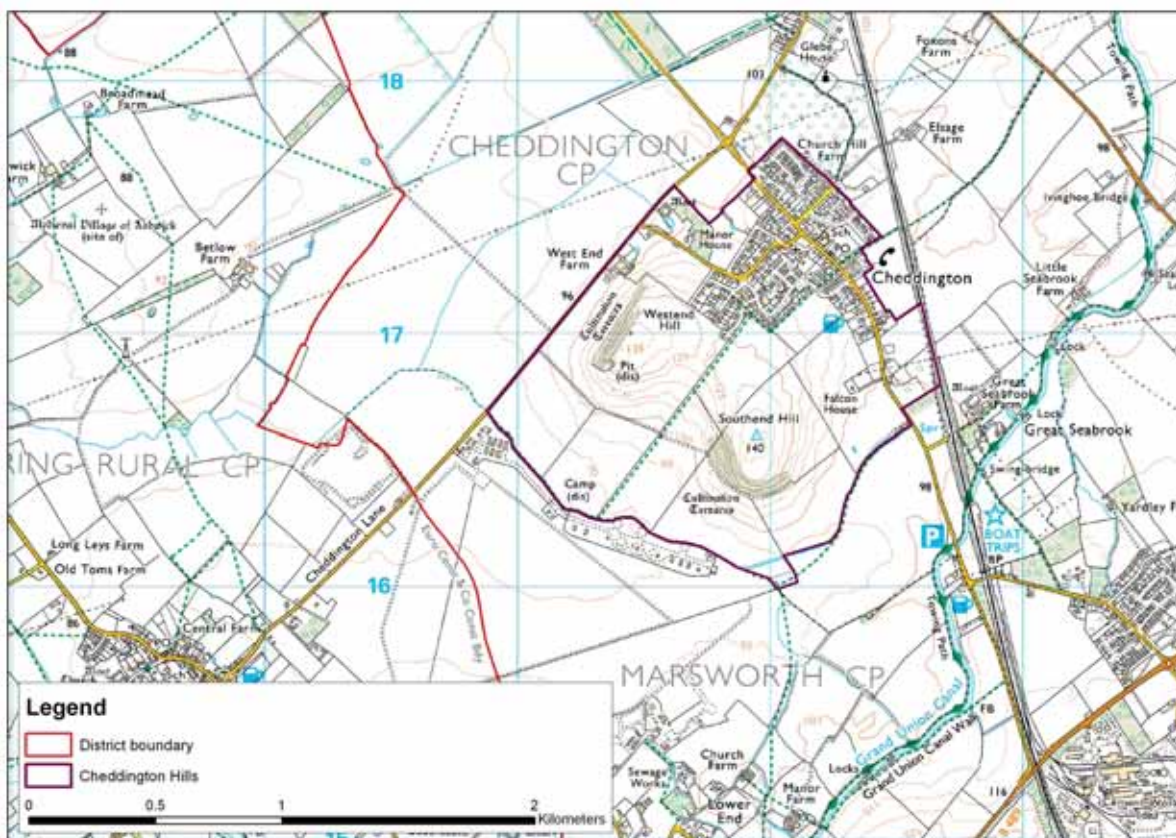


LCA 10.1 Cheddington Hills

Landscape Character Type: LCT 10 Chalk Foothills



LCA 10.1 Cheddington Hills (LCT 10)

Key Characteristics

- Distinctive chalk outliers
- Suburban development of Cheddington
- Arable land use
- Geometric pattern of parliamentary enclosures
- Large open fields
- Long distance views over Vale landscape

Distinctive Features

- Scrub woodland cover on the steeper slopes
- Historic earthworks (cultivation terraces)
- Manor House in woodland setting
- Prehistoric and Roman archaeology
- Dominance of arable habitat

Intrusive Elements

- Suburban development
- West coast mainline railway

Location The LCA covers the village of Cheddington and includes the two small hills to the southwest. The south western boundary extends to the edge of the disused airfield at Long Marston, whilst to the east the boundary follows in part the west coast mainline railway.

