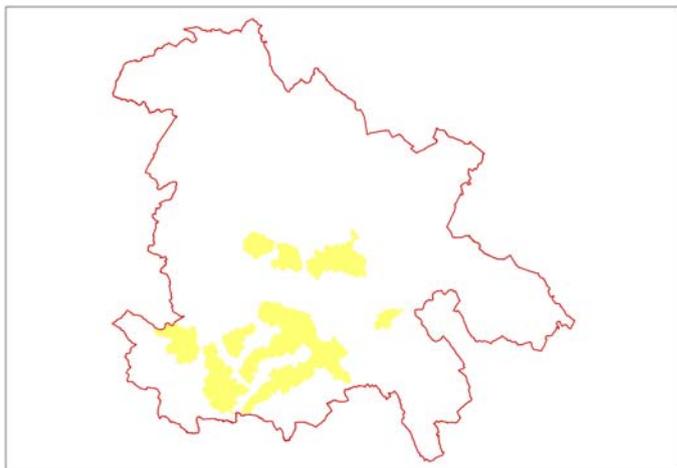


LCT 9 Low Hills and Ridges



Constituent LCAs

- LCA 9.1 Finemere Hill
- LCA 9.2 Quainton Hill
- LCA 9.3 Pitchcott-Whitchurch Ridge
- LCA 9.4 Waddesdon-Eythrope Parkland
- LCA 9.5 Brill and Muswell Hill
- LCA 9.6 Ashendon Ridge
- LCA 9.7 Chearsley Ridge
- LCA 9.8 Chilton Ridge
- LCA 9.9 A418 Ridge
- LCA 9.10 Hartwell House & Golf Course
- LCA 9.11 Berton Ridge



View across the lower slopes of Brill Hill with Chiltonpark Farm on high ground.

LCT 9 Low Hills and Ridges

Key Characteristics

- Clearly defined small hills and ridges
- Prominent features in low vale landscape
- Elevation range 190M to 60M AOD
- Predominantly grassland apart from Chearsley Ridge
- Medium sized fields
- Low level of woodland cover
- Settlement on ridge or hill tops
- Highest sensitivity historic landscapes at Waddesdon Eythrope and Hartwell
- Ancient woodlands; remnants of Bernwood Hunting Forest
- Dramatic views
- Areas of early enclosure

Distinctive Features

- Windmill at Brill
- Designed parkland at Waddesdon, Eythrope and Hartwell with mature and veteran trees
- Views to Chilterns escarpment and AONB
- Limestone Villages
- Ridge and furrow next to settlements
- Ash dominant hedgerow trees
- Sunken lanes on ridge slopes
- Witchert walls

General Description

Accords generally with CA 109 Midvale Ridge identified by the Character of England Map and with LCT RLN identified by the National Landscape Typology.

Narrow ridges and small hills with steep sides are distinctive features on the south west side of Aylesbury Vale. The landform comprises in geological terms an exposure of Portland and Purbeck Limestone Beds. The landforms stand out of the lower clay vale.

The greatest historic interest in the area is associated with the parklands at Waddesdon, Eythrope and Hartwell - all registered as historic parks and gardens. Elsewhere the areas of greatest historic landscape interest tend to be associated with the historic settlements on the tops of the ridges and hills. As well as vernacular buildings and a number of unexpanded villages there are also crofts, common, assarts, fossilised strips and other small areas of parkland. Away from the villages the field pattern primarily reflects pre eighteenth century enclosure and Parliamentary enclosure.

Wooded areas provide ecological interest with the areas of Finemere Hill, Waddesdon Manor (National Trust), Eythrope Park and Hartwell House of note. Eythrope Park supports good assemblages of lichens and the mature trees in the Waddesdon area support a number of bat species. Also present are a number of woods that are remnants of the ancient Bernwood Hunting Forest, that includes Finemere Wood SSSI and a cluster of woods including Runts Wood, Balmore Wood and part of Romer Wood to the north that are County Wildlife Sites.

The clearly defined small hills and ridges are of interesting character and afford spectacular views over the surrounding lower ground and across to the Chilterns escarpment. Settlement is generally on the highest ground with Brill, Ashendon and Pitchcott being particularly spectacularly positioned. Access to the villages is predominantly by narrow; sometimes sunken lanes. The hedgerow pattern is largely intact but there are significant areas of modern enclosure and prairie farming which has weakened the landscape character. In addition in some areas, particularly those associated with arable farming, where the hedgerows are cut very low and have become gappy with few hedgerow trees. The greatest visual detractors are the A418 and hedgerow removal creating bleak open areas.

The landform and settlements are the landscape elements of highest quality throughout the area. Where the hedgerow pattern remains strong and there are frequent hedgerow trees the landscape quality is significantly enhanced. Views out are a major feature of this area. The villages are notable for their limestone houses and walls. There is also some use of Witchert - a clay marl notably used for garden walls and occasionally in the construction of houses. Historic brick making and clay quarrying at Brill has left a relict industrial landscape and areas of rough undulating grassland. There are

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Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment

Scheduled Ancient Monuments just north of the village of Quainton and at Whitchurch. The area is rich in relics of the medieval landscape including many deserted and shrunken medieval settlements (e.g Eythrope, Fulbrook, Denham, Dinton, Pitchcott) and ridge and furrow (e.g Ashendon/Pollicott).