

Stowdes Estate Landscape Visual Appraisal

Landscape and Visual Planning Policy Context

(Public Rights of Way map - 1 km)

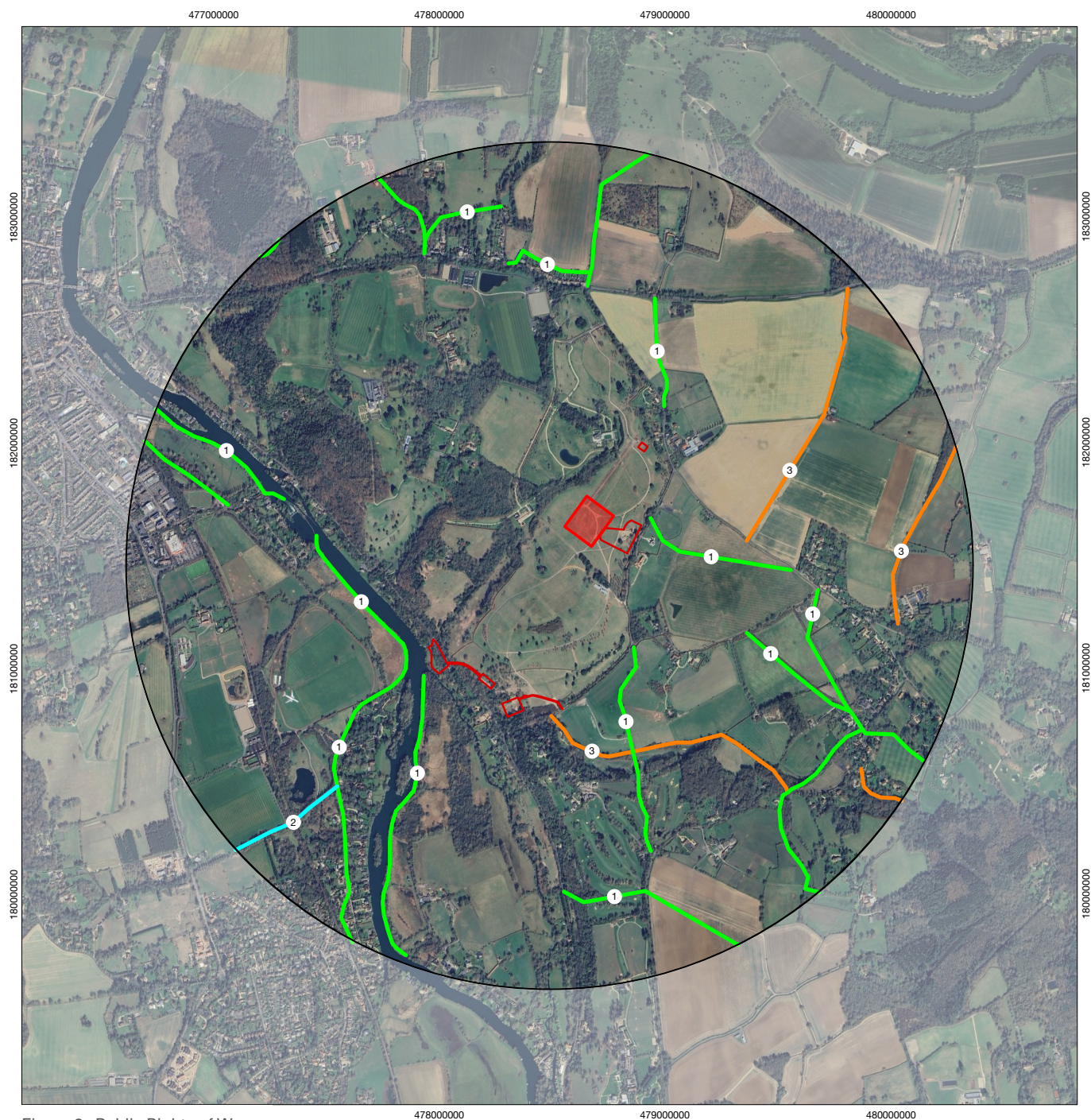
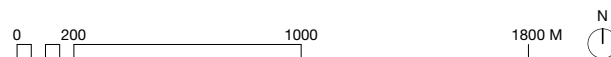


Figure 3 : Public Rights of Way



Drawing notes

- | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Application Site Boundary | ① Public Footpath | ③ Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) |
| 1km Buffer | ② Public Bridleway | |

Image data sources

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Landscape and Visual Planning Policy Context

(Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens map - 1km)

