



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

VALUED LANDSCAPES ASSESSMENT

SEPTEMBER 2024

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape Narrative

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On June [1614], being Ascension day, she being by chance at play with other young maidens and children at a place not far from the enclosure, some speeches were used by the young people there that Arrowsmith had brought freestones to the enclosure and threatened very insolently to build a house on the common there, enclosing a great part of Bear Wood to his own use in despite of all men and debarring the inhabitants thereabouts from their common.

Bacon v Allwright: bill of information; interrogatories; depositions - answer of Margaret Allwright¹

Introduction

In the north, the Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape centres on the Registered Park and Garden of Bearwood, and in the south of the area it centres on the ancient Langley Common and course of the Barkham Brook, many of the landscape features of which appear on Nordens 1607 map of the Royal Forest of Windsor.

To the north lies the Sindlesham Conservation Area and in the extreme south of the valued landscape lies the medieval village of Barkham. The western boundary broadly follows Mole Road (B3030) from Arborfield to Sindlesham. The eastern boundary of the valued landscape incorporates Fox Hill and the woodlands forming the western edge of the settlement of Wokingham and a degree of separation from Barkham. The valued landscape sits in the southern part of Bishops Bear Wood, a traditional chase of the Bishops of Salisbury from before the Norman Conquest to the reign of Elizabeth I when the chase was incorporated into the Forest of Windsor; England's principal royal hunting forest. Whilst not included in hot-spot analysis to date the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019) identifies it as a 'valuable landscape attribute':

Barkham Brook and associated wetland which provide important ecological habitats including wet meadow and BAP priority habitat wet woodland.²

¹ STAC 8/20/22 Attorney General v Allwright, Court of Star Chamber: Proceedings, James I, Berkshire, 1614

² Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 240

Attributes of the valued landscape

Landscape quality (condition) – The Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2004) categorises this area as L1 ‘Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills’. It confirms that this is a high quality landscape with strong character and a strong sense of place (paragraph 16.26). The Assessment confirms that the landscape is in good condition (paragraph 16.26) and states that:

*‘the landscape strategy is to conserve and strengthen existing character, including woodland and features associated with the historic landscape’.*³

The J2 ‘Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay’ Landscape Character Area lying to the south-west is described as being of moderate quality, moderate character and moderate condition. The part lying to the east of Arborfield is arguably of higher quality than this would suggest, because of its visual and cultural links with the L1 ‘Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills’ Landscape Character Area to the east. It is true that this part of the landscape has far fewer woodlands and hedgerows, but it is very likely that it has had an open character for many centuries, probably as part of a medieval strip farming system associated with the village of Arborfield Cross.

The urban conurbation of modern Reading is visible from high points along Mole Road (B3030) but not generally from the land to the east of this road, where the landscape is more contained by the high land occupied by Mole Road and the settlement of Arborfield Cross. The tranquillity and relative remoteness of this landscape is thus preserved by this important western part of the landscape. The landscape strategy of the J2 ‘Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay’ Landscape Character Area is to enhance:

*‘the historic field system, habitats... rural lanes and wooded valleys... and more general improvements to woodland, farmland and habitat management’.*⁴

Scenic Quality – The Barkham Village Design Statement (2007) refers to the parish of Barkham lying principally in open farmland which rises gently toward the ridge known as Barkham Hill. The parish boasts a number of significant landscape features and views recorded in the Statement. The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2020) identifies several important views and vistas within the Arborfield and Barkham neighbourhood area. The Plan recognises that, in addition to Bearwood Park and The Coombes, there are many wooded areas and copses that are fragments and reminders of earlier times, when the area was heavily wooded before being cleared for cultivation⁵. The views and vistas identified in the Plan⁶ are incorporated in the valued landscape area.

The Coombes area was also identified in the Wokingham and District Local Plan (2004) as an Area of Special Landscape Importance.

³ Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 16.27, page 374

⁴ Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 14.44, page 319

⁵ Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 (2020), Annex V – Landscape and Important Views, available at: <https://arborfield.org.uk/documents/annex-v-landscape-and-important-views-3-3mb/>

⁶ Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 (2020), Map D – Important Views and Vistas, available at: <https://arborfield.org.uk/documents/map-d-important-views-and-vistas/>

The LCA (2004) states that the strong character of the L1 'Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills' Landscape Character Area is:

'related particularly to the synergy between the topography, woodland and historic ambience which create a distinctive landscape with a strong sense of place'.⁷

The good condition of the landscape:

'relates to the privacy and secrecy resulting from the relative absence of intrusive infrastructure and development (including roads), the dense woodland character accentuating the landform which creates intimacy and the contrasting context of undulating coombe pasturelands'.⁸

The overall strategy is to 'conserve and strengthen the existing character' and identifies the 'woodland and the features associated with the historic landscape' as the key characters to be conserved.

An important aspect of landscape that has been identified in the LCA (2004) is the 'locally distinctive Rhododendron Drive'⁹. Whilst this is at odds with a note to enhance 'woodland habitat' it is true that – for a few brief weeks in the year - the 'Rhododendron Drive' or more properly the Rhododendron-lined Bearwood Road is a spectacular landscape feature when in bloom.

