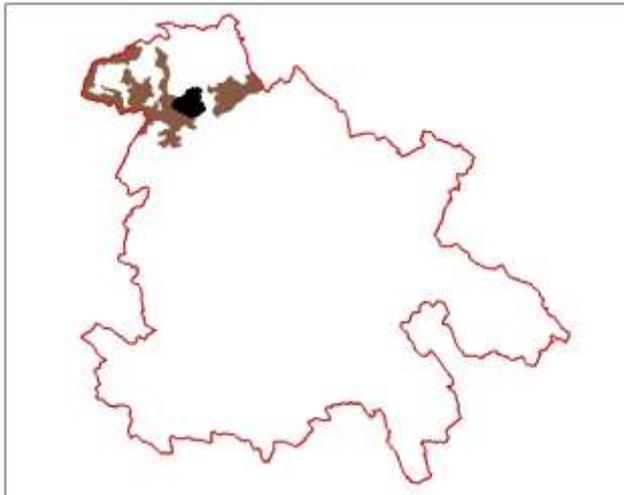


## LCA 2.4 Stowe Park Approaches

### Landscape Character Type: LCT 2 Incised Valleys



## LCA 2.4 Stowe Park Approaches (LCT 8)

### Key Characteristics

- Undulating landform generally falling from east to west
- Stowe Avenue and impressive views of the Corinthian Arch
- Mixed agricultural landscape
- Chackmore stream with strong tree and shrub vegetation
- Straight roads
- Parliamentary and pre-18<sup>th</sup> century fields

### Distinctive Features

- Stone lodge gateway buildings at the Buckingham end of the avenue
- Chackmore village
- Remnants of parkland around Castle Fields Farm
- Neutral grassland

### Intrusive Elements

- Traffic on minor roads
- Small sewage works
- Slight, very localised visual impact of northern edge of Buckingham

**Location** The area is situated between the northern edge of Buckingham and the Corinthian Arch gateway to Stowe.

**Landscape character** Forms the transition between the edge of Buckingham and the Stowe landscape gardens. The central and most impressive feature is the Stowe Avenue, which stretches one and a half miles from the northern edge of Buckingham to the 60ft high Corinthian Arch (outside the area) that acts as a focal point in views from Stowe House and from the avenue. This area has a grand impressive character with very strong historic associations.

The land either side of the Grand Avenue is rolling countryside in mixed farming. To the south the residential edge of Buckingham has an impact on the character whilst to the north there are views of elements of the designed parkland. It is therefore a varied and lively landscape with impressive views along the avenue.

**Geology** The underlying geology is limestone – Cornbrash close to Buckingham and Great Oolite to the west, overlain by till and glaciofluvial deposits.

**Topography** The landform is gently undulating and represents a transition between the higher plateau at Maids Moreton to the east and the lower Great Ouse valley to the west. The notable features are the ridge of higher ground in the southeast topped by Castle Fields Farm - an extension of the plateau.

**Hydrology** This area drains into the upper valley of the Great Ouse. The main stream through the area starts as two straight ditches following field boundaries to the south of Bycell Farm. It then meanders past Chackmore and under the Stowe Avenue almost unseen before entering a more distinct small valley that extends beyond the area.

**Land use and settlement** Land use is mixed with more arable farming around the Stowe Avenue and more pasture in the small stream valleys to the west and around Castle Fields Farm.

The historic village of Chackmore is located in the northern part of the area and features stone and brick houses with little recent development. There are several farms mostly on the very edges of the area. At Castle Fields the cluster of buildings and mature trees include two short avenues of Lombardy poplar leading up to them. There are also remnants of much older parkland tree planting in the fields around the farm.

The Corinthian Arch (design by Thomas Pitt) and the lodge gateways at the entrance to Buckingham contain residential accommodation.

There are several lanes through the area - the ones running up to the avenue are very straight and were realigned to allow for the creation of the Grand Avenue.

