

Dacorum Borough Council
**Stage 2 Green Belt Review and
Landscape Appraisal**
Annex Report 4 – AONB
Assessment Pro-Formas

224026-00-4-05-AN4

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This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

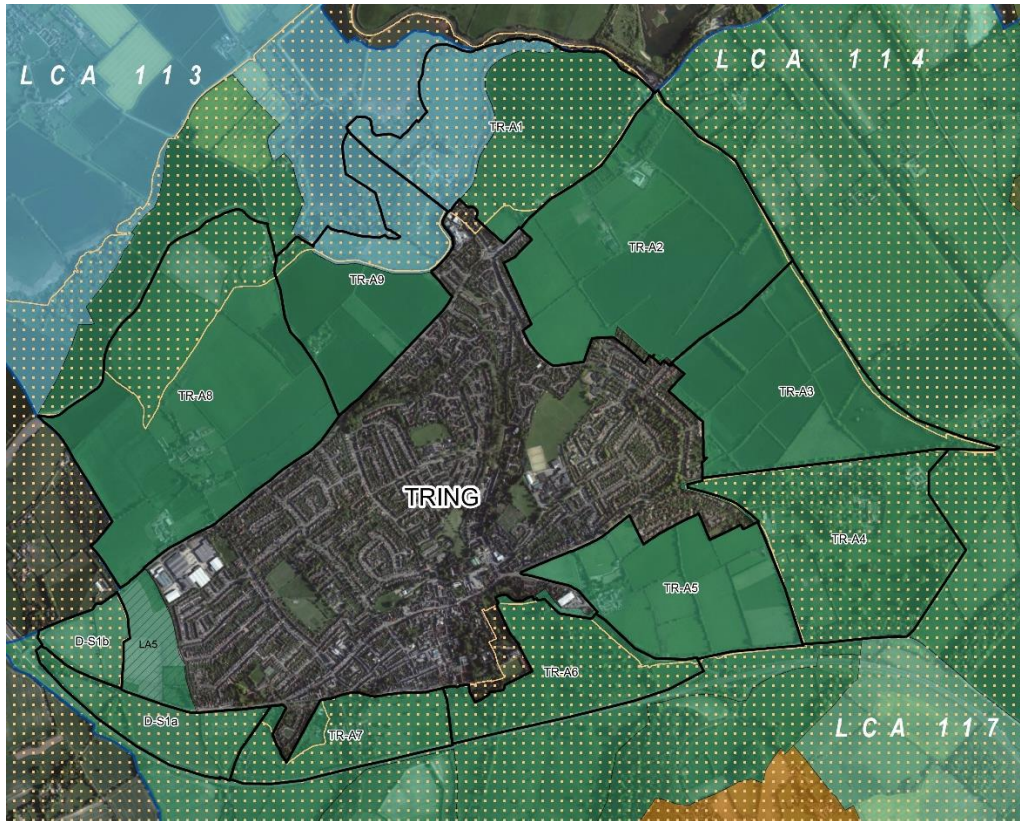
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Job number 244026-00




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Settlement: Tring



Legend

-  Dacorum District Boundary
-  AONB
-  Feature Defined Parcels

Source: ESRI, Digital Globe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstop, and the GIS User Community

Parcel cluster: D-S1b, TR-A1 – TR-A3; TR-A8 – TR-A9 (D-S1b and TR-A1 fall entirely within the AONB with TR-A8 and A9 partly within the AONB and TR-A2 and TR-A3 outside of but immediately adjacent to the AONB).

Representation of AONB Special Qualities:

Not directly represented. The parcels form part of the foothills to the scarp and have intervisibility with the prominent escarpment to the south and which forms the backdrop to the settlement.

Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:

The AONB Assessment identifies the parts of the cluster within the AONB as falling within the Scarp Foothills LCT.

Within the Dacorum LCA the cluster falls within area 114: Tring Gap Foothills, a transitional landscape between the elevated chalklands of the Chilterns and the expansive open Vale of Aylesbury to the north. The clusters are representative of a number of key characteristics identified in relation to this area in that they have intervisibility with the Chilterns escarpment, are often framed and contained by wooded scarps and are defined by mixed, open farmland. The clusters are also defined by a gently undulating foothills topography, which becomes more

pronounced at the interface with the scarp. The partially restored Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal is identified as a distinctive feature in the LCA and its predominantly vegetated corridor forms the northern boundary of parcels TR-A1, A8 and A9. D-S1b, in spite of its relatively close proximity to the A41 bypass and the junction with the B488, maintains an essentially rural character due to the prominent backdrop of the Chiltern scarp and associated strong intervisibility, the relative intactness of landscape structure/field boundary vegetation and the importance of this in providing a perceptible sense of separation to the existing settlement and adjacent land allocated for development.