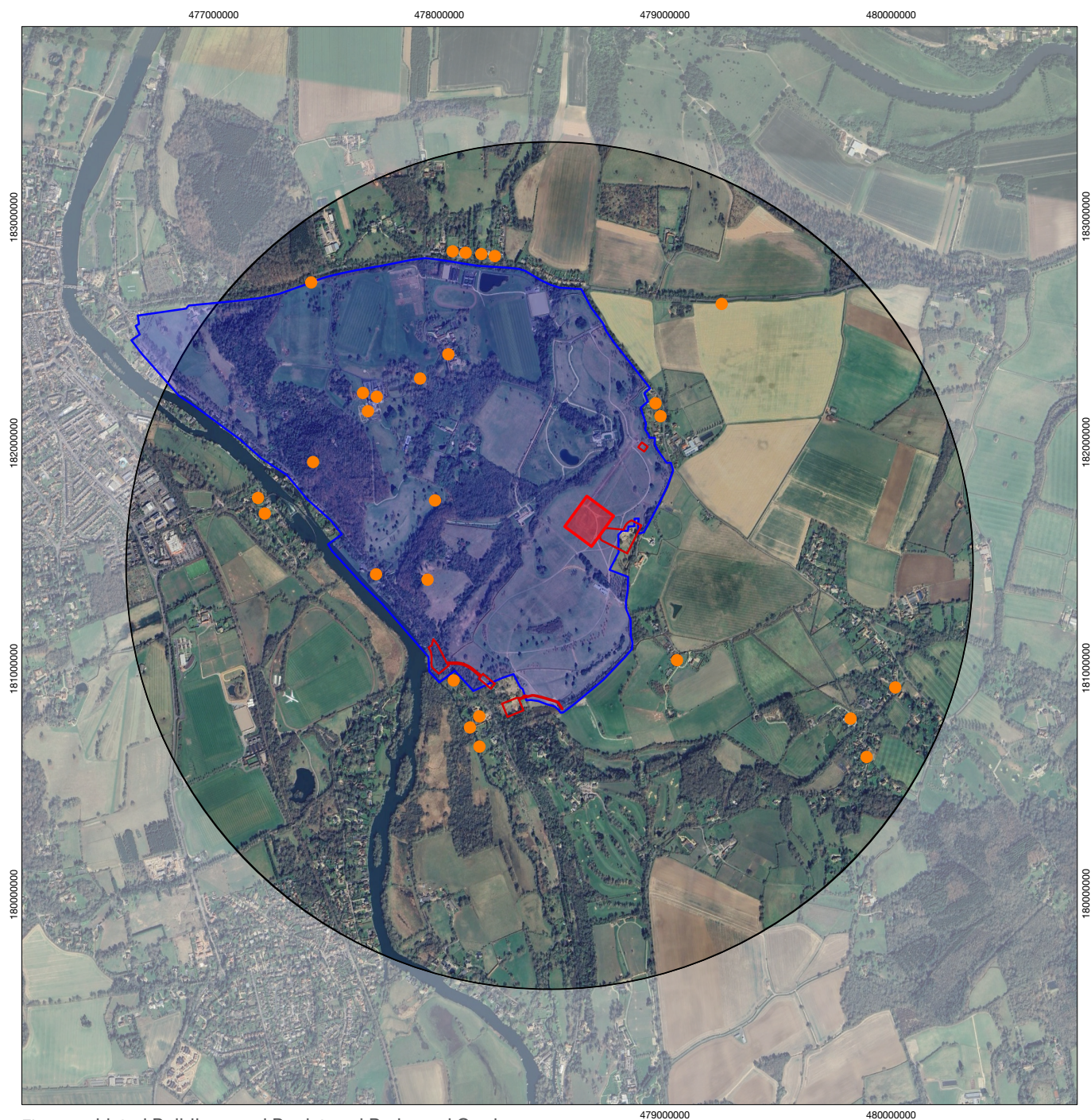


Figure 4 : Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens

Drawing notes

- | | |
|---|---|
| Application Site Boundary | ● Listed Buildings |
| 1km Buffer | Registered Parks and Gardens |

Image data sources

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Strowdes Estate Landscape Visual Appraisal

Landscape and Visual Planning Policy Context (Historic map)

