

Section Four - Vision and Landscape Aims



© Roy Foreman

The Vale of Aylesbury from Quainton (Z5 from Z7)

Vision

- 93 Landscape is a dynamic and changing scene, whether by natural processes such as the tendency for ungrazed grassland to revert to scrub and woodland, or through human actions such as planting a woodland or ploughing a meadow. Furthermore, we must recognise that there are fashions in countryside which also change with time. For example, much of what we value today is a direct result of the bitterly opposed enclosures of the seventeenth century onwards. Yet enclosure must have resulted in a landscape totally abhorrent to most of the population of the time.
- 94 This Landscape Plan must aim to protect the landscape that people value today and to predict and provide for the landscape that they will value tomorrow, accepting that change has its place in the landscape. The challenge is to direct that change so as to enhance those elements which make the landscape special, rather than allowing it to dilute them.
- 95 Landscape protection, conservation and enhancement is a complex issue and although some landscapes have a high degree of protection others have none. There are now a wide range of initiatives and policies designed to

stop, limit or discourage further degradation and to enhance the whole landscape. It is therefore an ideal time to take stock of the Buckinghamshire landscape and define in simple terms a vision for the twenty-first century of

"A productive and sustainable rural landscape retaining its essential character, local distinctiveness and quality."

- 96 The achievement of such vision will be dependent upon wide recognition that:
- The landscape of Buckinghamshire will remain predominantly rural in nature;
 - Greater compatibility between the rural and urban landscapes will be encouraged;
 - The landscape will continue to be a dynamic and evolving resource;
 - Change will be seen as an opportunity to enhance rather than dilute local character and to remedy degraded landscapes;
 - Due weight will be given to the nature and importance of each landscape component whose cumulative effect produces local distinctiveness;

- f) Local distinctiveness will be reflected in the siting and design of appropriate new development and in new landscape elements;
- g) Economic and environmentally sustainable agriculture is practical everywhere facilitated by targeted grant schemes where necessary;
- h) Encouragement will be given to the production and consumption of traditional local produce;
- i) Characteristic field patterns and boundary features will be maintained and enhanced;
- j) Hedgerow regulations will be actively enforced and hedgerow planting will exceed hedgerow loss;
- k) Woodland resources will be actively and economically managed for long term sustainability, ecological vibrancy and the supply of produce for a local market;
- l) Woodland planting will continue with better targeting based on a strategic landscape approach;
- m) The landscape importance of water features will be recognised for their amenity and recreational value and provided for by land use development at all scales;
- n) Historically important landscapes and features will be recognised for their intrinsic value, and will be the subject of targeting of grant to ensure enhancement, interpretation and enjoyment of the public;
- o) Suburbanisation will be resisted with the intrusion of visible infrastructure (signs, lighting, transport networks, communications masts etc.) kept to a minimum;
- p) Built developments will harmonise with their landscape setting, respect local distinctiveness in settlement patterns and reflect local traditions in architecture using locally sourced materials wherever possible;
- q) Increased public understanding and direct practical involvement in landscape related issues will become more common place;

- r) Organisations and individuals will work together to achieve the vision.

Landscape Aims

97 Part 2 of the Landscape Plan sets out aims and action points which together provide a framework for working towards the vision. The framework must incorporate flexibility and enable action to be determined in the context of individual partners. Thus the action points, with a number of exceptions, are deliberately general in nature and do not relate to specific landscapes, nevertheless, all are intended to:

- Encourage adoption and retention of good practice
- Guide plan and programme making
- Foster new initiatives and partnerships
- Facilitate effective use of existing and new resources

98 The seven aims are as follows:

1. Conserve and manage existing landscape diversity to maintain landscape character and identity including the creation of new landscape features where appropriate.
2. Ensure landscape interests are a major consideration at all stages of the Town and Country planning process.
3. Promote the protection and enhancement of special landscapes.¹
4. Enhance degraded landscapes and reduce the impact of intrusive elements.
5. Promote wide public understanding and enjoyment of the landscape.
6. Promote a partnership approach to landscape conservation, enhancement and management.
7. Develop a geographical database of landscape information which enables landscape change to be monitored.

¹ "Special landscapes" refers to designated landscapes (see paras 21-27) and other landscapes with specific interest, for example historic landscape features, patterns and associations, which may or may not be afforded protection by other designations. See also Part 2.