A small part of the cluster (TR-A1 and TR-A9) falls within LCA 113: Tring Reservoirs. These areas partly represent the wider landscape character of this area due to the presence of the Grand Union Canal (Wendover Arm) and associated infrastructure.

Summary:

The intervisibility with the scarp is important in defining settlement setting. This and the more pronounced topographic distinction would be key constraints to development, however the lower lying and contained nature of eastern parcels (reduced sense of openness) in particular would render these areas less constrained as would their generally weak representation of AONB special qualities.

Parcel cluster: D-S1a, TR-A4 – TR-A7 (D-S1a, TR-A4, A6 and A7 fall entirely within the AONB with TR-A5 outside of but is immediately adjacent to the AONB).

Representation of AONB Special Qualities:

These clusters are closely related to the prominent scarp topography and are framed by hanging woodlands and chalk downland/grassland/scrub mosaics which partly extend into them. This is particularly notable in TR-A6, which covers the registered historic (Bridgeman) landscape and former Rothschild Estate at Tring Park (albeit now bisected by the A41 bypass, which forms the parcel boundary), where the scarp backdrop forms a prominent part of the southern half of the designed landscape. The eastern part of parcel D-S1a has a more settlement edge influenced character due to the presence of the allotments which form part of the western approach to Tring. However to the west, a more open and rural quality persists, albeit partly defined by neglected land management and by the corridor of the A41 bypass which severs the parcel from the Chiltern scarp, although the parcel maintains a degree of intervisibility with that.

Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:

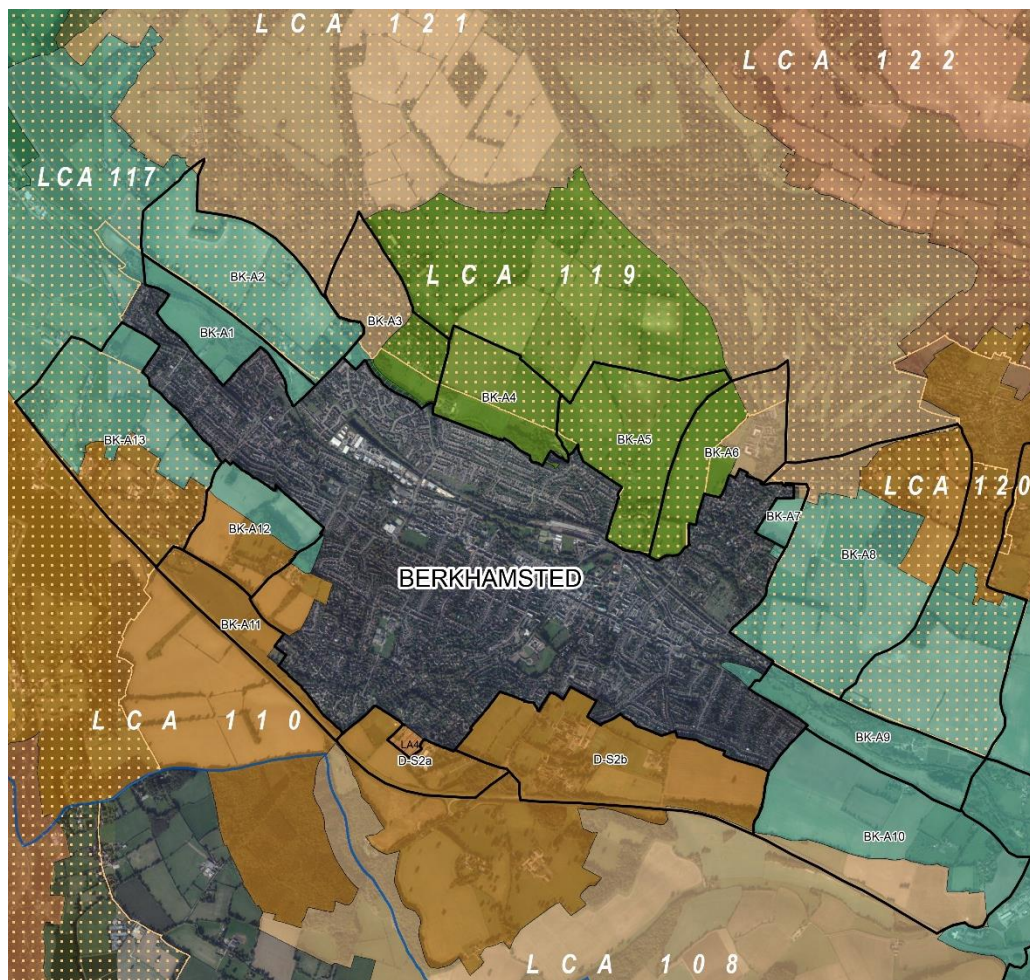
The AONB Assessment identifies the cluster as falling within the Scarp Foothills LCT.

