

BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT 2017



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A stylized illustration of a landscape. The background is a bright yellow-green gradient. In the middle ground, there is a dark green silhouette of a city skyline, featuring a prominent church with a tall spire and several arched windows. The foreground consists of rolling hills in shades of green and yellow-green. The text '01 INTRODUCTION' is written vertically in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, with '01' positioned to the left of 'INTRODUCTION' and both overlapping the hills and the city silhouette.

01 INTRODUCTION

The Bathscape area is a unique, inspiring landscape encompassing the City of Bath World Heritage Site and its setting. It lies at the southern edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and comprises natural features including woodland, grasslands, river corridors, common land, parkland and green spaces, as well as the Georgian city of Bath itself. An outstanding quality of Bath is the close relationship of the city with the surrounding landscape. The rich landscape legacy is reflected in the breadth, number and quantity of landscape and building designations within the area.

Purpose

The Bathscape Partnership was formed to help co-ordinate and promote greater care and enjoyment of the landscape. The Partnership has been awarded development phase funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Landscape Partnership Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to reconnect people and communities with Bath's unique landscape setting in ways that benefit people, communities and heritage. To achieve this, the scheme will work at a landscape and ecosystems scale to ensure the heritage is better managed and in better condition and also deliver a range of projects and activities that will encourage greater public use, enjoyment and appreciation of its heritage values.

The purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment is to provide a consistent approach to describing, classifying and analysing the landscape character across the rural parts of the Bathscape area surrounding Bath that can be used confidently in the work of the Partnership. Specifically it will form part of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan and is a key baseline resource against which to assess the outcomes of the programme and individual projects.

Scope

The assessment was carried out using up to date guidance and best practice and has been developed in consultation with the Bathscape Partnership Board. The site survey work was undertaken during April to July 2017 by Bath and North East Somerset Council's in house landscape architects. The methodology is given in Appendix 1. A sample survey form used for the site survey work is included in Appendix 2. As described, the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Character Assessment has been used as a basis for this assessment. A full review of existing assessments covering the Bathscape area is given in Appendix 2.

Each Landscape Character Area is described with reference to Geology, Hydrology and Landform, Biodiversity, Human Influences, Visual Significance, and Perceptual and Cultural Associations. A brief landscape evaluation has also been included for each character area covering the forces for change and the landscape condition. Some of the more widespread threats and opportunities include loss of skyline trees, intrusion of development, tree management issues, a reduction in the extent and diversity of wildflower meadows, management issues relating to hedgerows and tree lines such as along the R Avon,

threats to trees within the cityscape, perceived loss of tranquillity in rural areas around Bath and the perceived disconnect between Bath residents and the landscape surrounding Bath.

While the assessment has been carried out to inform the Bathscape project it will also be a useful resource to guide and inform land management decisions, planning policy formulation and development management decisions.

“The surface of this district is one continued succession of hills and vales, highly cultivated. It is watered by the river Avon, which, touching Freshford, crosses a peninsula of Wiltshire, and re-enters this hundred at Monkton-Combe. From the numerous hills and eminences, the most extensive as well as picturesque and romantic views open on every hand, and render it one of the most beautiful spots in this county, or perhaps any other county in the kingdom.”

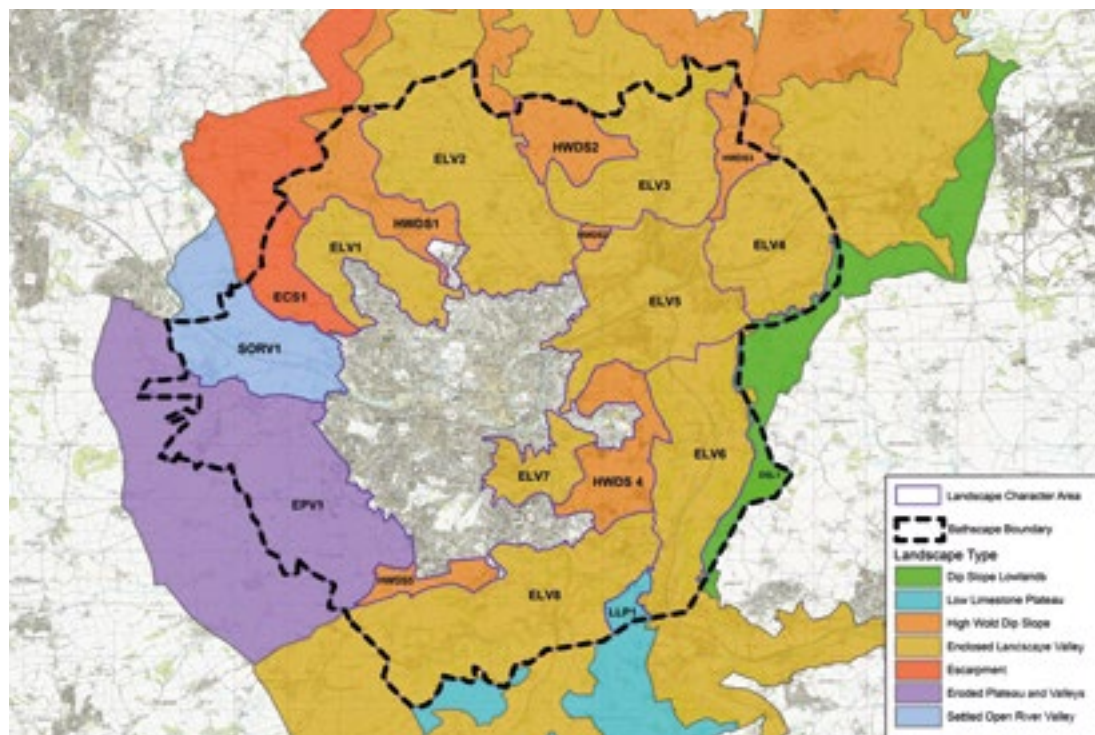
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02 THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Each Landscape Character Area is described in detail grouped under the relevant Landscape Type. Landscape Types are described in summary before the relevant character area descriptions.

Bathscape Character Areas and Landscape Types



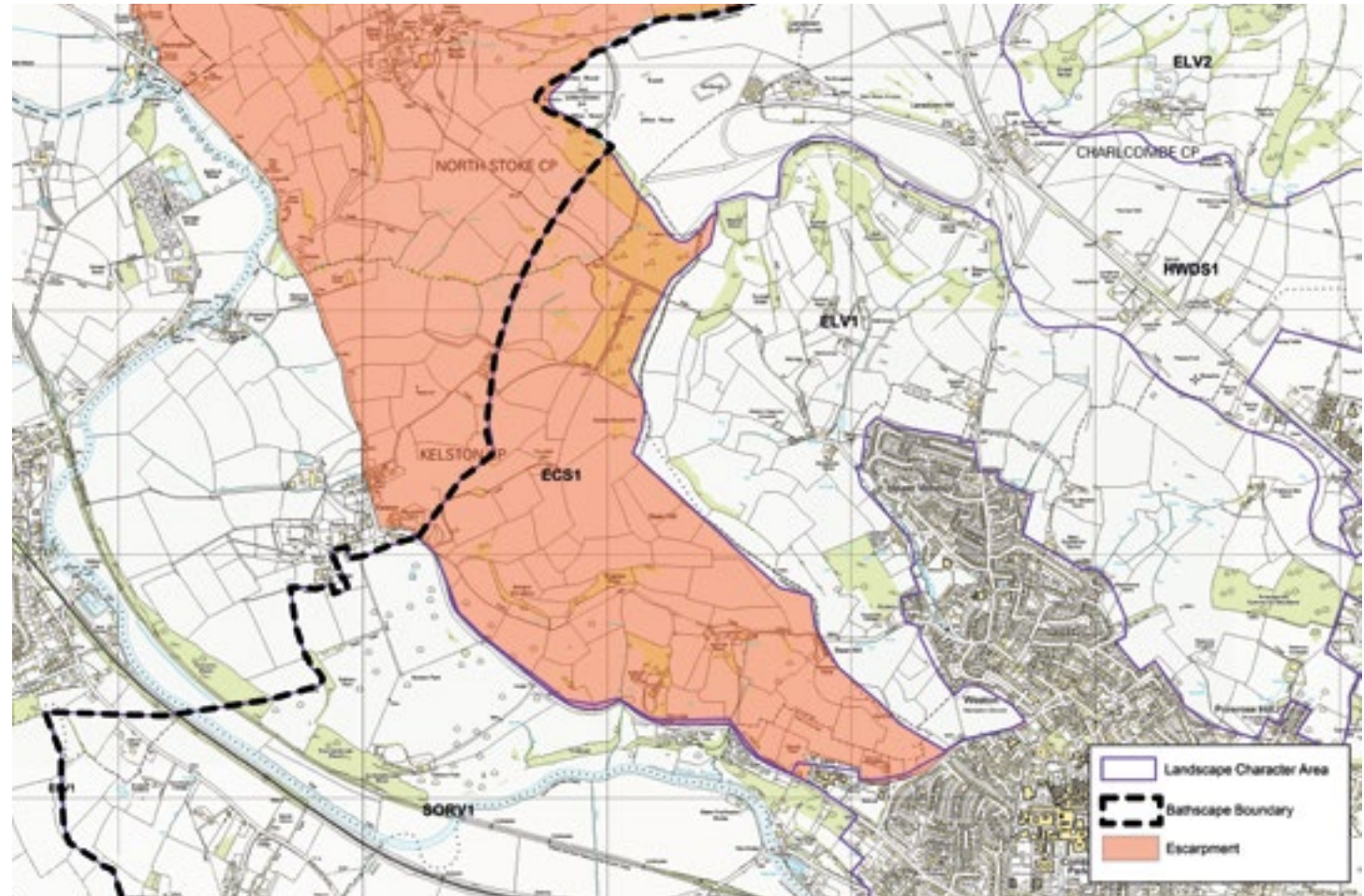
Landscape types are described by key characteristics only. For detailed landscape type descriptions within the Cotswold AONB refer to the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Character Assessment.

Table of Bathscape Landscape Types and Landscape Character Areas

Escarpment Landscape Type	HWDS2 Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill
ESC1 Dean Hill to Prospect Stile	HWDS3 Bannerdown and The Rocks
Enclosed Limestone Valley Landscape Type	HWDS4 Claverton and Bathampton Down
ELV1 Weston Valley	HWDS5 Sulis Plateau
ELV2 Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley	Dip Slope Lowlands Landscape Type
ELV3 Northend and St. Catherine's Valley	DSL1 Plateau Edges Around Monkton Farleigh
ELV4 Lower By Brook Valley	Low Limestone Plateau Landscape Type
ELV5 Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Tributary Confluences	LLP1 Limpley Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau
ELV6 Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley	Eroded Plateau and Valleys Landscape Type
ELV7 Perrymead and Widcombe	EPV1 Corston and Newton Brook Valleys
ELV8 Cam and Midford Brook Valley	Settled Open River Valley Landscape Type
High Wold Dip Slope	SORV1: River Avon Valley West
HWDS1 Lansdown Plateau	

2.1 BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE TYPE: ESCARPMENT

Escarpment Landscape Type



Key Characteristics

- Steep exposed and elevated west facing scarp slope, partly cloaked in semi-natural broadleaved woodland.
- Generally poor soils and steep sloping relief of the escarpment not suited to arable farming, and primarily used for pasture and woodland.
- Distinct sense of elevation with dramatic panoramic views over the Severn Vale to the Forest of Dean and beyond into Wales, the Malverns and the Shropshire Hills, over Bristol, Bath, Keynsham, Saltford and the wider countryside to the south including the Marlborough Downs to the south-east.
- Continuity of escarpment face interrupted by a series of major valleys and embayments.
- Gentler landform on lower slopes below spring line.
- Calcareous grasslands located on steeper scarp slopes.
- Rock outcrops often mark the site of former quarries, except within southern section of the escarpment.
- Woodlands, hedgerows, scrub and isolated trees give the impression of a well-treed landscape.

- Small scale settlement generally confined to lower, shallower slopes of the escarpment, in sheltered locations and adjacent to spring lines.
- Many large towns and cities located at varying distances from, or in the vicinity of the foot of the escarpment including the City of Bath located at the southern end and the City of Bristol to the north-west.
- Roads and tracks surrounded by dense vegetation and occupying holloways.

Character areas:

ESC1: Dean Hill to Prospect Stile

2.1.1 ESC1 DEAN HILL TO PROSPECT STILE

Location and Boundaries

The Dean Hill to Prospect Stile character area lies on the far north-western edge of the Bathscape area. It is located north of the River Avon; between the Cotswolds Way to the east, the A431 and the Bath city boundary to the south-west and south, and the Bathscape boundary to the west. Immediately to the east is the Weston Valley character area and to the north is Lansdown Plateau. To the south and south-west is the River Avon Valley West and Kelston Park character area.

Summary Landscape Character

- Distinctive landform of the southernmost end of the steep escarpment slope of the Cotswold Hills. The landform is much affected by the complex geology and with landslips resulting in west and south-west facing slopes which are highly undulating (both vertically down slope and horizontally along the contours) and is indented due to the effects of tributary streams.

10 2.1 Escarpment

ESC1: Dean Hill to Prospect Stile

- Harmonious pastoral landscape of the escarpment slopes with a patchwork of small, medium and occasional large-sized irregular shaped fields which are bounded by hedgerows which are often tall and thick with good hedgerow trees. Limited woodland and tree clumps. The character of the slope is more open towards the north and north-west and has a greater 'treed' feel towards the south and around the southern end of the escarpment.
- Expansive, panoramic west and south-west facing views are distinctive features. These are epitomised by those from Kelston Roundhill with its upstanding nature and distinctive conical shape affording 360° views. In general the views from the escarpment extend into Wales on a clear day and to the Mendips in the south and the Wiltshire Downs to the south-east. From both Prospect Stile and Dean Hill there are excellent views which show part of the City of Bath in its landscape context.
- Kelston Roundhill is an important local landmark with its highly distinctive conical shape rising up from the escarpment skyline and topped by a clump of trees, being visible for miles around including from many parts of Bath and the heart of Bristol.
- This is a tranquil area due to its attractive scarp slopes with a patchwork landscape of pasture and trees; expansive views over countryside and town; beautiful wildflower meadows; and the sounds of birds, particularly skylarks, and the wind in the trees, dominating over the occasional traffic noise from the road below.

ESC1 West from Prospect Stile



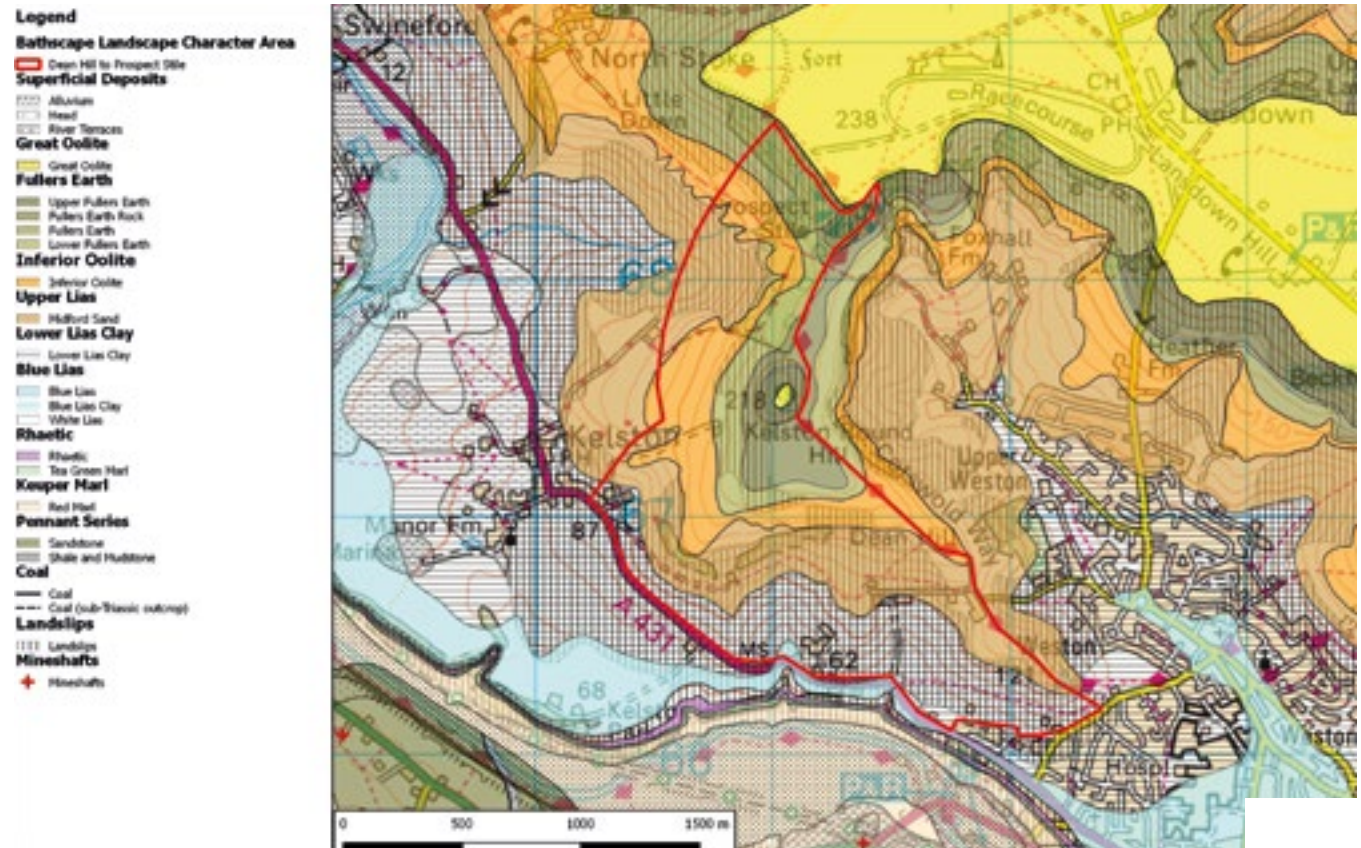
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The geology of this area is topped by Fullers Earth Rock from the Greater Oolite Group of the Middle Jurassic Period. Kelston Roundhill stands proud of the Fullers Earth Rock and comprises a cap of Greater Oolite Limestone below which is Upper Fullers Earth and then the Fullers Earth Rock. Below the Fullers Earth Rock is a layer of Lower Fullers Earth and then below that a harder layer of Inferior Oolite Series limestone followed by Midford Sand from the Upper Lias Group and finally Lower Lias Clay. In terms of surface geology, the Lower Lias Clay and Midford Sand form the substantial part of the lower and middle slope of the escarpment, the Inferior Oolite forms the upper middle slope and the Fullers Earth the upper slopes with Greater Oolite limestone capping Kelston Roundhill.

The alternating layers of harder Oolite limestones and softer clays and sands has given rise to significant landslips which are of key importance in shaping the landform of the Escarpment and Enclosed Limestone Valley landscape types. Landslips have occurred through a long period of geological time right up to the present. In this character area landslips have affected the

ESC1 Dean Hill to Prospect Stile – Geology



“From an elevated point of land in this parish, called North-Stoke brow [Prospect Stile], there is one of the most extensive, beautiful, and diversified prospects in this county. Hence the eye wanders with delight and astonishment over the cities of Bath and Bristol; a vast range of cultivated country, thrown into the finest inequalities of hills, valleys, and woods”

The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset

area as follows: below Prospect Stile; the Midford Sand belt just at the head of the tributary valley between Prospect Stile and Kelston Roundhill; all around the limestone cap of Kelston Roundhill in the Upper Fullers Earth band and then continuing downhill to the west and south of Kelston Roundhill in the Fullers Earth Rock and Lower Fullers Earth and over the whole of the south end of the escarpment between the Cotswolds Way and Kelston village.

These landslides and a process known as cambering where blocks of capping limestone break off and slip down-slope, are responsible for the distinctive highly undulating valley sides and escarpment. Undulations and bulges form both along the slope and down the slope where the softer clays and sands are squeezed out between and below the harder limestones; with steeper angles where the harder limestones are present usually at the top of the slope and then around halfway down where the Inferior Oolite limestone often forms bench-like outcrops.

In the Dean Hill to Prospect Stile character area all these effects are present. In addition tributary streams of the River Avon form more marked indentations in the escarpment slope, in particular running down to the west from below Prospect Stile.

Overall the escarpment is moderate to steeply sloping throughout with limited areas of shallower slopes in an uneven distribution over the slope. The highest points are at Prospect Stile (238m) and Kelston Roundhill (218m) with the general top of the escarpment at around 170m decreasing towards Dean Hill down to 120m.

Kelston Roundhill forms a major landmark on the skyline where it forms a distinctive conical hill topped by a clump of trees. Its distinctive outline is visible for miles around including from many parts of the cities of Bath and Bristol.

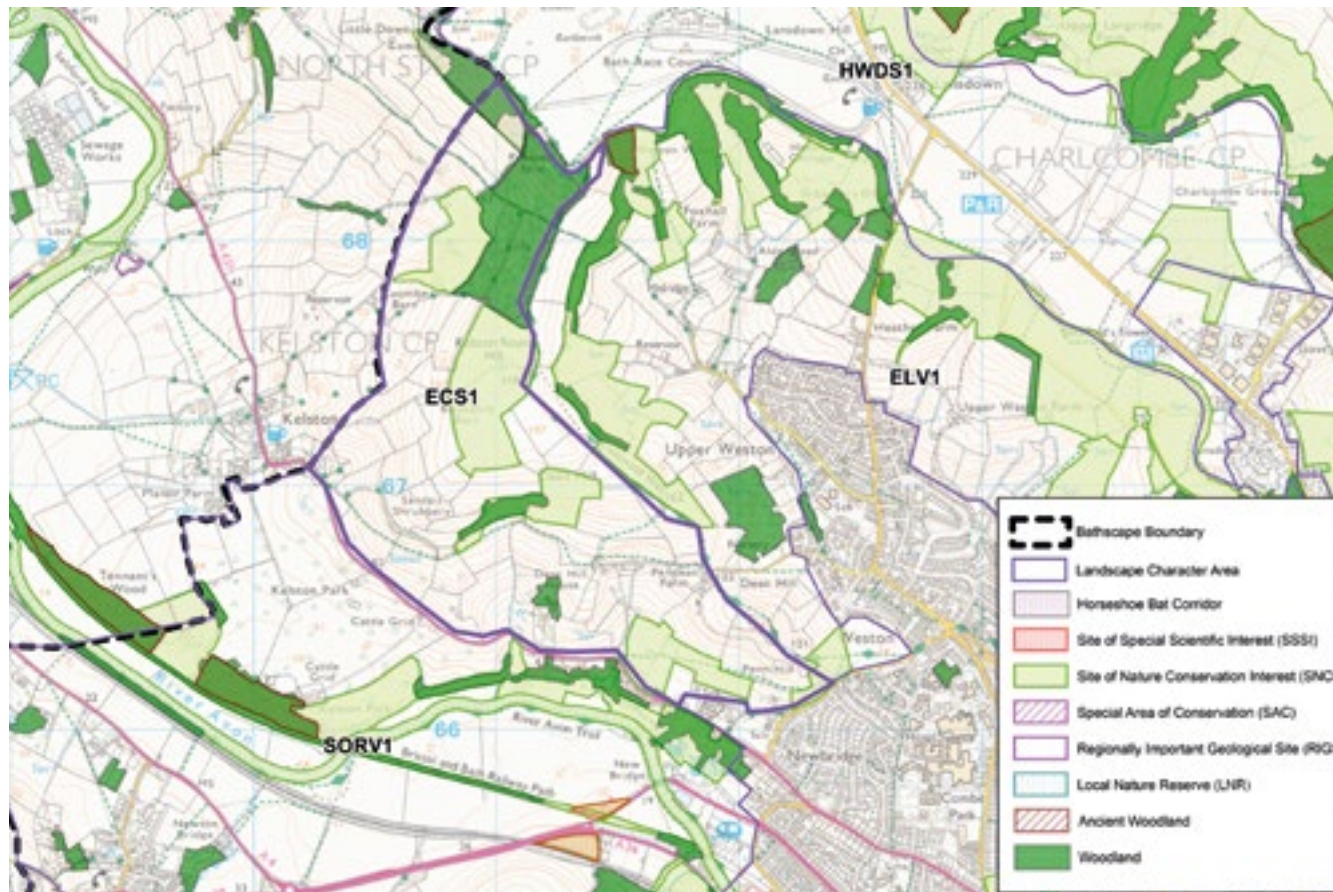
2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There are three Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) on the escarpment which are principally categorised as lowland calcareous grassland. The southernmost area includes a linear copse of broadleaved woodland and a clump of pine trees. There is a large area of lowland calcareous grassland on the slopes immediately around Kelston Roundhill. To the north this is designated as UK Priority Habitat and to the south it is SNCI only. The final area of SNCI grassland lies at the top of the tributary valley just to the west of Prospect Stile and is a UK Priority habitat area for lowland calcareous grassland.

Mature woodland is limited with only two linear copses running along the contours about halfway up the slope between Kelston and Dean Hill. There is an extensive area of new woodland planting at the top of the escarpment running southwards from just below Prospect Stile plus some additional and recent, copse and tree belt planting lower down the slope. The location of the planting below Prospect Stile will in time completely block views from Prospect Stile (see views section below). None of the areas of woodland are recorded as ancient woodland. In addition to small linear woodland areas there are also a few scattered clumps of trees and some substantial groups of trees associated with Dean Hill House and a property in large grounds to the west of Dean Hill House and running down to the A431. The tributary valley running down the slope to the west of Prospect Stile has trees along the stream as well as a small clump and some scrub at the head of the valley within the SNCI area.