Appendix A - English Heritage - Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

No.	Name	Grade
1	Stowe	I National Trust
2	Claydon House	II National Trust
3	Ascott House	II* National Trust
4	Mentmore Towers	II*
5	Wotton Underwood	II*
6	Waddesdon Manor	I National Trust
7	Ethrope Park	II
8	Hartwell House	II*
9	Halton House	II
10	Chequers	II*
11	Chenies Place (Woodside)	II*
12	Latimer Park	II
13	Shardeloes	II*
14	Hughenden	II National Trust
15	West Wycombe Park	I National Trust
16	Wycombe Abbey	II
17	Milton's Cottage	II
18	Denham Place	II
19	Bulstrode Park	II*
20	Hall Barn	II*
21	Hedsor House	II
22	Harleyford	II
23	Fawley Court and Temple Island	II*
24	Cliveden	I National Trust
25	Taplow Court	II
26	Berry Hill	II
27	Nashdom Abbey	II
28	Huntercombe Manor	II
29	Stoke Park	II
30	Stoke Poges Gardens of Remembrance	II
31	Langley Park	II Buckinghamshire County Council
32	Dropmore	II
33	Bradenham Manor	II
34	Missenden Abbey	II

NB Numbering relates to Map 1

Grade 1 - Parks and gardens which by reason of their historic layout, features and architectural ornaments considered together make them of exceptional interest

Grade II* - Parks and gardens which by reason of their historic layout, features of architectural

ornaments considered together make them not of exceptional interest nevertheless of great quality.

Grade II - Parks and gardens which by reason of their historic layout, features and architectural ornaments considered together make them of special interest

Appendix B - The Landscape of Buckinghamshire

- B1 A range of physical and human influences have created the Buckinghamshire landscape we see today. The rich and diverse landscape is the result of centuries of human influence. For instance, a typical view may contain a winding lane of medieval or possibly prehistoric origin, a medieval church tower, hedgerows which are probably 18th century but possibly much earlier, and hedgerow trees planted by a Victorian farmer. The survival of these features to the present day gives us an idea of not only the activity, desires and needs of their creators, but also those of subsequent inhabitants who, with or without intention, enabled their survival.
- B2 In the past, man's limited ability to adapt the environment led to a strong correlation between landscape features and physical features such as slope, soils and water. This is a major reason for the variety of distinctive landscapes in the county. The combinations and patterns of historic landscape features are very important to the identification of landscape character.
- B3 It is therefore important we understand how the landscape evolved. Past human influence through activities such as agriculture, transport and settlement are considered below along with current influences and trends. Further information on the development of the Buckinghamshire landscape is included in the 'Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan' (12).

Physical Influences on the Landscape

- B4 The wide variety of distinctive landscapes in Buckinghamshire show a strong relationship with their underlying geology and resulting soils. The geology can be grouped into four main areas associated with bands of rock lying diagonally across the county from south-west to north-east (as illustrated in Map 4).
- B5 In the north of the county in the Ouse valley and catchment area, the underlying rock is oolitic limestone and cornbrash. Although this is an extension of the Cotswold geology, much of it is overlain with boulder clay and interspersed with sand, marl and rubble, producing a wide variety of soils. The landscape comprises a shallow poorly defined valley and a meandering river in a narrow flood plain running through a gently undulating clay plateau.
- B6 To the south are the heavy clays. The Kimmeridge clays form the basis of the Vale of Aylesbury. The Oxford clay is overlain with glacial drift and boulder clay, producing low, rounded hills and broad vales. In some places it is overlain by the Portland, Purbeck beds or Greensand to form the hills of the Midvale Ridge and the free draining soils of the Greensand Ridge. Gault, a stiff calcareous clay forms a band along the base of the Chiltern scarp. The River Thames cutting through the Midvale Ridge is the only river. Elsewhere the clay is drained via numerous meandering streams and ditches.
- B7 Chalk forms the foundation of the south of the county. The Chiltern scarp, running from south-west to north-east, rises up to circa 180m above the Vale of Aylesbury. The plateau behind the scarp slopes gently towards the south east. More than a third is covered with plateau drift and clay-with-flints. Erosion has cut deeply into the plateau producing narrow, steep-sided valleys often with gradients of one in five. Rivers and streams are notably absent from most of the free draining chalk.
- B8 In the far south of the county on the Burnham Plateau and in the Thames and Colne valleys the chalk is covered by the Reading beds and London clays. These have been inextricably mixed with glacial and river gravels. The result is a very wide range of soils, gravels, sands and brickearths, in a landscape of shallow valleys and a gently sloping plateau.
- B9 Climate including glaciation has undoubtedly been a key influence in defining the county's landform and vegetation. Current climatic trends and their impact on the landscape are difficult to assess because of the time needed to ensure that there is a real change rather than just a short term variation. In landscape terms, monitoring changes in vegetation and habitats is the most valuable way of assessing any long term impact.