Whilst the landscape of the J2 'Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' Landscape Character Area is described as being of only moderate scenic quality, the LCA (2004) does pick out the 'notable characteristic[s]' of the Barkham Brook; geometric field systems; arable and pastoral lands; and a wide range of habitats. The LCA identifies the following as being 'features of particular uniqueness or distinctiveness' which lie within the LCA: moats; and 'the coombes' wooded valleys. The strategy for this landscape is set out in the LCA (2004) as 'enhancement' including: the historic field system, habitats, moats, rural lanes and wooded valleys (which are to be retained and respected); and more general improvements to woodland, farmland and habitat management.

Rarity – The bulk of the valued landscape centres on the Registered Park and Garden of Bearwood and is thus clearly of national importance and also rare at a national level. Whilst the Reading Football Club training ground development has undermined the character of the Park's second phase of development, in this instance, it has compensated in valued landscape terms because of the increased recreational interest offered by the sports facility. It should be recognised that this development was completed prior to the identification of the valued landscape, and there is a clear policy position in the Local Plan Update to ensure that proposals affecting valued landscapes demonstrate that they protect and enhance the special features, characteristics and qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits clearly outweigh the harm.

⁷ Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 16.26, page 373

⁸ Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 16.26, page 373

⁹ Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 16.27, page 374

The southern part of the valued landscape incorporates much of the countryside falling within Langley Common; an historic area of common land with interesting history including the conflict between the Crown's agent and Sir Robert Arrowsmith and the Commoners of the Forest. The land appears to have lain on the northern side of the boundary between the Royal Forest and the traditional Bishops Bearwood Chase (the private chase of the Bishops of Salisbury before the time of Queen Elizabeth I) and 'Bigshotte Walke' an administrative area of the Royal Forests of Windsor. The land is bounded by Public Rights of Way from Arborfield Cross, through the Coombes, to the Ye Old Leathern Bottel public house on Barkham Road – a line following the modern day Cole, Coombes and Sandy Lanes. The southern boundary of Langley Common follows the lanes and footpaths linking Arborfield Cross, Barkham and the Barkham Road. These lanes form the boundary between Bearwood Walk and Bigshotte Walk. This land was mapped in 1607 by the cartographer John Norden who produced two slightly different maps, one for King James I (British Library Version)¹⁰ and one for his son Arthur Prince of Wales (Royal Heritage Collection)¹¹. The maps are amongst the earliest of accurate, modern maps. They are a detailed assessment of the Royal Forest of Windsor, its' boundaries, roads and trackways, towns and villages, deer parks and other features including an estimate of the number of deer kept in each of the sixteen 'walks' or administrative boundaries within the Royal Forest.

Many of the features shown persist to the present day including: the villages and towns of Arborfield Cross, Barkham (with its medieval centre around the re-built church), and Wokingham; river crossings; the name of 'Langley' Heath or Common, which appears on modern maps as well as Thomas Pride's 1790 map of the environs around Reading (as does Ye Old Leathern Bottel public house); trackways or roads which criss-cross the landscape (including the northern boundary to Langley Common - a medieval road from the Royal residence at Swallowfield Court to Wokingham); the sites or early names of farms like Randall's Farm and Evendon's Farm still persisting in the landscape: ancient woodland including Hazelden's copse (now Hazleton's copse). Ancient woodland is defined as woodland persisting since 1600, partly because this is a time when high quality maps started to become available and also the time after which the planting of new plantations began. The presence of Hazelden's Copse is a rare example in this valued landscape of an ancient woodland appearing on an ancient map from the first decade of the 17th century and persisting to the landscape of today.

Representativeness – As previously noted the northern part of the valued landscape is entirely taken up by the nationally important Registered Park and Garden of Bearwood. The LCA (2004) discusses sensitivity finding that overall, the J2 'Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' Landscape Character Area is of 'moderate sensitivity' and values 'most characteristics at the local scale'. However, in highlighting valued characteristics, the LCA (2004) states that *'the peaceful rural qualities are rare at a regional or even national level'*.¹² The ways the many woodlands and trees *'form shelterbelts and woodlands that restrict view and reduce visual sensitivity'*¹³ is also discussed.

¹⁰ Norden 1607 Map

¹¹ Norden 1607 Map

¹² Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 14.45, page 319

¹³ Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 14.45, page 319

In the assessment of the L1 'Bearwood Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills' LCA the LCA (2004) highlights the sensitivity of the woodland due to its many functions in acting as a backdrop to surrounding landscapes and accentuating undulating landform, providing wildlife habitat, providing a wooded backdrop to the western edge of Wokingham town, and being an integral part of the listed historic parkland estate.¹⁴ The wooded context and 'private' secluded character are again highlighted as being important characteristics. The woodland is clearly of an importance and value over and above the 'mere countryside'.

Conservation Interests – In terms of wildlife and biodiversity the Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape provides an important mix of habitats: Pasture and Lowland Mixed-Deciduous Woodlands, and Wood Pasture and Parkland, these last two being Habitats of Principal Importance. Riverine habitats are also found but on a smaller scale in the Barkham Brook. They are, however, closely linked with the habitats of the adjacent River Loddon Valued Landscape and the western and south-western boundaries clearly reflect this for reasons of interconnectivity of habitat and green infrastructure.