There are signs of scrub developing in places usually on steeper slopes but the areas are small. More of a problem may be some patchy areas of nettles and thistles especially in areas of grassland where drainage is impeded.

ESC1 Dean Hill to Prospect Stile – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

Enclosure of the escarpment slopes took place in the late medieval period with the area north of the linear copses described in the Council's Historic Landscape Character Assessment as 'late medieval enclosure of open fields created by local arrangement and exchange'; and the area to the south and east of the linear copses largely described as 'late medieval enclosure of steep slopes'.

The steep slopes restrict farming practices to mainly sheep grazing. Pasture is mostly improved or semi-improved with fields ranging from small through to medium and occasionally large especially along the flatter parts of the scarp top below and around Kelston Roundhill. Fields are generally angular and irregular in shape with field boundaries mostly hedges which are widely varying from clipped to tall and thick. The southern end of the character area has the smallest fields and the thickest, tallest hedges especially on lower slopes and below Dean Hill Lane where the slope is steepest. It is these tall, thick hedges with hedgerow trees which gives the southern end of the escarpment a particularly well-treed feel.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

There is little settlement which is restricted to isolated properties and one farm, Pendean, which is just off the Cotswolds Way on the eastern boundary of the character area. Closer to the western edge of the city and set out along the A431 are Oldfield School and one or two more residential properties.

The A431 Kelston Road runs along the southern and south-western boundary of the character area. This was an important route to and from Bath in the Georgian period and was popular for riding out due to the fine views of the Avon Valley, Kelston Park and the hills of Newton St. Loe.

The Cotswolds Way lies mostly just within the adjacent Weston Valley character area but parts run along the boundary of the two areas with paths connecting to Kelston Roundhill and also passing directly beside Prospect Stile. Additional paths and tracks connect to Kelston and there is open access land around Kelston Roundhill forming part of the Kelston Roundhill Farm.

3. Land Ownership

The land and the barn in the ownership of Kelston Tump LLP, referred to under the cultural associations section below, are of considerable importance.

Visual Significance

Expansive, panoramic west and south-west facing views are distinctive features of the character of the escarpment. These views are epitomised by those from Kelston Roundhill with its upstanding nature and distinctive domed shape which extend around 360°. In general the views from the escarpment extend into Wales on a clear day and to the Wiltshire Downs in the south-east and to the Mendips in the south.

The boundary of this character area with the adjacent Lansdown Plateau character area runs through the Prospect Stile viewpoint although technically the viewpoint lies just within the plateau area. Views from Prospect Stile have been celebrated since Georgian times and no doubt prior to that. These views are primarily south facing but panoramic over a wide area centred on Bath in the middle ground, reaching right round to the Malvern and Welsh hills in the west and Wiltshire Downs in the east. There is a beautiful sweeping vista over to Kelston Roundhill in the near distance where the intervening land dips down and then rises back up to the Roundhill in a smooth, shallow curve. The woodland planting immediately south of Prospect Stile will result in the loss of this view and the very important prospect over the City of Bath. This is one of the few views to

show the city in the context of the surrounding hillsides and is important to the World Heritage Site Setting reflecting the World Heritage Site Attribute no. 42: *'The compact and sustainable form of the city contained within a hollow in the hills'*.

In addition the escarpment slope is itself a strong and visually prominent and attractive feature when viewed from the adjacent countryside.

ESC1 Bench at Prospect Stile



ESC1 Kelston Roundhill looking West



“Tranquillity – provided by – natural sounds which at the time of survey were dominated by birdsong and in particular the song of skylarks and occasional rooks in a nearby rookery”

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

The character area has a strong sense of tranquillity, security and peacefulness provided by:

- The lack of development or roads,
- the expansive views over attractive countryside,
- the wildflowers in the grasslands,
- the natural sounds which at the time of survey were dominated by birdsong and in particular the song of skylarks and occasional rooks in a nearby rookery and
- the attractive pastoral and undulating landscape of the slope interwoven with trees and hedgerows.

Cultural Associations

- The use of the recently restored Roundhill Barn as a music venue, for community events and for educational use by local schools. The partners have three aims for the land: to support financially sustainable farming; to increase natural diversity and deepening knowledge about it; and to support suitable amenity, education and leisure uses without harm or disruption. They are actively involved in grassland habitat restoration and have a

permissive path network which allows people to walk on private land from the Cotswolds Way and Cullimore’s Lane up to Kelston Clump.

- Prospect Stile was a destination for Georgian visitors riding out onto Lansdown, to enjoy vistas out to the Avon Valley and the wider countryside including to “Cainsham” (Keynsham).
- Kelston Roundhill appears in paintings and etchings from the Georgian period.
- A track 850m north of Kelston Park leads 500m south-east through Sandpit Shrubbery and Shagbear Wood and runs for c 1km in an easterly direction before turning north-west on the Cotswold Way for 1km over Dean Hill to the ornamentally planted 218m summit of Kelston Round Hill. This route was an C18 ride from the park to take in the unbounded views available from the high ground to the north.¹
- The enduring popularity of Kelston Roundhill as a prominent landmark.

¹ From Historic England listing for Kelston Park

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- Deterioration of hedgerows and mature copses/stands of trees due to lack of management and changes in agricultural practises. The visually strong grown out hedgerows often make an important contribution to the harmonious landscape but without management they will thin out and die off.
- Locally, the planting of woodlands without consideration of the importance of maintaining an overall open skyline both in terms of the importance of this landscape for views and also the importance to the World Heritage Site Setting.
- Potential changes to the economics of farming which result in a change to the all-important pastoral landscape of small and medium fields surrounded by hedgerows.
- Introduction of solar farms, poly tunnels and any agricultural or horticultural practice which changes the pastoral landscape and introduces visually discordant elements in the landscape.

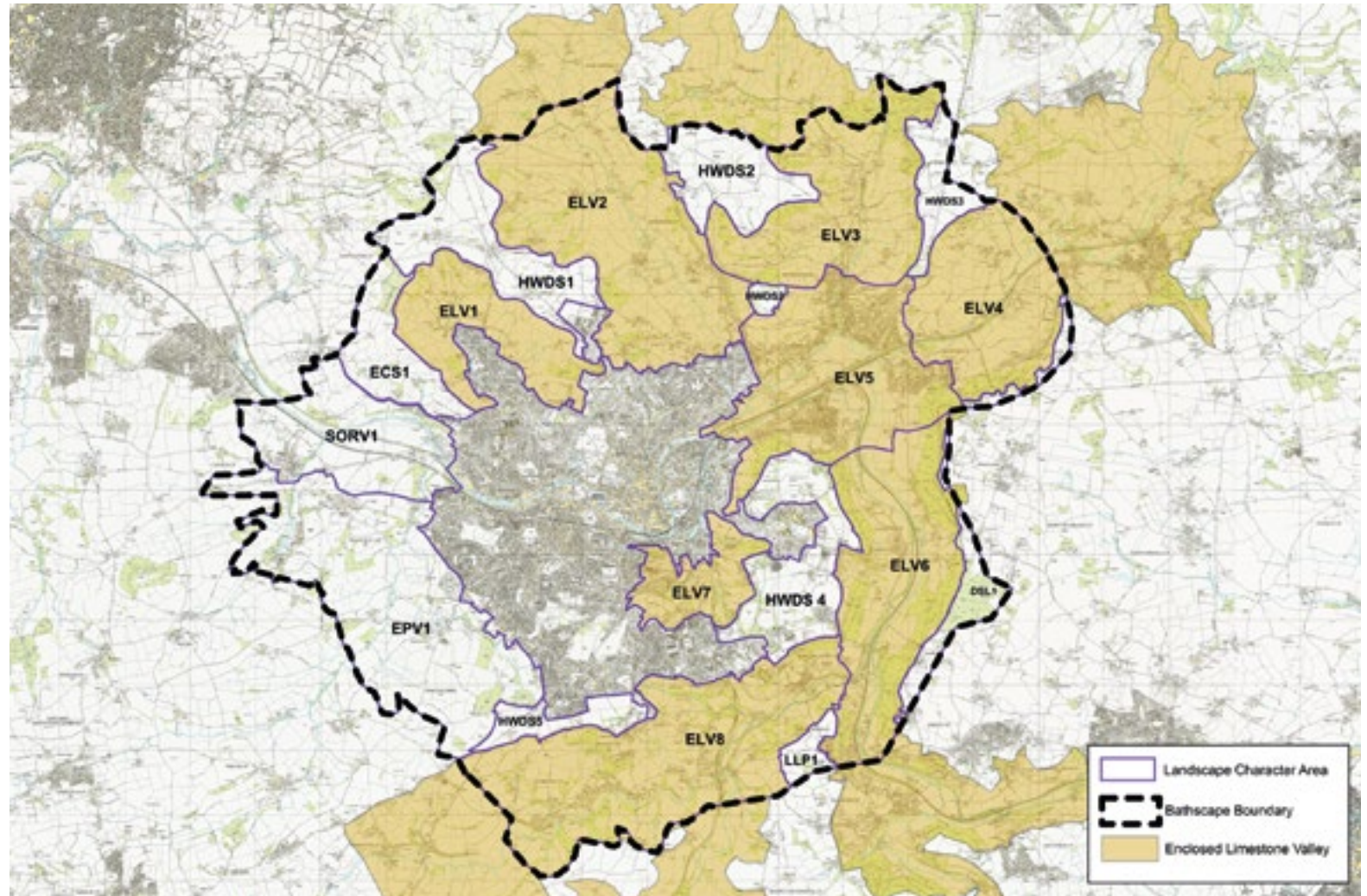
2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The condition overall is generally good. Farmland in the current Roundhill Tump LLP ownership is being actively managed to improve habitat quality, and pursue its aims with regard to sustainability, ecology and community.

There are some areas on the escarpment where pastures appear a little neglected but overall the greatest cause for concern is the lack of hedgerow and mature woodland management.

2.2 BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE TYPE: ENCLOSED LIMESTONE VALLEYS

Enclosed Limestone Valley Landscape Type



Key Characteristics

- Moderately broad but enclosed river valleys with steep sides separated by areas of Low Limestone Plateaux and High Wold Dip-Slope;
- Strong physical enclosure of valleys creates a secluded character;
- Rural character with local influences from large urban centres;
- Significant areas of woodland, of which a number are ancient semi-natural woodlands particularly on upper and steeper slopes;
- Areas under both arable and pastoral use, together with areas of rough pasture and scrub;
- Fields of varying sizes, dependent on slope, mainly enclosed by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees;

- Road networks following valley bottoms, connecting settlements and ascending valley sides to more isolated dwellings;
- Industrial heritage of the valleys signified by the presence of railways, mills and canal network within Avon Valley;
- Impressive features of Victorian engineering; and surviving vernacular structures such as terraces of weavers' cottages.

Landscape Character Areas

ELV1: Weston Valley
ELV2: Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley
ELV3: Northend and St. Catherine's Brook Valley
ELV4: Lower By Brook Valley
ELV5: Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Tributary Confluences
ELV6: Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley
ELV7: Perrymead and Widcombe Brook Valley

2.2.1 ELV1: WESTON VALLEY

Location and Boundaries

The Weston Valley character area lies on the north-west side of Bath between the Dean Hill to Prospect Stile character area and the Lansdown Plateau character area. The character area surrounds but does not include, the village of Weston and Upper Weston.

Summary Landscape Character

- This is a complete, relatively open and simple, valley within the Bathscape area. It surrounds the large village of Weston and Upper Weston which has grown over time from its historic core at the southern, open end of the valley close to the City. The village occupies much of the base of the valley and shallower slopes. There is a harmonious balance and strong interrelationship between the developed village and the surrounding undeveloped valley slopes.
- Gently undulating valley sides and a variety of landslip effects forming benches and slumping down slope give a varied landform to the valley sides.

- Harmonious pastoral landscape with a patchwork of mostly medium sized fields and clusterings of small fields bounded by hedgerows. Towards the head and foot of the valley the hedgerows are often overgrown and thick, with some good hedgerow trees.
- Scattered small woods, often linear and including two larger woodland blocks, give a varied tapestry of pasture and woodland linked by hedgerows.
- Attractive views across the valley from footpaths and open access land on either side of the valley. The Cotswolds Way through the area is a popular walking route with extensive views which include Beckford's Tower on the edge of Lansdown Plateau.
- Towards the southern end of the valley the views open out to take in larger panoramas over part of Bath and the countryside beyond.
- The higher slopes of the valley provide a feeling of tranquillity.

ELV1 Sheep on slopes overlooking Weston Village



Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The valley has been formed by the Weston Brook tributary of the River Avon cutting through the High Wold dip slope of the Cotswold Plateau. The valley has a relatively simple, parallel sided outline and moderately broad cross section. It is strongly asymmetrical with the south-western valley side being narrower than the north-eastern valley side. The valley has a broad and open junction with the River Avon Valley. The valley sides are of varying steepness although there is a slight tendency for slopes to moderate in steepness midway down the valley sides and then steepen again towards the base of slope especially on the north-eastern valley side.

The geology of Weston Valley has Fullers Earth (upper, lower and Fullers Earth rock) around the highest parts of the valley sides and valley head immediately below the Greater Oolite Limestone of the Lansdown Plateau. The Fullers Earth forms a broader band on the north-eastern valley side and at the head of the valley than on the south western valley side where it gradually fades out towards the south. Below the Fullers Earth is a band of Inferior Oolite Limestone which is more prevalent on the north-eastern side of the valley where it forms the convex bulges of land in between the indented tributary valleys. On the south western valley side it is present as a very narrow strip of particularly steep slope quite high up the valley side below the Fullers Earth where two distinctive linear copses are located. It is also present towards the southern end of the sloping skyline down to Dean Hill, where it forms the capping layer of the ridge. Below the Inferior Oolite is an extensive layer of Midford Sand (along with some Lower Lias clay) on the lower part of the slope occupying all but the top quarter of the slope on the south-western valley side and the head of the valley and the indented tributary valleys on the north-eastern valley side. The spring line around the valley sides is found within this Midford Sand zone.

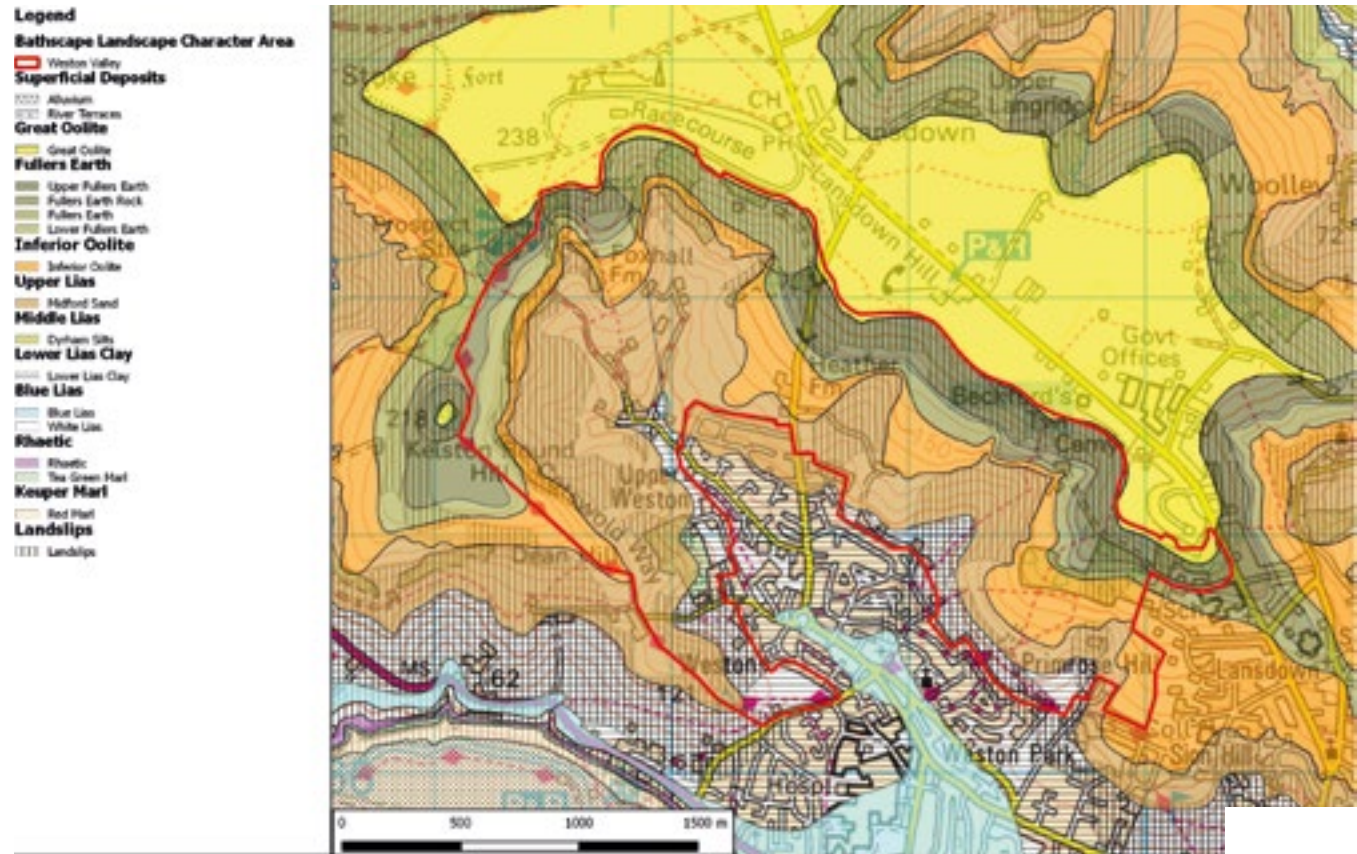
“There is a harmonious balance and strong interrelationship between the developed village and the surrounding undeveloped valley slopes.”

The alternating layers of harder Oolite Limestones and softer clays and sands, has given rise to significant landslips throughout much of the valley.

These landslides and cambering, where blocks of capping limestone break off and slip down-slope, are the principal cause of the locally complex downhill undulations on the valley sides and especially at the head of the valley. In contrast, the stream tributaries which run down from the head of the valley and along the north-eastern valley sides give rise to undulations and indentations along the valley sides. The combination of stream tributary effects and landslip effects gives the overall rounded forms, variable slopes and rhythmic undulations of the valley landform.

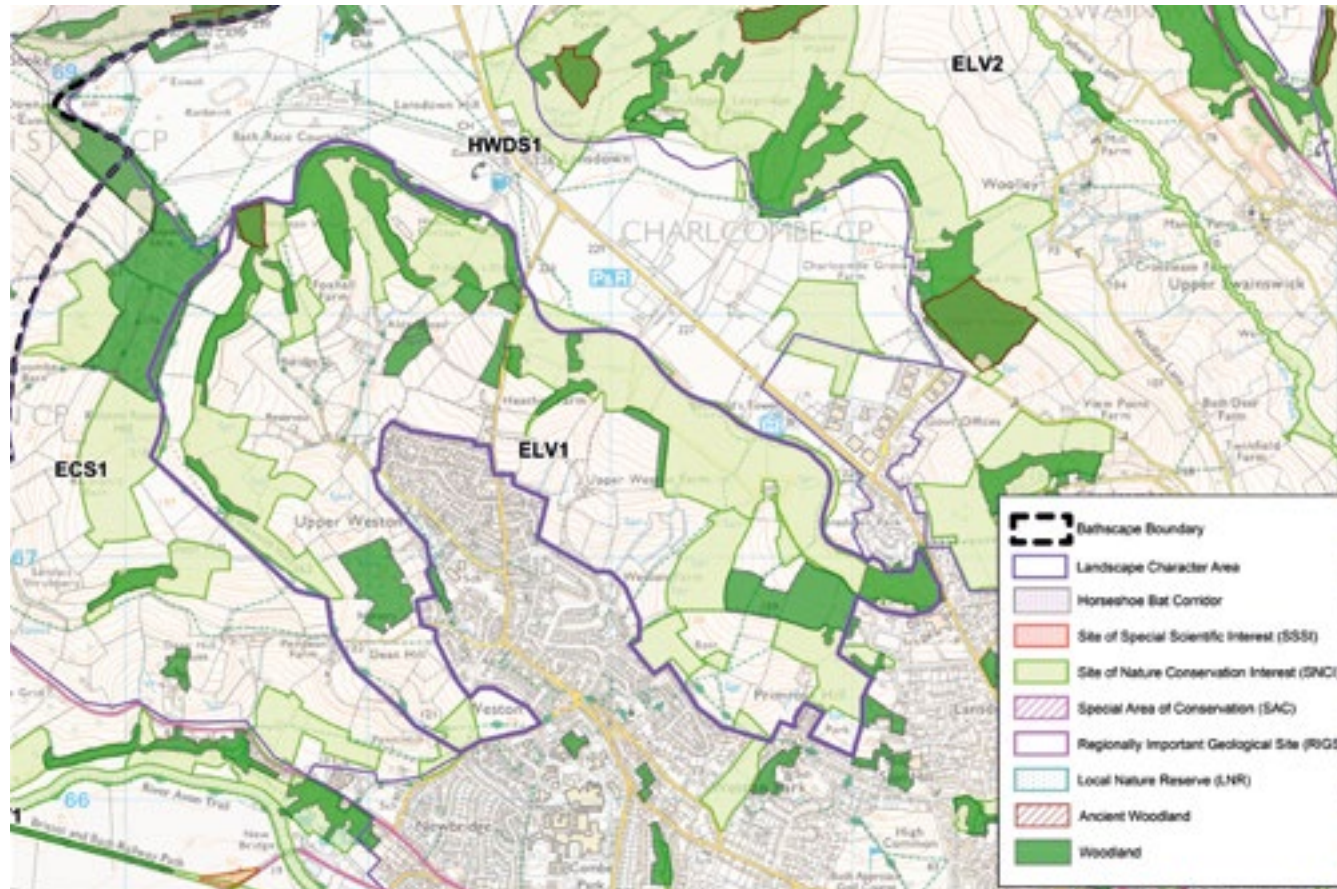
The Weston Brook runs down the valley close to the south eastern valley side. Throughout much of the village it is culverted, only emerging along the side of Broadmoor Lane. There are a number of small tributary streams running into the Brook, primarily up at the head of the valley. There are many springs scattered roughly midway up the valley sides.

ELV1 Weston Valley – Geology



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ELV1 Weston Valley – Biodiversity



2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There are extensive areas of grassland SNCI throughout the valley. The woodland SNCI areas are concentrated at the head of the valley as linear copses of ancient woodland running down the slope in steep tributary stream valleys. There is also a small ancient wood at the southern end of the north-eastern valley side below Lansdown Park. The grassland areas are concentrated on the upper valley sides especially on the north eastern valley side where they run along the upper slopes. On the north eastern valley side towards the southern end the SNCIs extend more widely down the slopes as well. At the time of the landscape character survey there were indications that some of the areas may have deteriorated in quality since the original assessment with increases in scrub cover. Around half of the SNCIs are UK priority habitat, lowland calcareous grassland, with three small sites being UK priority habitat, lowland meadow.

Woodland is relatively limited within the valley. The greatest concentration of small woods is at the head of the valley and at least half of it is ancient woodland. It mainly forms elongated areas running along the contours on steeper slopes and within the tributary valleys, in particular the

valley to the east of Foxhall Farm. Much of the skyline at the head of the valley is wooded. Elsewhere there are scattered small copses which are generally linear in form and mostly run along the contours on steeper slopes. There are two larger areas of woodland, one on the south western valley side north of the lane to Pendean Farm and the other on the north eastern valley side. This is a complex of two woodlands comprising the developing community wood and the ancient woodland below Lansdown Park. There are two linear areas of newly planted tree belts both of which run against the contours and are very regular in outline, one is along the west side of Lansdown Lane above Heather Farm and the other is midway down the north eastern valley side. Both of these because of their alignment look a little discordant in the landscape.

Associated with a recent development along Broadmoor Lane is a small community orchard beside Weston Brook which is looked after by residents.

Individual field trees are very limited within the valley and concentrated in small areas at the southern end of the valley on each side. The grounds of Kingswood School are included within the Weston Valley and include some large parkland trees.

Where Weston Brook is not culverted it is lined by trees and shrubs.

Scrub is relatively limited to steeper slopes especially on the upper slopes of the north eastern valley side where it shows signs of increasing over some of the grassland SNCI areas.

Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

Enclosure of the Weston Valley sides took place in the late medieval period with the vast majority of the valley within the Council's Historic Landscape Character Assessment as 'late medieval enclosure of steep slopes' and the remainder on part of the north-eastern valley side being categorised as 'late medieval enclosure of open fields created by local arrangement and exchange.'

Today agriculture on the valley sides is primarily sheep and beef cattle grazing on semi-improved or improved pasture with some significant areas of seeded grass leys. Fields are overall medium, roughly rectangular in size and running along the contours. There are clusterings of smaller fields often close to the village edges, sometimes in relation to steeper slopes but also sometimes without any obvious relationships to landform or settlement. Field boundaries are predominantly hedgerows, both clipped and grown-out, with a very small amount of walling close to the plateau. Taller grown-out hedgerows are concentrated up in the head of the valley and also down in the southern part of the valley on both sides.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

Although outside the Weston Valley landscape character area, Weston and Upper Weston village extend up through the centre part of the valley keeping generally to the east of Weston Brook and generally located on the shallowest slopes. Until the Second World War, the village had changed little from the area shown on maps from the late 1900s and was limited to the southern end of the valley, with extensive orchards occupying much of the land immediately to the north of the village. By the 1960s the village had extended north and eastwards up through the valley almost doubling in size. By the 1970s it had reached its current northwards extent.