© Roy Foreman

Beech woodland is characteristic of the Chilterns

Human Influence on the landscape

Woodlands and Trees

- B10 The first vegetation to colonise after the last ice-age, was tundra. As the climate warmed woodland of hazel, oak, elm, lime and beech developed across the county. This natural, unmanaged woodland is known as “wild wood”. The first true farmers of around 4,000 years ago started to have a permanent impact on this wild landscape. By the end of the iron age about 2,000 years later it is possible that population growth and the need for fuel for smelting had resulted in no “wild wood” being left. By the Roman period all the indications are that the large tracts of woodland had been removed leaving a predominantly agricultural landscape with smaller areas of managed woodland.
- B11 Woodland throughout the subsequent centuries has been managed to provide for human needs, often in the form of coppice with standards. The Royal Hunting Forests of Bernwood, Whittlewood and Windsor were established during the medieval period as large tracts of land for the preservation of the beasts of the Chase, where the King alone might hunt. They appear to have been located in areas which had remained well wooded. They were not designed landscapes
- nor were they continuous woodland but they would have been well wooded with areas of rough grassland and arable farming. Whaddon Chase was a similar area granted to a valued subject to hunt. Map 5 shows the approximate location of medieval hunting forests and chase. Elsewhere there were common woods such as Penn Wood.
- B12 Woodland cover was probably at its lowest level after World War I. Since then acreage has increased with the help of Government support. Until recently, expansion was driven mainly by a desire to increase timber production to reduce dependency on imports. Environmental damage sometimes followed, with poorly designed forests marring the landscape or giving insufficient consideration to wildlife. The latest incentives aim to encourage multipurpose forestry ensuring landscape, wildlife, water, archaeological and recreational interests are all given full consideration. Commitment to the sustainable management of woodland and a steady expansion of tree cover is clearly established in national forestry policy (28).
- B13 Woodland is an important element in the landscape character of much of the county. Today it represents approximately 10% (7) of the land area, which is more than the English average of 7%. The woodland is not evenly distributed. In the north woodland is largely concentrated in the ancient Forests and Chases and the Brickhills. Substantial areas of woodland in the south are found in the Chilterns and the Burnham plateau.
- B14 The County Council's records show that approximately 46% of Buckinghamshire's woodland is on ancient woodland sites; that is sites that have been continuously wooded since 1600 AD or before. Over half has been continuously covered in native trees and shrubs and is known as ancient semi-natural woodland, representing approximately a quarter of all the woodland and well above the British average of 15%. The majority of this woodland is in the Chilterns or on the Burnham plateau.
- B15 Traditionally, woodlands were managed not only for a wide range of woodland products but also for other uses including hunting and wood pasture. Woodland products were used to meet local needs and sold further afield for example firewood to London and oak for shipbuilding. The Chilterns beechwoods were planted to provide timber for the furniture

industry. A well managed wood is a permanent and sustainable feature in the landscape and management practices such as coppicing tend to have associated animal and plant communities which create habitat diversity and greater visual interest.

- B16 In 1982 it was estimated that over half Buckinghamshire's woodlands were unmanaged. Since then a concerted effort has reduced this to approximately a third. The reasons for neglect are complex. Ways to combat them are addressed in the 'Woodland Management and Marketing Strategy for Buckinghamshire' (29).
- B17 Coniferous woodland cover in the county more than doubled between 1924 and 1980, coinciding with a significant reduction in the area of managed coppice. Surveys indicate that the majority of broad-leaved trees in woodland are of the older age classes, posing a serious threat to their long-term well being. This is of particular concern in the Chilterns where many beech woodlands were established over 100 years ago.
- B18 A comparison of aerial photographs from 1947 and 1985 for the old county area indicated over a 1% sample that isolated trees and clumps have declined by 50% since 1947 (7). The reduction can to some extent be explained by Dutch elm disease and changes in farming practice.
- B19 Dutch elm disease killed hundreds of thousands of mature elms in the 1970's. Since then small trees have regenerated from suckers, some have now reached 4-6 metres and are becoming important features in the landscape. Unfortunately at this size the trees are again becoming susceptible to the disease and many are dying.