Habitats of principal importance:

- Wood Pasture and Parkland habitat are present within the valued landscape. Indeed, much of the northern part is historic parkland. However, because of its use as an educational establishment little is currently done to manage the ancient and veteran trees and woodlands in the park for biodiversity enhancement.
- Blocks of scattered Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland grow throughout the Bearwood Park parkland in the northern part of the valued landscape. A large block of lowland mixed deciduous woodland occurs in The Coombes; an area of varying topography of high importance for other landscape factors. There are a number of areas of Ancient Woodland located in the central west-east band of the landscape. As might be expected for woodland persisting in a landscape with an ancient use as a common, the woodlands are discrete and have generally well-defined boundaries – with some good examples of wood banks and ditches – and in this case there is good evidence for them on early maps (principally Norden - 1607).

The Ancient Tree Inventory¹⁵ shows a wide variety of notable Ancient and Veteran Trees with noteworthy aggregations around Barkham Manor (a selection of half a dozen ancient and veteran oaks - all over 6m in girth - in pasture and woodland to the north of the listed building). There is an avenue of notable Wellingtonias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) at Bearwood Park. This avenue is one of a handful in the borough which were planted seemingly because of the close association of the borough and its inhabitants with the first Duke of Wellington (1769 - 1852) – the hero of Waterloo. The Duke died at about the time of the 'discovery' of the Wellingtonia tree by Augustus T. Dowd in 1852. The first seeds and seedlings were commercially available in the UK shortly afterwards and were popular with landowners.

¹⁴ Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004), paragraph 16.28, page 374

¹⁵ The Ancient Tree Inventory is an online resource made available by the Woodland Trust. The Government refers developers to this resource in online planning guidance on Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: protecting them from development – last updated 5th November 2018, available at: <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/tree-search/>

The Coombes Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is an area of 33 hectares, located in woodland in the centre of the valued landscape. The site consists primarily of an area of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland that varies in its structure and species mix. Much of the site is also a Local Geological Site (LGS). There are some features indicative of long-established woodland, including wood banks and ditches with associated mature trees, and 23 long-established woodland indicators. There are also poor areas where *Rhododendron* dominates the shrub layer, shading out field layer species.

Cultural heritage and built form - the valued landscape encompasses and forms an important part of the setting of the Sindlesham Conservation Area to the north; a nineteenth century model village built of polychromatic Reading brick in the Jacobean style by John Walter III, who also built Bearwood House. The Arborfield Cross Conservation Area lies to the south-west and takes in fine views of the valued landscape from its vantage point on the ridge forming the south-western edge of the catchment of the Barkham Brook.

The valued landscape forms the setting for these conservation areas as well as for the individual buildings and structures in the landscape. Indeed, the form and location of many of the principal buildings is, in a major part, a response to the historical, geological, topological and geographical features of the landscape, in which they sit.

Notable buildings outside the conservation areas include: the Grade II listed, late 17th century Mole Bridge Farmhouse and the Grade II listed, 17th century, The Glen, in the west of the valued landscape. There are notable medieval buildings around Barkham village including the Grade II listed, 15th Century, Sparkes Farmhouse, Church Cottage (on a moated site) and the late 16th Century Langleypond Farmhouse, which has been assessed by some as being a Tudor hunting lodge and a tangible link between the medieval hunting and modern settlement of this landscape. There is also a fine assembly of farm buildings: engine shed, barns, and cattle sheds at Newlands farmyard on the edge of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area. Quite apart from the setting of the listed buildings, and with references to Newlands in the historic record going back to the Middle Ages, this link with the valued landscape is important.

Notable mansion houses include the palatial Bearwood House – now a school, Grade II listed Barkham Manor and the Grade II listed Barkham Square, an eighteenth-century house. Bearwood House, (built between 1865-74 by Robert Kerr in the Jacobean style) is Grade II* listed and sits amongst other listed buildings including the Grade II listed chapel and the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Bearwood Park.

Bearwood Park itself includes notable features of the designed landscape including the Pulhamite 'rock' garden, the lake and dam, the terraces and the fine avenue of *Wellingtonia* trees running from the house to the model village of Sindlesham. The working landscape of the estate included sawmills powered by the dam and kitchen gardens. The latter now replaced (early 21st Century) by a training facility for Reading Football Club. Associated with this designed landscape is the tree-lined Bearwood Road, laid out by John Walter III and now famously lined with *Rhododendrons* which, whilst they have visual appeal, are invasive in woodland areas and harmful to biodiversity.

The valued landscape also encompasses the Barkham Street Area of Special Character identified in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan. Mainly centred on Barkham Street and stretching from the original medieval centre of Barkham, this area includes the church, the village pond and notable manor and listed buildings, such as The Bull Public House and Sparkes Farm¹⁶. It also extends further towards Barkham Manor.

Other notable designed landscapes within the valued landscape include Barkham Manor, a locally listed historic garden with listing of the manor house stating that it was built on an earlier moated site from the late 1700s. Also of interest is a long-distance trackway passing west-east through the middle of the valued landscape. The trackway with deep ditches either side, runs from Swallowfield Park (a royal residence from before the conquest until Tudor times) to Wokingham (an Anglo-Saxon settlement with the earliest market charter dating from 1219 AD).

An avenue of lime trees is included in the far eastern part of the valued landscape. The lime grove at Nashgrove Ride in Barkham is recognised in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan as a Locally Valued Natural and Historic Asset due to its historic context in the former Bearwood estate and value as a landscape feature. According to the plan, the avenue of four-lined lime trees was planted at the command of John Walter III, the landowner at the time, who wanted to create a route for his sons to travel along to Wellington College. The plan recognises that it is unusual to find this type of feature with the only other places being at Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire¹⁷.

