spring. Ponds are a notable feature of the ridge top villages of Botolph Claydon and East Claydon. The designed parkland around Claydon House includes a sinuous lake along the small, shallow valley to the west of the house.

Land use and settlement This is a mixed agricultural landscape with a slight predominance towards arable farming. The area has more woodland than most of the surrounding area. Settlements along the ridge to the north are a feature of the area and they have retained their historic character. Vernacular houses many with timber frames and thatch roofs, and historic farm buildings and ponds are common in the villages. Claydon House and parkland is a National Trust property the house and terrace has fine views over parkland to the west and south.

Tree cover Almost a tenth of this area is woodland, which is significantly more than the lower areas to the east and north. The woodland is mainly concentrated on the southern edge and around Claydon House; Sheephouse Wood, Shrubs Wood and Home Wood are amongst several ancient woodlands. There are also small plantations of poplar planted in a grid. The tree cover within hedgerows is fairly good with some fine oak trees.

Biodiversity Claydon Bowl has a high proportion of arable land distributed throughout. There is also grassland almost half of which is unimproved, with a small amount of the broad habitat type neutral grassland, notably in the central part.

The main biodiversity interest in the area lies within the parkland at Claydon

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House with its open water body, and in the woodlands. Both key and broad habitat types are present - lowland mixed deciduous and wet woodlands, and broad leaved deciduous woodland respectively.

Some of the woodlands, particularly in the south are relatively large. They include in close proximity Sheephouse Wood SSSI and the CWSs at Home Wood, Shrubs Wood and Decoypond Wood. The former includes the wet woodland. Relic hazel coppice is present, there has been replanting and the woods include rides, they are also part of a wider group of woodland extending into LCA 9.1.

Historic environment The most prominent historic landscape feature is the nationally important Claydon House and Parkland which is also registered as a conservation area. This is the historic seat of the Verney family and was originally a 16th century manor house, though the current house is an 18th century adaptation. The gardens were landscaped in the 18th century and have ornamental bridge, pavilions and lodges. The design of the parkland has had an influence on the surrounding landscape. In particular the ancient woodland of Home Wood and Romer Wood to the south of the park, forms a setting for the house as they contain a number of woodland rides aligned to the house, one in particular to the centre of the house. The remaining landscape is composed of woodland assarts and pre 18th century fields believed to have been laid out in the 17th century. To the south and east of Claydon Park parts of the historic landscape pattern have been lost to more recent enclosure and prairie farming.

The built environment is dominated by Claydon House, which is a Grade I listed building and the 14th century church of All Saints within the grounds of the manor house. In addition to the historic park, the settlement pattern of the area is mostly composed of 'nucleated' forms including the villages of Botolph, Steeple, and East Claydon, each village contains a number of listed buildings including St Michael's church at Steeple Claydon which is a prominent landmark. The village of Boltoph Claydon has been designated a conservation area, and contains a number of attractive timber 'box' framed buildings. There are also a handful of isolated farmsteads in the area some such as Muxwell Farm and Knowhill Farm are associated the Claydon House.

There are relatively few archaeological sites known within the area; the most prominent are the village earthworks at Middle Claydon. There are records of the remains former medieval village was levelled in the 18th century to make way for these gardens. There is also a duck decoy pond hidden away in Decoypond Wood. The disused Oxford-Bletchley railway and the Great Central railway cross the area.

The area has a high amenity value, despite Claydon House being occupied by the Verney family; it is in the custodianship of the National Trust and open to the public. The Rights of Way and the surrounding landscape is also promoted in the Bernwood Jubilee Way guide books. Iconic views of the steeple of the church at Steeple Claydon are characteristic.

Designations

Conservation Areas at Botolph Claydon and Claydon Park (Middle Claydon)

EHRHP&G at Claydon Middle Claydon

Archaeological Notification Areas – 8 No.

SSSI: Sheephouse Wood

CWS – 4 No.

BNS – 2 No.

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This area has a mixed land use with a slight predominance of arable coverts are scattered across the area.



The hedgerow pattern is generally intact particularly in areas of pasture but in some places the hedges are gappy or have few hedgerow trees.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Very Good
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Strongly unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Very strong

Sensitivity	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Guidelines	Conserve and Reinforce
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Condition

The landscape is generally in a very good condition. It is a harmonious landscape unified by a good hedgerow pattern and a higher level of woodland cover than in most of the surrounding landscape. There are few visual detractors, although the landfill operations at Calvert are just beyond the high ground on the south western side and can sometimes be seen close to this boundary. The landscape is considered to be strongly unified. The cultural integrity of the area is good with strong historic association given by Claydon House, parkland and estate along with the historic villages, good hedgerow pattern and good woodland cover. Ecological integrity is moderate due to relatively large areas of designated sites and broad habitats of District significance and good connectivity. Overall the functional integrity is considered to be very strong.

Sensitivity

The landscape of this area has a distinct character and strong sense of historic continuity giving the area a moderate sense of place. The landform is apparent and the tree cover is considered to be intermittent due to the variation between some well wooded areas and other parts of intensively managed fields with few hedgerow trees. This combines to give a moderate sense of visibility. Overall the sensitivity of the landscape is considered to be moderate.



Ponds, vernacular houses and traditional farm buildings are distinctive features of the ridge top villages.

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Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for the Claydon Bowl are as follows:

- Encourage the retention and strengthening of the historic hedgerow pattern by infilling gaps and establishing new hedgerow trees. Oak and ash trees are a feature of hedgerows in this area.
- Maintain and improve the condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Promote the management and conservation of vegetation adjacent to watercourses including the pollarding of willow.
- Maintain the condition and extent of existing woodland and promote the establishment of new woodland.
- Maintain the condition and extent of unimproved and semi-improved grassland. Encourage good management practices.
- Promote the connectivity of habitats, particularly woodland.
- Maintain extent of parkland and broadleaved woodland.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and use locally traditional materials.
- Survey, maintain and restore features of Claydon estate which extend into the surrounding agricultural area.
- Promote the conservation and interpretation of rich historic environment.
- Identify key views to Claydon house and parkland and ridge top villages from publicly accessible land and promote the preservation and enhancement of these views.



The house and the historic landscapes at Claydon are a feature seen from the highway to the south.