The current extent of the village has a harmonious proportionality in relation to the undeveloped valley sides and there is a strong interrelationship between the two especially given the compact and contained nature of the valley. For example day to day sounds and activities in the village can be heard from footpaths on the valley sides; local residents are involved in looking after the community woodland on the eastern valley slopes near Primrose Hill and the village green which was designated after a determined village campaign; and the attractive views of the rural valley sides are ever present from within the village.

Not all the development edges are designed to set the development sensitively into the surrounding countryside and there are some harsh and discordant boundaries around the more modern parts of the village.

Outside of the village there is very little development in the valley with just a few scattered farms, some of which are converted to a mix of small business units.

Although technically not sited within the character area but on the Lansdown Plateau, Beckford's Tower is an important historic feature and landmark for the valley on its eastern side and a focus for walkers.

A well-used commuter route, Lansdown Lane, runs up through the valley bottom and then the valley side, joining Lansdown Road on the plateau beside the head of the valley. Other narrow lanes and tracks run up the valley sides generally serving farms but also connecting with footpaths. There are also many footpaths running up the valley sides from Weston especially around the community woodland, village green and Primrose Hill area and linking the village with the extensive open

access land high up on the valley side below Beckford's Tower. The Cotswolds Way runs along the top of the escarpment and the south-western valley side forming the boundary between the two character areas. Lower down the valley it crosses over on to the north-eastern valley side emerging out of the village at the village green. There are stunning views from the Cotswolds Way over Weston Valley and also over the southern part of Bath and the countryside to the west and south-west, particularly where the path runs along the top of Dean Hill at the southern end of the valley.

3. Land Ownership

There is limited information available about land ownership within the character area.

Visual Significance

There are extensive views over the village and across the valley from high up on each valley side. The landmarks of Beckford's Tower and Kelston Roundhill together with the attractive outline of the skyline are distinctive parts of the view from the Cotswolds Way and from the many footpaths and the open access land. Towards the valley floor, views are more intimate and contained by the steep and undulating landform and in places by village development.

At the southern end of the valley which has a wide opening onto the River Avon valley, higher level views are more panoramic looking out across the city of Bath and beyond to the wider countryside including the River Avon Valley West and Kelston Park and the Corston and Newton Brook valleys character areas.

Looking into the valley there are views from the southern side of the city including good views from Bath City Farm.

There are very few discordant views within the valley and those which stand out are:

- The views looking north-west to the skyline at the head of the valley where the grandstand of Bath Race Course can be seen as a rather alien, white structure visible through a large gap in the skyline trees;
- views from the south-eastern side of the valley around the open access land and down to the village green which look across to the recent horticultural poly-tunnels on the opposite side of the valley;
- some of the more recent and discordant developments within the City and the large and rather ugly massing of the nearby hospital.

ELV1 Lansdown Cemetery to Kelston Round Hill



Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

Even though there are often village sounds such as school children playing, which waft up from below from time to time, the character area has a strong sense of tranquillity, security and peacefulness provided by:

- the natural sounds of the wind in the trees and of birdsong, sheep or cattle;
- wildflowers in the meadows at certain times of year;
- the attractive views across the valley to landmarks such as Beckford's Tower, or beyond into the wider countryside;
- The attractive pastoral and undulating landscape of the undeveloped slopes.

Cultural Associations

- St. Alphage's Well at the head of the valley to the west of Lansdown Lane and just below the skyline. This is now largely buried in vegetation and covered with a rusting iron door.
- Beckford's Tower with its gilded belvedere is an important local landmark overlooking the valley. (for further description see Lansdown Plateau Character Area Description).
- The once very large areas of orchards to the north of the original village core, now reduced to a recently created community orchard.
- In Georgian times there was a popular circular walk across the fields beyond Primrose Hill to Weston Village and it was this walk which was taken by Jane Austen and her companion Mrs Chamberlayne in 1801.

“In Georgian times there was a popular circular walk across the fields beyond Primrose Hill to Weston Village and it was this walk which was taken by Jane Austen and her companion Mrs Chamberlayne in 1801.”

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- Deterioration of hedgerows and mature copses/stands of trees due to lack of management and changes in agricultural practises. The visually strong grown-out hedgerows often make an important contribution to the harmonious landscape but without management they will continue to thin out and die off.
- Locally, there has been some rather regimented linear tree belt planting which is laid out running against the contours whereas the overall character of the valley is for tree belts and copses to run along the contours.
- Signs of increasing scrub on areas of important grassland habitat.
- Potential changes to the economics of farming which result in a change to the all-important pastoral landscape of small and medium fields surrounded by hedgerows. Little sign of increases in pony paddocks was seen within the valley but is an example of potential change when farmland is sold off.

- Introduction of solar farms, poly tunnels and other agricultural or horticultural practice which changes the pastoral landscape and introduces visually discordant elements in the prominent landscape. Historic maps do show that there was a significant use of land on the lower slopes of the valley and valley floor, for orchards and horticulture. However in those times technology did not require the visually intrusive use of plastics for Poly tunnels or ground mulching.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

Condition appears to be generally good on the valley sides with fairly small pockets of land showing signs of neglect or poor grazing management especially around parts of the head of the valley. There also appears to be some increase in the extent of scrub especially on upper and steeper valley slopes.

2.2.2 ELV2: SWAINSWICK AND CHARLCOMBE VALLEY

Location and Boundaries

The Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley character area lies on the north side of Bath between the Lansdown Plateau and the Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill character areas. The valley runs north-northwest of the residential areas of Fairfield Park, Larkhill and Lambridge.

Summary Landscape Character

- Viewed from a distance the Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley is seen as having a simple outline cut into the Cotswolds Hills and forming a shallow “v”-shape. Close-up however, it has a distinctive open but also highly complex, rolling, undulating and indented landform. This is the result of both the underlying geology with the occurrence of landslips and cambering and the hydrology of the valley forming small, steep-sided, indented tributary stream valleys along the valley sides. The undulating landform is not just confined to the larger scale but is experienced as all sorts of benches and bulges

at a smaller scale down slope and often within individual fields.

- This is a very harmonious, open, pastoral landscape with a patchwork of variously sized pasture fields surrounded by often thick and grown out hedgerows with occasional areas of arable. Woodland is generally small, often quite linear copses and concentrated within the steep sided tributary valleys or along steeper areas on the upper valley sides. They all lie along the contours. There are three larger

ELV2 Swainswick Valley



woodland areas which integrate well within the overall landscape. The relatively small area of woodland reinforces the open landscape character with its focus on the landform shapes within the valley.

- The Lam Brook is a particularly attractive tree-lined and tightly meandering feature tucked down into the centre and bottom of the valley.
- There is a very distinctive settlement pattern with five small hamlets scattered through the valley, usually located about a third to a half of the way up the slope from the brook. The exception is Upper Langridge which is set high on the valley side. These are linked together by attractive, narrow sunken lanes. The hamlets were almost certainly larger at one time in order to sustain the four historically important churches. Three of these date back to the 12th century. The remaining vernacular buildings in the valley are generally 17th century or earlier.
- The A46 runs through the valley high up on the north-eastern valley side and is well integrated into the landscape.
- The Charlcombe Valley, although technically a tributary valley of the Lam Brook, is visually and

physically separated from the main valley and has its own distinctive character. It is an open horse-shoe shaped valley form with Charlcombe Lane running around the curving valley sides approximately half way up from the base. Along the lane in the centre of the curve is the hamlet of Charlcombe nestling amongst two linear belts of woodland. Below the woodland are open fields and a small lake which is the breeding site for the locally famous frogs and toads in the valley.

- There is a rich store of local historical and cultural knowledge available and this enriches the landscape character of the valley.
- There are excellent views over the valley from the A46 and attractive views to and from, across and down the valley from the various footpaths, lanes and hamlets. From Charlcombe there are expansive views across the Avon Valley to Bathampton and beyond.
- The valley has a very tranquil character even with the presence of the A46 and its occasional road noise.
- Discordant elements in the valley are generally limited to poor design and siting of houses in the landscape at two prominent locations.

“This small parish, consisting of a few detached houses, is situated two miles north east from the city of Bath, in the valley between Lansdowne and Holt Down; the slopes of both which hills are pleasingly varied with fine swells and recesses, and still retain some appearance of those woods with which they were formerly vested. The intermediate vale is a narrow range of rich meadows, watered by a small stream, which runs into the Avon below Lambridge. On this stream are the gunpowder mills of Matthew Worgan, Esq.; situated in a deep picturesque spot, and almost environed with wood.”

The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset

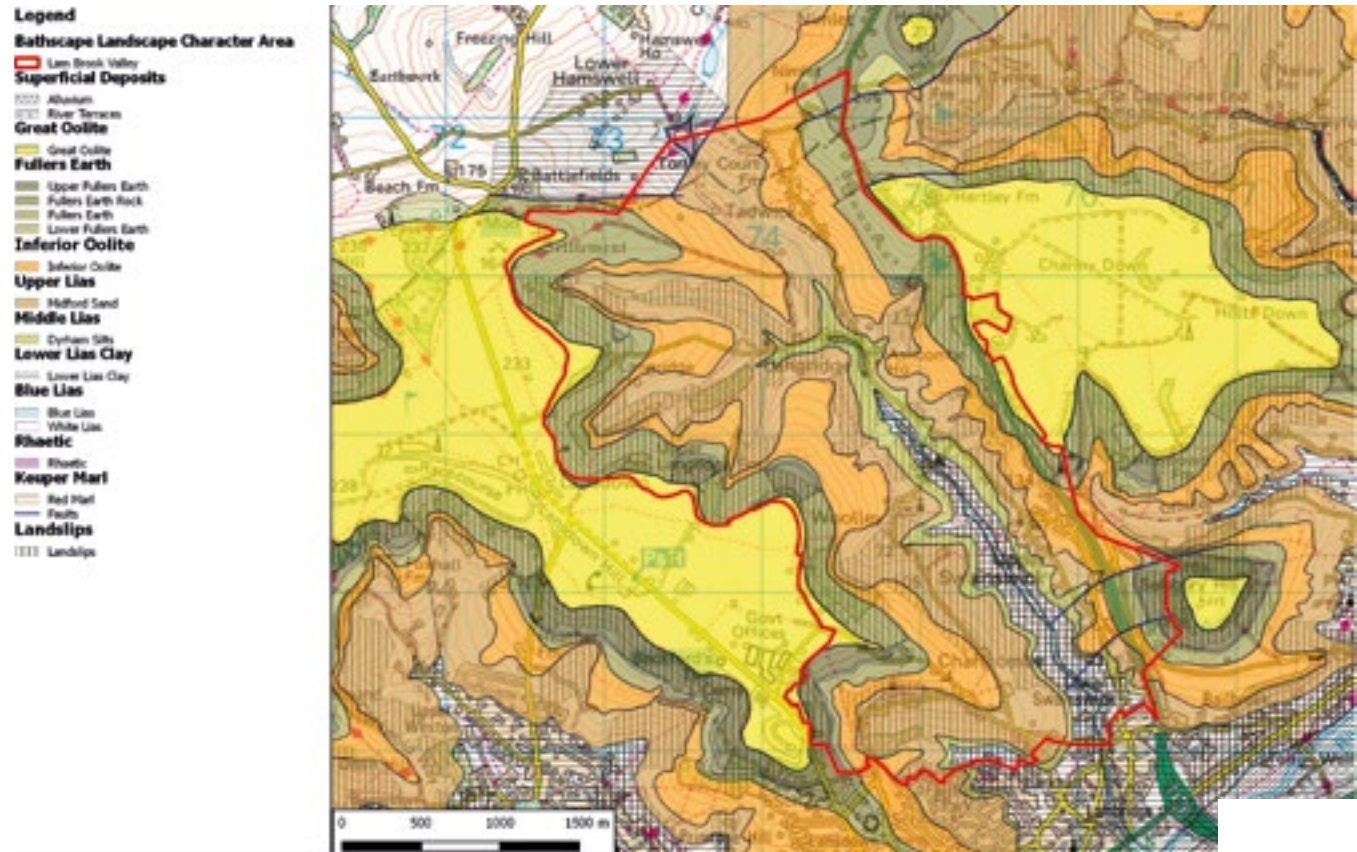
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

All except the head of the Swainswick Valley is included in the Bathscape area. The valley is relatively broad and has been formed by the Lam Brook tributary of the River Avon cutting through the High Wold dip slope of the Cotswold plateau.

The valley is strongly asymmetrical with the north-eastern valley side being narrower and less deeply indented than the south-western valley side which is highly indented due to the presence of a number of minor tributary stream valleys. Close to the base of the valley where the Lam Brook joins the River Avon, the Charlcombe Brook forms a tributary valley again on the south-western side of the main valley. It is visually and physically separated from the main valley by a narrow ridge line which bends sharply south-eastwards towards the Avon Valley. Midway up the south-western side of the main valley is a simple tributary stream valley running down through Woolley. Finally, higher up the valley there is a highly indented area formed by a three-armed tributary stream valley, with the tributaries joining together at Langridge before running down into the Lam Brook. The Lam Brook has a tightly

ELV2 Lam Brook Valley – Geology



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meandering course and is “tucked down” into a narrow, almost “v”-shape in the bottom of the valley, throughout its course.

The valley sides are very variable in terms of steepness although overall the narrower north-eastern valley side is significantly steeper especially on the upper slopes, than the more variable south-western side. On the south-western side the variable steepness is due to a combination of the tributary stream valleys and the underlying geology. The steepest slopes are on the narrow tributary stream valley sides underlain by softer Midford Sands and all along the uppermost slopes of the main valley side underlain by Fullers Earth. The shallowest slopes are on the bulging, convex shaped haunches of land between the tributary stream valleys where the underlying rock is harder Inferior Oolite Limestone.

The geology of the Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley character area is generally typical of the Enclosed Limestone Valley Landscape type but with local differences which contribute to its distinctive landform. Fullers Earth runs all around the highest parts of the valley sides and valley head immediately below the Greater Oolite limestone of the Lansdown Plateau. Below this is a variable width of harder Inferior Oolite

limestone, followed by an equally variable width of Midford Sands (see paragraph above). Finally, closest to the valley floor are layers of Dyrham Silts and Lias Clay.

The alternating layers of harder Oolite limestones and softer clays and sands have given rise to significant landslips which have occurred throughout much of the valley. In the Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley landslips have affected almost all of the Fullers Earth areas highest up the valleys sides as well as almost all of the Midford Sand, Dyrham Silts and Lias Clay areas. The A46 which runs through the Fullers Earth band on the north-eastern side of the valley has only recently had stabilising work done in response to landslips.

These landslides and a process known as cambering where blocks of capping limestone break off and slip down-slope, are largely responsible for the locally complex downhill undulations on the valley sides. In contrast, the stream tributaries give rise to undulations and indentations along the valley sides. The combination of stream tributary effects and landslip effects gives the overall complex mix of convex and concave forms, variable steep and shallow slopes and rhythmic undulations of the valley landform especially on the south-western valley side.

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There are extensive areas of SNCI throughout the valley although the greatest concentration is on the south-western valley side where it occupies all of the upper slopes and the tributary stream valleys. This is described as “Langridge and Woolley Complex – ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland, unimproved and semi-improved calcareous grassland, unimproved and semi-improved neutral grassland, scrub and running water (springs and streams) with associated marginal habitats”. On the north-eastern valley side there are two SNCI areas. The northern-most area is a complex of ancient woodland (the Ashcombe Wood Woodland Trust nature reserve) with unimproved calcareous and neutral grassland. The southernmost area is West Wood which is semi-natural broadleaved woodland with a small amount of unimproved calcareous grassland and scrub.

The entire length of the Lam Brook is also designated as an SNCI and is known to have populations of White Tailed crayfish.

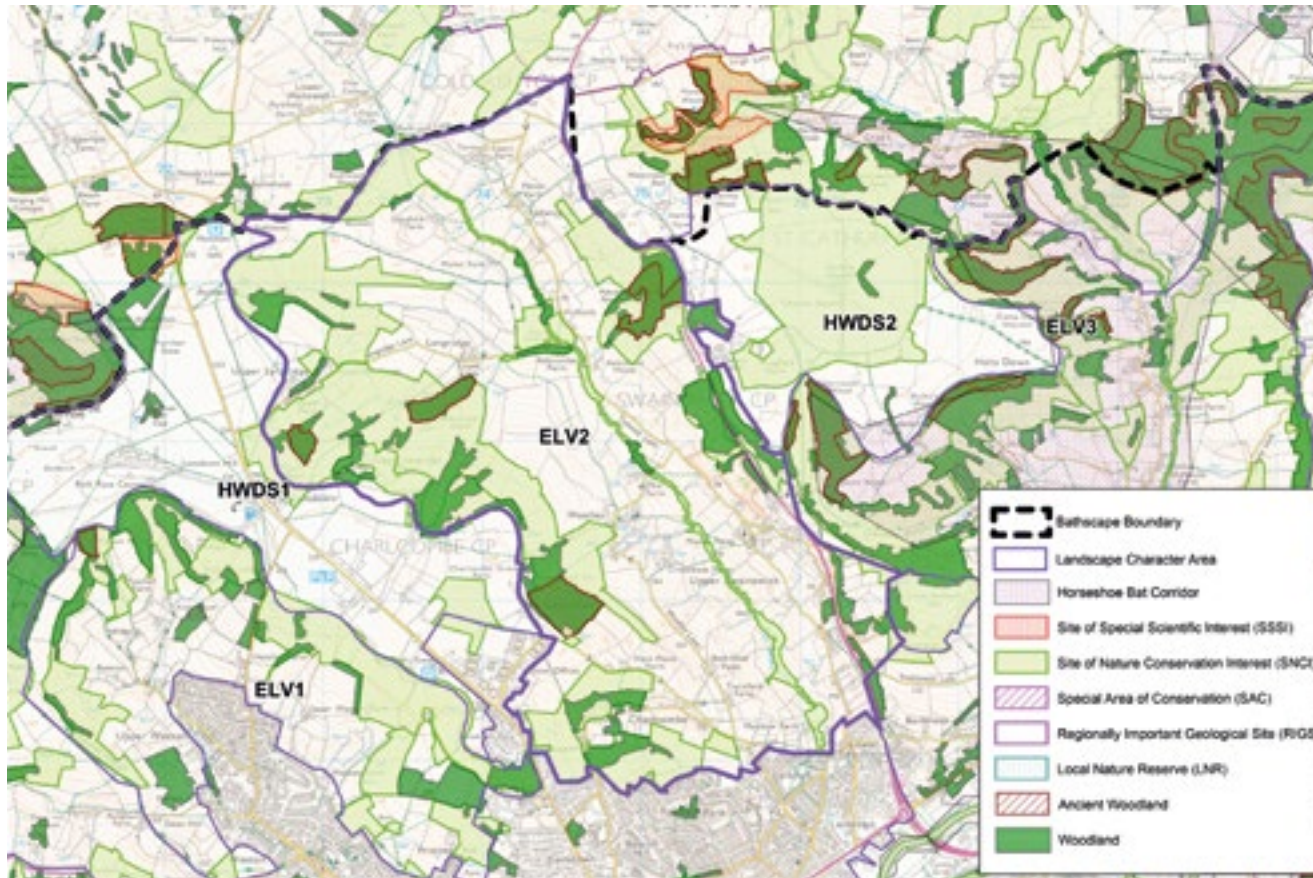
Woodland in the valley comprises small to medium sized blocks of woodland and some smaller uneven-shaped copses and linear belts which are mostly within the tributary stream valleys. All of the

woodland areas run along the contours. At least two thirds of the woodland and copses in the valley is ancient woodland illustrating its relative inaccessibility. The Lam Brook is lined with trees throughout its length often forming quite wide belts.

Individual field trees are few within the valley apart from a significant concentration between Ashwicke Wood and Tadwick on the north-eastern side of the valley.

Scrub appears to be relatively limited to steeper slopes especially in the tributary stream valleys on very steep slopes. It is difficult to see whether it is increasing and a study would need to be made of the aerial photo archive.

ELV2 Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

Enclosure of the Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley took place mainly in the late medieval period with the vast majority of the valley categorised in the Council’s Historic Landscape Character Assessment as ‘late medieval enclosure of steep-sided cultivation.’ South of Upper Swainswick the enclosure is described as ‘late medieval enclosure of open fields by local arrangement and exchange.’ There is also a small area on the slopes above Ashcombe House on the north-east side of the valley which is described as ‘medieval enclosure created by organised clearance.’

Today agriculture in the valley is primarily sheep and a mix of beef and dairy cattle grazing on semi-improved or improved pasture with some significant areas of seeded grass leys. There is a small amount of arable where slopes are shallower. Fields are overall small to medium in size with medium fields often created by amalgamation. Most fields are rectangular or even square (especially smaller fields close to the brook in the Upper Swainswick area). South of Upper Swainswick there is a change to more irregular shaped, small fields which appears to coincide with the area of ‘late medieval enclosure of open fields by local arrangement

and exchange.’ Field boundaries are predominantly hedgerows both clipped and grown-out with no obvious pattern apart from a tendency towards clipped hedges around the larger fields. Good hedgerow trees are primarily within taller hedgerows and scattered throughout the valley.

Historical maps show that small orchards surrounded each of the small hamlets in the valley. Today there are only a very few remaining, one being at Tadwick.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

The Swainswick and Charlcombe valley has a particularly distinctive settlement pattern. There are five separate hamlets scattered through the valley, and a sixth, Upper Hamswell, north of the Bathscape boundary. These are Charlcombe, Upper Swainswick, Woolley, Upper Langridge and Tadwick. The hamlets are generally located about halfway up the valley sides although Woolley is a little lower and Upper Swainswick sits only just below the Lansdown Plateau. There are also four churches, three of which date to the 12th Century, St. Mary at Charlcombe (grade 2* listed), St. Mary the Virgin at Upper Swainswick (grade 2* listed) where John Wood and John Wood the Younger are buried and St. Mary Magdalene at Upper Langridge (Grade 1 listed). The Fourth church

is All Saints at Woolley (grade 1 listed) which was built in 1761 by John Wood the Younger.

All the hamlets comprise mostly 17th century buildings or earlier while Charlcombe has some more modern properties scattered along Charlcombe Lane. All are mentioned in the Domesday Book so have a very long history of habitation. The historic core of Charlcombe has distinctive high-walled buildings and walls straight onto the lane and sits in a distinctive location half way up and in the centre of the horse-shoe shaped valley within a woodland setting.

Outside of the hamlets there are a very few farms, four at the most although not all of these remain working farms, and Ashcombe House just outside Tadwick. Almost all the buildings in the valley are vernacular and built of Cotswold stone with pan-tile or occasionally slate roofs.

Much of the Swainswick and Charlcombe valley seems to have been always in agricultural use but there is also a history of milling with the Dead Mill at the south end of the valley still in existence but now a residential property. There is also Mill Farm at Woolley which had a corn mill but again the buildings have been converted. There was also a gunpowder mill at Woolley which operated from 1722 to the

early 19th century when it was closed, partly because of the abolition of the slave trade. Explosions at the mill were not uncommon.

At one time there was a school house in Upper Langridge but this is now a residential property. Upper Swainswick does still have a primary school although most children come from outside the valley. There are no shops, pubs or post-offices anywhere in the valley, although St. Mary the Virgin church in Upper Swainswick does operate monthly “Pub Swainswick”.

The re-routed and upgraded A46 runs along the top of the north-eastern valley side and is visually well integrated. Apart from that there is a network of very narrow and usually sunken lanes which are hidden in the landscape and which connect the hamlets and link to both the A46 and Lansdown Road. Part of the old A46 still exists, running parallel to the new road south of Upper Swainswick.

There are a scattering of public footpaths in the valley, one of which passes through a cottage garden in Upper Swainswick. The path through Charlcombe Valley is very well used being close to Fairfield Park and running up to Ensleigh. There are three areas of open access land, one is West Wood just off the A46 and running down to

Tadwick Lane, the other is a small area in one of the tributary stream valleys running down to Langridge, and the third is a small area on the Little Solsbury Hill slope which joins with the land on the top of the hill.

3. Land Ownership

There is limited information available about land ownership within the valley area.

Visual Significance

There are panoramic views over large parts of the valley from sections of the A46 as well as from lanes and footpaths in the upper valleys sides. These views are mostly contained by the valley sides and generally look across the valley or down it. There are some views, for example, from below Upper Langridge which extend over to the top of woodland in the St. Catherine's valley, parts of Browns Folly woodland and the outline of Little Solsbury Hill. Views in the bottom of the valley are more intimate and contained by the steep and undulating landform.

From the upper part of Charlcombe valley there are expansive views right across Bath to the wider countryside beyond.

There are very few discordant views within the valley. Two are notable:

- The views across the valley to the new property which has replaced the original vernacular farm building at Upper Langridge. The new building has an elongated form which does not sit well in the landscape as well as large areas of glazing which reflect light and draw attention to the building.

- The new development of large detached properties on the skyline on the upper Charlcombe valley slopes. This development is very incongruous and discordant on the skyline and upper undeveloped slopes which are so important to the World Heritage Site Setting. The development is highly visible locally within Charlcombe valley as well as from across the City at Bathampton, on Bathampton Down, in the Perrymead and Widcombe character area, from Fairfield Park and from Little Solsbury Hill and even as far away as Bannerdown. The large areas of glazing cause light to reflect and a flash off the buildings which draws attention to them even more.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

There is a strong sense of tranquillity throughout the valley even with the presence of the A46. Road noise travels through the valley but, depending on wind direction, at times there is virtually no sound. For the most part the valley is very quiet with the sense of tranquillity provided by:

- Predominantly natural sounds of birds, sheep and cattle interspersed with occasional agricultural machinery and punctuated at play times by the sound of children at Upper Swainswick School. The sound of the Lam Brook from the valley floor
- The attractive small hamlets with their churches, nestling into the valley sides
- The beauty and harmony of the pastoral landscape laid over the undulating landform
- The panoramic views from places high on the valley sides, and
- the dark skies at night.