From the perspective of archaeological heritage, the landscape is largely of interest for the way medieval boundaries, buildings, trackways, woodlands and other structures are incorporated into the modern landscape. Buildings, routes and enclosures from the early 19th Century are also of importance as is some 20th century development, for example the Second World War pillbox guarding the bridge over the Barkham Brook.

Culturally this landscape is important, being on the edge of the historic Royal Forest of Windsor between Bigshotte Walke and Bishop's Bear Wood Chase. The line of the boundary is picked out in today's landscape by roads and footpaths from Arborfield through the medieval centre of Barkham, to Wokingham lying to the south of the current Barkham Road. Two important conflicts between local residents and John Maltravers, on the one part, and King James I on the other, highlight the importance of Forest landscapes (that is land falling under Forest law) and the assertion of the pre-conquest rights of common people against the usurpation of those rights by powerful interests such as the nobility or the Crown. The latter case is discussed in some detail by Dan Beaver and the quote at the header of this narrative is from his work¹⁸.

Recreational Value – The Barkham Village Design Statement states:

¹⁶ Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 (2020), paragraph 4.32 c), available at: https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Neighbourhood_Plan_Made_Version_April_2020.pdf

¹⁷ Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 (2020), paragraph 4.35, available at: https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Neighbourhood_Plan_Made_Version_April_2020.pdf

¹⁸ BEAVER, D, *Hunting and the age of violence before the English Civil War*, 2008 Cambridge

Many of Barkham's country lanes are well used for leisure purposes. In particular Sandy Lane, Coombes Lane and Hayes Lane, along with the many bridleways, are well used by horse traffic originating from the various livery stables in the area, as well as by cyclists and runners. These routes and the extensive network of footpaths are popular with ramblers and dog-walkers. Commonfield Lane and Barkham Ride are both part of the Round Berkshire Cycle Route.

Much of the northern part of the valued landscape is covered by Bearwood Lakes Golf Course and the Reddam House Berkshire School, which, whilst both privately run, have a quasi-public face and their landscapes can be enjoyed by workers, members, scholars and in those views in from public roads and other rights of way. The eastern part of the valued landscape includes The Junipers and Elizabeth Park, which provide recreational value for the residents of Barkham. The valued landscape also encompasses an area of land at Fox Hill. Situated on the edge of Wokingham, the area of woodland comprises several rights of way used by residents of Wokingham and Barkham. Part of the land also benefits from planning permission for the change of use of existing private woodland to land for informal recreation that is publicly accessible¹⁹, thereby emphasising its recreational value.

Perceptual Aspects – This is a wooded and pastoral landscape, just a short distance from the busy transport corridors of the M4, A329M and M3, the mainline to Waterloo and the towns of Wokingham and Reading. Notwithstanding this, the landscape is a haven of tranquillity²⁰ and incorporates a sizeable area of relatively dark skies²¹. These perceptual qualities are important and increasingly rare in the borough and the eastern part of the county.

Associations – As well as early associations with the Bishops of Salisbury and with Monarchs from Elizabeth I to the enclosures of the Royal Forest in the early 19th Century (reigns of George III, George IV, William IV and Victoria), the landscape has associations to a number of individuals with national and local importance. Whilst they are not household names now, John de Maltravers, a regicide of the despised Edward II, held land in Barkham much to the annoyance of local residents who petitioned the King:

"To our Lord the King and to his Council complain the inhabitants of Yeingdon [Evendons Farm – near Wokingham], Finchamstede [Finchampstead], Earle [Earley], Erbourgfild [Arborfield] and Nywelend [Newlands] that where they had their village, and villagers paid rights to a common pasture called Langenhurst in the town of Berkham which is within the bounds of the forest of Wyndesore [Windsor]. And themselves and their ancestors have had and used the common rights in the said pasture as appended to their free tenantry of time and of mind. Then moreover Mr. Johan de Mautravers as justice of the forest residing at Wyndesore ... seized this pasture and had it enclosed by a ditch and a hedge claiming the said common pasture as appended to the Manor of Berkham so that they cannot enjoy their

¹⁹ Planning application reference: 203539, Land off Bearwood Road, Wokingham, decision dated 19 November 2021

²⁰ Based on Tranquillity mapping for CPRE by Northumbria University. Cf Tranquillity Mapping: Developing a Robust Methodology for Planning Support Technical Report on Research in England, January 2008 (revised)

²¹ Based on Campaign to Protect Rural England dark skies analysis. cf Night Blight – mapping England's night pollution and dark skies, CPRE, June 2016

*common use as they were wont to use it, and pay without reason, and to their dispossession and to their great damage to which they beg remedy*²².

The petition must have been made around 1330, as John Maltravers acquired Barkham in that year, and was condemned to death in the same year for his role in the execution of Edmund, Earl of Kent, a son of Edward I. He escaped abroad and was subsequently pardoned. According to the cleric and chronicler Adam Murimuth (c.1274 – 1347) he also issued the order for the murder of Edward II.