- B20 Ash trees, which account for about 20% of all isolated trees, are in particularly poor health, most notably in north Buckinghamshire due to the increase in ash die-back. This seems to be related to changes from pastoral to arable farming, a series of dry summers and disease taking advantage of weakened trees.

Agricultural Practice

- B21 In 1998 (30) agriculture amounted to approximately 84% of the land use in the new Buckinghamshire based on agricultural census 1987-97, in comparison with a national average of circa 81%. The current landscape reflects different agricultural practices of the past and present. This includes field patterns and ridge and furrow and landscape features such as hedges, meadows, commons, orchards and ponds, with their associated wide diversity of flora and fauna.
- B22 The earliest fields were small, irregular and bounded by hedges, fences or occasionally walls. During the medieval period agriculture moved to the open or common field system, where large fields were divided up into furlongs and strips. It is doubtful that any pre-medieval fields survive. The end of the open field system and the beginning of the enclosure of land began in the mid 15th century, but was not complete until the Victorian period. Enclosure created a landscape of straight hedgerows, roads with broad grass verges and isolated farmsteads. Many of the hedges created still exist today. In the Chilterns change was more piecemeal, leaving more of the Anglo-Saxon landscape intact, including large areas of common land.



Ridge and furrow at Ford (Z7)

B23 Commons originated in the Middle Ages when many manors had an area of unenclosed land from which freeholders had the right to graze or take natural produce. Many have since been lost but a substantial number remain protected by registration under the Commons Registration Act of 1965. In Buckinghamshire there are 264 commons of over 1 hectare (2.5 acres) totalling 1058 hectares (2614 acres). The importance of commons in the landscape is for historic interest, accessibility and the visual interest often provided by a matrix of habitats. Good examples include Brill Common with its fine views, the woodlands of Burnham Beeches and the commons at Naphill and at Hawridge and Cholesbury.



Brill Windmill and Common (Z7)

© Buckinghamshire County Council

B24 Since World War II there has been a national trend towards maximising agricultural production. In north Buckinghamshire, fields have been ploughed for the first time since the late 15th century destroying most of the county's medieval ridge and furrow and many deserted settlement sites. New crops, large machines and pesticides have dramatically increased production but have an impact on the landscape. Hedgerows have been removed to enable large machines to work more efficiently. Wet meadows have been drained and ploughed. The application of herbicides and fertilisers also affects the species composition of woodlands, streams and road verges outside the agricultural area. The bright colour and texture of new crops such as oil seed rape may have a dramatic local impact on the landscape, albeit for a few months of the year.

B25 The majority of landscape features do not have any statutory protection. It is often only when they disappear that their importance to landscape character is fully appreciated. This has certainly been the case with the loss of elms to Dutch elm disease and the removal

of hedgerows for farming. Hedgerows are not only removed by grubbing up, more disappear due to inappropriate, or lack of management. The introduction of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 has brought protection to many hedgerows but there is no accompanying obligation to carry out appropriate management. More evidence of overcutting of hedgerows is seen in the county than lack of management.

B26 Recordable changes in the Buckinghamshire landscape include a 30% loss of hedgerows and a 64% reduction in farm ponds between 1947 and 1985. (Figures apply to the area of old Buckinghamshire). Verges in arable areas also showed a marked drop in the diversity of species. The 'Countryside Survey 1990' (31) demonstrated that nationally there was not only a reduction in landscape features but also a marked drop in quality in terms of the diversity of species. This was particularly notable in semi-improved grassland, arable fields, and woodland. The Survey brought national attention to the recordable decline in landscape features and the diversity of plant species.

B27 Changes in agriculture have also meant that orchards of cherry, plum and apple which were once common south of Aylesbury were reduced by over 90% between 1938 and 1994 and are continuing to disappear. The County Council's 'Survey of Orchards in Southern Buckinghamshire' (32) revealed a 39% loss in orchards between 1975 and 1995 in one of the areas previously most important for fruit production. The condition of those remaining orchards is generally poor.