Within the Dacorum LCA the parcel cluster is identified as falling within area 114: Tring Gap Foothills, a transitional landscape between the elevated chalklands of the Chilterns and the expansive open Vale of Aylesbury to the north. Relevant key characteristics of this area and which are represented in the cluster are the historic designed landscapes/parklands of Pendley Manor and Tring Park, associated mansions, estate architecture and grasslands, the views to the Chiltern Escarpment, the backdrop and level of framing and containment created by the escarpment and woodlands and the presence of arterial transport corridors such as the A41 bypass. Urban fringe influences identified within the key characteristics, such as sports pitches (and allotments) are also locally apparent in the parcel cluster.




Summary:

This cluster is more strongly representative of AONB special qualities than clusters TR-A1 – TR-A3; TR-A8 – TR-A9 (due to its closer proximity to and intervisibility with the scarp) and contain a number of key characteristics relevant to historic designed landscapes which are sensitive and form a significant constraint. However D-S1a has a perceptible degree of urban fringe influence.

Settlement: Berkhamsted



Legend

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Parcel cluster: BK-A1 – BK-A4; BK- A8 – BK-A9; BK-A11; BK-A12 – BK – A13

(BK-A1, BK-A9 and BK-A12 are outside of but directly adjacent to the AONB, BK-A2, BK-A5-8 are entirely covered by the AONB, whilst BK-A3, A4 and A13 are partly covered by the AONB).

Representation of AONB Special Qualities:

Cluster BK-A1-A3 is partly representative of AONB special qualities, particularly in relation to chalk valley landform and the chalk stream of the Bulbourne which cuts through BK-A1 and BK-A2 in an east west direction. The upper (farmed arable) slopes within parcel BK-A3 is also partly intervisible with Northchurch Common, a fine and extensive tract of heathland and regenerating woodland within the AONB and which forms part of the extensive and historic Ashridge Estate. This is partly mirrored with parcel BK-A8's relationship to Berkhamsted Common (although this is now partly overlaid by a golf course) with the hinterland formed by ancient hanging woodlands and the wood-pasture of Frithsden Beeches forming the edge of the prominent plateau on which Ashridge is sited. The urban fringe influences associated with the edge of Northchurch (Berkhamsted St Mary) and the West Coast Main Line (and associated infrastructure, catenaries and overhead lines) which follows the valley floor however detract from the perception of the special qualities in parcels BK-A1 and BK-A2.

Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:

The AONB Assessment identifies the cluster as falling within the Arterial Valleys LCT. Part of parcels BK-A12 and A13 also fall within the Level Plateau LCT.

Within the Dacorum Borough Landscape Character Assessment the cluster falls in the following landscape character areas: Area 117 Upper Bulbourne Valley and area 118 Lower Bulbourne Valley. Some of parcels BK-A11 to A13 also falls within LCA 110: Wigginton Plateau. Relevant key characteristics of these areas which are represented by the clusters are as follows:

Area 110: Wigginton Plateau: Relevant key characteristics include the gently undulating plateau landform and estates/parklands such as Ashlyns and Haresfoot, plus hedgerow and field oaks associated with the Rossway Estate. The landscape features and farmland associated with Rossway are partly represented in this cluster.