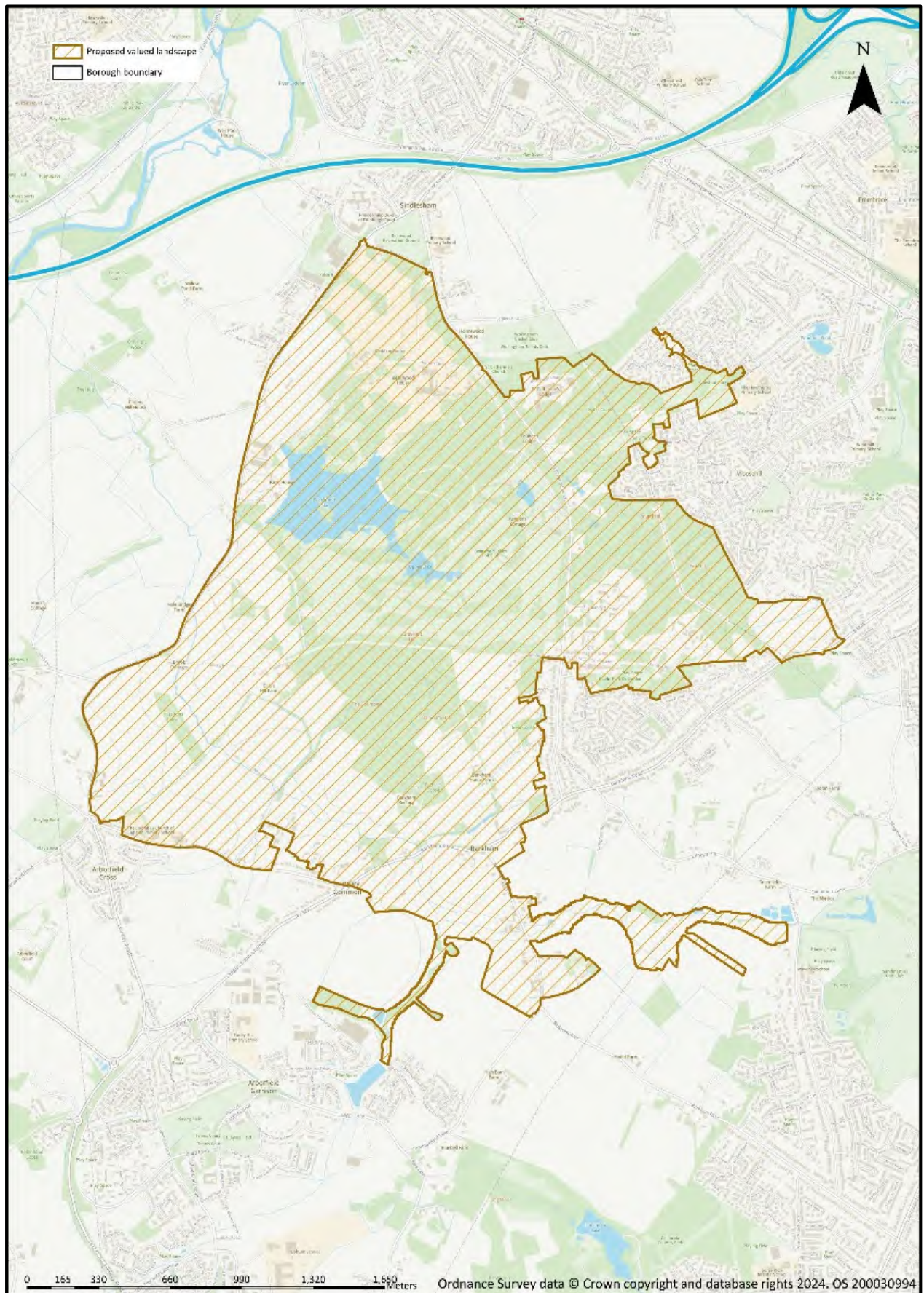
Whilst the site of Maltravers's enclosure is not visible today, the common, known as Langenhurst, is shown on the Norden map of Windsor Forest (1607) and is still visible today. Many features of the common including woodlands, important junctions such as the six-pointed one at Arborfield Cross, tracks (now visible as roads and footpaths) and the villages of Arborfield (now known as Arborfield Cross) and Barkham. The same 1607 map shows details of secular buildings, including public houses in the centre of Windsor that can still be seen today. Whilst no such built landmarks are mapped by Norden within the valued landscape, the links between this early map and the modern landscape are striking.

The historic concerns of local people over the enclosure of common land have already been mentioned. Within Langley Common – anciently 'Langenhurst', or Bearwood Common (both within the valued landscape) - the Allwrights, the Webbs and other villagers of Barkham and surrounding parishes rose up to confront the powerful Sir Francis Knollys, Keeper of Bearwood Walk and his man Richard Arrowsmith. Relying on their ancient pre-conquest rights to pasture on the common their ultimate challenge was to the rights of King James I. These struggles between the people, the aristocracy and the Crown were played out on the stage of forest landscapes across the country, often in the name of the Commonweal or Commonwealth. A precursor of challenges to the power of Kings leading to the Civil War with James' son Charles I and the foundation of the English Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. The landscape is valued not only for its associations with such people, but also as the stage upon which their lives were lived and their formative deeds played out.

