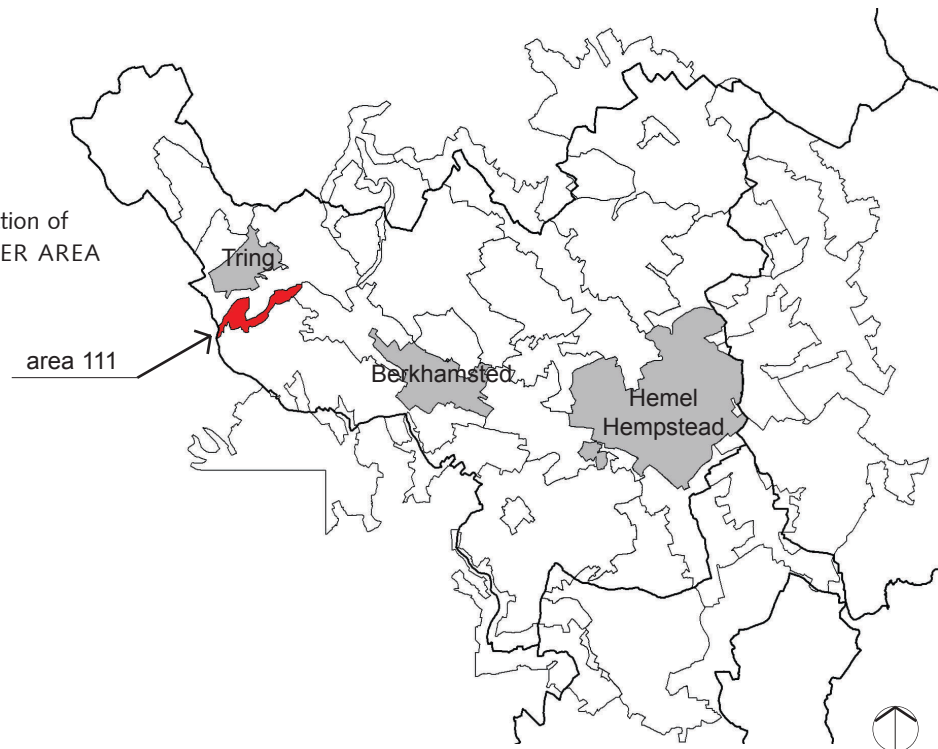


District Map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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100018935 2004

area 111



LOCATION

The section of the north west facing Chiltern escarpment south west of the Bulbourne valley up to the county boundary.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A prominent and dramatic section of the Chilterns scarp slope that provides a backdrop to Tring as seen from the north. The escarpment folds and twists along its length and forms a natural amphitheatre around Tring Park. The landform is further articulated by a mix of contrasting vegetation and land uses including woodland, species rich chalk downland and areas of invading hawthorn scrub. There are extensive and dramatic elevated views to the west over Tring Park and the Aylesbury Vale.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- prominent and clearly defined chalk scarp slope rising over 50m
- high proportion of woodland cover
- mixed chalk grassland and scrub to escarpment section of Tring Park
- limited vehicular access up the slope, but good pedestrian access
- fine panoramic views to the north west over the Aylesbury Vale
- ancient Icknield Way following the crest of scarp

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Ridgeway footbridge over the A41(T)
- Obelisk within Tring Park woods



- Scarp slopes within Tring Park (HCC Landscape Unit)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Typical of downland scarp slopes, the Tring Scarps are composed of clay-with-flints on the plateau edge with some slumping affecting the vegetation down-slope, especially at the heads of valleys, such as at Bishops Wood and High Spring. On the steeper slopes there are areas of exposed upper chalk under shallow well drained calcareous silty soils, (Andover 1 association). At the foot of the scarps there are some deeper soils.

Topography. The chalk scarp is a marked geomorphological feature, formed by Pleistocene ice erosion. The crest of the scarp marks the line of the Upper Chalk, while the middle and lower slopes (and the hollows of Tring Park below) are formed on Middle Chalk. There are marked local undulations within the scarp slope.