Cultural Associations

- Ancient churches (see above) with links to John Wood and John Wood the younger. The interesting links with St. Mary. The author Henry Fielding was married at St. Mary's Charlcombe in 1734.
- St. Mary the Virgin at Upper Swainswick operates a monthly village pub and welcomes walkers passing through by offering a kitchen area where tea and coffee can be made as well as having a very beautiful and homely loo available just round the back of the church.

- Jane Austen mentions Charlcombe in her letters to her sister Cassandra. She describes it as being "sweetly situated in a little green valley, as a village with such a name ought to be".²
- In 1940 Arthur Mee wrote that "... when we came to Langridge there is nothing about us but the lovely group made by the barn, the farmhouse and the church". He also wrote about the attractions of Woolley in the 1930s and mentions the narrowness of the lanes

- St. Mary's church at Charlcombe has a holy well which is said to heal eye conditions. The well-used to be in the Rectory Garden but when this was sold in the 1980s it was moved to a small community garden and orchard just across the lane from the church and re-dedicated.
- Also at Charlcombe, there has been a practice of closing Charlcombe Lane during February and March during the frog and toad breeding season to allow them to safely cross the road to a lake further down in the valley. A local resident, Helen Hobbs received an award from the International Fund for Animal Welfare in 2010 for her work in saving around 4500 amphibians.
- Legend has it that King Bladud (the founder of Bath and discoverer of the hot springs) sought refuge in Swainswick and became a swineherd.
- Woolley was the location for a gunpowder mill between 1722 and 1802. This was known for its dangers and frequent explosions. It relied on slave labour and the abolition of the slave trade is thought to have contributed to its closure.

ELV2 St Mary's Upper Swainswick



“Jane Austen mentions Charlcombe in her letters to her sister Cassandra. She describes it as being ‘sweetly situated in a little green valley, as a village with such a name ought to be’.”

² 1799 in *Letter of Jane Austen - Braeburn Edition*.
(see [Wikipedia on Charlcombe](#))

- Langridge Court Farm is an ancient farm and still has a prison and court room which was used for the detention and trial of prisoners after the Battle of Lansdown. The infamous Judge Jefferies is said to have held court proceedings there.
- Famous residents have been Peter Gabriel at Ashcombe House and also Jonathan Dimbleby and his now ex-wife Bel Mooney at Upper Swainswick Farm before its more recent re-building project.
- There is a lot of published research on the geology of the Swainswick Valley and in particular the landslips so common around Bath. This dates back to the work of William Smith “the Father of English Geology”, who researched and wrote about the geology and landslips particularly around Sopers Wood above Woolley, in 1799. More recently the re-routing and re-design of the A46 was the opportunity and catalyst for much more modern geological work on the landslip phenomenon and helped significantly in the updating of the geology maps for the area enabling the underlying geology in the large areas on the map previously shown as “foundering” to be determined.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- Deterioration of hedgerows and mature copses/stands of trees due to apparent lack of management and changes in agricultural practises. The visually strong grown out hedgerows often make an important contribution to the harmonious landscape but without management they will thin out and die off.
- The new-build which replaced the original and vernacular Upper Langridge Farm that blended so well into the landscape, may be highly environmentally sustainable in terms of energy efficiency but it has not proven to have a visual impact and effect on the landscape character of the valley. There may well be pressure for this type of building to replace other vernacular buildings as these come on the market and this is a force for change which needs to respond to the landscape setting within this beautiful valley within the World .
- Increasing scrub on areas of important grassland habitat may be an issue and would benefit from an assessment using older aerial photographs of the area.

- Potential changes to the economics of farming. Farms in this valley were historically mixed, with dairying, sheep and some arable. There is now only one farm with dairy cattle and this reflects the changing economics of farming. It is understood that farm sizes around 65 acres were the norm for the steeply sloping valley sides within the Avon Valley around Bath and that these are no longer really viable as functional farms. Some now have beef cattle on the land and others have sold off farm buildings to non-farming families and rent out the land to others. There are likely to be similar situations all around the Avon Valley resulting in an uncertain future for the currently pastoral land parcels and the possibility of possible novel land uses such as the introduction of solar farms, poly tunnels and any agricultural or horticultural practice which changes the pastoral landscape and introduces visually discordant elements in the prominent landscape.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The condition appears to be generally good throughout the valley. The lack of management of grown out hedgerows is a concern as is possibly the increase in scrub.

2.2.3 ELV3: NORTHEND AND ST. CATHERINE'S VALLEY

Location and Boundaries

The Northend and St. Catherine's Valley character area is located on the north-east side of Bath, running northwards from Batheaston. It lies between the Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill character area to the west and The Rocks and Bannerdown Plateau character area to the east.

Whilst much of the overall St. Catherine's Brook valley is included in the Bathscape area, a quite large section of the upper part of the valley lies outside the project area.

Summary Landscape Character

- St. Catherine's Valley is a steep sided, relatively narrow valley with two major tributary valleys, Chilcombe Bottom and Oakford Brook Valley. Within the Bathscape area, these tributaries are particularly strong landscape features. All valley sides are indented and undulating at a range of scales and show the effects of landslips and slumping throughout. When standing close to St. Catherine's Brook on the

narrow valley floor, the lower slopes of the valley appear concave initially before becoming convex and then concave again higher up, all the time with undulations and indentations.

- The valley has a very well-treed and wooded character although overall there is more pasture than woodland. Larger areas of woodland are generally on the steeper, upper valley sides giving a well-treed skyline. Elsewhere smaller belts and copses of trees are mostly on steeper slopes and run along the contours. Within Chilcombe Bottom there is a notable, winding ribbon of woodland which follows the very steep slopes where the Inferior Oolite meets the softer Midford Sands. The Oakford Brook tributary valley is almost entirely wooded. Elsewhere much of the apparently wooded character comes from the thick grown-out hedgerows around small fields, from the areas of scrubby woodland developing on steeply sloping fields, from the many field trees, from trees associated with gardens at Northend and from the tree-lined brooks and lanes. Combined with the largely pastoral agriculture, the overall effect is of a harmonious and intricate patchwork landscape with a good balance between pasture and trees.

- Only the northern part of Northend lies within the character area and this has a notable linear settlement pattern, strung out along Northend Lane. Old stone cottages, houses and farms line the lane almost as far as the junction with Oakford Lane, often turning their backs on the lane and presenting large areas of distinctive blank wall or having front doors directly onto the lane.

ELV3 View over valley towards The Rocks Woodlands



- St. Catherine's Court, close to the north-western boundary of the character area is a beautiful grade 1 listed manor house with a grade 2* listed historic park.
- Lanes in the valley are themselves notable features, very narrow, usually sunken and tree or hedgerow-lined with flowery hedge banks at their best in late spring. Northend Lane is the main route through St. Catherine's valley running parallel to the brook but above it on the valley side. In addition to the characteristics described above, it is also characterised by the buildings and walls of Upper Northend coming straight onto the lane, often with no pavement at all but sometimes with distinctive narrow stone paved and shallow stone kerbed pavements.
- There is a rich store of local historical and cultural knowledge available and this enriches the landscape character of the valley, in particular relating to St. Catherine's Court, and also The Mead Tea Gardens which is no longer open but lives on in local memory and at least until recently, was occasionally used for village fund-raising events
- There are no wide and panoramic views in St. Catherine's valley but many tantalising glimpses through trees along the lanes to patchwork countryside, views of lovely old buildings and curving stone walls, views to St. Catherine's Court and intimate views along or across the valley from footpaths such as the Limestone Link.
- The valley has a very tranquil character contributed by the patchwork pastoral landscape and attractive stone buildings, the trees and flowers, the brooks, the sound of birdsong, water and the rustling of leaves. Human disturbance is limited to the typical sounds of rural farming landscapes.
- Discordant elements in the valley are limited to the unsightly metal painted municipal green spring-head capping structures and the occasional fencing and other structures belonging to Wessex Water.

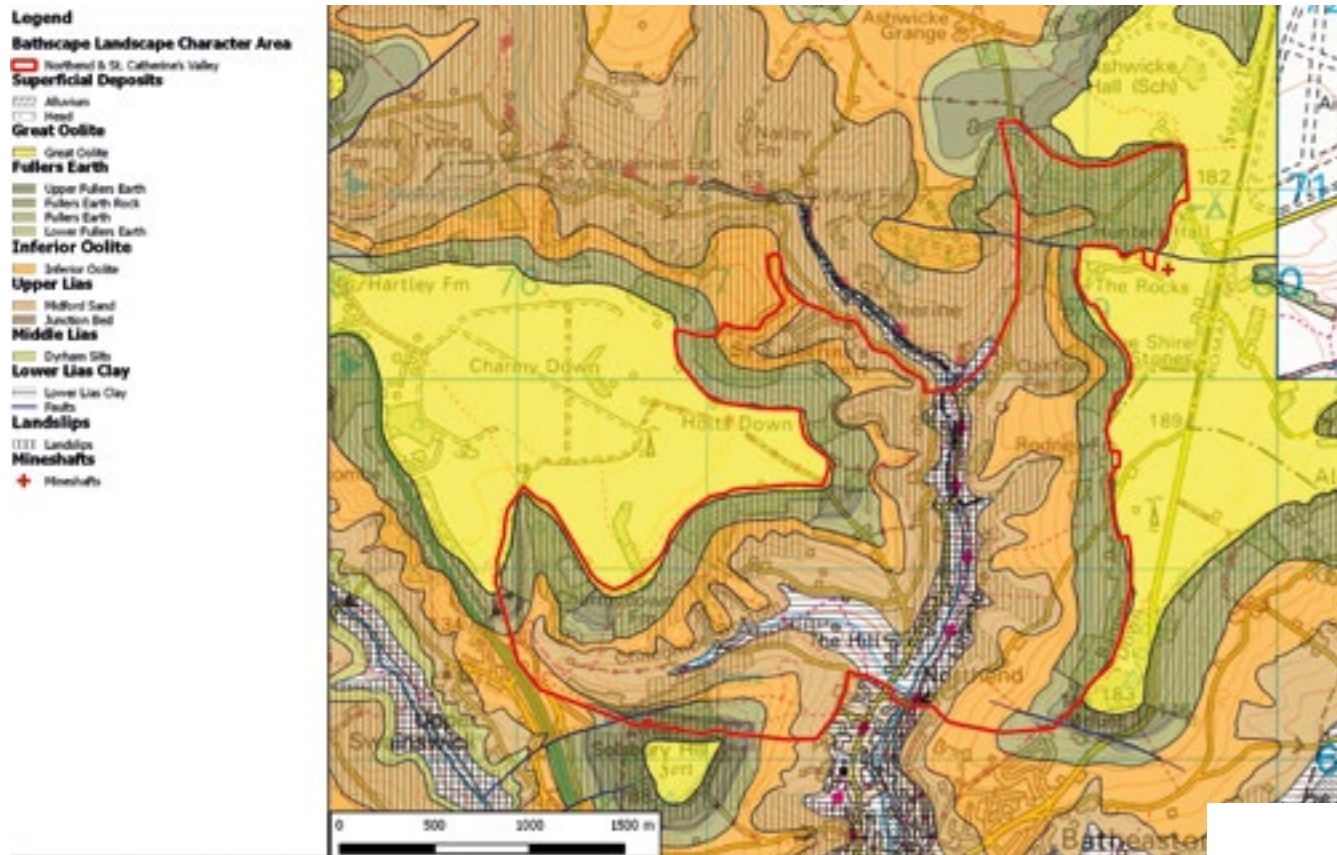
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The valley has a relatively symmetrical cross section with St. Catherine's Brook running roughly down the middle of the valley. Compared to both the Swainswick and Charlcombe and the Weston Brook valleys, St. Catherine's Brook Valley has a more complex landform. It is narrower with steeper slopes overall, has two significant tributary valleys, as well as being indented and convoluted both along the valley sides and in cross-section. The valley turns sharply towards the west-north-west just at the northern boundary of the Bathscape area close to the point where Oakford Brook joins St. Catherine's Brook. Much of the St. Catherine's Brook Valley itself is outside the Bathscape area to the north-west.

There are two large tributary valleys; the largest is Chilcombe Bottom which joins St. Catherine's Brook from the west at Northend. This tributary has cut down so far westward that it has almost merged into the Swainswick Valley leaving only a very narrow saddle of higher ground in between the two valleys. Chilcombe Bottom has a particularly distinctive and regular pattern of indented minor stream tributaries on its northern valley

ELV3 Northend & St. Catherine's Valley - Geology



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side whereas on its southern valley side there are no tributaries at all. The Oakford Brook forms a very steep-sided tributary valley which runs down from the north to join St. Catherine's Brook.

The geology of the Northend and St. Catherine's Valley character area is generally typical of the Enclosed Limestone Valley landscape type but with local differences which contribute to its distinctive landform. Fullers Earth runs around the highest parts of the valley sides immediately below the Greater Oolite Limestone of the adjacent plateau tops. Below this is a variable width of harder Inferior Oolite Limestone, followed by an equally variable width of Midford Sands. Finally, closest to the valley floor is Lias Clay and then Alluvium.

The Inferior Oolite is a particularly thick exposure on the eastern side of St. Catherine's Valley, forming the convex haunches of land between minor tributary indentations and then, below Starfell Farm, forming the majority of the much less indented valley side at Batheaston. Slopes here are generally more moderately sloping than those underlain by Fullers Earth, Midford Sands or Lias Clay.

The Midford Sands underlie most of the very steep sided tributary stream valleys.

The alternating layers of harder Oolite limestones and softer clays and sands have given rise to significant landslips which have occurred throughout much of the valley in almost all of the Fullers Earth areas highest up the valleys sides as well as much of the Midford Sand and Lias Clay areas.

These landslides and cambering, where blocks of capping limestone break off and slip down-slope, are largely responsible for the locally complex downhill undulations on the valley sides. In contrast, the stream tributaries give rise to undulations and indentations along the valley sides. The combination of stream tributary effects and landslip effects gives the overall complex mix of convex and concave forms, variable steep and shallow slopes and rhythmic undulations of the valley landform.

Wessex Water has a significant presence in the Northend and St. Catherine's Valley character area. There are numerous springs throughout the area which have heavy duty metal security caps protecting them; there is Washpool Water Treatment Works where Oakford Lane branches off toward Oakford Valley; in Chilcombe Bottom there is a fenced of "Protected Spring" area and an area of limestone grassland and wetland habitat where a previous Wessex

Water reservoir was drained; the small Oakford Reservoir and just outside of the Bathscape area is the larger Monkwood Reservoir.

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There are extensive areas of SNCI throughout the valley with only the slightly more intensively farmed areas immediately to the north, west and east of Northend omitted; these tend to be the areas with more moderate slopes and especially the larger areas of Inferior Oolite. The SNCI designated areas are complexes of habitat with a rich mix of ancient and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, unimproved calcareous and neutral grassland, semi-improved neutral grassland, improved grassland, scrub, running water (spring and stream) and standing water with associated marginal habitats. Draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridors' extend through the valley mainly on the western valley sides, through Chilcombe Bottom and up through the Oakford valley.

The entire length of the St. Catherine's Brook and its significant tributaries are also designated as an SNCI.

The sunken lanes are notable for their flowery hedge-banks.

There is extensive woodland scattered throughout the valley with the exception of the slightly

more intensively farmed areas around Northend. The woodland comprises mostly small to medium-sized blocks of woodland, usually following the contours and mostly located on the steeper slopes. In Chilcombe Bottom there is a particularly good example of narrow and linear strips of woodland on the very steepest slopes, forming a scalloped pattern which marks out the pattern of the tiny tributary streams on the

ELV3 Wild Garlic The Rocks Woodland



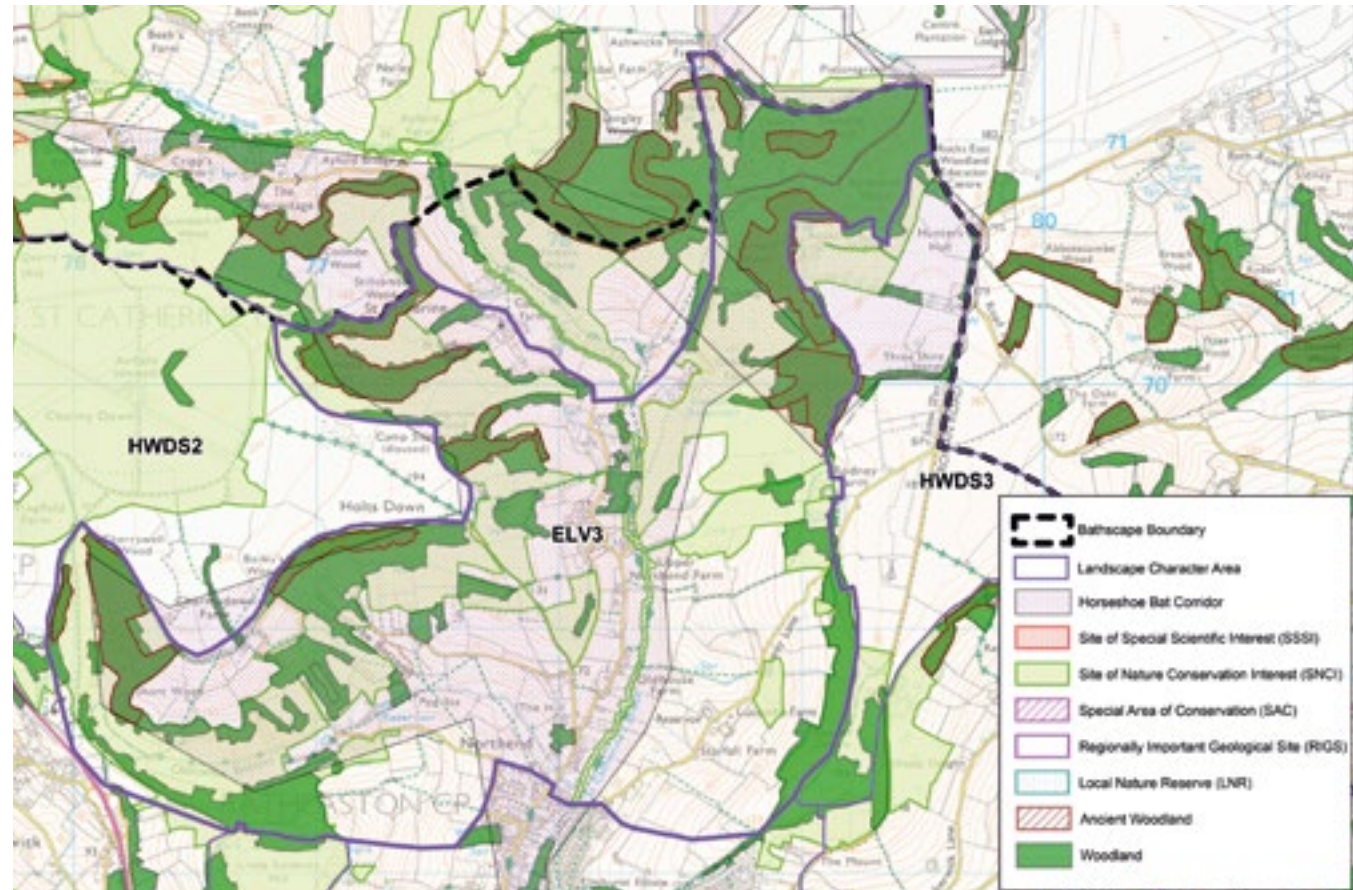
northern valley side. The heads of these streams appear to coincide with the boundary between the Inferior Oolite and the softer Midford Sands.

The most extensive areas of woodland are generally located highest up the valley sides giving a tree-lined skyline. The Oakford Valley tributary is almost entirely wooded forming the Rocks East woodland which is a rich mix of ancient broadleaved woodland, mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland and some conifer plantation. The Rocks East woodland is actively managed with areas of recently felled woodland and significant re-planting.

Outside of the woodland areas, the valley continues to have a very well-treed character with many hedgerow trees, trees lining St. Catherine's Brook and tributaries, trees in the grounds of larger properties and individual field trees. Individual field trees are found in some concentration around Northend in the pasture areas previously described as more intensively farmed but excluding the areas used for horticulture.

There are some significant areas of scrub especially in the Chilcombe Bottom valley on the northern side but also elsewhere in St. Catherine's Valley, usually on the western valley side.

ELV3 Northend & St Catherine's Valley – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

Enclosure of the Northend and St. Catherine's Valley character area took place mainly in the late medieval period with about two thirds of the valley identified in the Council's Historic Landscape Character Assessment as 'late medieval enclosure of steep-sided cultivation' and one third as 'late medieval enclosed open fields created by local arrangement and exchange.' These latter are found on the eastern side of St. Catherine's Valley at Northend and also on the southern side of the Chilcombe Bottom Valley.

Today agriculture in the valley is primarily sheep and cattle grazing on semi-improved or improved pasture with some significant areas of seeded grass leys. There is also one moderately large area (north of Ramscombe Bottom Lane on the north side of Chilcombe Bottom close to where it joins the main valley) and one smaller area (immediately west of Northend) of market garden/open field horticulture.

Fields are mostly small on the western side of St. Catherine's Valley and the northern side of Chilcombe Bottom. Elsewhere they are a mix of small to medium in size, with medium fields often on shallower slopes. Most fields are

very irregular in shape with little discernible pattern. Field boundaries are hedgerows which are mostly grown-out.

Historical maps show that there were large areas of orchards throughout the valley (none in Chilcombe Bottom) but particularly on the western valley sides. By the 1950s these were much reduced except on land to the south of St. Catherine's Court. Today there are no old orchards to be seen although there is a new orchard at St. Catherine's Court.

The large Rocks East woodland is a woodland campsite catering for families as well as school groups and scouting and guiding groups and includes classroom facilities.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

Northend, a small village on the north side of Batheaston, extends some distance up the St. Catherine's Valley along the narrow Northend Lane, as a ribbon of intermittent old stone houses, farms and cottages giving it a very distinctive character. Many of the buildings in Northend are C17th and C18th and of Bath stone with mostly pantile roofs. There are some distinctive stretches of high walls along Northend Lane and a number of properties have blank walls against the lane.

ELV3 St. Catherines's Court & Church



“The Mead Tea Gardens between St. Catherine’s Court and the Oakford Lane turn-off, was a wonderful St. Catherine’s institution from its beginnings in 1923 when it was set up in original Market Gardens by the Wilson family to serve the large numbers of visitors to see St. Catherine’s Court and church. Until its closure in 1992 well over 400,000 visitors are estimated to have visited.”

Most of Northend is residential or farm-related but there is a small amount of light industrial use.

There is no other settlement in the Northend and St. Catherine’s Valley character area apart from a few scattered farms and houses on the valley sides and including the Grade 1 listed St. Catherine’s Court and its grade 2* listed registered Historic Park. The 12th Century St. Catherine’s Church also stands within the grounds.

Wessex Water has significant land interests within the valley as well as reservoirs, protected springs and a treatment works. There are around 44 springs in the valley, each with large steel box-shaped spring-head caps installed after the events of ‘9/11’.

Northend Lane is the principal lane through St. Catherine’s valley just up the valley side from the St. Catherine’s Brook, with Oakford Lane running off to the north-east through the Oakford tributary valley towards Marshfield. Steway Lane also runs north-east connecting the northern edge of Batheaston with the Fosse Way on Bannerdown. On the western side of the valley, Seven Acres Lane runs partway through Chilcombe Bottom before becoming a rather inaccessible trackway and Hollies and Ramscombe Bottom Lanes run up towards Charmy Down. These lanes

are often sunken and tree-lined giving a sense of enclosure when passing through the valley. At the time of the field survey, these lanes had a wonderful showing of hedgerow flowers with wild garlic, pink campion, violets, cow parsley and remnants of bluebells. The lane through the developed area of Northend is particularly characterful with narrow stone pavements and shallow pennant kerbs.

There is a well maintained and recently re-surfaced byway running very steeply down into the valley from Charmy Down. This is lined with hedgerows (some have been recently laid) and very old trees. The Limestone Link path runs alongside the St. Catherine’s Brook through the character area. The Limestone Link is a 36 mile long path joining the Cotswolds to the Mendips. Elsewhere in the valley there are scattered footpaths mostly running down the valley sides and there is Wessex Water open access land on the northern side of Chilcombe Bottom.

3. Land Ownership

There is limited information available about land ownership within the valley area although there is known to be a significant Wessex Water land holding.

Visual Significance

Views within the valley are contained overall due to the combination of steep, relatively narrow valley cross section, sinuous and complex landform and heavily wooded nature especially on the skyline. Views are therefore generally channelled up and down the valley or across from side to side and are often framed by trees giving enticing glimpses to a harmonious balance of pasture fields, full hedgerows, trees and woodland clothing an interesting and varied undulating and indented landform. There are few views out of the character area itself but occasional views can be seen down the valley to the Brown's Folly and Ashley Wood areas of the Bathampton and Limpley Stoke and the Lower By Brook Valleys. The outline of Little Solsbury hill can sometimes be viewed on the skyline.

There were no significant discordant views noted in the field survey apart from where the Wessex Water metal spring-head caps formed intrusive elements in the view.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

There is a strong sense of tranquillity throughout the valley. For the most part the valley is very quiet indeed. This sense of tranquillity is provided by:

- The beauty and harmony of the well treed pastoral landscape clothing the intimate and undulating valley landform, and the beauty of many of the vernacular buildings;
- The quietness in the valley with sounds being mainly birdsong, typical sounds of low intensity livestock farming, and running water close to St. Catherine's Brook, and
- the dark night skies.