**Tree cover** There are no substantial woodlands although the trees around Castle Fields Farm create a small woodland. Stowe Avenue is a double row of trees with a hedge behind. The original avenue was laid out around 1775. The trees are of a variety of species including lime, horse chestnut, hornbeam and beech and oak and have been planted within the last 40 years. The avenue extends southwards within the urban area - here the

## LCA 2.4 Stowe Park Approaches (LCT 8)

trees are much older. The other notable tree cover is along the streamlines and particularly the stream to the south and east of Chackmore, which widens out in places to become a linear copse known as Chackmore Farm Spinney.

Tree cover over the rest of the area is variable. Around Castle Fields Farm there are two short avenues of Lombardy poplars and some ornamental trees. There are also groups of trees within fields and isolated, ageing stag headed oak trees. Hedgerow trees are generally oak and ash, with some fine oak in the fields west of the Grand Avenue.

**Biodiversity** The area comprises a mix of grassland and arable habitat. The grassland is largely improved although some areas of the broad habitat type of neutral grassland occur in the wide avenue, there are also some areas of unimproved grassland present centrally in the area.

Small fragments of the broad habitat type of broadleaved woodland are present, associated with the avenue, but also at Chackmore Farm Spinney which is the only CWS. Here there is an interesting mix of habitats as the woodland is closely associated with a stream and at the southern end a pond and damp ground. The spinney includes numerous woody species including mature yew and a diverse ground flora.

Connectivity between habitats is good due to the hedgerow system and streams.

**Historic environment** The area is covered by the Whittlewood Project which aims to investigate the area's landscape history and archaeological interest particularly in relation to medieval settlement patterns. A minor Roman road is thought to traverse the area and one Roman settlement is recorded. The most dominant historic landscape feature through the area is the Grand Avenue with its view of the Corinthian Arch. Castle Fields Farm has several veteran trees around it the remnants of former parkland. The hedgerow pattern primarily reflects pre18<sup>th</sup> century and parliamentary enclosure. The historic settlement of Chackmore is predominantly limestone and brick buildings and lies immediately to the east of the avenue.

### **Designations**

Conservation Areas at Stowe Avenue and Chackmore

EHRHP&G at Stowe Park

Archaeological Notification Areas – 3 No.

CWS – 1 No.

BNS – 2 No

## LCA 2.4 Stowe Park Approaches (LCT 8)



View towards Castle Fields Farm south of Chackmore.



Looking towards Chackmore from the south.

## LCA 2.4 Stowe Park Approaches (LCT 8)

### Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Strongly unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Strong

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

**Guidelines** **Conserve and Reinforce**

### Condition

This is considered to be a landscape in very good condition. The rolling landform is unified by the Stowe Avenue making this an important area of transition between Buckingham and the Stowe designed parkland. There are few detracting features and their impact is very localised. The cultural integrity is good with a good hedgerow pattern and interesting features such as the Corinthian Arch. Ecological integrity is moderate due to strong connectivity and moderate areas of habitats of District significance compared to other parts of the District. Functional integrity is strong.

### Sensitivity

Overall this is considered to be a moderately sensitive landscape. It has a distinct landscape character and a good sense of historic continuity even away from the Stowe Avenue the field pattern is strong and there are many features such as the historic village of Chackmore and the parkland trees around Castle Fields that give strong historic associations. The gently rolling landform and the intermittent tree cover combine to give the area a moderate level of visibility.



View down the Stowe Avenue to the Corinthian Arch.



View of the lodges at the Buckingham end of the Stowe Avenue.

## LCA 2.4 Stowe Park Approaches (LCT 8)

### Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Stowe Park Approaches are as follows:

- Conserve the historic field pattern and encourage hedgerow management to enable new hedgerow trees to establish.
- Encourage less intensive management adjacent to watercourses.
- Support initiatives to maintain the character of the Grand Avenue.
- Encourage management around Castle Fields Farm that retains and restores the parkland features including veteran trees.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of neutral grassland.



Strong line of trees and shrub adjacent to a stream, north of the A422.