Ironically, the landscape achieves importance because of its association with another rich and powerful man – John Walter II – who built a huge estate across the lands of the borough, centred on this valued landscape area. However, far from being the scion of a mighty Norman or Plantagenet house, John Walter II purchased a patent in the new technology of block type. He soon established The Daily Universal Register which in a few years became the well-established daily newspaper the Times of London. The works of John Walter II in establishing and innovating this business cannot be underestimated and, having purchased an estate at Bearwood, employed his considerable vigour in simultaneously working and adorning the landscape, making his estate as self-sufficient as possible. A work continued by John Walter III. This has resonances of the modern struggle to achieve economic growth whilst addressing the need for beauty, biodiversity and more recently the issues of sustainability and climate change.

²² Ancient Petitions, 8315, Record Office, London – translated from the old French.

Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape Map



Appendix 4: Summary of responses to valued landscapes proposed in the Draft Plan Consultation (2020)

Valued Landscape	Individual / Organisation	Summary of comments	Officer response
Barkham and Bearwood Valued Landscape	Barkham Parish Council	The boundary of the valued landscape should incorporate the whole 'Area of Special Character' as identified in the made Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, as well as extending further to include the separation between Barkham and Wokingham.	Noted. The boundary of the Barkham and Bearwood valued landscape has been reviewed and refined to incorporate the Area of Special Character identified in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.
Billingbear Valued Landscape	Site promoter for land at Ashridge, Hurst	The north-western part of the valued landscape includes the promotion's northeastern fields, which adjoin the M4 motorway along an open, unvegetated boundary. Presence of motorway detracts from the scenic and rural qualities and is not considered to be tranquil or rare. Promotion at Land at Ashridge is detached from the valued landscape, including the locally listed Billingbear Park by dense woodland at Beech Wood.	Noted. The methodology for identifying the valued landscapes is consistent with the Aylesbury Road, Wendover decision by recognising that whilst a site in itself may not exhibit any of the demonstrable physical features, where it forms an integral part of a wider 'valued landscape', it should deserve protection under the NPPF. Requiring the site/land in itself to demonstrate the physical features in order to qualify as a valued landscape would be a formulaic, literal approach, and could lead to anomalies. The approach to identifying the borough's valued landscape was based on the aggregation of demonstrable physical attributes or features of the landscape set out in Appendix 1 of the assessment, and recognising the concept that landscape is itself not an average of its parts, but a sum of its parts.

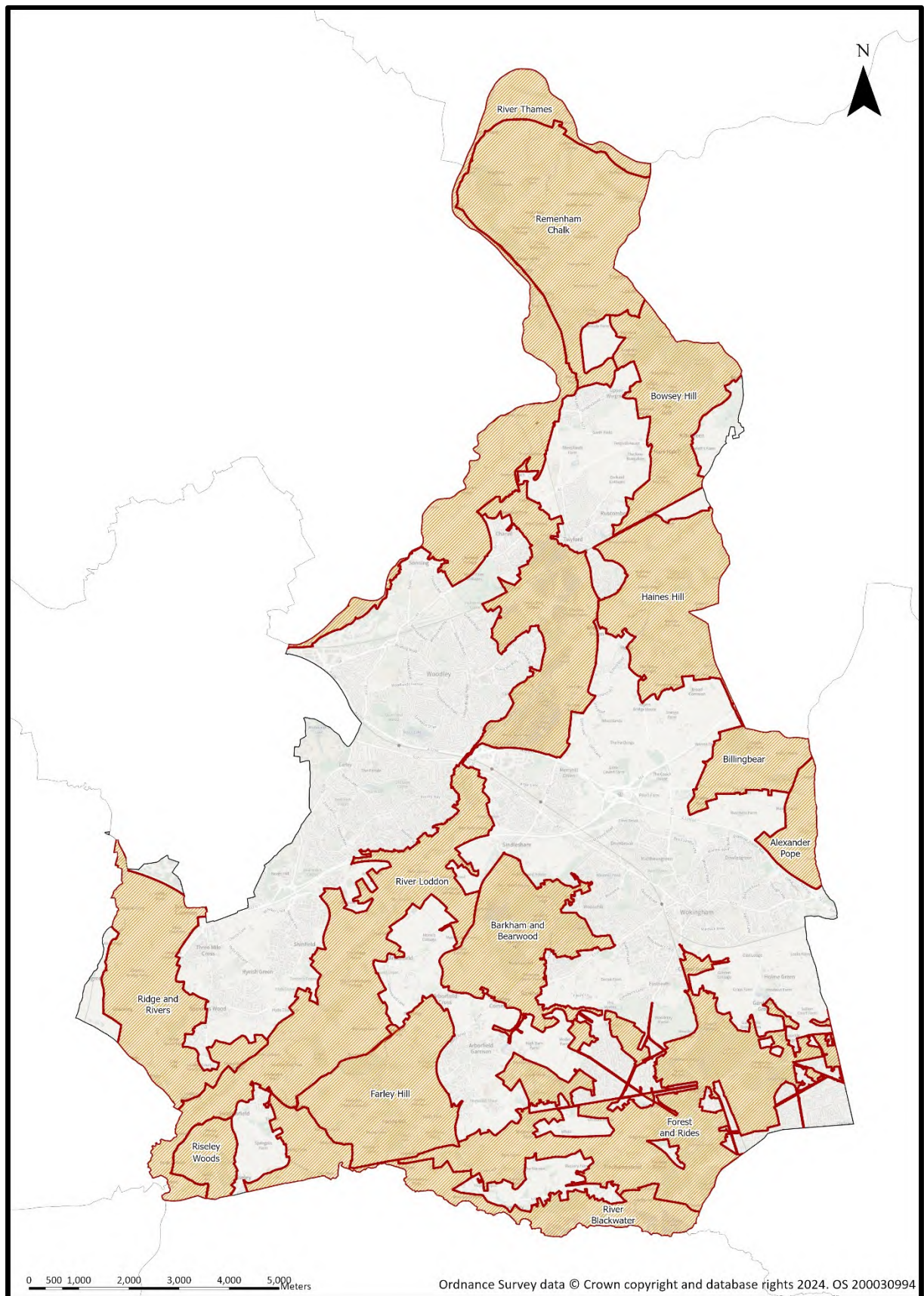
Valued Landscape	Individual / Organisation	Summary of comments	Officer response
Forest and Rides Valued Landscape	Barkham Parish Council	The boundary of the valued landscape should incorporate the four-line lime tree avenue associated with the Bearwood Estate. Its value is recognised as an attractive landscape feature and 'locally valued natural and historic asset' in the made Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.	Noted. The boundary of the Forest and Rides valued landscape has been amended to incorporate the four-line lime tree avenue at Nashgrove Ride recognised in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.
Forest and Rides Valued Landscape		The identification of historic straight rides as a valued landscape is an unusual approach as the historic routes are retained in the road pattern, and many of these have the characteristics of tree lined roads. The area should be reduced to outside the urban areas where the historic character (rides backed by woodland blocks) is retained.	Noted. The boundaries of the Forest and Ride valued landscape have been reviewed and refined to reflect the pattern of the historic straight rides and areas of 'woodland in depth' as recognised by Planning Inspectors in several appeal decisions.
River Loddon Valued Landscape	Landowner at Thames Valley Science Park	The southern edge of the valued landscape should take account consented development at Thames Valley Science Park and the British Museum, and to follow the alignment of the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, existing field boundaries and landscape features.	Noted. The northern boundary of the River Loddon valued landscape has been reviewed to follow, where possible, physical and permanent features on the ground. The western boundary of the valued landscape follows the alignment of the Shinfield Relief Road and existing field boundaries and features.
River Loddon Valued Landscape	Landowner for Loddon Valley Garden Village	To the south of the M4, the boundary does not follow any physical features on the ground. A more robust, permeable and defensible boundary would be to follow existing landscape features, such as distinctive blocks of woodland on the edge of the River Loddon floodplain.	Noted. The boundary of the valued landscape south of the M4 has been reviewed and refined to follow more physical features on the ground, notably the blocks of woodland on the edge of the River Loddon floodplain.
River Loddon Valued Landscape	Landowner of land to the south Arborfield Road	To the south of Arborfield Road, the boundary should follow the settlement edge and boundaries of the junior school and recreation ground, rather than including part	Noted. The western boundary of the valued landscape, to the south of Arborfield Road has been reviewed and refined to follow more physical and