B28 The picture of loss of landscape features and decline in the condition of those that remain is alarming in that it has a direct impact on the character and quality of the county's landscape. The effect of the loss or deterioration of landscape features is considered in more detail in Section 2 and by the Landscape Character Zone descriptions in Section 3.

B29 Since the early 1980's policies both nationally and through the European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), have been slowly adjusted to give a higher priority to environmental concerns. This has included both the tightening of regulations and a variety of compensation schemes, such as set-aside, which takes land out of productive use for a specified time.

B30 Other measures and MAFF conservation grants for farmers aim to conserve, enhance and restore landscape and wildlife value along with more diverse objectives to ensure uncontaminated water supplies and promote organic farming. For example, Countryside Stewardship initiated as a pilot scheme in 1991, encourages the restoration and conservation of landscape features along with the improvement of habitats and increased public access. In early 2000 there were circa 155 current schemes in the old county area, focusing on chalk and limestone grassland, lowland heath, waterside landscapes, hedgerows and historic parkland.

B31 The current trend (21) suggests European Union policy will continue towards a closer integration of environmental and agricultural policy which should benefit the county's landscape.

Transport and Infrastructure

B32 The best known prehistoric road in Buckinghamshire is the Icknield Way which follows the Chiltern scarp, the route of which can still be traced in sections of the B4009 and A4010. Many historic trackways survive as relic "holloways" particularly along the Chilterns scarp. We still use the straight Roman road of Akeman Street (A41) although little, apart from the alignment, remains. After the Romans the condition of roads declined until the late 18th century when the turnpike system was introduced to cope with increased demand for travel and transportation. The road system was improved vastly in the following century with the introduction of macadam.

B33 The Grand Union Canal was complete by 1800, connecting London with Birmingham, crossing the north-east of the county. Arms off the canal were built to Slough and several of the county's northern towns. The canal added new features to the landscape including locks, bridges and aqueducts. Much of the canal and associated features remain today. It is now seen as an asset to the landscape. The scale is unobtrusive and the associated vibrant features of brightly painted narrow boats, hump back bridges and locks add colour and vitality to the landscape.

B34 Victorian industrialisation was limited in Buckinghamshire but the railway came early. By 1914 nowhere was more than five miles from a railway station. More new features appeared in the landscape including cuttings,

embankments and bridges. Many of the railway lines in the north have closed and can now be traced as a line of scrubby vegetation. Those that remain have fairly limited impact, except in the sensitive, small valleys of the Chilterns. However, the electrification of the main line to London on the east of the county has made it more visually intrusive. Locally station car parks, lighting and noise impact on the countryside.



The Grand Union Canal at Marsworth (Z6)

© Roy Foreman

B35 The strategic need for good road borne transport links and the congestion caused by the increasing popularity of the car after 1945 led to the creation of the motorway network and the construction of bypasses. The M40, M4, and M25 motorways cross the county creating significant visual intrusion, often associated as much with elevated junctions, lighting, gantries and service areas as the road itself. Widening is likely to increase their landscape impact. Improvements to the rest of the road network have also been intrusive. Hedges and trees have been removed to allow for bypasses, road widening, signage and lighting. Traffic itself has a visual impact on the surrounding countryside. In the more rural areas minor road improvements, such as the use of concrete kerbs can have a significant urbanising effect.

B36 Road building is unlikely to continue at its recent rate. However some road development is likely to continue in the form of bypasses and measures to improve road safety.

B37 National grid pylon lines have a marked impact on the landscape, particularly when they cross the horizon. Their huge size dominates landform and natural features. The sagging cables depress the natural positive curves of landform and the uniformity of lines across the countryside reduces local distinctiveness. Large

concentrations of pylon lines occur to the north of Aylesbury, near Verney Junction and at New Denham, where lines converge at a switching stations. Once pylon lines are constructed there are limited opportunities to reduce their impact. The cables can be put underground but this is very expensive. Woodland planting, although not possible close to the lines, may in time be effective from particular viewpoints.

- B38 Other masts and towers have a localised impact or may be widely visible in the landscape. The tall mast on the Chiltern scarp near Stokenchurch is widely visible from the Vale of Aylesbury. Masts for mobile phones are proliferating. Although smaller they are intrusive due to their tendency to be located on high ground and often in the remotest rural areas. Water towers are also significant local features.