“The valley has a very tranquil character contributed by the patchwork pastoral landscape and attractive stone buildings, the trees and flowers, the brooks, the sound of birdsong, water and the rustling of leaves. Human disturbance is limited to the typical sounds of rural farming landscapes.”

Cultural Associations

- St. Catherine's Court has a rich history originally being a priory grange for the monks of Bath Abbey. After dissolution Henry VIII granted the manor to his tailor, John Malte on condition that he adopts the King's illegitimate daughter, Ethelreda Malte. By the 18th century the house was falling into disrepair but was eventually bought by Colonel Joseph Holden Strutt in the 19th century who renovated it. Subsequent generations of the Strutt family continued renovations to the highest standard and this was continued by the actress Jane Seymour when she bought it in 1984. After her marriage to an American film producer, she rented out the house as a film set and also recording studio. Bands including The Cure, Radiohead and New Order recorded there and for a time the house was rented by Robbie Williams.

- The Mead Tea Gardens between St. Catherine's Court and the Oakford Lane turn-off, was a wonderful St. Catherine's institution from its beginnings in 1923 when it was set up in original Market Gardens by the Wilson family to serve the large numbers of visitors to see St. Catherine's Court and church. Until its closure in 1992 well over 400,000 visitors are estimated to have visited according to the Mead Tea Gardens website. Notable visitors included Peter Gabriel, Joni Mitchell, Ann Widdecombe, Bel Mooney, Lyn Redgrave and more. Since its closure in 1992, the Mead has continued to hold special fund-raising charity events and in the last 6 days of August 2016 it raised £900 for Batheaston's new village hall.
- The Rocks and its gardens in the Oakford Valley. The following is taken from www.parksandgardens.org:

There seems to be no foundation in fact for the idea that a 'castle' existed at the Rocks in medieval times. The earliest documentary record of buildings there dates to 1686. Presumably the first landscaping activity there dates from the same period. There was more landscaping in the mid-18th century, when the avenue of limes flanking the main entrance was planted, and the wall along the Fosse Way was built. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a typical 18th century park was laid out around the Rocks at this time.

An extensive garden was laid out on the slopes of the valley to the west of the house. This probably took place in the early-19th century. A kind of grotto was created in the rock face, and a pond with a statue was built. Paths led through the woods to an ornamental footbridge, and a long staircase of stone led down to the bottom of the valley. This whole area is now so overgrown that it is difficult to reconstruct the scene there in the 19th century.

The main house at the Rocks was demolished in 1957, and the estate was divided. Since then, the park and garden have reverted to farmland and forest.

It was known for its romantic setting in 1738 when it was celebrated in a collection of poems dedicated to Princess Amelia by Mrs. Mary Chandler of Bath. In the 1760s Gainsborough produced several paintings of the Jacob Family, owners of The Rocks, and he would have been familiar with this landscape.

The Rocks East Woodland is now run as a woodland campsite. It also has classroom facilities and takes school parties and has group-camping for Scouts and Guides and other organisations.

- The Monks Causeway. A causeway of stone slabs was thought to have been built by the monks of St John's and St Catherine's in the valley to link it with Bath Abbey. Only small sections remain today, one being between Eagle House in Northend to New House Farm in Upper Northend. Batheaston Parish Council is amongst those hoping it might be restored.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- Deterioration of hedgerows and mature copses/stands of trees due to lack of management and changes in agricultural practises. The visually strong grown out hedgerows actually make an important contribution to this harmonious landscape but without management they will thin out and die off.
- Possibly increasing scrub on areas of important grassland habitat may be an issue and would benefit from an assessment using older aerial photographs of the area.
- Potential changes to the economics of farming. The small field sizes, hedgerows and steep slopes are a key part of the attractive and distinctive character of the valley. They are not likely to be conducive to economically farming. Changes in agricultural practice which resulted in the reduction of hedgerows or the intensification of farming in what is currently steeply sloping land with small fields, often with important ecological designations could result in loss of that which gives this valley its essential character. It would be helpful to understand more of the agricultural practices and the size of holdings in the valley and to know the areas within higher level stewardship agreements.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The condition appears to be good in general throughout the valley. The lack of management of grown out hedgerows and small woodlands is a concern as is possibly the increase in scrub. The current condition of much of the ecologically designated pasture is largely unknown.

The Wessex Water protective Spring-head covers are numerous and are unsightly and discordant in the landscape. There are other areas of fencing and structures in Wessex Water ownership which are painted an institutional green and tend to be rather unsightly.

2.2.4 ELV4: LOWER BY BROOK VALLEY

Location and Boundaries

The Lower By Brook Valley character area is a small section of the much larger By Brook Valley character area categorised in the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment. The By Brook itself within the Lower By Brook character area runs from the western edge of the village of Ashley near Box in a south westerly direction towards its confluence with the River Avon. The south western boundary of the character area runs between the eastern edges of Batheaston and Bathford. Adjoining the Lower By Brook to the north is the Bannerdown and The Rocks character area; and to the south is the Plateau Edges around Monkton Farleigh character area.

Summary Landscape Character

- This is the lowest 2.5km of the By Brook which is a small river and tributary of the Bristol Avon. Here the By Brook has cut right through the Cotswolds dip slope to form a flat bottomed valley with a relatively broad cross-section and high valley sides which are initially steep off the valley floor, become convex and shallower sloping in the middle section before

becoming steep again high up the valley sides. The overall convex middle section of each valley side has large-scale and quite gentle undulations and indentations giving a pleasing rounded and curvaceous character. In detail at a local scale there are often smaller but steep undulations and indentations within individual fields. Almost all of this variation is due to the geology of the

Bathscape area with its tendency to landslips and slumping.

- The land-use character of the valley is heavily influenced by the underlying geology. There are heavily wooded upper steep slopes especially on the south-eastern valley side. A large mid-slope area of mixed farming, arable dominated and with a scattering of horsiculture with

well-managed hedgerow field boundaries, takes advantage of the more shallow slopes. A well treed valley bottom and lower valley sides where the distinct, flat but relatively narrow flood plain carves a corridor through the Cotswold dip slope has become the obvious route for a transport corridor.

- Well-treed parkland around Shockerwick and well-treed grounds of Ashley House on the opposite side of the valley give a distinctively parkland character to the eastern end of the character area.
- Less common land-uses include the award winning Mumford's Vineyard at the north-western end of the area and an apple/tree nursery apparently now neglected, which extends up the north-western valley side from the A4 close to Batheaston.
- Although outside the character area, the western part of the valley is heavily influenced by the villages of Bathford and Bathampton. Within the area is the attractive stone built hamlet of Shockerwick centred around the C18th Shockerwick House on the north-western valley side at the eastern end of the character area and opposite that is the distinctive linear village of Kingswood located high up on the opposite

ELV4 Lower By Brook Valley looking East



“This is a visually harmonious, gentle, undulating and open, settled agricultural landscape contained from north to south by wooded and well treed skylines and with channelled views along the valley.”

valley side below the woodland skyline. Along the valley floor extending out along the A4 from Batheaston for about a kilometre is less attractive ribbon development.

- The transport corridor links Bath and Bristol with towns and cities to the east and comprises the A4 Box Road and the great Western Railway running parallel with each other beside the meandering By Brook which crosses under both routes.
- The north-western valley side has a network of sunken lanes with high hedge-banks and occasional large old trees and few footpaths whereas the south-eastern valley side has a network of mostly tree-lined lanes and roads and many footpaths probably reflecting its more settled character.
- The character of the valley is strongly influenced by the nearby stone mines which initially produced building stone for local and then later were used as a national munitions store during and after WW2 wider. They were an important source of local employment. The line of the tunnel linking the munitions storage areas in the old mines to the railway sidings can still be seen as an earthwork in the fields.
- The gentle visual harmony of the whole area give a natural sense of tranquillity but this is slightly negatively affected by noise and settlement effects at the western end of the area.
- This is a visually harmonious, gentle, undulating and open, settled agricultural landscape contained from north to south by wooded and well treed skylines and with channelled views along the valley, opening out at each end with views to Bath in the west and to the continuing By Brook valley as well as up to Colerne, to the east.
- There are few discordant elements. The Leyland Cypress Shelterbelt and somewhat out of character lines of trees of the old Bathford Nursery and some of the less well integrated shed development along the A4 are notable. The A4 and railway are, perhaps surprisingly, well integrated in the landscape as is the short section of pylon line. Locally, areas of horse tape and stabling are slightly discordant.

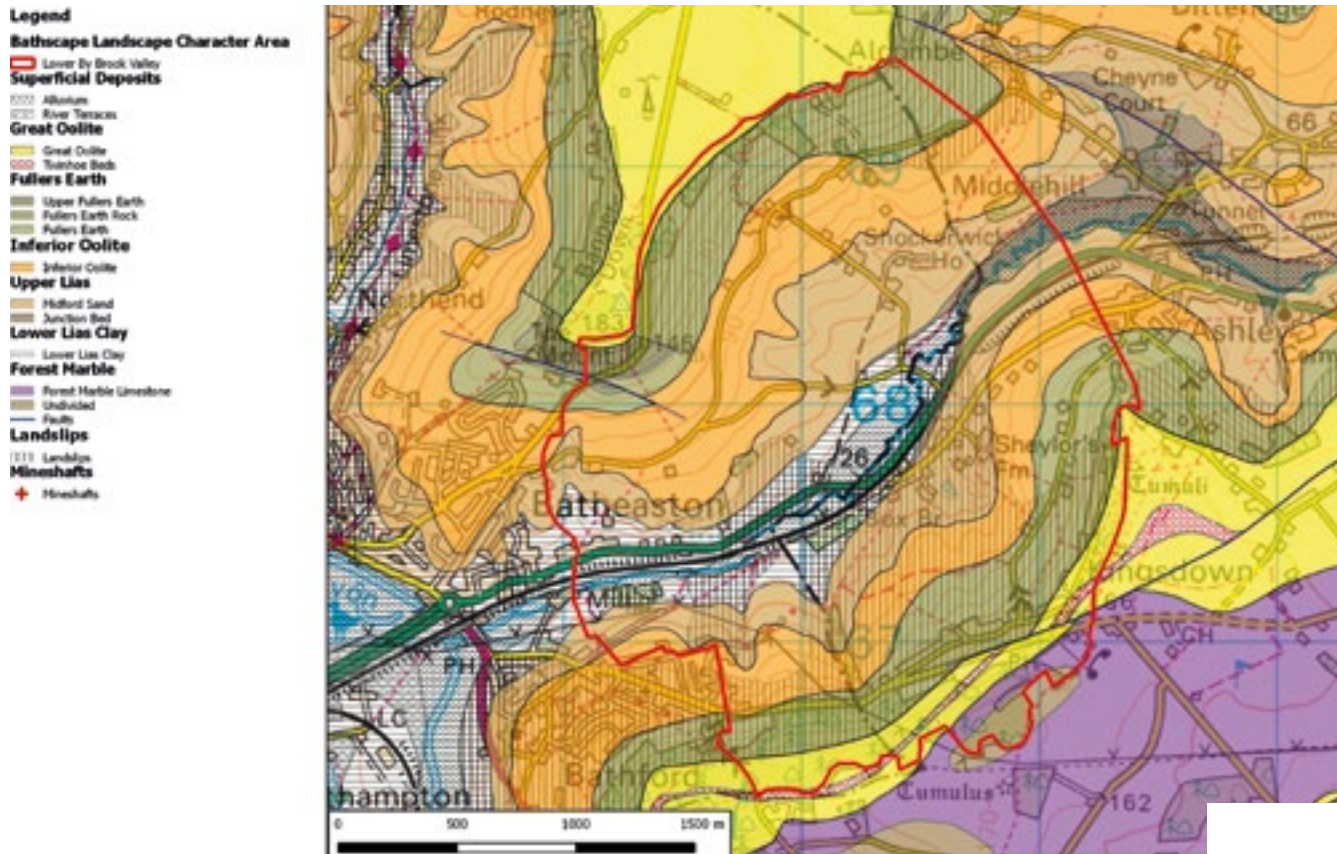
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The By Brook is a small river, 19km (12miles) long and is a tributary of the Bristol Avon. Approximately 2.5km of the lower reaches of the By Brook lies within the Lower By Brook character area and cuts right through the Cotswolds dip slope here, forming a corridor effect. The River has a relatively narrow but distinct flood plain, and within the Bathscape area only a slight fall, appearing almost flat to the eye. This is in contrast to the Weston, Lam and St. Catherine's Brooks which are relatively short in length and mostly entirely contained within the Bathscape area. They have little or no flood plain and significant levels changes between source and confluence with the River Avon.

The Lower By Brook Valley is relatively symmetrical in cross section and although enclosed by the high ground of the Cotswold Hills on either side, the valley itself is quite open. The cross-sectional form of the valley sides is distinctive with a narrow flood plain, initially steep valley sides, followed by a shallower, convex outline in the middle section and then finally steep upper slopes. Within that general cross-sectional form there is additional variety of landform both down and along the valley

ELV4 Lower by Brook Valley - Geology



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sides caused by gentle undulations and slumping at a range of scales caused by the characteristic geology of the Bathscape area (see below). There are only two small tributary streams both on the South-western valley side.

The geology of the Lower By Brook character area is generally typical of the Enclosed Limestone Valley Landscape type but with local differences which contribute to its distinctive landform.

Fullers Earth runs all along the highest parts of the valley sides immediately below the Greater Oolite limestone of the adjacent plateau tops. In places at the very top of the north-eastern valley side there is a very narrow strip of Great Oolite which corresponds with steep slopes; similarly on the South-western valley side, however here the Great Oolite at the top of the valley side is quite a thick band extending about 20m down the slope. Below the Fullers Earth is a variable width of harder Inferior Oolite limestone occupying the upper centre part of the slope, followed by an equally variable width of Midford Sands on the lower centre slopes). Finally, on the valley floor and lowest slopes is Lias Clay.

The alternating layers of harder Oolite limestones and softer clays and sands have given rise to significant landslips which have occurred throughout much of the valley. Almost all of the Fullers Earth areas highest up the valley sides have landslips, as well as much of the Midford Sand and Lias Clay areas.

Overall the wide bands of Inferior Oolite and Midford Sands in this valley give its slopes and undulations a more rounded and gentle character than those in the Weston, Swainswick and St. Catherine's Valleys.

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

Ecological designations in the Lower By Brook Valley are restricted to the By Brook, the valley floor and lowest slopes; and then the steepest upper slopes. The majority of the valley is an improved and farmed landscape taking advantage of the more gentle slopes. Most of the designated habitat is woodland, which is extensive on the upper south-eastern valley sides where Ashley wood is the largest woodland block and is also ancient woodland. A narrower block of woodland also occupies the steep slopes between and amongst the village of Kingswood and the plateau, its ecological status is unknown. Ashley wood is included in a draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridor' providing likely foraging corridors for Iford.

On the North-western valley sides there are smaller blocks of woodland which are either linear or irregular in shape but overall run along the contours. The central area of woodland is ancient and also designated as UK priority habitat, mixed deciduous woodland. The designation names Shockerwick, Tennygrove and Woodleaze Woods. Much of this woodland is included in a woodland/grassland SNCI (Site of Nature Conservation Interest) complex which extends onto the plateau at Bannerdown and also the

upper slopes of St. Catherine's Valley. Of the grassland areas in the By Brook Valley which are included in this SNCI complex, only a small area is UK priority habitat lowland limestone grassland with a small area of lowland meadow. There is also a UK priority habitat lowland meadow just north of Shockerwick Lane on the edge of Batheaston.

The tightly meandering, tree-lined By Brook is designated as an SNCI and the brook, valley floor and lower slopes throughout the character area are also designated a draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridor' providing likely foraging corridors for St. Catherine's Valley.

As described above, woodland is mostly confined to the upper valley sides on steep slopes especially notable on the south-eastern valley side where Ashley wood is a large ancient woodland area. There are also a number of small copses scattered along the valley floor, mostly just onto the lower slopes of the south-eastern valley side where there are several small copses and tree groups associated with Ashley House and Sheylor's Farm. The only other small area of woodland on the south-eastern valley side is a linear strip which runs along the B&NES (Bath and North East Somerset)/Wiltshire boundary following the course of a minor tributary stream. On the north-western valley side

the only woodland apart from that on the upper slopes are some small copses forming part of Shockerwick House historic park. A small amount of new woodland planting was noted on the north-western valley side

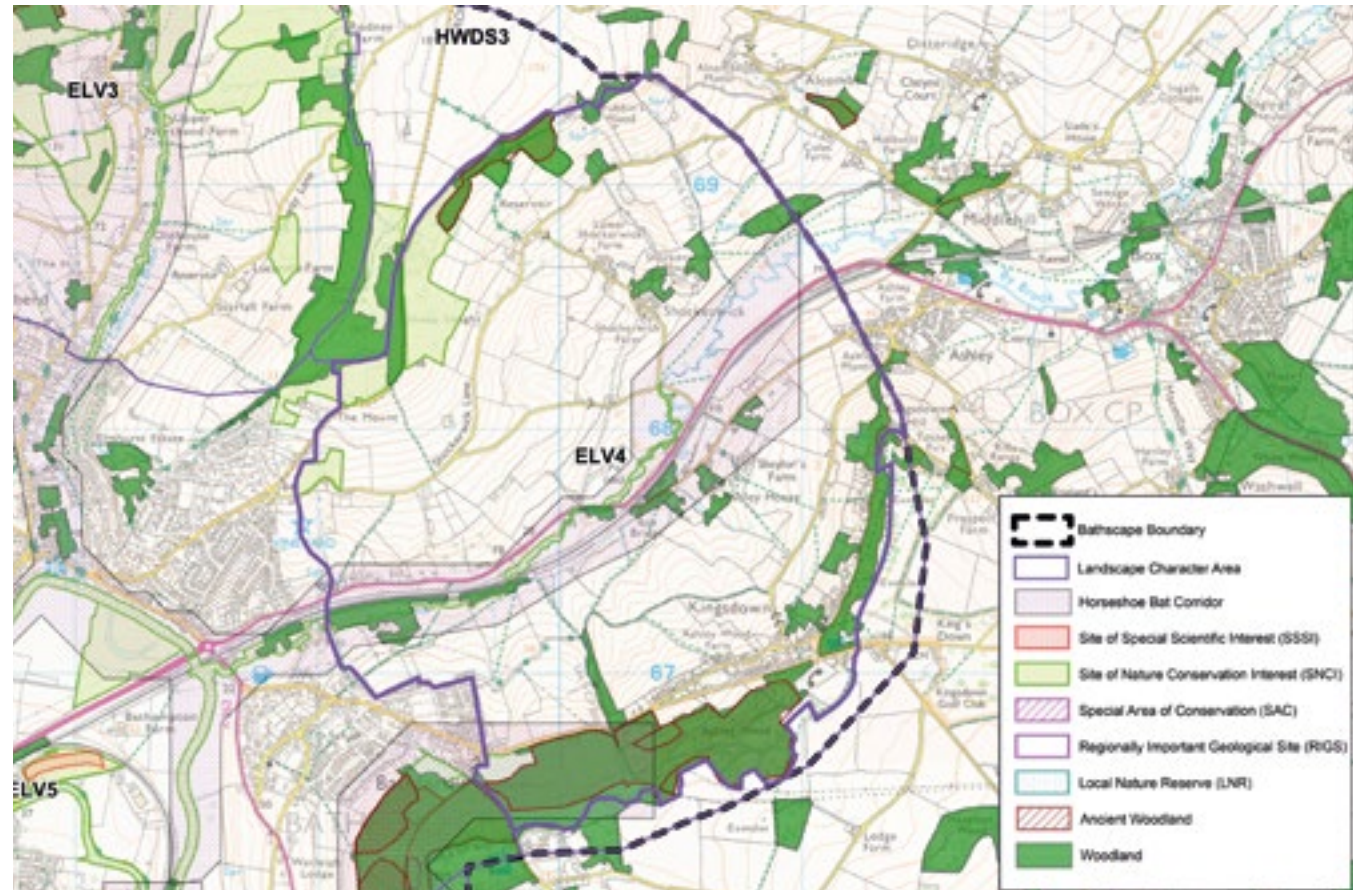
Outside of the woodland areas on the upper valley slopes and the valley floor, much of the valley is a mixed agricultural landscape with limited trees especially on the north-western valley side. Notable exceptions are:

- the historic parkland of Shockerwick House and its immediate surrounding fields where there are numbers of excellent old parkland trees (mixed species but many oak) and tree clumps;
- an area of well treed roads, hedgerows and gardens associated with Ashley House, Sheylor's Farm and other nearby properties just to the north-east of Box Bridge;
- trees associated with properties in Kingswood on the upper slopes of the south-eastern valley side;
- trees other than woodland on or close to the valley floor including those associated with the A4 and railway, the Bathford nursery site including a visually discordant row of Leyland Cypress trees, and the By Brook;

50 2.2 Enclosed Limestone Valleys
ELV4 Lower by Brook Valley

- on the south-eastern valley side the roads are all distinctively well treed and there is also a well treed and ancient byway which wanders along the valley side between the edge of Bathford and Kingswood.
- Finally there are a significant number of excellent large field trees in the SNCI grassland on the upper north-western valley side at Sheep Sleight.

ELV4 Lower By Brook Valley – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

Historic landscape character data is available for most of the north-western valley side and the southernmost part of the south-eastern valley side.

The majority of the north-western valley side and the whole of area within B&NES on the South-eastern valley side were enclosed in the late medieval period through local arrangement or exchange. The eastern part of the north-western valley side within the B&NES area formed part of the original Shockerwick House estate parkland and its historic landscape character is classified as 'post-medieval designed ornamental landscapes.' This extends from Lower Lodge, an original Lodge house for the estate at the boundary with the A4, up to Grubbin's Wood just below the adjacent plateau. Finally there is a small area just below Bannerdown which is classified as 'C18th-19th parliamentary enclosure.'

Today the valley has a well-managed agricultural landscape character with a predominance of arable apart from around and to the east of Shockerwick and also on the un-wooded steeper upper slopes which is all predominantly pastoral. At the time of the site assessment flax crops were noted in places. In addition there is a considerable amount of horticulture on both sides of the valley, generally in areas accessible from lanes through the valley. There is also a stud Farm close to Ashley, Mumford's Vineyard just to the east of Batheaston village on the upper valley side and some horticulture activities off the A4 including a neglected apple nursery.

Fields range between small and large, but the majority are medium or medium to large and irregular in shape. It is hard to recognise any of the original post-medieval enclosure pattern suggesting that there has been significant enlargement of fields. Field boundaries are predominantly hedges, mostly clipped but occasionally tall with hedgerow trees. There is a small amount of walling up at the top of the North-western valley side. There are also areas of sub-divided pony paddocks with the ubiquitous horse tape.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

There are two settlements in the character area. On the North-western valley side is the hamlet of Shockerwick focussed around the grade 1 listed C18th Shockerwick House and its C18th Park, and including Lower Shockerwick Farm, Shockerwick Farm and a few other houses. The vast majority of the buildings are vernacular in style, stone built with pantile roofs dating

from the 18th and 19th century and occasionally earlier. The one modern house within the hamlet core and some of the modern agricultural buildings appear visually rather discordant.

ELV4 Shockerwick House



On the south-eastern valley side is the small village of Kingswood with its distinctively linear form along two lanes (Lower Kingsdown Road and High Street) set right up high on the valley side one below the other. The village does extend onto the adjacent plateau outside of the Bathscape area, where it has a more diffuse form and is dominated by Kingsdown Golf Course. There is a predominance of vernacular buildings ranging from cottages, some terraced and some detached, to larger detached houses in large gardens. There are also a number of modern houses particularly towards the western edge of the village. There is one working farm, Ashley wood Farm and one pub, the Swan Inn.

Outside of these two settlements development is limited. There is some C20th ribbon development along the A4 Box Road extending out from Batheaston and comprising a mix of detached or semi-detached houses, Bathford Nursery (possible not active), some small warehousing and cafe. There is also some ribbon development along the lane between Box Bridge and Ashley and comprising mostly large properties in grounds such as Ashley House, Sheylor's Farm, now converted and Ashley Stud Farm. Elsewhere there are a few scattered properties along Shockerwick Lane including Mumford's Vineyard just beyond the edge of Batheaston.

The western end of the character area is strongly influenced by the villages of Bathford and Batheaston in the adjacent character area.

There is a significant transport corridor running along the valley floor with the A4 Box Road running beside the Great Western railway line. Both are busy routes and apart from the noise they generate, are remarkably well visually integrated into the valley landscape being largely screened by a combination of trees and the steep lower slopes of the valley sides. These routes do however physically separate the two valley sides as well as the Bathford Parish and the communities living there.

There are three narrow, single track lanes on the north-western side of the valley which are mostly enclosed by high hedge banks and scattered large trees, at the time of survey they were full of hedgerow flowers. Shockerwick Lane runs from the Meadow Park estate on the eastern edge of Batheaston along the upper valley side continuing out of the character area towards Ditteridge and beyond. There are two more lanes dropping down the valley side from Shockerwick Lane which connect up just before an attractive bridge over the By Brook close to their junction with the A4 Box road. The lane furthest to the east runs down through the hamlet of Shockerwick.

On the south-eastern valley side the roads are generally two-way and characteristically tree-lined rather than sunken. They are also generally more settled with scattered houses and farms as well as the village of Kingswood. The lowest lane runs off the A4 at Box Bridge towards Ashley. The main road route runs close to the top of the valley side connecting Bathford with Kingswood. From this road, Lower Kingswood Road forks off to the left and another interestingly named lane - Wormcliff Lane forks left off that. These then connect up again at Ashley via Doctor's Hill.