Valued Landscape	Individual / Organisation	Summary of comments	Officer response
		of Chestnut Crescent and Shinfield St Mary's Junior School grounds and adjoining recreation ground.	permanent features on the ground, such as the defined settlement edge of Shinfield.
River Loddon Valued Landscape	Landowner of land to the south of Shinfield	Around the southern extent of Shinfield, the boundary is incoherent and arbitrary. A more rational boundary would be to follow the Langley Mead SANG and watercourse that run parallel to the River Loddon.	Noted. The boundary of the valued landscape to the south of Shinfield has been reviewed and refined to follow the settlement edge of Shinfield, a more physical and permanent feature.
River Loddon Valued Landscape	Site promoter / developer for land west of Park Lane, Charvil	Part of the housing site allocation on land to the west of Park Lane, Charvil is identified as a valued landscape, but the assessment does not provide justification. Disagree that the valued landscape occupies the flat alluvial floodplain of the river within A2 and B1 landscape character areas, as the site is mainly rising ground, outside the floodplain. Sandpit Copse is not contiguous with the flat alluvial floodplain of the river, which lies to the east of Park Lane. Incorrect reference to World Heritage Sites in the narrative.	Noted. The boundary of the valued landscape has been refined to exclude the area of land proposed for allocation in the Local Plan Update. The valued landscape incorporates the area of ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Site on the site's southern boundary at Sandpit Copse, as well as the area of woodland on the site's western boundary.
Spencers Wood Southern Ridge Valued Landscape	Site promoters for land at Highlands, Basingstoke Road; and land at Beech Hill Road and Lambs Lane	Unclear why the boundary of the Loddon River Valley Landscape Character Area has not been adhered to. Valued landscape extends out within area defined as Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay LCA into neighbouring Loddon River Valley LCA. Assessment identifies the valued landscape as lying within two LCAs, but analysis of the mapping suggests	The assessment recognises that valued landscapes will to a greater extent reflect Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), but in some instances the overlaying of LCA and valued landscape boundaries will not always coincide as particular attributes, such as rivers, geology, old roads or other historic features may cross through LCA boundaries.