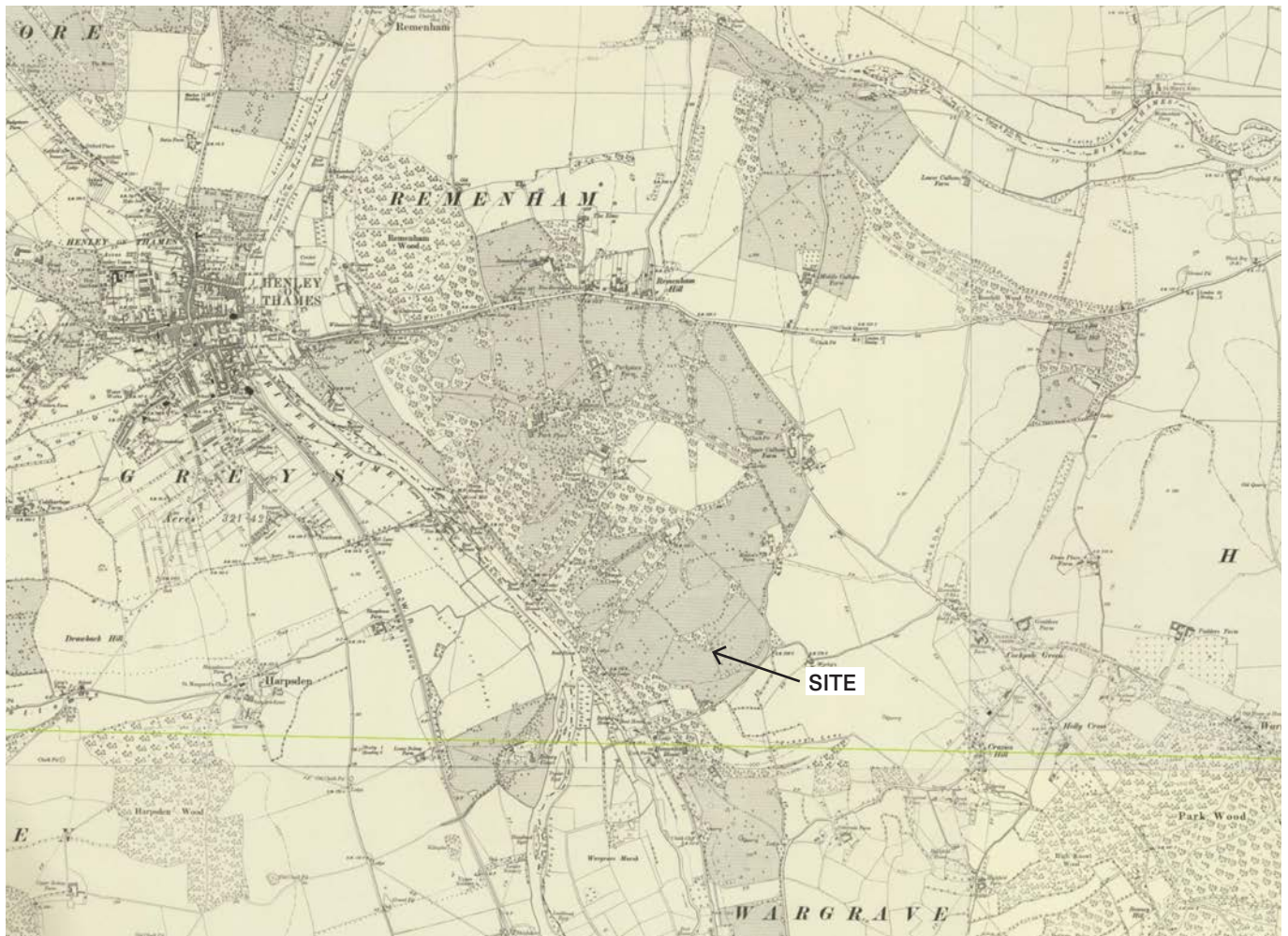


Figure 5: One-Inch England and Wales Revised New Series - Henley on Thames 1872-1914

Stowdes Estate Landscape Visual Appraisal

Landscape Appraisal - Character

National Character

4.1: The Character of England Map, divides the country into 159 distinct National Character Areas (NCAs), each representing a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, and cultural and economic activity that together define the character of England's natural environment.

4.2: Site lies within the updated NCA 110, **The Chilterns**. An extract of the NCA description is provided below:

- The chalk plateau is incised by parallel branching valleys gently shelving to the south-east into the London Basin. The large chalk aquifer is abstracted for water to supply London and its surrounds and also supports flows of springs, chalk streams and the River Thames.
- There are several chalk streams. Features associated with a history of modification include historic mills, watercress beds, culverts and habitat enhancements.
- The north-west-facing escarpment is an abrupt relief feature beside low-lying vales, breached notably by the Thames at the Goring Gap. The escarpment lowers northwards, terminating as distinct hills. The Chiltern ridge offers panoramic views.
- Within the Chilterns, views are enclosed within branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields. There are hidden, tranquil pockets along single track lanes and rights of way.
- A mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflects the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated. There are, however, not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys.
- Numerous parkland landscapes define large, historic estates. Designs by Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown are represented, and the houses, follies and wooded features provide local landmarks.