Mineral Extraction and Waste Management

- B39 Since very early times man has used the county's mineral resources. Early workings were small and most have little impact on the landscape today, others are more prominent for example the clay pits at Brill and the so called "flint mines" at Pitstone Hill. By the Victorian period clay extraction had increased to create large brick pits at Calvert and Newton Longville.
- B40 Extraction expanded in the 20th century so that until recently Buckinghamshire produced large volumes of clay, chalk, sand and gravel. Chalk working has now largely ceased, although an old excavation has recently been reactivated. Use of the brick clay is now limited to two small works in the Chilterns, producing high quality bricks. Sand and gravel workings occur in the valleys of the Thames and Colne and close to Beaconsfield. The workings have a significant impact in the sensitive landscape of the valley bottoms.
- B41 The large voids left by extraction are not dominant features in the landscape of the county as a whole but may be of local significance, e.g. the void at Pitstone is particularly intrusive in views from the Chiltern scarp. Some of the most visually degraded land is associated with past mineral working. This is supported by the Department of the Environment's 1993 'Derelict Land Survey' (33) which recorded

that 76% of the derelict land in the new county area was the result of former mineral workings.

- B42 Since 1947 around 2,130 hectares (5,300 acres) of land in the 'new' county area have been or are in the process of being worked for minerals. A further 570 hectares (1,400 acres) has permission for or is committed to mineral extraction. The majority is for sand and gravel works in south Buckinghamshire. In landscape terms mineral extraction will be of considerable future concern.



Mineral extraction

© Buckinghamshire County Council

- B43 Some voids have been restored by creating lakes for recreation and nature conservation benefit. The landscape impact varies from producing positive features in a landscape generally devoid of large water bodies, to stiff harsh features which sit uncomfortably in their surroundings. The large lakes with straight sides and little planting beside the Thames are poorly integrated into the surrounding landscape. In contrast the Eton Rowing Course although very linear includes an extensive landscape scheme.
- B44 Potentially landfill of voids enables sites to be restored to their original condition or to make an enhanced contribution to the landscape. Historically landfill sites were often restored to poor quality agricultural land which retains a disturbed character due to poor grass cover and ponding caused by poor drainage and settlement. Today the requirements of planning consents are more stringent and landfilling technology is more advanced leading to higher standards of restoration and the provision of measures to control landfill gases which may require residual infrastructure and buildings. In addition measures to control landfill gases require residual infrastructure and buildings.

Landfill operations are now carefully controlled to minimise intrusion in the countryside, however, some temporary impact is difficult to avoid.

- B45 It is estimated that voids available for landfill in the south-east of England will be exhausted by 2010. As suitable landfill sites become more scarce there are likely to be planning applications for incinerators which will also generate power. Waste management in whatever form it takes will continue to have implications for the landscape.

Settlement Pattern

- B46 Remnants of forts on high ground are the most conspicuous relics of man's prehistoric settlement. However, crop markings in the Ouse and Thames valleys suggest that these were the most inhabited areas but subsequent human activity has been greater so less evidence remains. Scatters of Roman occupational debris have been found in almost every parish in the county. By Domesday (1086) it is clear that the most densely populated parts of the county were north of the Chilterns scarp and in the Thames and Colne valleys. It is likely that all the towns and villages we see today were established by the end of the 11th century but the maximum number of inhabitants would have been about 500.
- B47 The population continued to grow until the late medieval period when over 60 villages were deserted, mostly in the northern half of the county. This is attributed to a combination of factors including the Black Death and enclosure. Evidence of these settlements can still be seen in the landscape. The next major change in population occurred during the Victorian period when the population almost doubled between 1801 and 1901. Towns in the south showed no real expansion until the establishment of commuter lines out of London in the 1890's. It was not until 1914 that more people lived in the south than the north of the county.
- B48 In January 1967 circa 8900 hectares (21,900 acres) in north Buckinghamshire adjacent to the M1 and the main London-Birmingham railway line were designated for the new city of Milton Keynes. The layout of the city was developed on a 1km grid which responds to variations in topography. Within the city the river Ouzel landscape has been conserved as a park and several archaeological sites have been preserved and interpreted. Over 20

million trees and shrubs have been planted creating a new and distinct urban landscape. Milton Keynes is now outside and just to the north of the administrative area of Buckinghamshire. The proximity of the city (which is amongst the fastest growing urban areas in the UK) with a population in the designated area of 172,500 in April 2000 will continue to exert recreational and other pressures on the landscape of Buckinghamshire.