Valued Landscape	Individual / Organisation	Summary of comments	Officer response
		that majority is within the Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay LCA, with small areas beyond the A33 road corridor located in the Grazeley Farm Clay Lowlands LCA. Assessment refers to the route of the GHQ Stop Line and links to the medieval Beaumys, however this is a non-designated heritage asset and has little influence on landscape quality. Views from parts of the ridge to the Loddon Valley are of some significance given former historic associations with the Second World War defences, but are likely to be appreciated at a local level. Light pollution and dark skies mapping shows the area lies within an area of moderate night light and affected by light spill from surrounding urban areas and the highway network. Planning Inspectors at several appeals found that each site was not a valued landscape. Two of the appeal decisions referred to in the narrative predate the Wendover decision, which requires an holistic approach to identifying the extent of a valued landscape.	Planning Inspectors have recognised a person's association with a particular historic event or figure contributes towards their perception and experience of a landscape. In the decision for Stable Cottage, Poundfield Lane, Cookham the Inspector highlighted the strong associations between the Conservation Area and the English painter, Sir Stanley Spencer, who set many of his work in the village and its surroundings. The Inspector concluded that a development proposal would denude the special qualities of the CA and its cultural significance, as it contained an open area associated with his paintings. In the decision for land south of Westleaze, Charminster, the Inspector concluded that a development proposal would cause harm to a listed manor house and surrounding landscape associated with the novelist Thomas Hardy. The Inspector highlighted how a person might appreciate how an environment might have felt for Thomas Hardy's character, Mayor of Casterbridge at that point in time, and therefore it brought a social and literary aspect to the significance of the asset and its setting. The methodology for identifying the valued landscapes is consistent with the Aylesbury Road, Wendover decision by recognising that whilst a site in itself may not exhibit any of the demonstrable physical features, where it forms an integral part of a wider 'valued

Valued Landscape	Individual / Organisation	Summary of comments	Officer response
			landscape', it should deserve protection under the NPPF. Requiring the site/land in itself to demonstrate the physical features in order to qualify as a valued landscape would be a formulaic, literal approach, and could lead to anomalies. The approach to identifying the borough's valued landscape was based on the aggregation of demonstrable physical attributes or features of the landscape set out in Appendix 1 of the assessment, and recognising the concept that landscape is itself not an average of its parts, but a sum of its parts.

Appendix 5: Map of valued landscapes across Wokingham Borough



Appendix 6: Criteria and evidence used to identify Wokingham Borough valued landscapes

Criterion	Definition (GLVIA Box 5.1)	Potential indicators	Examples of evidence used
Landscape quality (condition)	A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.	• A coherent landscape character conferring to recognisable sense of place • An area representative of a particular phase in landscape history/development • State of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character of the landscape	Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004) Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) East Berkshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project (2019) Site visits
Scenic quality	The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).	• Strong visual character e.g. patterns/composition of vegetation/landform • Qualities of expansiveness, openness, enclosure, seclusion • Memorable, important, or distinctive views • Uninterrupted tracts of land with few built features • Relative lack of human influence/absence of incongruous features	Town/Parish Village Design Statements (adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents) Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004) Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003) Designations in neighbourhood plans

Criterion	Definition (GLVIA Box 5.1)	Potential indicators	Examples of evidence used
Rarity	The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.	• A coherent landscape character conferring to recognisable sense of place • An area representative of a particular phase in landscape history/development • A distinctive rare or representative land cover • A distinct landform or topography forming a discrete or recognisable area	Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004) Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020)
Representativeness	Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.	• A coherent landscape character conferring to recognisable sense of place • An area representative of a particular phase in landscape history/development • A distinctive rare or representative land cover • A distinct landform or topography forming a discrete or recognisable area	Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004) Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) East Berkshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project (2019) Planning appeal decisions Presence of other designations or features indicative of representativeness Local research
Conservation interests	The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as	• Presence of wildlife and/or habitats/species that make a particular contribution to sense	Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004)

Criterion	Definition (GLVIA Box 5.1)	Potential indicators	Examples of evidence used
	well as having value in their own right.	of place or scenic quality • Presence of settlements, buildings or other structures that make a particular contribution to sense of place or scenic quality • Visible expression of geology creating distinctive sense of place • Visible presence of historic landscape types or specific landscape elements or features that provide evidence of time depth or historic influence on the landscape	Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) Designations Conservation Area Appraisals Secondary sources (e.g. Ancient Tree Inventory)
Recreational value	Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.	• Evidence of recreational activity based on experience of the landscape (e.g. walking /cycling routes, access opportunities, activities such as birdwatching, angling etc)	Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (2004) Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) Town/Parish Village Design Statements (including those prepared/produced by neighbourhood planning groups) OS map data Designations (e.g. National Trails and National Cycle Networks)

Criterion	Definition (GLVIA Box 5.1)	Potential indicators	Examples of evidence used
Perceptual aspects	A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wilderness and/or tranquillity.	• Tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity – peace, quietness, dark skies, presence of water – ditches, streams, rivers, lakes etc • Qualities of expansiveness, openness, enclosure, seclusion • Relative lack of human influence/absence of incongruous features	Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) Planning appeal decisions CPRE Tranquillity Mapping CPRE Night Blight/Dark Skies Mapping
Associations	Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.	• Associations with written descriptions, artistic representations, and associations of the landscape with people places or events	Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2020) East Berkshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Project (2019) Historic England's National Heritage List for England (NHLE) Planning appeal decisions Local research Presence of other designations or features indicative of the natural beauty of the area