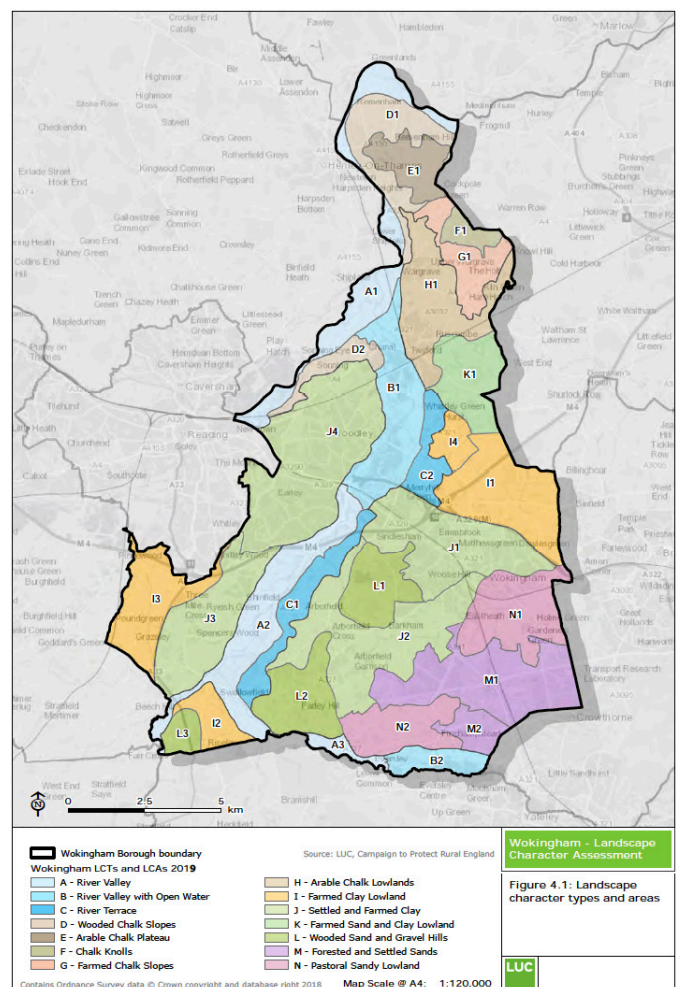


Figure 6: Wokingham Landscape Character Areas Map

Stowdes Estate Landscape Visual Appraisal

Landscape Appraisal - Character

Regional Character

4.3: The Wokingham Landscape Character Study, identifies different landscape character areas in the district. The Site falls within the "E Arable Chalk Plateau" character type.

The key characteristics of the D1 Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes are described as follows:

- Dramatic chalk slopes and cliffs rising sharply from valley floodplain of the River Thames from 40m to 100m AOD. The steep valley sides dominate the landscape, with incised coombe valleys creating areas with a more intimate character. Localised areas of gravels overlie the dominant underlying Chalk Formations.
- Heavily wooded character created by woodlands blanketing the steepest slopes. The woodland is mostly BAP priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and coniferous woodland blocks of varying shape. There are characteristic hanging valleys with BAP priority habitat beech and yew woodland. Many of the woods are designated as LWS and contain ancient woodland including Cannon Wood and Remenham Wood.
- Small pastoral fields in the west contrast with larger arable fields in the north. The arable fields tend to have no obvious boundaries or field divisions, while the pasture fields in the west are bounded by woodland.
- Areas of open grass pastures suggestive of 'downland' are predominantly grazed by sheep. Small areas of BAP priority habitat lowland calcareous grassland, designated as LWS (Happy Valley and Conways Bridge, Chalk Grassland Remenham, Grassland Slope Wargrave), found on the steepest valley slopes, support a number of restricted and rare grassland species.
- Formal parkland estates associated with large country houses on the chalk slopes overlooking the Thames e.g., Remenham Court (Grade II listed). Grazed pasture, lawns and parkland trees, including the Cedar of Lebanon avenues at Hennerton House, are distinctive features. The Grade II* Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden covers much of this area south of the A4130. Culham Court, Grade II* and associated parkland occupies rolling slopes south of the Thames with views to the estate from the other side of the Thames Valley.
- Small hamlets, clustered on the floodplain edge, exhibit a consistent vernacular character, typified by warm polychromatic Reading brick, flint, and black weatherboarding. This character is evident in hamlets such as Aston and Remenham, and in the listed buildings of the Wargrave Conservation Area.
- Rural lanes and tracks, frequently sunken, are enclosed by steep banks and hedges, and wind up the dry valleys e.g., Remenham Church Lane. The A321 runs along much of the western boundary, and introduces noise and movement into an otherwise rural area.
- Limited access by footpath except for the promoted route of the Chilterns Way which runs along the lower slopes connecting to the Thames Path before climbing to Remenham Hill.
- Sense of peacefulness due to the intimate scale, limited settlement and remoteness of the landscape with a strong experience of 'dark skies'.
- Glimpsed picturesque views across the Thames Valley to the Chilterns AONB which can open out dramatically in places.