There are few footpaths or byways/ green lanes on the north-western side of the valley. There is a footpath linking the A4 to Shockerwick Lane close to the edge of Meadow Park estate, a short length of byway further along Shockerwick Lane which connects up onto the fosse Way on the adjacent plateau and a small network of paths just to the east of Shockerwick hamlet which include a short stretch along the By Brook. It is notable that there is little public access to the By Brook in this character area although there are fishing rights and club fishing which do allow that specific type of access.

The north-western side of the valley is better endowed with paths, which probably reflects its more settled nature. There are various paths running out from Bathford and also around Kingswood and also paths running up and down the valley side and crossing over or under the railway and the brook at various footbridges or tunnels to reach the box Road. There is a particularly notable and well-used greenway running between Bathford and Lower Kingsdown which is known to have been in use in medieval times.

There is general well-used but informal access to both Ashley Wood and the wood above Kingswood.

A pylon line runs diagonally down through the western end of the south-eastern valley side cutting through Ashley Wood and then through the fields before running along the side of the By Brook outside the character area and eventually crossing Bathampton Meadows.

3. Land Ownership

There is no available information

Visual Significance

- The high valley sides contain most views within the valley, although there are channelled views out of the valley to Bath in the west and further up the valley out of the character area to the east where the landscape is more open and rolling and there are views across to Colerne in its plateau edge location in the northeast.
- The extent of views varies depending on location up the valley sides. Lower down or onto the valley floor views tend to be more confined by trees and hedgerows and where there are views they mostly look across to limited sections of the opposite valley side. Views higher up the valley sides can be panoramic and looking down over the near valley slopes and then across at the whole opposite valley side as well as out of the valley to the east and west.
- There are many more opportunities for wide panoramic views from the south-eastern valley side because of the more extensive settlement and larger number of footpaths. Many properties high up in Kingsdown have lovely panoramic views across and along the valley with excellent views to Shockerwick House and parkland just across the valley on its lower slopes and also to Colerne high up on the skyline to the north-east. From the western end of the character area close to Bathford, views look across to the edge of Batheaston and the Mumford's Vineyard can just be seen as the developed landscape gives way to the attractive rolling valley side, which is here slightly marred by the somewhat discordant and rather regimented and angular old tree nursery off the A4.
- On the north-western side of the valley, there are limited, mostly glimpsed views across the valley from gateways or gaps in hedgerows on the lanes and from the few footpaths. At the western end of Shockerwick Lane and from the footpath which runs down from Shockerwick Lane to the A4, views across the valley are focussed on Bathford village just outside the character area. The allotments surrounded by houses are particular prominent in the view here as is the strong woodland all along the top of the valley. From the higher parts of this footpath, there is also a distinctive difference between the view looking west and the view looking east. To the west is Bath, Bathford, Bathampton and the Bathampton Meadows area which is more urban in nature and more influenced by road noise and the sounds of city life. To the east the view has a sense of tranquillity being open countryside, with limited settlement, and a harmonious balance of mixed agriculture, trees clumps and hedges on gently undulating and rolling valley sides, glimpses of Kingswood village and all topped by woodland all along the top of the valley side
- Views of the By Brook are rare due to limited public access and enclosure by trees. There is one good view where the lane from Shockerwick hamlet crosses the bridge over the brook. Here the brook is fast flowing with a stony bed and overhung by trees.
- There are visual links looking west out of the valley to the city of Bath; to the adjacent Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Valley Tributary confluences character area as well as longer distance views taking in Charlcombe valley and the outline of Little Solsbury Hill. Looking to the east, there are views over the rest of the By Brook valley, to Colerne and to countryside further to the east.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

Towards the western end of the character area the influence of increasing settlement and road noise becomes stronger and this has a slight negative effect in terms of experience of tranquillity. However, locally on footpaths and tree-lined lanes the attractiveness and harmony of the visual landscape and the sound of countryside bird song tend to balance out the negatives. At the eastern end of the area the settlement and road noise is reduced and the visual landscape with its parkland character in places is more rural, with wider rolling countryside views extending eastwards. Overall tranquillity increases to the east.

The effects of the sounds from the A4 and railway are generally well muted due to a combination of valley floor location, overall landform and tree cover.

Walking in the woods there is a strong sense of tranquillity and of history.

Cultural Associations

- The local stone mines at nearby Monkton Farleigh and Box have had a strong effect on life within the valley. A fascinating website exists, called Kingsdown Memories and it comprises the writings of a lifetime local resident.³ Amongst numerous other interesting memories he documents the local stone quarry (Swan Mine) right opposite the Swan Inn where the tunnel went back in about 1.5 miles and stone was brought out by horse and cart with the best being taken to Bath. Historically many Kingswood residents worked in the mines.
- After the mines closed their usefulness as dry, underground storage was recognised. In the late 1930s Monkton Farleigh quarry was renovated by the Royal Engineers as one of the three major national stockpiles for munitions. In November 1937 the Great Western Railway were contracted to build a 300m long raised platform at Shockerwick with two sidings and a sorting yard. This was attached by a 1.25 miles (2.01 km) tunnel descending down the valley side from the Central Ammunition Depot (CAD), housed in the former mine workings on top of the adjacent plateau. The whole logistics operation was designed to cope with a maximum of 1,000 tonnes

of ammunition a day. CAD Monkton Farleigh closed at the end of hostilities, although was kept in an operational condition until the 1950s. The sidings were then cleared, and not used again until the mid-1980s when a museum opened for a short period on the site. Today the north end of the tunnel is sealed by a concrete and rubble installation, while the former mine/CAD is used for secure commercial document storage.⁴ The line of the tunnel linking the munitions storage in the mines with the railway sidings can still be seen as an earthwork in one of the fields adjacent to the Bathford Parish boundary.

- Ashley House just below Kingsdown and set in well-treed grounds has an interesting history. There are strong links to the building of the Great Western Railway with one owner William Adair Bruce being a board member and it is thought that Brunel stayed there on occasion. Later between 1909 and 1917, Sidney Robinson the Liberal MP owned the house and David Lloyd George often visited.

- Shockerwick House is grade 1 listed. In 1740 the estate and ruined manor house were bought by the Wiltshire family. In about 1750 Walter Wiltshire commissioned Wood the Elder to build a house and lay out the grounds. Around 1900 extensive alterations to the house were carried out by Earnest George. In 1983 the house was opened as a private nursing home and remains so today. Shockerwick was originally the site of a Court which tried local offences and was presided over by Adam of Shockerwicke in the reign of Henry II. Walter Wiltshire was the founder of a business carrying goods by wagon between London and Bath. He was influential in establishing Bath as a flourishing and fashionable city. He was a good friend of Gainsborough, who often painted in his orangery. From 1761 to 1774 Wiltshire carried Gainsborough's paintings to London. Whilst staying at Shockerwick in 1805, William Pitt received the news of Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz. When the Princess Victoria visited Bath to open the Royal Victoria Park in 1830 she viewed the valuable collection of paintings at Shockerwick, some of them by Gainsborough.⁵

³ <http://www.choghole.co.uk/victor/victor1.htm>

⁴ Wikipedia "Monkton Farleigh" page

- Mumford's Vineyard is a successful, award winning 4 acre vineyard just east of Batheaston, high up on the North-western valley side. It is owned by the Cox family who planted the vineyard in 1986. The name Mumford is the old field name on ancient tithe maps and thought to derive from "Montfort". Simon de Montfort owned land here in 1250Ad.⁶

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- There is significant horsiculture in the valley. Currently this does not have any more than local negative effects in visual terms from the use of white horse tape. Pony grazing can lead to deterioration in pasture condition from over-grazing and poor management but this does not appear to be the case currently.
- Ribbon development along the A4 includes some unattractive and poorly integrated shed development. Further development along the A4 would significantly damage this attractive landscape.
- The old parkland trees around Shockerwick House are showing signs of their age and there are no signs of any replacement planting. These trees are important elements in the valley landscape.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

Overall this landscape appears to be well managed and in good condition apart from the apparent lack of replacement and management of the parkland trees around Shockerwick house and in the fields beyond the immediate garden; the old, neglected Bathford Nursery; and also the poor integration of the shed development along the A4.

There is a prominent shelterbelt of tall and mature Leyland Cypress running up the north-western valley side on the boundary of the old Bathford Nursery. This is a significant visual detractor locally.

⁵ <http://www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people - Shockerwick House>

⁶ www.mumfordsvineyard.co.uk

2.2.5 ELV5: BATHAMPTON MEADOWS AND RIVER AVON TRIBUTARY VALLEYS

Location and Boundaries

The character area is centred on Bathampton meadows flood plain where the River Avon takes a curving right angle turn westwards from its south-north course through the Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley. It includes the flood plain west of Bathampton Meadows as far as Kensington Meadows, and extends southwards to just below Warleigh Lodge Farm. The area also includes the confluences of the St. Catherine's Brook and By Brook and the whole of the surrounding valley sides including the village settlements of Batheaston including Northend, Bathford and Bathampton.

Summary Landscape Character

- Convergence of Limpley Stoke, Bristol Avon, St. Catherine's and By Brook valleys with intervening steep hillsides.
- Convergence of London Road, the GWR railway and Warminster Branch line, Kennet and Avon canal, A4 Batheaston Bypass, A36 Warminster Road and A363 Bradford Road.
- The three attractive and historic villages of Bathford, Bathampton and Batheaston all spaced around the hub on the lower slope of the hillsides facing towards each other
- There is a distinct contrast in character between the woodland dominated surrounding slopes and the open, grassland dominated valley floor.
- The whole contained by the encircling, steep hillsides and wooded upper slopes and skyline.
- Woodland around the hillsides includes notable ancient woodland especially part of the Brown's Folly SSSI. There are large areas of SNCI habitat complex on slopes below Bathampton Down. The River Avon and Kennet & Avon Canal, the Bathampton Oxbow Nature Reserve and Kensington Meadows LNR are all wetland and water related SNCIs.

Converging bat corridors feed in to Bathampton Meadows from the surrounding valleys.

- Strong visual and physical links with surrounding character areas of Northend and St. Catherine's Valley, Lower By Brook Valley and Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley. Longer views to mouth of Charlcombe and Swainswick Valley. Strong visual links with eastern edge of Bath.
- Strong cultural influences relating to the development of the transport network. Historically there were at least five water mills

ELV5 From Little Solsbury Hill to Batheaston, Bathford, Bathampton



making use of the river and tributary network. Visitors to Georgian Bath enjoyed the countryside especially with the opening of the Kennet & Avon Canal. There is notable influence of John Wood the Elder and Ralph Allen amongst others.

- This is an area with both significant human noise and activity and at the same time a real sense of tranquillity to confound expectations.
- There are few discordant elements although these are significant. The pylon line through the food plain, the views to the A46 in its concrete 'canyon', the housing under construction in isolation on the flood plain, longer views to the prominent housing breaking the skyline at Charlcombe/Ensleigh.
- This is a changing landscape with the gradual loss of the small pasture areas amongst woodland on the southern valley sides to scrub and eventually to woodland overall; and the increasing amount of woodland on the open valley floor.
- This complex area has a strong, active and remarkably harmonious character with an intriguing balance of development and transport networks with countryside at the centre and as the containing backdrop.

Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The character area is centred on Bathampton meadows flood plain where the River Avon takes a curving right angle turn westwards from its south-north course through the Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley. Joining the River Avon here are the By Brook, St Catherine's Brook and the Lam Brook (Note the character area does not include the lower reaches of the Lam Brook as it does for the By Brook and St. Catherine's Brook due to this area being within the built landscape of the City of Bath and excluded from this character assessment).

The result of these tributaries merging with the River Avon just as it makes this sharp right angled turn, combined with the whole river system here cutting through the High Cotswolds Hills Dip slope, is to form a highly distinctive, incised bowl-like landscape. The large curving meander formed by the River Avon gives a notably widened flood plain from which the valley sides overall rise up relatively gently at first and then more steeply towards the top of the slopes. The tributary valleys have then cut completely through the valley sides forming three deep incisions and leaving four remaining areas of steep valley side, three of which

form relatively narrow sloping shoulders of land.

The geology of the area continues the same pattern as for the other enclosed limestone valley character areas with local differences.

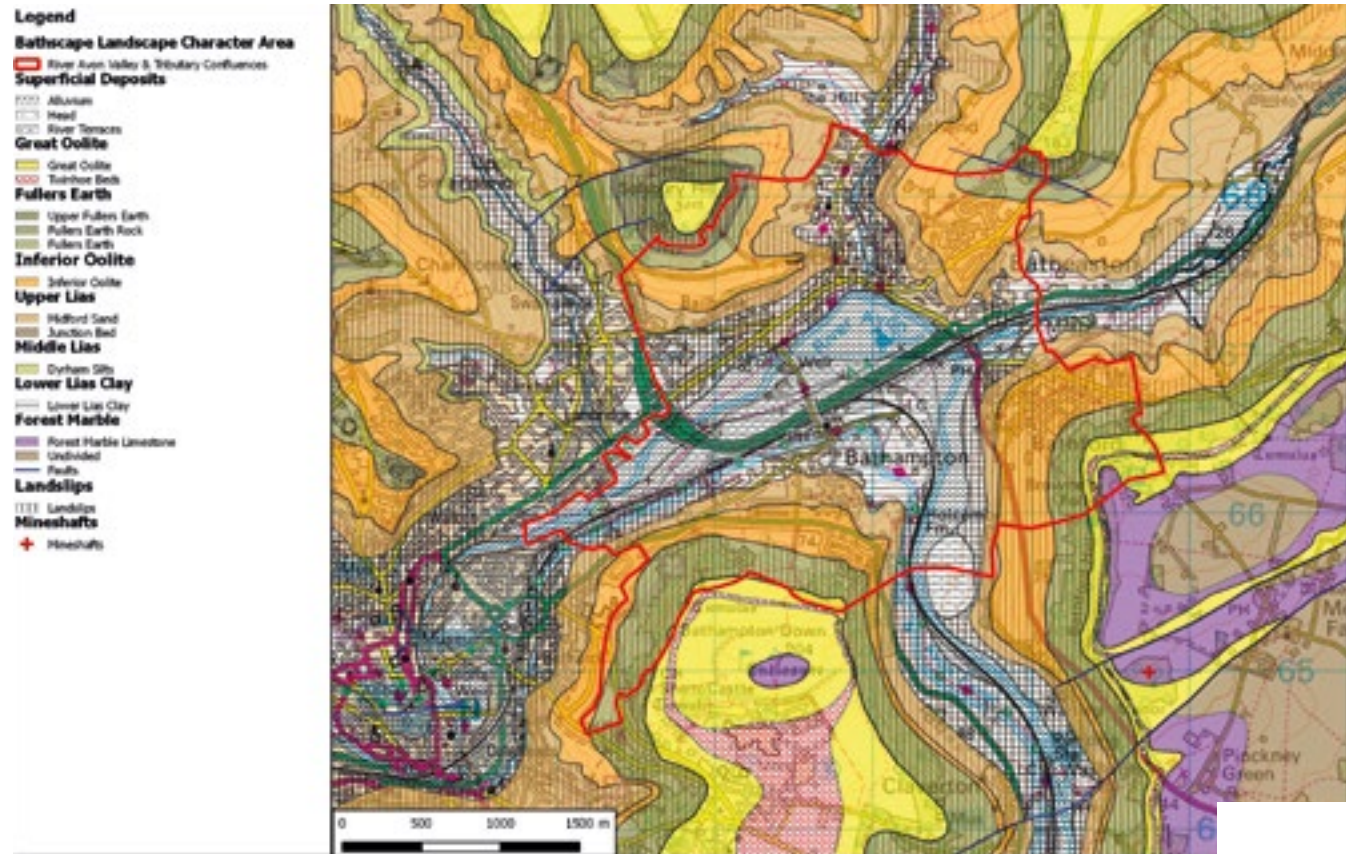
Fullers Earth runs all along the highest parts of the valley sides immediately below the Greater Oolite limestone of the adjacent plateau tops. Corresponding with the Fuller's Earth are the steepest upper valley slopes. Below the Fullers Earth is a relatively wide band of harder Inferior Oolite limestone occupying the mid-upper part of the slope, followed by a narrower band of Midford Sands on the mid-lower slopes. Slopes here vary in steepness from relatively shallow to moderately steep with an overall convex outline. Finally, on the valley floor and lowest slopes is Lias Clay. Superficial deposits of alluvium cover the valley floor forming two river terraces towards the Bathampton side away from the river resulting in gently rising ground.

The alternating layers of harder Oolite limestones and softer clays and sands have given rise to significant landslips. Much of the Fullers Earth highest up the valley sides have landslips especially on the slopes below Bathampton Down. Much of the slope underlying Bathford right down to the valley floor is a landslide area as well as

most of the Lias Clay areas on lower valley slopes.

The lower areas of landslip have generally given a rounded, slumped appearance to slopes with a complex pattern of local slumping, undulations and indentations at a field level of detail.

ELV5 River Avon Valley & Tributary Confluences - Geology



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2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

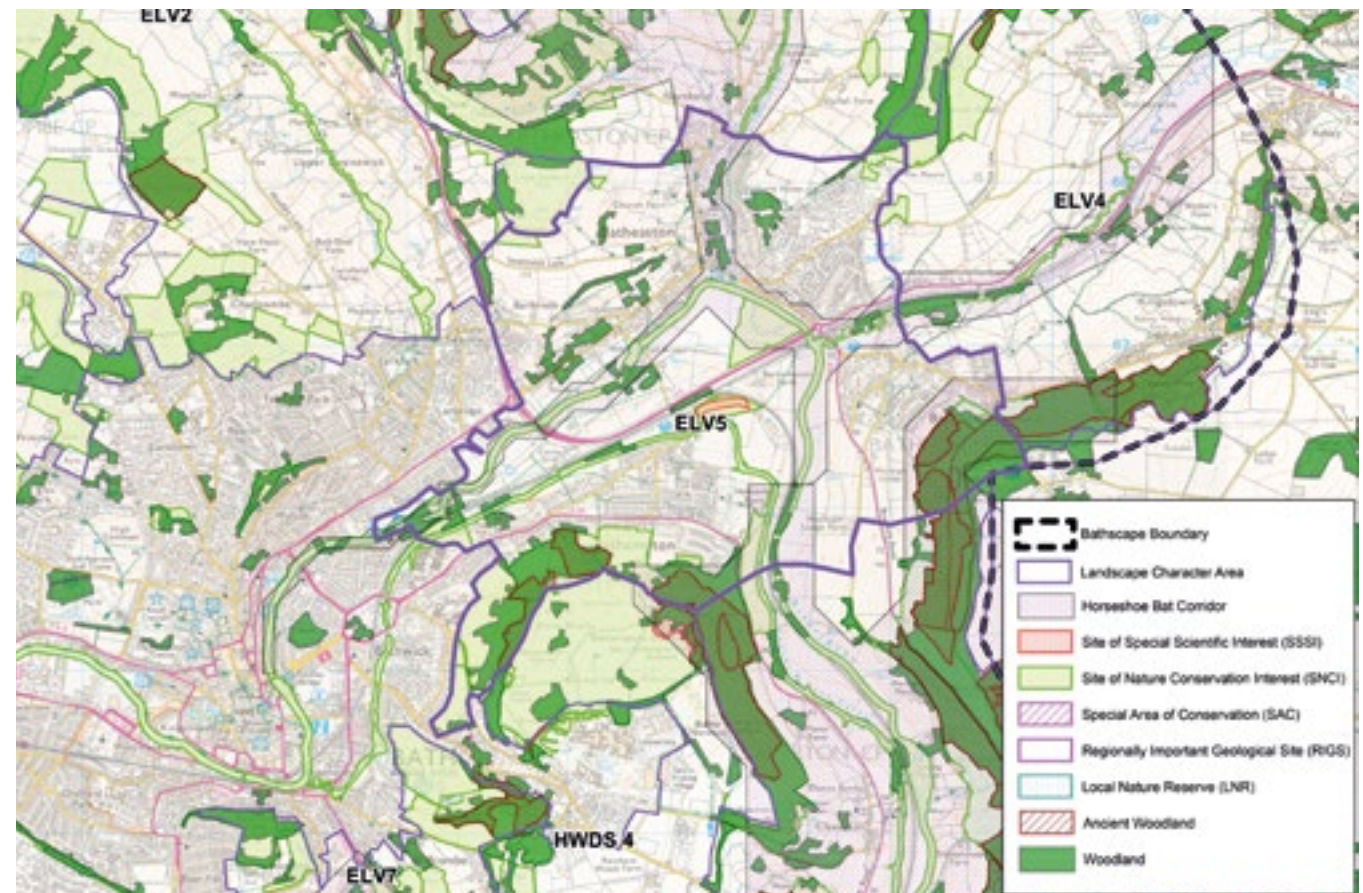
The majority of ecological interest is focussed on the valley floor and the upper valley slopes especially above Bathampton and at Brown's Folly.

Above Bathampton the whole area of slope is designated as SNCI (part of the Bathampton Down and Woodlands complex). Here there is a complex of woodland and grassland habitat. Woodland dominates the steepest slopes just below the plateau and grassland dominates on the lower slopes. All of the woodland is UK priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland and on the uppermost slope there are areas of ancient woodland including Bathwick Wood, Bathampton Down Wood and Bathampton/Hengrove Woods (part).

Grassland habitat is predominantly UK Priority Habitat lowland calcareous grassland, with some lowland meadow. On steeper slopes there are number of large ant hills and the grassland has patchy scrub throughout.

Across the Limpley Stoke Valley to the east are the Brown's Folly slopes above Bathford. The whole of the slope above Bathford village is designated as SSSI for its range of bat species, its rich habitat mix of woodland, grassland and scrub and its array of notable species. It is also a geological site of interest (RIGS) and shows evidence of past mining and quarrying.

ELV5 Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Valley Tributary Confluences – Biodiversity



Just below Little Solsbury Hill there is a small area of UK Priority Habitat – lowland calcareous grassland forming an extension of the larger South Chazy Down woodland and grassland complex. Similarly just below Bannerdown is a small area of ancient woodland and UK priority lowland calcareous grassland habitat forming part of the larger Bannerdown, and Shockerwick and Woodleaze Woods complex.

Down on the valley floor, both the River Avon (including the lowest section of the By Brook) and Kennet and Avon Canal are SNCIs. The river is designated for its running water and marginal habitat and a variety of notable plant and animal species including otter. The canal is designated for its standing water and marginal habitat, patchy woodland and scrub and range of notable plant and animal species including water vole.

Adjoining the R. Avon at the north-eastern end of Bathampton Meadows is a larger triangular-shaped SNCI, Bathampton Oxbow which was created as wetland habitat in the late 1990s as part of mitigation for the Batheaston Bypass. The habitat of standing water, marsh, wet woodland and grassland has established quickly and already supports notable species. It is managed by Avon Wildlife Trust.

At the far western end of the character area the river and canal run close together separated only by the railway. Here there are some small areas of scrubby woodland between the river and canal and also the Kensington Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR) immediately to the north of the river where there is a mix of habitat with UK priority fen and also wet woodland habitat. Just south of the canal here there is a small field identified as UK priority lowland meadow habitat.

Between the canal and the railway is Hampton Rocks Cutting geological SSSI.

The whole of the river corridor widening out to include the Bathampton Oxbow SNCI and the sections of included St. Catherine's Brook and By Brook are Draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridors'. Also included is the Brown's Folly area and the small section of Bathampton Wood/Hengrove Wood which both form part of a more extensive bat corridor in the adjacent Bathampton and Limply Stoke Valley Character Area.

In addition to the extensive woodland areas on the upper valley slopes, there are also a number of other small copses, semi-wooded gardens and tree belts scattered through the area. On the valley floor this is concentrated at the western end of the character area, west of

the Batheaston Bypass flyover particularly alongside the canal, with large gardens contributing significantly to the wooded character. There is another area of separate but merging patches of woodland and scrub on either side of the river to the west of the Toll Bridge, especially around Bathampton Manor Nursing Home; and this merges with the well-wooded gardens on the other side of the Toll Road and across the river. At the east end of the valley floor, the wet woodland associated with the Oxbow nature reserve is rapidly maturing. The river and parts of the canal are themselves lined with trees and shrubs.

There are a number of small copses around the lower section of the St. Catherine's Brook, which in addition to its tree-lined banks and the well-treed adjacent gardens gives an overall wooded appearance to the lower part of this tributary valley.

On the lower valley side to the north-west of the river, there are numbers of tree clumps, small copses and tree belts, areas of garden trees including parkland trees around Bailbrook House which all combine to give an overall wooded character to the lower slopes. Across the St. Catherine's Valley on the shoulder of land between the By Brook Valley and

St. Catherine's Valley are the extensively wooded grounds of Eden Park, a Grade II listed C18th house on the original site of Cold Bath Farm. To the east of Eden Park and below Bannerdown, the moderately large garden, detached estate houses are generally well-treed and combined together give the whole upper hillside a well-treed character.

“The three attractive and historic villages of Bathford, Bathampton and Batheaston all spaced around the hub on the lower slope of the hillsides face towards each other across the flood plain.”

Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The whole of the river floodplain has a historical landscape characterisation of 'medieval or earlier enclosure of rich wet grassland'. The undeveloped valley side slopes are all 'late medieval enclosed open fields created by local arrangement and exchange'. There are also some areas of 'designed ornamental landscapes' particularly around Bailbrook House. Historically the farmland associated with the Bathampton Parish area which included Bathampton Down, the valley slopes above the village and Bathampton Meadows, was all considered to be rich and productive with primarily sheep and cattle livestock farming including some fodder crops. The coming of the railway, canal and much more recently the Batheaston Bypass gradually chipped away at the viability of farming on the flood plain and today the number of viable farms is much reduced.⁷

There is still sheep grazing on Bathampton Meadow and some beef cattle on New Leaf Farm to the west of Mill Lane. South of the Batheaston Bypass, the land associated with Warleigh Lodge Farm appears to be well-managed grazing and some arable.