Degree of slope. Gradients are steep and typically vary between 1 in 3 and 1 in 5.

Altitude range. From 155m at the foot of the scarp to 225m at the crest near Wigginton.

Hydrology. There are no natural surface water features.

land cover and landuse. The slopes are mainly a combination of grassland and woodland with isolated arable to the base of the slopes. Areas of grazing are located between the extensive and linked wooded sections of the scarp above Tring which provide generally good enclosure. These woods are mainly managed by the Woodland Trust. Within Tring Park there are areas of unimproved chalk grassland within the parkland landscape, (see also Area 114).

Vegetation and wildlife. The semi-natural woodland on the scarp slopes is calcareous beech/ash. The main remaining site is Stubbings Wood, although this has been damaged by wind-throw. Tring Park Wood is essentially the same, but has been substantially modified by ornamental planting. Bishops Wood is also mainly calcareous beech/ash, but shades to more acidic oak woodland on the upper slope. Smaller copses are often dominated by hazel. Chalk grassland is the other principal habitat in the area, with important examples on the slopes in Tring Park which have strong links with the lower areas (see Area 114), and at Oddy Hill, east of the Park, on an old chalk pit. Other grasslands in the area have been agriculturally improved, or lost to arable.

The woodlands have been noted for scarce plants, notably several orchids, Wood Barley and Common Wintergreen at its only Hertfordshire locality, although the wind-damage may have caused the loss of some of these. The chalk grasslands at Tring Park and Oddy Hill are especially noted for their colonies of Chiltern Gentian and Chalk Eyebright.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

In terms of historical continuity and cultural pattern the character area is strong, with a pattern of chalk downland mixing with native woodland cover. At Tring Park this landscape is partially overlaid by more ornamental plantings. The early 18th century Obelisk stands boldly within the woods at the intersection of a number of rides. There are strong historical, visual and ecological links to Area 114 which contains the remainder of Tring Park.

Field Patterns. Much of the area falls within the parkland landscape of Tring Park. Remaining land is primarily pre 18th century organic in origin with most of these historic patterns still retained within medium sized fields. There is generally good enclosure by woodland and hedges.

Transport pattern. The ancient Icknield way follows the crest of the ridge giving fine views over Tring and the Aylesbury Vale to the south. Despite their imposing nature, the scarp slopes are climbed by a number of minor roads including; The Twist and Hastoe Lane. These lanes are steep and locally sunken. The A41(T) breaches the lower slopes of the scarp to the east where it is crossed in turn by an elegant award winning footbridge that carries the Ridgeway footpath.

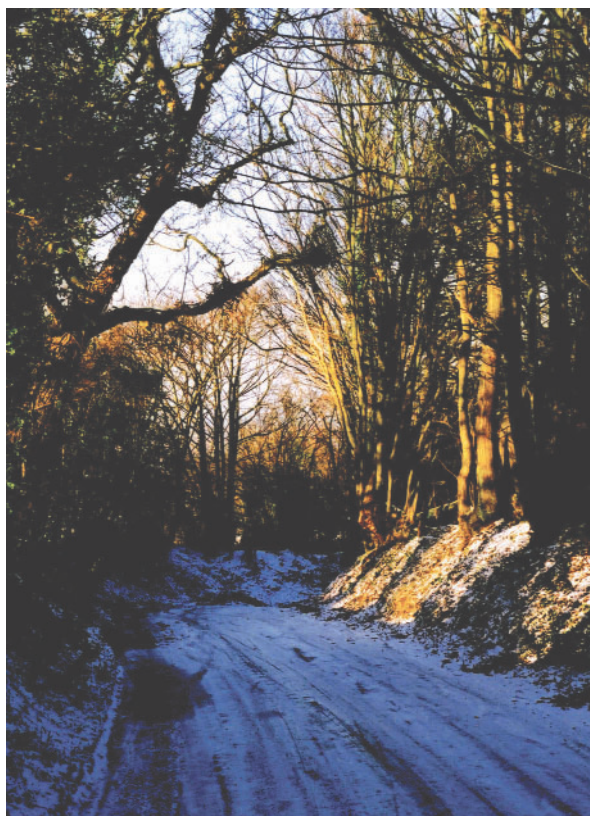
Settlements and built form. There is none apparent.