Area 117 Upper Bulbourne Valley: Relevant key characteristics include a narrow valley floor dominated by arterial transport routes, presence of canal infrastructure and architecture, unsettled valley slopes defined by large fields mainly under arable cultivation, and minor roads running up the valley slopes in sunken lanes with hedgebanks. The West Coast Mainline Railway and associated structure such as catenaries and bridges are distinctive. All of these features are represented within this site cluster.

Area 118 Lower Bulbourne Valley: The key characteristics for area 117 above also apply to area 118 and are essentially represented within this site cluster. The additional characteristics described by the LCA in relation to area 118 relate essentially to Hemel Hempstead and Boxmoor and as such do not apply here.

BK-A3, whilst partly covered by area 117, falls largely within area 121 Ashridge. Key characteristics of this area relevant to the parcel are semi natural woodlands, extensive open grasslands (fringes of Northchurch Common) and common lands/secondary woodland. Much of the Ashridge character area is defined by the historic landed estate of the same name, although this is essentially outside of the land parcel.

Summary:

The northernmost parts of parcels BK-A2, BK-A3 and BK-A8 have the strongest relationship to the special qualities of the AONB and associated characteristics (proximity to Ashridge and outlying settlements – note also the proximity of the northern part of parcel BK-A9 to the vernacular hamlet of Potten End). These represent the most constrained aspects of these parcels in these terms. Parcel BK-A9 is also representative/significantly constrained (intimate wooded

chalk stream of the Bulbourne). BK-A13, with the exception of localised areas of ‘horsiculture’ is also strongly representative of special qualities and characteristics of the AONB, specifically folded chalk landforms and a varied landscape mosaic created by the interplay of broadleaf hanging woodlands and farmland, particularly when seen from the rural lane network e.g. Hamberlins Lane. These qualities are also apparent to a degree from parcel BK-A12 from Durrants Lane (undulation, hanging woodland and a minor parkland), albeit affected by the perception of the rather blunt 1950s edge of Berkhamsted, plus fringe farmland and Egerton Rothesay School.

Parcel cluster: BK-A5, BK-A6

Representation of AONB Special Qualities:

The upper (farmed arable) slopes within parcel BK-A4 is also partly intervisible with Northchurch Common, a fine and extensive tract of heathland and regenerating woodland within the AONB and which forms part of the extensive and historic Ashridge Estate.

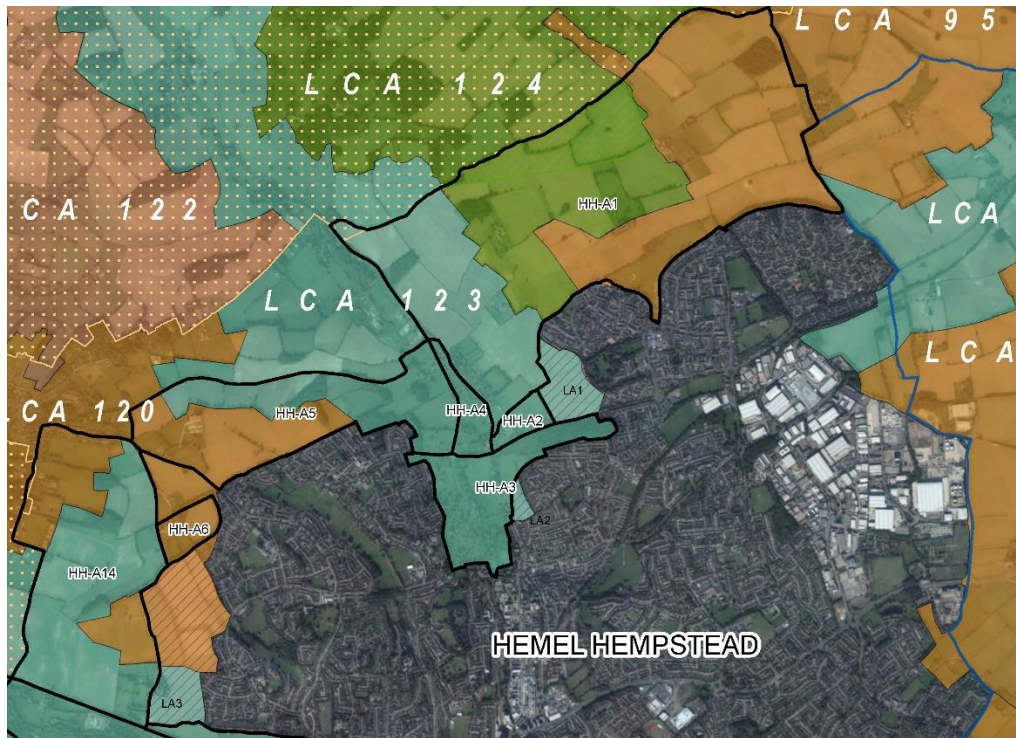
Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:


Dacorum Borough LCA: BK-A5-A6 fall within area 119 Berkhamsted Castle Farmland (with a small part of BK-A6 within LCA 121: Ashridge). Key characteristics of this area relevant to the parcels are the narrow enclosed valley with gently undulating landform, the presence of recreational uses towards Berkhamsted and prominent settlement fringes in places. Much of the Ashridge character area is defined by the historic landed estate of the same name, although this is essentially outside of the land parcel, aside from a small section of BK-A6.




Summary:

All of the parcels have some relationship to the special qualities of the AONB, due to topography their position at the edge of Northchurch Common and associated heathland, downland and regenerating woodland landscape, although also partly defined by urban fringe influences, which locally reduces sensitivity. Parcel BK-A5 is also partly defined by relict vernacular settlement at Castle Hill, near the site of the former Berkhamsted Place and outlying farms, with open views to the gently undulating open farmland within the AONB. All of these factors render the parcels sensitive/constrained in these term

Settlement: Hemel Hempstead



 **Legend**

-  Dacorum District Boundary
-  AONB
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Parcel clusters: HH-A1; HH-A5, HH-A14 (Parcel HH-A1 and A-14 are outside of but directly adjacent to the AONB, whilst parcel HH-A5 is outside of and within close proximity to the AONB, with a small linear field and one small section of field boundary in the parcel apparently within the AONB, although for the purposes of the assessment this parcel has been assessed as adjoining the AONB.

Representation of AONB Special Qualities:

Parcel HH-A1, whilst bordered by the AONB to the north, displays a relatively weak representation of the special qualities, predominantly by virtue of the simplicity and eroded character of the landscape pattern and the largely arable land use.

Parcel HH-A5 lies within 500m of the AONB and shares some elements in common with the special qualities of the AONB, specifically undulating chalk landforms. The relative intactness of landscape scale and pattern around nearby traditional settlements also reflect landscape characteristics found in many parts of the AONB.

Parcel HH-A14 is bordered by the AONB and represents a number of the special qualities (rural hedgebank lined lane network, markedly undulating chalk landforms overlaid with agricultural land use and occasional hanger woodland blocks). The parcel is adjoined to the east by shelterbelts which appear to have formed part of the original landscape mitigation for the New Town, although settlement perception is extremely slight.

Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:

The parcels fall just beyond the AONB boundary. As such, the AONB landscape classification does not apply.

Both parcels form part of Dacorum Borough landscape character area 123: High Gade Valley. Key characteristics of this area which are represented in the parcels are the steep valley slopes, the potential for long views along the valley, clustered areas of ancient settlement along the watercourse (the hamlet of Piccotts End falls within both parcels, with Piccotts End Mill and medieval cottages distinctive and the hamlets of Great Gaddesden and Water End lying directly north). Also the presence of sweeping arable fields and areas of floodplain and wetland vegetation. Former parklands such as Gadebridge Park are also distinctive features of the local landscape which are applicable to this parcel. The chalk valley landscape character, vernacular settlement and the steep landforms are to a degree representative of the special qualities of the AONB which lies to the north.

Parcel HH-A1 also falls partly within area 124 Gaddesden Row. Relevant key characteristics of this area which are represented in the land parcel are medium to large scale arable fields and discrete mixed woodlands creating varying skylines, juxtaposed with open plateau topography. The wider pattern of parkland and estate architecture (the Halsey Estate at Gaddesden Place) which defines the character area lies outwith this parcel which is more defined by fringe farmland.

The eastern and south-eastern parts of HH-A1 lie within area 95: Revel End Plateau. Key characteristics of this area which are represented in the parcel are arable farmland, discrete woodlands and urban fringe recreational uses (playing fields at Grove Hill).