Historically the flood plain was rich spring grazing meadows and these would have been important for supplying lamb, milk and beef for the residents and visitors to Bath in Georgian times. The 1887 OS County Series map shows that there was considerable horticultural use of the land north of the river from Lambridge to the Toll Road.

There is pasture on the lower valley sides between Bradford Road and Brown's Folly woodland. On the steep, upper valley sides above Bathampton, the mostly small pasture fields are showing signs of significant scrub encroachment. It is not known how these are managed. On the Upper valley sides above Bathwick, the land is owned by the National Trust and the pasture fields are being cut and grazed off by cattle to restore them and reduce scrub encroachment.

On the valley slopes above Bailbrook and Batheaston there is a more extensive area of un-wooded farmland with a mix of arable cropping on shallower slopes and pasture on steeper slopes, with fields of very mixed sizes and irregular shapes. Field boundaries are hedgerows which are mostly clipped on the slopes above Batheaston and Northend (west side of St. Catherine's Valley) and

mostly tall and well treed on the Avon Valley side especially above Swainswick Lane. There is a small amount of horticultural use close to Northend and patchy horse grazing including a new development with indoor arena etc above Bailbrook.

There are playing fields on the valley floor including a cricket pitch on the north-eastern edge of Bathampton between the village and canal.

ELV5 Bathampton Meadows



⁷ <http://www.bathampton-village.org.uk/history/>

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

This complex character area includes the villages of Bathford, Bathampton (within Bath City area) and Batheaston with Northend all of which have Conservation Areas. These settlements are not described in detail here and the reader is referred to the following sources:

- Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal – for information on Bathampton
- Bathampton Parish Council web site (<http://www.bathampton-village.org.uk>) – for information on Bathampton
- Batheaston Parish Council web site (<http://batheaston.org>) – for information on Batheaston and Northend
- Bathford Parish Council web site (www.bathford.net) – for information about Bathford including link to detailed Village Design Statement published 2005.

All three villages have village cores which are predominantly 18th and C19th with outer areas of C20th development.

Bathampton is located primarily on the lower slopes of the south and just onto the west side of the Avon Valley below Bathampton Down, where the valley bends round sharply at right angles from the direction of Limpley Stoke in the

south towards Bristol in the west. The settlement extends between the small area around the church and primary school to the north of the canal, to the main part of the village on the lower valley slopes and centred around Bathampton Lane and Warminster Road where there are many large detached C18th and C19th Bath Stone houses. There are significant areas of C20th estate development on both western and eastern edges but predominantly to the east.

Bathford is located to the east of Bathampton across the River Avon valley on the lower slopes of the shoulder of land resulting from the confluence of the By Brook Valley with the southern part of Avon Valley. There is an extensive Conservation Area of predominantly C18th and C19th Bath Stone buildings which is located primarily on the lowest slopes extending north-eastwards from the Crown Inn where Bathford Hill joins Bradford Road and then along High Street eastwards for some distance. There is also significant modern estate development both further uphill towards Brown's Folly woods and also to the north of High Street, downhill and bounded to the north by Ashley Road.

Batheaston and Northend form the largest village located on the north side of the Avon Valley with a historic core around the St. Catherine's Brook at its confluence with the Avon. The village comprises four distinctive areas: The High Street including London Road East and west, Northend to the west of St. Catherine's Brook, The Estate to the east of St. Catherine's Brook and the Bannerdown slopes. The historic part of the village with predominantly C18 and C19th but some older properties, is centred mostly along the High Street and Northend, with the more modern estate developments primarily in the other areas.

The grade 2* listed Bailbrook House, the modern estate development around it and the properties along the London Road and down to the Toll Bridge are included in the character area and are part of the City of Bath.

Outside of these areas there is limited development. There are four Farms, some being conversions and holiday accommodation. These are New Barn Farm, Bathampton Farm, Holcombe Farm and Warleigh Lodge Farm. Just south of the Toll Bridge is the Bathampton Mill Pub and adjacent to that Bathampton Manor Elderly Persons Home. There is also a rather incongruous housing

development currently taking place on the site of an old Timber Yard on the valley floor to the east of the Bathampton playing fields and cricket ground and immediately adjacent to the railway as it curves round to the south.

There is a significant transport corridor running along the valley floor with the London Road to the north of the River Avon. The A4 Batheaston Bypass sweeps first south-eastwards across the flood plain, from the roundabout and junction with the A46 and then eastwards along the southern edge of Bathampton Meadows, visually and physically cutting the flood plain in half through the large river meander. The Great Western Railway runs eastwards towards London just to the south of the Batheaston Bypass and includes the spur off southwards through the Avon Valley (Bathampton to Limpley Stoke Character Area). The A38 Warminster Road runs along the lower slopes of the southern and western Avon Valley sides through Bathampton, and the A363 Bradford Road runs along the base of the eastern valley side of the Avon Valley. In addition a prominent pylon line crosses the Bathampton Meadows area from east to west. At Bathford there is an important listed Brunel Rail bridge crossing over the Bradford Road.

Outside of the major transport corridor through the valley floor and the village roads, there are only a few, mostly single track lanes on the valley sides. Swainswick Lane is a mostly sunken lane running from Swainswick to Batheaston midway up the valley side below Little Solsbury Hill with a spur running up to the hill fort; a single track lane runs from Bathford southwards towards Warleigh with just a short section within the character area and the Toll Road runs between Batheaston and Bathampton crossing the River Avon and Bathampton Meadows.

There are a number of footpath routes throughout the area. The Limestone Link runs along the canal towpath, crossing over the Toll Bridge and then passing up into the St. Catherine's Valley. There are a number of footpaths crossing the flood plain either side of Mill Lane (the Toll Road) including a new permissive footpath/cycleway around the northern and western edges of Bathampton Meadows connecting Batheaston via a new footbridge, to Bathampton. There are a number of footpaths climbing up the steep slopes above Bathampton onto Bathampton Down including one which follows the old inclined plane which carried stone from Bathampton Down to the Canal at one time, crossing over the Warminster Road via a Dry Arch

(now removed). Over on the Bathford side of the valley there are two paths connecting the village to the plateau above Brown's Folly. On the northern valley sides there are rather fewer paths.

On the slopes above Bathwick there is an area of National Trust open access land which has spectacular views over the city (see below). In the far western corner of the character area beside the river is Kensington Meadows Local Nature Reseve (LNR) which is a heavily used local amenity.

Land Ownership

A small area of valley side above Bathwick is owned by the National Trust, the Bathampton Meadows area to the east of the Toll Road is owned by B&NES Council, as is the Kensington Meadows LNR, elsewhere landownership is unknown.

Visual Significance

Visual experience in this character area varies radically between the hillside views and flood plain views, and between the countryside views and views within the villages.

Views from footpaths, roads and other openly accessible areas on the hillsides vary again according to the height up the slope but overall the number of views is limited due to the amount of tree and scrub cover and where there are views these rarely look over the whole of the area, being more often directional and framed by or mostly glimpsed through, surrounding trees. Views over the character area from village properties on the slopes are again widely varying depending on aspect, height and degree of visual obstruction from vegetation or other buildings. Where there are good open views these are likely to include wide vistas across to the opposite hillside with lower level village development and upper level woodland and/or

fields and wooded skyline. Some will also include views down onto the flood plain meadows and along parts of the other valleys feeding into the character area. Views from the National Trust open access land on the slopes above Bathwick include some spectacular wide open vistas westwards out of the character area, across the City of Bath looking down towards the centre of the city and up to the surrounding slopes with their wooded skylines. These show the World Heritage Site attribute of Bath as a “City in a hollow in the hills” really well.

These hillside views are only occasionally marred by the effect of the pylon line across the meadows, the new development on the valley floor by the railway below Bathampton, or the A46 in its concrete canyon emerging from the Swainswick valley to the north-west.

Views from footpaths, the canal, the railway, roads and properties on or adjacent to the flood plain meadows again vary significantly in character and extent, depending on location. Views looking generally to the south, east and west from the footpath/cycleway which runs around Bathampton Meadows from

the foot bridge to the Toll Road are wide expansive views across the flat open flood plain landscape. These then look upwards in the middle distance to the Bathampton or Brown’s Folly or Bannerdown slopes with their lower village settlements and upper wooded or patchwork effect of woods and fields all leading up to wooded skylines. Views to the north from the flood plain are limited by the tree-lined river beside the path although there are views above the trees to the upper hillsides beyond. These views are only marred by the Pylon line across the fields.

Views from the footpath over the flood plain area between Bathampton and Bathford, to the south of the railway are wide open vistas to the hill sides all around with glimpses into the St. Catherine’s and By Brook Valley and longer views southwards along the Avon Valley with its well wooded slopes, towards Warleigh Manor. From this path views to the Bathampton Meadows are blocked by the embankments of the Railway and Batheaston Bypass. The main detractor in this view is the new housing being built on the valley floor beside the railway. Notable also is the longer distance view right across to the discordant new housing set on and just below the skyline into the Charlcombe valley below Ensleigh. The light building

materials and large windows cause significant glare and light reflection making them even more prominent in views.

Views from paths on the meadows either side of the river to the west of the Mill Lane and including those west of the Batheaston Bypass where it cuts across the flood plain, are less expansive and more channelled in terms of low level views due to the gradual narrowing of the floodplain, and the increasing tree cover on the valley floor. Beyond the immediate valley floor, views are mainly focussed up onto the valley sides above the local trees and are dominated by the increasing settlement on lower slopes although always with their wooded slopes and skyline. The Pylon line is a significant detractor in parts of this area.

The canal towpath and route of the limestone link brings views of a different character focussed around the canal itself, the narrow boats and birdlife and then either opening out to the floodplain or, west of the hump back bridge at Bathampton, being more enclosed beside attractive houses and gardens but always looking up to the distinctive surrounding hillsides.

Other notable local views include the views to Bathampton Weir on the River Avon by the Toll Bridge, the views from the new foot-bridge

ELV5 View over Bathampton Meadows to Batheaston



at Batheaston and the views from the hump-back bridge by the church and canal at Bathampton which look over attractive buildings in one direction; the canal in another; and then the cricket ground and wider flood-plain and beyond to Limpley Stoke valley in the south, with Bathampton and Bathford facing each other on opposite sides.

Visual links exist with a number of adjacent character areas due to the convergence of tributary valleys. These are the Northend and St. Catherine's Valley, Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley, Lower By Brook Valley plus more distant views to the mouth of the Charlcombe and Swainswick valley.

ELV5 K&A Canal Bathampton



Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

The immediate impression might be that this is not a tranquil character area with its villages all around and its array of transport links, its pylon line and general sense of activity. However, walking over Bathampton Meadows, or along the canal and river or up on the valley sides there is a definite tranquillity from the attractiveness of the overall character area, the woodlands, the water, the balance of built and natural or farmed environment, the range of different views and the balance of natural sounds set against urban sounds and traffic noise. Once away from the immediate urban environment onto the slopes or flood plain, the sense of tranquillity increases rapidly.

Cultural Associations

This is an area rich in cultural associations

- The Avon Valley around Bathampton was renowned in the C18th for its beauty (often referred to as Arno's Vale, from its resemblance to Tuscany), but was relatively inaccessible from the City. However the building of the Kennet and Avon Canal at the end of the C18th changed all that and the canal toting-path became a popular route for walkers between

Bath and Limpley Stoke, one of which was Jane Austen. The canal was not just seen as picturesque but also provided many new views, frequently illustrated, of the City from the east. Walkers could obtain refreshment in the village at Bathampton Lodge with its rustic bath house.

- Bathampton village was a manorial village until 1921. In 1743 it was purchased by Ralph Allen. One of his various properties was Bathampton Manor and Ralph Allen built one of his famous “Rides” from Bathampton Down to Bathampton Manor. In the 1750’s he undertook extensive renovations of St. Nicholas Church and created the Allen chapel.
- Bathampton was the location of Harbutts Plasticine factory. William Harbutt, head of Bath’s Art School, invented plasticine in 1897. In 1899 he purchased the Grange and steam mill on the banks of the canal in Bathampton. He lived in the Grange and made plasticine in the mill building. The business expanded and continued until 1983. The site is now retirement homes known as “Harbutts”. There is an interpretation sign by the canal which tells this story.

- Bathampton became even more accessible with the building of the new Warminster Road in 1834 by the Black Dog Turnpike Trust and by the GWR in 1840, the latter being commemorated in J.C. Bourne’s lithographs. The railway and canal were not seen as eyesores, both being conspicuous in Dicksee’s “Bath from Bathampton”.
- The toll bridge together with its access roads was built in 1872 and is one of the few privately owned toll bridges in England. It replaced a ford and horse-ferry that crossed the River Avon immediately below Bathampton Mill and weirs.
- Just to the north of character area boundary to the south of Bathampton, a path through the woods still marks the route of a self-acting, inclined plane tramway built between 1808 and 1810 by the then owners to transport stone from the Hampton Rocks quarry on Bathampton Down to the canal below where a wharf was built. The route included a Dry Arch built over the Warminster Road which was taken down in 1958. The tramway operated until the 1840s with the discovery of better sources of Bath stone at Box. Rows of sleeper blocks for the tram-plates are still visible on the path, as also is another older

Dry Arch which carried the line over an old parish road.

- The Character Area had a number of notable mills historically. None are used as such today but some buildings survive. There were flour mills on either side of Bathampton Weir and it is likely that the mills were first built (to function as one unit) around the C14th as a church initiative at a time when The Manors of Bathampton and Batheaston were both church holdings and the Bishops of Bath and Wells were known to favour Bathampton Manor as a residence. The earliest depiction of the mills and weir is found in the view by Robins circa 1740s and the map of the estate of Ralph Allen 1761. These buildings were known to have survived into the C19th when they were both beset by several fires. Today the Bathampton Mill buildings complex remains as a grade 2 listed pub and the Batheaston Mill is a C20th re-build now used as a hotel/restaurant which has incorporated a modern working water wheel to generate electricity.^{8,9}
- A four storey steam mill was built C1852 in Bathampton alongside the canal, North-west of the Grange. In 1875 it was being used as a paper pulp factory and later a steam bakery. It became the site of the plasticine factory.

At one time there was a mill on St. Catherine’s Brook by the school in Batheaston which is now a private house. According to the author David Harper in his book *Bath at Work* (Millstream Books 1989) there were two mills in Batheaston producing leather and paper.

At Bathford in about 1740 water from a spring adjoining Bathford fulling mill was found to have strong mineral content with good curative properties. As a result “Bathford Spaw” as it was then called was acquired by Dr William Oliver, a founder of Bath General Hospital and inventor of Bath Oliver biscuits. John Wood the Elder designed a pavilion over the spring in 1746 and the whole property including the mill and mill house was named Trevano after Oliver’s Cornish family home. However the spa did not last and the mill was converted to leather dressing in 1768 and then paper in 1800. It was reputed to produce the best paper in the kingdom. Nothing remains now of any of the original buildings but high quality paper is still manufactured there.

- Bathford was listed in the Domesday Book as Forde and a mill was listed at that time. Many residents were employed in stone quarrying and the buildings and many walls will all have been built

of the local stone. There are a significant number of listed houses and mansions built in the C17th and C18th including Titan Barrow (grade 2* listed) built by John Wood the Elder for Southwell Pigott in 1748 and overlooking the Avon Valley towards Bath; Sycamore House (grade 2 listed) in Church Street, built in the early C18th which was the home of the Dyson family at one time and the bagless vacuum cleaner was invented there; Bathavon Manor House was built in the 1770s for the Tyndale family and extended in the late 1790s by the Pickwick family famous as stage-coach operators and who were the inspiration for Charles Dickens's Pickwick Papers.¹⁰

- Bathford was on the main coaching road from London to Bath and the very steep, Kingsdown Hill between Bathford and Kingsdown was notorious for accidents. A series of Turnpike Acts were passed in Parliament from 1707 to provide and maintain better roads for this section of the route from Bath to London, resulting eventually in the current route of the A4 north of the By Brook. The last London to Bath stage coach ran in 1843, two years after the opening of the Great Western Railway. There was a station at Bathford Halt until 1965 when it was scrapped. Similarly

the station at Bathampton was scrapped at that time. There is a grade 2 listed Brunel railway bridge crossing the Bradford Road and also a larger Brunel bridge crossing the River Avon. There is also a three arch bridge over the By Brook built in 1665. In 2005 a new pedestrian footbridge was built beside it.

- Batheaston has had a settlement since at least Saxon times and is listed in the Domesday Book. For many years Batheaston lay on the main route from London to Bristol with the road carrying wagons and stagecoaches, continuing into the C20th as the A4 trunk road carrying heavy goods traffic, right through the narrow street at the heart of the village. After a 75 year-long campaign the Batheaston Bypass was finally built in 1997.

There are 126 listed buildings in the village most dating from the C17th to C18th and with a number being grade 2* listed: most notable is Eagle House (late C17th/early C18th; remodelled 1724 and 1729 by John Wood the Elder for himself. Eagle House was John Wood's first known house and work in the Bath area and is historically very important. Later owned in 1906 by Lt. Col. Blathwayt the house was an important refuge for suffragettes

released from prison after hunger strikes. Blaythwayt marked the connection by planting trees to commemorate each woman with at least 47 trees planted between 1909 and 1911. The garden is now destroyed and the trees gone. The house is now converted into flats.

For the literary visitor in the 1770s, the most famous attraction outside Bath was Batheaston Villa, where poetry competitions and meetings were held by Mrs Miller. Many prominent authors of the day attended including Garrick, Anstey and Graves.

The landscape around Batheaston was already attracting visitors by that time and in the 1740s a Public Cold bath had been established at Cold Bath Farm overlooking the village. The house was later enlarged and is known now as Eden House (grade 2 listed). The spring that fed the bath can still be seen issuing into one of the basement rooms.^{11,12}

- The new footbridge at Batheaston and the footpath and cycleway around Batheaston Meadows are popular and well-used. The management of the path and the land beside the river is being undertaken by community volunteers.

- Situated on the valley side above Bailbrook at the western end of the character area is the grade 2* listed Bailbrook House. Built principally between 1790 and 1802 by John Eveleigh for Dr. Denham Skeet a wealthy London lawyer, it was considered one of the finest of its day. Over the years it has been lived in by many wealthy people, with one tenant being Lady Isabella King, who devoted her time to charitable and benevolent work, notably helping street beggars. Her other initiatives included a knitting school and a button-making school for children and widows of the armed forces. This charity was honoured in 1817 by Queen Charlotte on a visit to Bailbrook House. William Pitt the Younger also often stayed in the house.

On the 1887 OS County Series map Bailbrook House is shown as a Lunatic Asylum.

In the 1970s the house became a Post office training college and then later a college for air traffic controllers. Since 2012 it has been a hotel and the house has been refurbished along with 20 acres of grounds.

- From the 1790s the eastern side of Bath became more accessible for new walks and rides out from the City. Many illustrations of the city taken from the slopes below

Bathampton Downs were published in the early C19th showing the new developments in Bathwick, and along Beacon Hill on the opposite side of the river. It was also about this time that Bathwick Hill (formerly a field-way leading to Claverton Down) became available for its views. The open access National Trust fields above Bathwick show something of the views which Georgian walkers and riders would have experienced.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- The fragmentation of agricultural holdings over time as the transport networks have extended over the valley floor and the reduction in viability of small agricultural holdings on the valley sides represents a potential threat to the landscape character of this area. Scrub and scrubby woodland cover has increased significantly on the valley sides especially below Bathampton Down since the C19th when maps are compared. If these slopes were to revert to woodland, would this be detrimental to landscape character? It would represent a change to the landscape of the Georgian period and it would certainly remove any remaining views over the area.

On the valley floor there has been significant change and fragmentation of agricultural holdings in the last 150 years. In addition there is already increasing woodland on the previously open valley floor from the Oxbow nature reserve.

- For some years there has been consideration of the Bathampton Meadows area either side of Mill Lane for various developments including for an east of Bath Park & Ride and an A36/A4 link road. Whilst the Park & Ride is no longer

being considered, it reflects the potential development pressures on such a large area of undeveloped flat land close to the city. Any major development on the floodplain would clearly bring radical changes to the landscape character and the visual landscape.

- Skyline development has not as yet affected this character area although the negative effects of it can be seen in views across the Charlcombe and Ensleigh. There is a continuing gradual erosion of the important wooded skyline around the City of Bath and the wooded skyline here requires protection.
- The electrification of the railway although currently delayed has already required the provision of a new electricity pylon on the Bathampton Meadows. When it does go ahead its landscape effects are likely to be visually discordant and damaging.
- Currently there is only limited evidence of horsiculture but this is a common urban edge activity and something which is likely to increase as agriculture becomes less viable.
- Overall this is a dynamic landscape and in fact has been so since at least the Georgian period. Its nature as a landscape hub and

⁸ Bathampton village web site

⁹ Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Bathampton Weir for JTS Partnership LLP on behalf of Mitchell and Butler – pdf doc available on B&NES website

¹⁰ bathfordsociety.org.uk

¹¹ Batheaston Parish Council website

¹² www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk.

communications hub is at the heart of this. The development of communications routes has been going on for centuries and continues today. Associated industry has also come and gone. Agricultural economics and land landscape fragmentation have and are causing difficulties with viability of farming here.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The initial appearance of this complex landscape is that its agricultural and woodland areas are in good condition and well managed and its villages busy and in good heart. However, there is evidence as already described of agricultural fragmentation and neglect. Much of the hillside below Little Solsbury Hill does appear to be a well-managed agricultural unit but across the valley below Bathampton Down the small pasture fields are increasingly becoming scrubby and some may be abandoned. The increase in tree and scrub cover also limits views from footpaths on the slopes. The fields now in the ownership of the National Trust are being managed through cutting and grazing to bring them back to viable flower-rich meadows and calcareous grassland. On the valley floor, the remaining meadows are grazed or cut on the north side of the Batheaston Bypass but on the south

side the grassland condition and use is harder to discern currently.

The Brown's Folly woodland is actively managed but the woodlands below Bathampton Down are unlikely to be in management at all. The Beechen Cliff Woods are owned by B&NES Council.

The villages have active communities but market pressures have seen to the removal of shops, pubs and services requiring communities to become active to maintain village vitality.

The farmland, the ecologically important habitat and the woodland within this area all appear to be deteriorating in condition overall with changes in agricultural viability and fragmentation of holdings a significant problem.

Local landscape and visual detractors are currently the pylon line across the flood plain, the views to the A46 in its concrete canyon, views across to the Elmhurst Estate in Batheaston, the new housing estate being constructed on the valley floor by the railway at Bathampton, views across to the new housing on and below the skyline at Ensleigh/Charlcombe.

2.2.6 ELV6: BATHAMPTON AND LIMPEY STOKE VALLEY

Location and Boundaries

The character area is the River Avon Valley from just south of Warleigh Lodge Farm to Limpey Stoke village, south of Limpey Stoke Weir. It is surrounded by a number of other character areas: To the north is the Bathampton Meadow and River Avon Valley Tributaries; To the west are Bathampton and Claverton Down, Cam and Midford Valley and Limpey Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau; The Southern boundary is the Bathscape Project boundary and to the east is Plateau Edges around Monkton Farleigh (a small character area just within the Bathscape project boundary)

Summary Landscape Character

- Strong character of north-south running, gently curving, heavily wooded valley which is simple in outline and cross-section without many complex indentations or undulations. The valley is high-sided and relatively broad with a flat valley floor through which the River Avon flows with limited meanders, in a moderately wide flood plain especially towards the north.

70 2.2 Enclosed Limestone Valleys

ELV6 Bathampton and Limpey Stoke Valley

- Woodland dominates on middle to upper slopes and forms an almost complete wooded skyline. The eastern valley side has a greater proportion of woodland to agricultural fields than the western valley side which has roughly a 50:50 split of woodland to grazing or arable with significant parkland trees at Claverton Manor. There are significant areas of ancient woodland but a larger proportion of the woodland dates from the ending of stone mining as well as the gradual loss of unviable steep sloping fields to scrub and then woodland. The majority of woodland is deciduous but there are a few stands of conifer.
- Claverton Manor and its well treed parkland is a strong landscape feature midway along the valley on the western side above Claverton. Warleigh Manor is a notable building on the eastern lower valley side.
- There is limited settlement with Limpey Stoke village in the far south of the area and the small, historic village of Claverton midway along the lower western

valley side. In addition there is the hamlet of Warleigh on the eastern valley side and tiny hamlet of Conkwell right up at the eastern valley side skyline. There are two significant manors – Claverton and Warleigh and a limited number of farms mostly midway up valley sides. There is a harmonious coherence to the settlement with Bath stone used throughout.

- There is a strong communications network with the A36, A363, Kennet & Avon Canal, and railway all running along the grain of the valley either side of the river. All are remarkably well visually integrated into the landscape and have generally well treed corridors.
- The Kennet and Avon Canal is an important recreational asset and is heavily used. It also acts as a cycle commuting route from Bradford-on-Avon to Bath. Dundas Aqueduct and Claverton Pumping Station are architecturally and historically important local landmarks on the canal and river and are hubs for visitors, especially Dundas with its Brassknocker basin and activity of narrow boats on the canal. Just by the Pumping Station is Warleigh Weir, one of the UK's top locations for river swimming attracting hundreds of visitors on sunny days.