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature : SSSI notification

CMS: Management Plan for Tring Park

English Heritage: Registered Park and Garden citation



- The Twist, sunken lane (J.Billingsley)

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

As part of the elevated scarp slopes of the Chilterns the area is widely visible from the north. However, the folding character of the escarpment and the presence of woodland cover means there is partial enclosure within the area. The elevated situation provides some exhilarating prospects over the Vale of Aylesbury, however these are partially downgraded by the A41 corridor.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is an unusual landscape within the county. The localised situation within Tring Park where a historic parkland runs off the escarpment towards Tring Mansion in the Tring Gap Foothills is unique within the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

The main detractor in the views is the A41 bypass which severs the park within the Tring Gap Foothills, (Area 114). Tring town is generally visually contained by vegetation to the fringes.

ACCESSIBILITY

There are good pedestrian and bridleway links both along and up the escarpment. These include sections that follow the Icknield Way through the elevated section of Tring Park, over which there is wider public access. There are however limited facilities for those who arrive by car and then wish to explore the area on foot.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This and the associated Tring Gap Foothills are well regarded for their distinctiveness (B/C).

[Tring Park] "is surrounded by perhaps the most exquisite woods - largely of beech - in the whole county." HW Tompkins 1903.

"the views [from the slopes near Wigginton] are glorious...the plain stretches before you as far as the eye can reach...the only break in the patchwork of fields comes from the white chimneys of the Pitstone Cement works," E A Manders from "Little-known Wigginton - the village on a hill" Hertfordshire Countryside, Vol 22 No 101 Sept 1967.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI: Oddy Hill and Tring Park

SSSI: Tring Woodlands (including Grove and Stubbing Woods)

AONB

Registered Park and Garden: Tring Park (Grade 2)

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	insignificant
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	linked
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	good
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	low

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	prominent
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	rare

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
		STRENGTH OF CHARACTER		

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING**CHANGE: SAFEGUARD AND MANAGE**

- promote the survey, retention and restoration of the historic parkland features of Tring Park. Restoration of structures should be historically accurate
- support the existing management strategies for Tring Park by CMS
- support the appropriate management of woodland by The Woodland Trust, in order to maintain the visually significant hanging woodland cover to the scarp slopes. To conserve and where absent to re-establish a species rich ground flora. To encourage replanting with indigenous mixed broadleaves including beech, ash and cherry
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved chalk grassland wherever possible by; promoting traditional grazing patterns, scrub management and discouraging conversion to cropping or use of fertilizers etc. in order to maintain their nature conservation value
- develop a strategy for public access to the area. To include for interpretation of archaeology, historic routes and natural history, assimilation of car parking facilities and erosion control on the sensitive chalk landscapes
- promote the retention of the character of local minor roads by the management of hedgerows and sunken lanes up the scarp. Where part of a hedge has been damaged or removed it should be replanted with a mix of indigenous species unless the gap provides a opportunity for an important vista
- promote awareness and consideration of the setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering development and land use change proposals on sites adjacent to the AONB
- promote as strategy for the continued mitigation of the A41 on the area
- enhance the landscape by promoting the screening/removal of existing eyesores, (including those outside the area but visible from it), repairing damage and mitigating the effects of existing intrusive developments
- conserve and enhance the distinctive character of traditional settlements and individual buildings by promoting the conservation of important buildings and high standards of new building or alterations to existing properties, all with the consistent use of locally traditional materials and design to reflect the traditional character of the area
- Tring Park (A. Tempany)