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Landscape Appraisal - Character

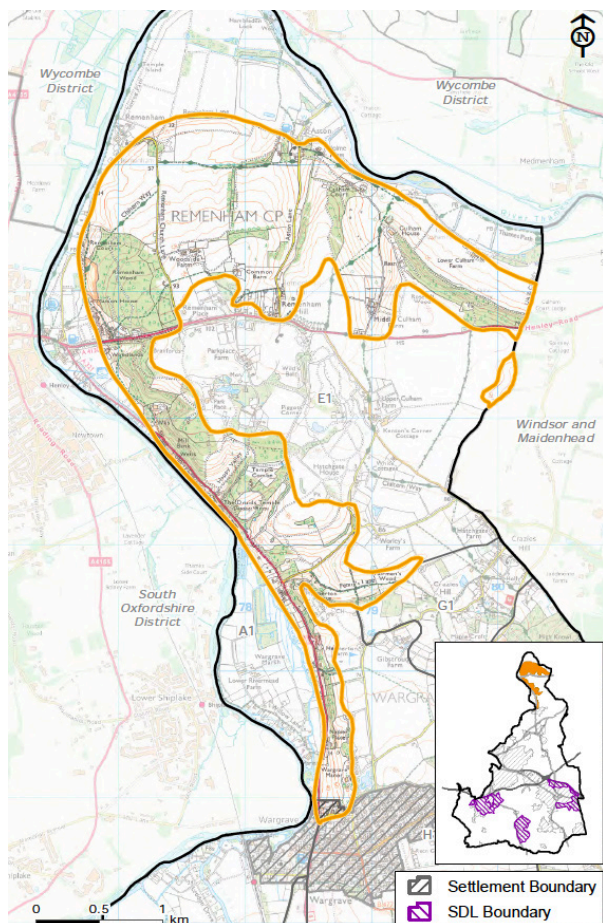


Figure 7: D1 Remenham Wooded Chalk Slope, Character Areas Map

The key characteristics of the E1 Remenham Arable Chalk Plateau are described as follows:

- Predominantly flat landform with upland 'plateau' character, underlain predominately by chalk with an area of Lambeth Group east of Park Place, clay and flint drifts cap much of the area.
- Large scale agricultural landscape intensively farmed for arable production, predominantly cereals and oilseed rape, due to well drained soils generally to the east of the LCA. Some horse grazing in subdivided fields closer to settlements.
- Large open fields with relatively few hedgerow trees and sporadic short, flailed, gappy hawthorn hedgerows.
- Restored hedgerows and shelterbelt planting along the rural lanes and within the Park Place estate reinforced by estate rail fencing.
- Generally unwooded, although shelterbelt planting and strips of both mixed and BAP priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland can be found along rural lanes and tracks with larger copses within Park Place estate.
- Valuable semi-natural habitats including Park Place School LWS designated for its open water, woodland and grassland and a spur of broadleaved woodland of the Temple Combe Wood LWS.
- Designed landscape at Park Place (Grade II* Registered Park and Garden) located along the plateau edge evokes a formal estate character and exploits views over the Thames to the Chilterns. New estates have recently been created to the east of Park Place at Hamilton and Strowdes with new country mansions set in a mature parkland setting.
- Largely unsettled characterised by scattered farmsteads and individual houses linked by narrow lanes. Remenham Hill is the only settlement and consists of a ribbon of large detached 19th and 20th century houses.
- Tranquil and remote rural area, with a strong experience of dark skies, due to its relative inaccessibility, particularly on the Park Place estate and the new estates at Hamilton and Strowdes. The area is crossed by small estate roads and limited public rights of way including the Chiltern Way. The busy A4130 introduces a corridor of movement, light, and noise across the north of the area.
- Strong sense of exposure due to lack of vertical element such as trees hedgerows or buildings, exaggerated by the wooded character of the adjoining DI: Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes.
- Clear views of the wooded hills of High Knoll and Bottom Boles (F1) provide distant enclosure.