- B49 A CPRE study (34) estimates that between 1945 and 1990 the urban area of Buckinghamshire doubled. Much of this growth was concentrated on Milton Keynes and other existing towns. Elsewhere the historic settlement pattern of small villages is under pressure but remains largely intact. The Structure Plan (1) identifies a commitment to major housing growth in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. The edges of these urban areas are already visually intrusive in the countryside. This impact will increase unless a new landscape structure is an integral part of the proposed expansion.

Archaeological Sites

- B50 Archaeological features are very important to our understanding and enjoyment of the landscape. They enliven the landform with interesting patterns and shapes which when interpreted give a strong visual link with man's past activity. The most visible archaeological features in Buckinghamshire are the prehistoric burial mounds and forts, particularly on the Chiltern scarp. In other locations in the north of the county deserted medieval villages, moats and fishponds are still visible along with one of the best preserved areas of ridge and furrow in England. Most moats and fishponds, the commonest medieval features after ridge and furrow, are today visible only as a dip in the ground.
- B51 Archaeological sites of national importance can be designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. In early 2000 there were 143 such monuments in Buckinghamshire. An ongoing review is likely to increase the number. There are also a large number of sites which are recorded as being of countywide or local importance. Although there are over 15,000 records on the County Sites and Monuments Record it is likely that many archaeological remains in the county lie completely unrecorded at present.

B52 Many sites, particularly those that are not scheduled, are threatened by development, new roads and pipelines and by agricultural and forestry operations. Where development proposals threaten unscheduled archaeological sites, government guidance in PPG16 (4) advises planning authorities to require that further information is gathered before decisions are made about their future. Earthwork survival is often good in permanent pasture and historic woodland. Of particular concern are ploughing of the former (which also has associated impacts on nature conservation interest) and the damage caused by mechanised forestry plant to the latter.

B53 In the last 20 years there has been increasing emphasis on not only conserving archaeological and early industrial features but also on providing an interpretation of their former use and importance. This is an effective way of increasing public understanding and enjoyment of the landscape and its history.

B54 The 'Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan' (12) provides a strategic framework for the management of the county's archaeological heritage and takes an holistic view of the historic environment.

Buildings in the Landscape

B55 Most early buildings were built of timber infilled with a variety of materials and have not survived. The earliest buildings found today tend to be the stone churches and the houses of the wealthy. Watermills and windmills were very common in the medieval landscape and a handful of windmills remain. Historic buildings are valuable features in the county's landscape. Many are of archaeological interest, such as the parkland monuments at Stowe and are covered by the provisions of PPGs 15 and 16 (4).

B56 Brick was used in a very limited way in the late medieval period. It was only in the 17th century that brick was used widely on its own. The use of other materials such as stone and flint remained localised reflecting difficulties in transportation. The variety of stone and other materials across the county has led to very distinctive variations in the character of buildings and hence villages.

B57 Increased trade and a rising population in the Georgian period led to building and rebuilding in the new Georgian style. The railway in the Victorian period brought



Brick and flint cottages at Turville (Z10)

completely new building materials. One of the first to appear was Welsh slate.

B58 The increasingly wide variety of materials and styles of building in the 20th century has tended to dilute local distinctiveness. New development in the landscape does not have to be a negative element, provided it is carefully designed to fit into the grain of the landscape and to reflect local identity. Small villages are particularly sensitive to new development which can quickly change their character. This is predominately by the introduction of new building styles and materials and the excessive infilling of internal village space with alien street layouts and clusters of "executive homes".

Historic Parks and Gardens

B59 During the medieval period in the 'old' Buckinghamshire there were over 60 deer parks where the Lord of the Manor held his own deer to hunt. Most have disappeared, however at Langley almost the whole of the park survives as part of a country park owned and managed by the County Council.

B60 By the 18th century the style of garden design reflected a growing awareness of natural beauty. Ambitious attempts were made to mould the landscape around country houses to create an idealised landscape. The landscape at Stowe records every change in taste and fashion through the 18th century, and was worked on by many of the great designers of the time. Today it is under the stewardship of the National Trust and widely regarded as one of the finest historic parks in Britain.