Landscape character The LCA comprises two prominent chalk outliers with suburban settlement on lower slopes to the east. Scrub woodland is present on the steeper slopes covering the earthworks of former cultivation terraces. The land use is predominantly arable. There are long distance views from vantage points over the surrounding flat vale landscape.

Geology Chalk outliers made up of chalk formation over Gault clay.

Topography The two hills are prominent known as Westend and Southend Hill. The highest points are at 140m AOD on Southend Hill and 130m AOD on Westend Hill. The eastern boundary of the LCA falls to just above 120m AOD whilst to the southwest the local stream falls from 95 to 85m AOD.

Hydrology No known watercourses originate from the hill, however, the southwest boundary follows the alignment of a local stream that drains westwards into the river Thames catchment. The Grand Union Canal runs past the southeast corner of the area and a small stream rises to the northeast of the LCA immediately to the east of the mainline railway.

Land use and settlement An arable landscape except for the smaller parcel of pastoral fields adjacent to the Manor House and the extensive suburban development at Cheddington.

Tree cover Minimal with the exception of a local pocket of mature woodland at the Manor House and scrub woodland on the steeper slopes of the former cultivation terraces.

Biodiversity The range of habitats is limited as Cheddington Hills is dominated by arable land, particularly in the south. Some improved grassland, a scattering of fragments of broadleaved and scrub woodland, and a few ponds are also present, largely in the north.

There are no designated sites within the LCA. As there are no watercourses the hedgerows alone provide connectivity between habitats.

Historic environment The two chalk hills are divided between an area of parliamentary enclosure on the north hill and 20th century enclosure on southern hill. There is a small parcel of pre 18th century enclosure on land around the Manor House northwest of Cheddington. The area is of archaeological interest as a focus for early settlement. An Iron Age hillfort lay on top of Southend Hill, although unfortunately little remains visible due to arable cultivation. There are also cultivation terraces, a cropmark site and Roman finds.

Designations

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Small Multivallate Hillfort on Southend Hill
Archaeological Notification Areas – 6 No.

LCA 10.1 Cheddington Hills (LCT 10)



Southend Hill from the Grand Union Canal.



Overgrown cultivation terraces seen from Cheddington Lane.

LCA 10.1 Cheddington Hills (LCT 10)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Moderate
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Some
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity	High
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Guidelines	Conserve and Restore
-------------------	-----------------------------

Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be moderate. The landform is a distinctive feature of the locality and is widely visible. The general pattern of elements is considered to be coherent however, the key visual detractor is the suburban development of Cheddington which extends up the lower slopes of the hills.

Cultural integrity is variable the landscape having lost some of its integrity through field amalgamation but with strong archaeological interest. Ecological integrity is weak due to small areas of habitats of District significance, and an absence of designated sites, despite good connectivity. Overall the functional integrity is coherent.

Sensitivity

The area has a distinctive character dominated by its equally distinctive landform. Overall the sense of place is considered to be moderate. The degree of visibility increases with elevation above the surrounding Vale landscape. Tree cover is intermittent. Overall the degree of sensitivity is considered to be high.



Suburban fringe of Cheddington seen from Cheddington Crossroads.

LCA 10.1 Cheddington Hills (LCT 10)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Restore

The landscape guidelines for Cheddington Hills are as follows:

- Conserve the open character of the hills.
- Prevent development from encroaching onto the lower slopes of the hills.
- Screen the suburban edge of Cheddington and the industrial development to the south.
- Conserve the historic value of the cultivation terraces.
- Maintain and improve condition of existing hedgerows on lower slopes by traditional cutting regimes and 'gapping up' of hedges.
- Maintain the extent and condition of calcareous, improved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible.
- Maintain connectivity of habitats.
- Identify key viewpoints from publicly accessible locations and promote the management and enhancement of these viewpoints.
- Encourage arable reversion or minimum cultivation to protect buried archaeological remains.