Parcel HH-A5 also falls partly within area 120: Little Heath Uplands, relevant key characteristics of which (as represented in the land parcel) are the urban fringe influence, the presence of arable farming, isolated farms and pasture fields and the contained visual character created by landform, hedgerows and woodland blocks. The undulating chalk landform character and ridgetop woodlands however shares characteristics in common with aspects of the AONB's special qualities.

Parcel HH-A14 falls mostly within landscape character area 118: Lower Bulbourne Valley, with the top half of the parcel within area 120: Little Heath Uplands. Relevant key characteristics of area 118 represented in the parcel include unsettled valley slopes defined by large fields mainly under arable cultivation, and minor roads running up the valley slopes in sunken lanes with hedgebanks. Relevant characteristics of area 120 represented in the parcel are arable farming, isolated farms and contained views.

Summary:

The relatively intact, intricate landscape pattern in parcel HH-A5 allied to the undulating landform results in this parcel having the strongest relationship in terms of character to the AONB and associated special qualities, and is therefore most sensitive/constrained. This is similarly reflected in parcel HH-A14. Aspects of the High Gade Valley within both parcels also have some relationship with the AONB, although this area is also much defined by the urban fringe influences associated with the A41 Leighton Buzzard Road (note Roman villa site in valley floor here, which relates to ancient settlement patterns intrinsic to the character of the AONB). Parcel HH-A1 is defined largely by eroded arable fields and 'edge' influences such as the playing fields near Grovehill.

Parcel clusters: HH-A14

Representation of AONB Special Qualities:

This parcel is bordered by the AONB to its western boundary and has a number of characteristics which exhibit commonality with the AONB special qualities, including pronounced, rolling chalk ridge and valley landform and open ‘downland’ character albeit overlaid by mixed agriculture and cultivation.

Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:

The area lies outside the AONB, therefore the AONB landscape classification does not apply.

Within the Dacorum Borough Landscape Character Assessment, the relevant landscape character areas are area 118: Lower Bulbourne Valley and area 120: Little Heath Uplands.

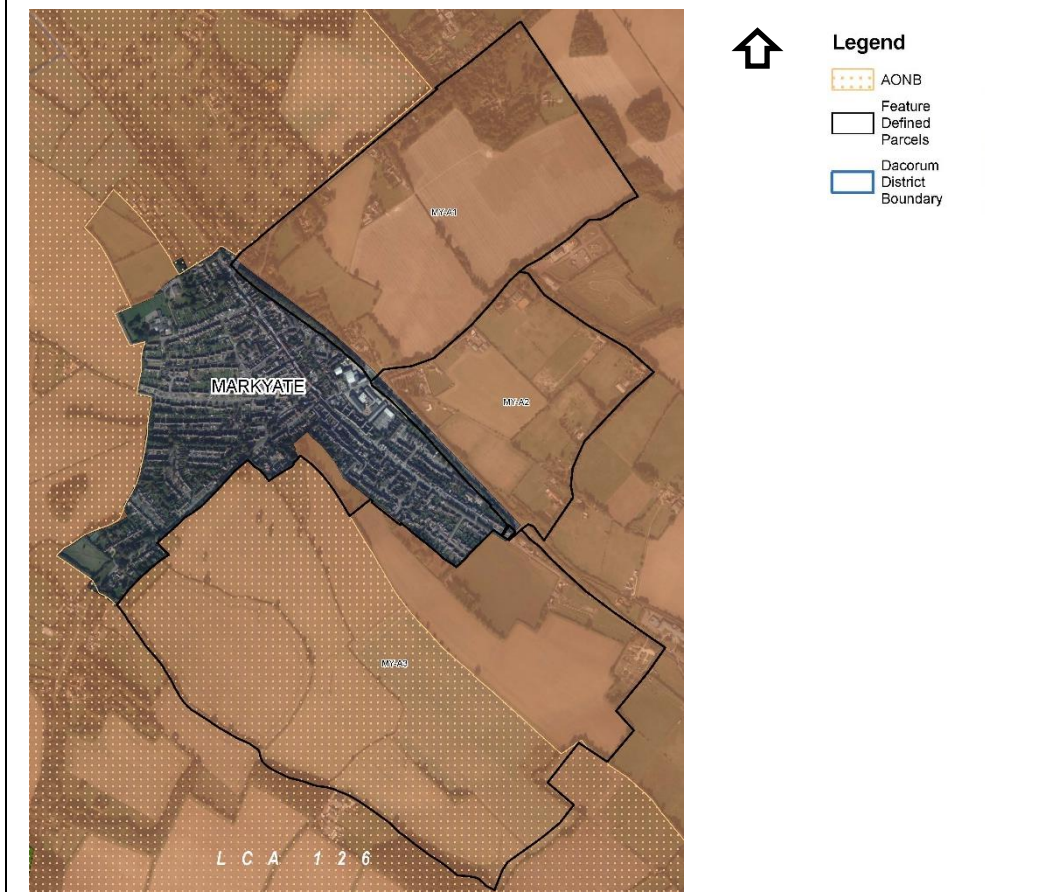
Key characteristics of area 118 applicable to this parcel are the narrow valley floor dominated by arterial transport routes, steeply sloping valley sides with views to major settlements, large arable fields to the valley slope and minor roads running up the valley slopes in sunken lanes with hedgebanks.