B61 Victorian expansion brought with it completely new buildings, styles and ideas. The most elaborate new buildings were the

Rothschild mansions at Waddesdon, Halton, Ascott and Mentmore. Their gardens reflect the reaction against the picturesque gardening movement to gardens of terraces, statues, clipped trees, urns and fountains.

- B62 The 20th century has seen the decline of the great country house and garden. A number have been preserved through the National Trust but some were demolished and others have been converted to new uses, often with only the shell of the house remaining intact.
- B63 The county has 34 entries in the English Heritage "Register of Historic Parks and Gardens". These sites have been assessed as being of special historic interest and an essential part of the nation's heritage (Appendix A). The register is sub-divided into grades. Four gardens in Buckinghamshire are of the highest grade which identifies them as being of exceptional interest. These are Cliveden, Stowe, Waddesdon and West Wycombe Park. Parks and gardens on the register are not subject to any new controls. The formulation of the register has however, ensured that the historic value of parks and gardens is considered when development is proposed. Today, one of the greatest threats to the survival of these landscapes is the lack of positive management to ensure that features such as avenues, lakes, tree groups and walls do not deteriorate, or are reinstated where lost. This is particularly the case where the core of a parkland area around a house continues to be managed as a garden, but the outer parkland is in intensive agricultural use. Several parklands have been converted to golf courses, completely changing their character.
- B64 The survival of the county's four grade 1 Registered Parks and Gardens is safeguarded by being in the stewardship of the National Trust.

Recreation

- B65 The impact of recreation on the landscape is primarily a 20th century phenomenon, although royal hunting forests and historic parks and gardens are considered a legacy of past recreational activity. Today it is recognised that increased leisure time and public awareness about health and fitness are expanding the demand for countryside recreation facilities.
- B66 In the countryside, taking in the atmosphere and admiring the view is the most popular

pastime, with walking the most popular activity. Although in Buckinghamshire, and as a nation, we have a good network of public rights of way, these are not accessible to everyone. There is therefore a demand for facilities that make the countryside accessible to all, including people in wheelchairs and children in pushchairs. It is also recognised that facilities such as toilets, car parks and refreshments are a prerequisite to many people's enjoyment of the countryside. They require careful design and siting to avoid urbanisation, dilution of local character and impacts on wildlife, habitats and visual amenity. Provision for access must be sustainable and address issues of visitor damage and erosion.



Informal countryside recreation

- B67 As we strive towards a more sustainable lifestyle there will be increased pressure to ensure recreational facilities are easily accessible by public transport or close to where people live, reducing the need to travel by car. This will tie in with objectives to improve the urban fringe and reduce the impact of urban development on the countryside. Facilities might also accommodate cycling and riding needs, which are not so well catered for by the rights of way network.
- B68 Other activities such as, riding, cycling, hang-gliding and mountain biking also make demands on the countryside along with more noisy and disruptive sports and activities that may not always require planning permission. Clear guidelines are required to enable these activities to be accommodated where most appropriate within the landscape.
- B69 The 1980s and 1990s have seen a dramatic increase in the demand for golf courses, reflecting a national trend. New golf courses tend to have a

sub-urbanising effect on the countryside, not so much due to the club houses and car parks, which are generally well screened, but more often due to the vivid colour of the manicured greens, sand bunkers and the planting of ornamental trees at the expense of traditional features.

- B70 Today many people are interested in being actively involved in the conservation and management of the countryside. At a national level the conservation holidays run by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and the National Trust are popular. Locally volunteer days organised by BTCV, BBOWT and others are well supported. The success of the Buckinghamshire Tree Warden Programme, which enables local volunteers to act as a contact point for tree information in their area and to initiate new planting schemes is another illustration.

Tourism

- B71 Tourism which can be defined as all visitor activity within an area, is a national industry and a significant employer in rural areas. Despite a lack of identity as a tourist destination and few major tourist attractions the industry provides 14,000 jobs in Buckinghamshire and contributes over £285million to the economy (11). Principle attractions are the countryside of the Chilterns and the Thames Valley and sites of historic interest, for example Waddesdon, Stowe and Cliveden, rather than major attractions such as theme parks or historic towns.
- B72 The county's bias towards rural tourism and the likely increase in this market will put further demands on the landscape, in terms of retaining its scenic beauty, whilst providing the facilities that visitors require, in a sustainable manner. The County Council has published the "Buckinghamshire Tourism Strategy and Action Plan" (11) which recognises key issues and opportunities for tourism in the County.