Key characteristics of area 120 applicable to this parcel are the arable farming, isolated pasture fields and contained views.

Summary:

The small scale, intact landscape of the upper parts of this area bear some relationship to characteristics within the AONB, as does the rolling chalk landform throughout, and the presence of hedgebank lined sunken lanes. These and the open visual character of the lower parts of the parcel (due to eroded landscape structure) and associated intervisibility with adjacent landscapes, render it sensitive and significantly constrained.

Settlement: Markyate



<p>Source: ESRI, Digital Globe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstop, and the GIS User Community</p>
<p>Parcel clusters: MY-A1</p>
<p>Representation of AONB Special Qualities:</p> <p>The open, rolling agricultural landscape, chalk valley landform and the sunken, hedgerow lined rural lane network which define this parcel are representative of a number of special qualities of the AONB, as is the well wooded character of the surrounding landscape (the historic parkland of Markyate Cell is adjacent to the parcel, within the AONB).</p>
<p>Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:</p> <p>The parcel lies just outside the AONB, hence the AONB landscape classification does not apply.</p> <p>Within the Dacorum Borough Landscape Character Assessment, the parcel is identified as falling within area 126: Markyate Ridges and Valleys. Key characteristics of this area which are represented within the parcel are gently undulating open arable land and the sunken lanes and hedgebanks on the valley slopes.</p>
<p>Summary:</p> <p>The parcel has some evidence of historic landscape character and therefore commonality with some of the qualities of the AONB. The open, rolling character and instances of intervisibility is important, as is its role in forming the setting to Markyate Cell Park (the house and extensive 16th/ 17th and 18th century park walls adjacent to the parcel are listed and the registered landscape park forms the setting to the same) and the fragmented parkland of the former Caddington Hall. It therefore forms the setting for historic landscape features which are intrinsic to the AONB special qualities. The parcel is therefore sensitive and significantly constrained.</p>
<p>Parcel clusters: MY-A3</p>
<p>Representation of AONB Special Qualities:</p> <p>The open, rolling agricultural landscape, chalk valley landform and the sunken, hedgerow lined rural lane network which define this parcel are representative of a number of special qualities of the AONB, as is the presence of the River Ver (chalk stream) which runs through the parcel. The parcel has much in common in terms of landscape pattern, texture and scale with the wider AONB in this area (presence of historic co-axial field systems, farm woodland blocks).</p>
<p>Relevant LCAs and representation of key landscape characteristics:</p> <p>The parcel is partly washed over by the AONB and falls within the Arterial Valleys landscape character type.</p> <p>Within the Dacorum Borough Landscape Character Assessment, the parcel is identified as falling within area 126: Markyate Ridges and Valleys. Key characteristics of this area which are represented in the parcel are the narrow ridges and valleys (the parcel forms part of one of the dry chalk glacial valleys radiating from the River Ver valley). Also the gently undulating</p>

open arable land, open views across surrounding valleys, and ribbon development adjacent to the A5/Ver Valley (20th century expansion/sprawl associated with the growth of the historic valley floor village of Markyate).

Summary:

The southern half of the parcel, which is washed over by the AONB, has the more intact character and much lighter perception of settlement influence and is therefore far more constrained/sensitive. The northern and eastern parts of the parcel are defined by a more apparent urban fringe influence associated with the modern edges of Markyate and the presence of the A5 corridor and bypass. These areas are therefore significantly less constrained.