- Brown's Folly Tower and nature reserve is an important site for wildlife, geology and for visitors and occupies a commanding position at the northern end of the valley high up on the eastern side of the valley by Bathford.
- Strong cultural interest associated with the movement of coal and stone along the K&A canal and the Somerset Coal canal, Jane Austin's walks along the canal, Ralph Allen's relationship with Claverton, Claverton vineyard, the civil war skirmish at Claverton and Sally in the Woods, a well-loved wise-woman who lived in the woods near Bathford.
- Overall the landscape is open providing extensive views both along and across the valley from the valley sides. Views are contained or framed by the ridges and dense woodland on each side. Wider views beyond the valley are rare until the northern end of the valley. From the valley floor views are more constrained by trees and the curve of the valley apart from at Dundas Aqueduct where there are sweeping views up and down the valley.

ELV6 Looking North from Dundas Aquaduct



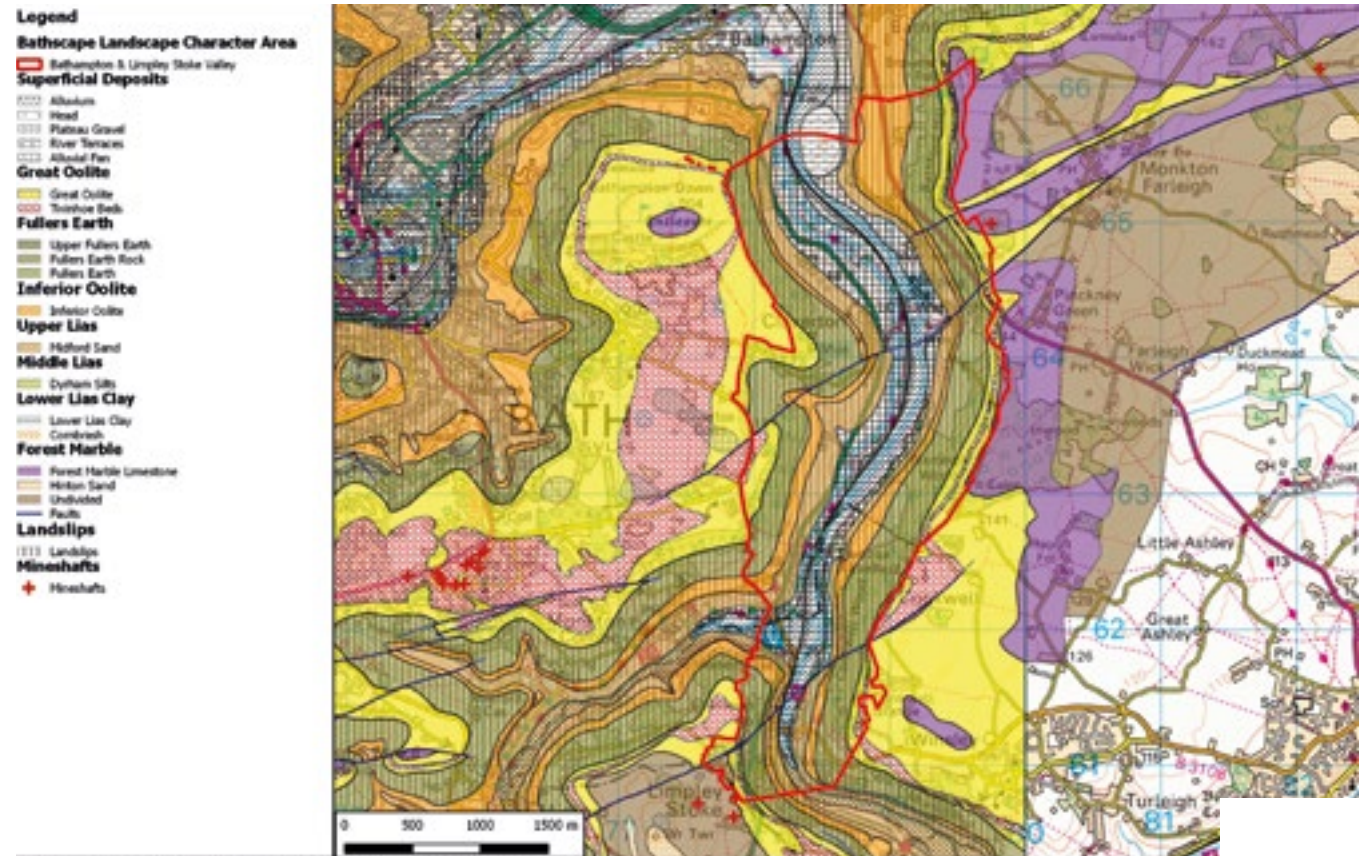
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

This character area follows the course of the River Avon from the south running almost due north. The southern third of the area has the river meandering through a narrow flood plain which gradually widens north of Dundas Aqueduct where the river curves eastwards and then westwards through one large meander before leaving the character area and entering Bathampton Meadows. Through the main section of the character area there is only one minor tributary stream running down into the river just south of Claverton. To the south of the character area and south of Dundas Aqueduct, the Midford Brook in its distinctive wooded valley, joins the River Avon forming a significant local landscape feature.

The landform of the River Avon Valley in this character area is very striking. The valley is simple in form, it runs south to north with a gentle curve towards the east close to Warleigh. In cross-section it is relatively broad with high and mostly steep or very steep sides, becoming shallower and more convex where the slopes are located on the inside of the river meander. Apart from the major confluence of the Midford Brook valley with the Avon valley at the

ELV6 Bathampton & Limpey Stoke Valley – Geology



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southern end of the character area, there is only one minor tributary stream forming a shallow tributary valley cutting into the valley side at Claverton. This lack of tributaries give the valley sides a relatively smooth outline with indentations and undulations being generally at a local scale. The valley floor is flat at 25m and is narrow at Limpey Stoke, becoming wider at the Midford Brook confluence, narrower towards Dundas Aqueduct and then gradually widening northwards towards the Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Tributary Valleys character area.

Whilst the overall pattern of geology of the area continues the same pattern as for the most of the other enclosed limestone valley character areas, there is a narrower band of Inferior Oolite than elsewhere apart from the shallower slope of the eastern valley side below Brown's Folly. Fullers Earth forms a wide band in the upper half of the valley sides accounting for the very steep slopes. The lower to middle slopes are primarily Midford Sands with a very narrow band of Inferior Oolite; the lower valley sides and underlying the alluvium on the valley floor, are Lias Clay.

The alternating layers of harder Oolite limestones and softer clays and sands have given rise to significant landslips. The geology

map shows the entire valley to be affected by landslip although there is less obvious visual evidence of them in this valley than the other enclosed limestone valleys in the Bathscape area. The complex slumping and undulations of other valleys is lacking here.

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

Large parts of this character area have ecological designations, primarily woodland, with only the shallower slopes of the valley sides and some of the valley floor being excluded. There is little designated grassland habitat however, most of which is associated with habitat complexes on the valley sides especially the Brown's Folly-Warleigh Wood Complex, and is unimproved or semi-improved calcareous grassland.

Both the River Avon and Kennet & Avon Canal are SNCl, comprising flowing or standing water with associated marginal habitats, a little woodland and also some semi-improved grassland and scrubby habitat at the northern end of the character area beside the canal. Water Voles are noted in the canal and otters in the river.

Almost all the valley is a draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridor' and some areas are also included in the candidate Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC.

There are significant areas of woodland SNCl as well as part of the Brown's Folly SSSI which is managed by the Avon Wildlife Trust as a nature reserve. The vast majority of the woodland is deciduous although there are some coniferous blocks in Conkwell Wood, Warleigh Wood and east of Claverton Down. Much of the woodland is ancient, including parts of Brown's Folly Woodlands, Home Wood, Warleigh Wood, Conkwell Wood, Claverton Wood and Bathampton/Hengrove Woods. The Woodlands line almost all of

the upper half of the eastern valley side and in several places extend down to the valley floor. On the Western valley side woodland lines most of the upper, steeper slopes, only coming down to the valley floor near the northern boundary just south of Bathampton.

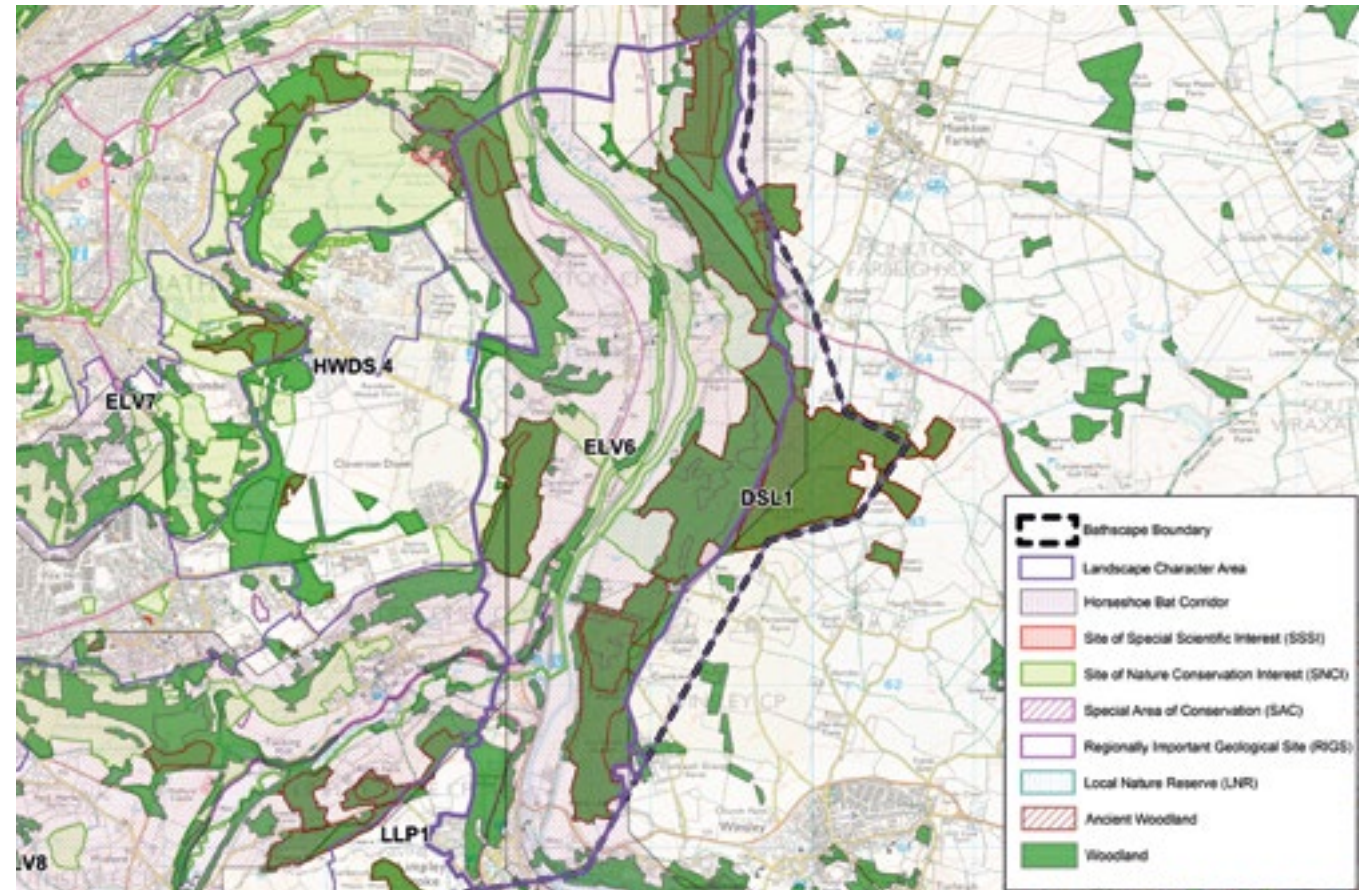
The OS 1886 map shows the uppermost part of the eastern valley side from Bathford almost down to Warleigh as being stone quarries, so the upper part of the woodland we see today has matured since the quarrying ceased.

ELV6 Conkwell Wood



There are only limited numbers of small copses or tree belts outside of these large woodland blocks. These are mainly above Claverton and also scattered along the river and canal especially in the southern part of the area where the Midford Brook joins the River Avon, and on south to Limpey Stoke village. The river, canal and all the roads through the valley are generally lined with trees and these combined with extensive field and parkland trees, extensive grown-out hedgerows and of course the large areas of woodland, give the valley a well-treed character.

ELV6 Bathampton & Limpey Stoke Valley - Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The whole of the river floodplain has a historical landscape characterisation of ‘medieval or earlier enclosure of rich wet grassland’. The steeper cultivated slopes are generally late medieval, the shallower slopes around Claverton are generally ‘post medieval or modern fields adjusted from earlier enclosure’, and the shallower slopes north of Warleigh Manor towards Bathford are ‘late medieval enclosed open fields created by local arrangement and exchange’.

There is a notable registered historic park, Claverton Manor (home to the American Museum). This is listed grade 2 and comprises gardens and pleasure grounds of 1820–30 in the early C19 Park, around the country house. The parkland extends to the north, east, and south of the house and blends with the wooded nature of the valley. The park contains a wide variety of mature trees, including notable oak, beech, lime, holm oak, and cedar, many dating from the C18 and early C19.¹³

Warleigh Manor and its gardens are across the valley. The gardens were laid out when the house was built in around 1815, in an interesting juxtaposition of styles. The estate covers 20 acres between the River and Warleigh Lane. A long strip of mixed ornamental woodland runs along the eastern edge of the estate to the west of Warleigh Lane. There is a small formal garden with terraces overlooking the river. Much of the original garden has been modified since its use as a school and most recently its conversion to residential flats.

Farming in the valley is primarily pastoral with both sheep and cattle seen during site visits. There is a gradual increase in arable at the northern end of the valley where there are more extensive areas of shallower slopes and a wider valley floor. Fields are mainly medium in size and roughly rectangular. There are larger fields on the western valley sides which appear to be recent changes to much earlier enclosure. Indeed the OS 1886 Somerset Series map shows additional field boundaries here. Field boundaries are mostly hedges, generally clipped on the western valley side and grown out on the eastern valley side. A few walls were noted along Warleigh Lane in places.

There are large numbers of field trees, often mature oaks, on the eastern valley slopes and also the valley floor east of the river, contrasting with the western valley slopes where field trees are limited to the Parkland at Claverton.

Horse grazing was noted in a few places but horsiculture is not extensive in the valley.

A new orchard was noted associated with Vineyard Farm south of Claverton.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

The main settlement in the valley is Limpey Stoke village at the far southern end of the area on the western valley side and down to the river. Some of the village is outside of the area.

Limpey Stoke village is set along a series of roads and lanes zig-zagging up the valley side. This is a leafy village and seen from across the valley, buildings peak through the abundant trees and garden vegetation. There is a large mix of building ages from pre-Georgian to modern but most are built of Bath stone or reconstituted stone for modern buildings, with clay tiles. St. Mary the Virgin church was built in the 12th/13th centuries with the tower added in the C15th. There is a large mill building, now converted, by the river.

Around half way along the valley on the western valley side is the spring line village of Claverton which is a small, linear village running just to the west of the A36. The entire Claverton village is a Conservation Area with a high proportion of listed buildings and monuments, particularly the collection of buildings at Manor Farm and the Parish Church. The village is compact and there are many historic remnants of the manorial village including walled gardens, associated buildings, drives and gate piers. There is a strong uniformity of traditional Bath stone building material, in ashlar and rubble finishes with mostly clay tiles. High stone boundary walls and walled gardens are a notable feature giving the village a rather hidden and secret character. The church is grade 2* listed and dates from the C15th. There are stunning views out across the valley. Claverton Pumping Station is grade 2 listed and was built in 1809–1813. The Pumping Station and weir are a popular walking destination.

¹³ Heritage England citation for Claverton Manor

Midway up on the eastern valley side and almost opposite Claverton is the hamlet of Warleigh spread out along Warleigh Lane between Warleigh Manor and Sheepphouse Farm. Finally right up at the top of the eastern valley side, on the skyline, is the tiny hamlet of Conkwell clustered along a narrow lane running down from the top of the slope and almost hidden in Conkwell Wood. In addition to these small settlements are a number of farms and also two impressive listed mansions – the grade 1 listed Claverton Manor (see above) and the grade 2* listed

Warleigh Manor. Warleigh Manor was built in 1814 in a picturesque mock Tudor Gothic style. Overall there is limited settlement through the character area. The majority of farms and Warleigh Manor are characteristically situated about midway up the valley sides.

Brown's Folly is a folly tower which stands above Brown's Folly woodland on Farleigh Rise above Bathford and overlooks the valley. It is grade 2 listed and was built in 1845. It is an important local landmark for Bath.

Throughout history the area has been important as a communication corridor. The Avon valley contains not only the river, but also the Kennet and Avon Canal, the railway running between the river and the canal, the A36 Warminster Road, and the A363 Bradford Road. There are also a number of minor routes either running along the contours on the valley sides as for Warleigh Lane or running down the contours – Brassknocker Hill and Claverton Hill. Dundas Aqueduct is an important local landmark taking the canal over the river. Close to the canal basin by the aqueduct is a very small restored section of the Somerset Coal Canal which was built in 1800 to transport coal from the Somerset coal field.

The main footpath route through the valley is the Limestone Link which follows the route of the Kennet and Avon Canal. There is only one footpath on the western valley side which runs from Dundas Aqueduct up the hill side to Claverton Down at Brassknocker. On the eastern valley side there are many footpaths focussing on Dundas Aqueduct and also the Pumping Station. Paths run through and up the valley side from both. Much of the woodland on both sides of the valley has informal public access.

ELV6 Claverton Church & Ralph Allen Mausoleum



Land Ownership

Landownership is unknown.

Visual Significance

Visual experience in this character area varies radically depending on whether the views are from up on the valley sides, along the canal or river, or at either end of the area.

From up on the valley sides there are expansive views across the valley and along it as far as the gentle curve of the valley landform or enclosing tree canopies will allow. Claverton Manor was built up at the top of the valley in part to take advantage of the beautiful views as was Brown's Folly. There are entirely different views to be had from the valley floor, with Dundas Aqueduct perhaps having the best of the views to show the prospect up and down the valley. From the aqueduct the views show the enclosing valley sides clothed in woodland, the meandering, tree-lined river below and all the colourful interest of the canal and canal basin with its narrow boats and activity and old stone structures.

From the Limestone Link path along the canal, views vary according to the amount of tree cover lining the canal. Most of the roads are almost entirely tree-lined leaving only glimpse views, although there are lovely views up part of the Midford valley from the A36 including views

to Midford Castle on the valley-side amongst woodland. There are more open views from the railway affording a scenic journey to or from Bath.

From the northern end of the character area views open out towards Bathampton Meadows and across to the main Cotswolds plateau. There are views to St. Catherine's Valley and Batheaston, the outline of Little Solsbury Hill Fort can be seen and the eastern edges of Bath including the detracting new housing on the skyline at Ensleigh. From the southern end of the area views become more constrained and enclosed as the valley narrows and bends quite sharply eastwards just to the east of Freshford which can be seen climbing up the western valley side.

There are views to the following character areas:

- Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Tributary Confluences
- Northend and St Catherine's Valley
- Skyline of Bannerdown and The Rocks Plateau
- Skyline of Little Solsbury Hill (hence Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill Plateau)
- Charlcombe and Swainswick Valley.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

The road noise from the A36 is surprisingly unobtrusive in the valley, although giving a background hum of traffic in many areas. Trains are sufficiently infrequent for their noise to be negligible. Overall the valley is a tranquil area even when walking along the canal on a weekend with many people around and cyclists speeding by. The experience of tranquillity in the valley is primarily provided by:

- The beautiful landscape and views;
- the proximity of water when walking along the canal or river;
- the quiet woodland walks; and
- the overall highly rural countryside with limited settlement most of which is in a vernacular style.

Cultural Associations

This is an area rich in cultural associations

- Ralph Allen, the entrepreneur and philanthropist, so important to the development of Georgian Bath had strong links with Claverton. He owned the manorial estate of Claverton and often preferred to live in the original manor house in the village (later demolished and replaced with the current.

Claverton Manor), entertaining his friends there, particularly Richard Graves who was Rector of Claverton. He built a school room in the village for Richard Graves which is today used as a garage. He also chose to be buried in Claverton and his pyramid-topped Mausoleum (grade 2*) can be seen at Claverton Church.

- Brown's Folly is located high up on the valley side close to Bathford in a commanding location overlooking both the Limpey Stoke Valley and main Avon Valley. The site is a biological and geological SSSI and is now managed as a nature reserve by Avon Wildlife Trust. It was previously part of Farleigh Down stone quarry which ran along the upper slopes and had extensive underground workings stretching back under the plateau. Most of the underground workings were shut off by the War Department when they were taken over for ammunitions storage. The remainder are part of the SSSI for roosting and hibernating bats. The mines below Brown's Folly are popular with cavers who regularly remove graffiti and litter and repair damage. Seen from a distance today the area appears to be a large and prominent woodland, however it is actually a fine complex of short limestone grassland and ancient woodland

with the grassland on the old quarry workings. The name Brown's Folly comes from the folly tower which is a local landmark standing near to the top of the valley side in the middle of the reserve. The tower is now a grade 2 listed building. It was commissioned in 1849 by the local quarry owner, Wade-Browne supposedly to promote the quality of the building stone but also to keep his idle workers employed during a period when the business was struggling.

- The Avon Valley around Bathampton was renowned in the C18th for its beauty (often referred to as Arno's Vale, from its resemblance to Tuscany), but was relatively inaccessible from the City. However the building of the Kennet and Avon Canal at the end of the C18th changed all that and the canal towing-path became a popular route for walkers between Bath and Limpey Stoke, one of which was Jane Austen. The canal was not just seen as picturesque but also provided many new views, frequently illustrated, of Bath from the east.
- Dundas Aqueduct on the Kennet & Avon Canal is a spectacular and architecturally noteworthy structure built from 1796-98 to carry it across the River Avon. It is grade 1 listed and also a Scheduled

Ancient Monument. Over many years leaks developed and eventually it was closed in 1954. It remained dry in the 1960s and 70s and people remember walking along it then as well as on either side on the canal bed. Subsequent restoration was completed in 1984 and the canal was re-opened. The aqueduct is also the location for the junction of the largely derelict Somerset Coal Canal with the Kennet & Avon canal. Here a short stretch of this very narrow canal remains water filled as well as the Brassknocker Basin which is now used for boat moorings, cycle hire

and a cafe. Adjacent is Dundas Wharf where the small tollhouse, warehouse and crane still stand. At the opposite end of the aqueduct a wharf was constructed to serve the Conkwell stone quarries. From the quarries up on the plateau above Conkwell Woods, a self-acting inclined plane railway was built by the Kennet & Avon Canal Company to supply stone for the construction of the canal. Once the canal was built it was of no further use. The line is still clearly defined and serves as a public footpath.

ELV6 K&A Canal Dundas Wharf - restored crane



“The area has a strong cultural interest associated with the movement of coal and stone along the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Somerset Coal Canal, Jane Austin’s walks along the canal, Ralph Allen’s relationship with Claverton, Claverton vineyard, the civil war skirmish at Claverton and Sally in the Woods.”

- Claverton Pumping Station was built in 1813 to pump water up from the river to the canal some 48ft. It remained operational until 1952. Subsequently restored as part of the canal restoration it is now a museum as well as pumping station and, with the weir is a popular destination for walkers. The weir and the stretches of river on either side are one of the UK’s top locations for river swimming with hundreds of people gathering on warm sunny days often causing significant parking problems on the A36.
- There are two interesting road names in the valley, Sally in the Woods and Brassknocker Hill. The A363 Bradford Road becomes Sally in the Woods soon after it leaves Bathford. Sally was Sally Gibson, the widow of a gamekeeper to the Skrine Family of Warleigh Manor. When he died, Sally lost her home and moved herself to a little hut in the wood which her husband had used for his work. Her burial is recorded in the parish records of Monkton Farleigh: *“August 12th 1824, Sarah Gibson aged 100yrs of Bathford, Somerset.”* She lived in the hut for 40yrs and was known as a wise woman with herbal lore. Some stories talked of her as a white witch. She was certainly a well-known local figure, living to an unusually great age for the times.¹⁴

Legend has it that Brassknocker Hill is named after the distinctive door knocker on the door of the old Brassknocker Inn, which subsequently became the Crown Inn.

- Claverton manor house, in the village of Claverton, was built c1580 and completed in 1625. The old manor was purchased by John Vivian in 1816 and demolished in the 1820s, when the present house was built about 400m to the south-west, high up on the valley side. This was following the fashion for healthier and fresher air, away from the damp, still air close to the river as well as to appreciate the commanding views. The terraced gardens of the manor were left in place. The present grade 1 listed classical house was built and the parkland laid out c1819–20, with gardens and pleasure grounds laid out between 1820 and 1830. From 1961 the manor became the American Museum in Britain, founded by Dallas Pratt and John Judkyn.
- In the Civil War a major skirmish took place at Warleigh Bridge, below Claverton Village, which was a precursor to the Royalists defeat at the Battle of Lansdown in July 1653. One Royalist and three Parliamentarian soldiers were killed and are buried in a nameless grave by the

churchyard wall of St Mary the Virgin Church in Claverton Village.¹⁵

- Just to the south of Claverton village is a small tributary valley known as Vineyard Bottom in which are Vineyard Farm and Vineyard Cottage. These are the only surviving references to a thriving and well known vineyard which is recorded in literature from the early 17th century until the very end of the 18th century. The vineyard was associated with the old manor house and became widely known when the manor was owned by Sir William Bassett. The earliest description of the vineyard comes from John Aubrey who famously wrote about it between 1656 and 1691. His first sentence has been extensively quoted, *“Sir William Basset, of Claverdoun, hath made the best vineyard that I have heard of in England. He says that the Navarre grape is the best for our climate, and that the eastern sun does most comfort the vine, by putting off the cold.”*¹⁶

¹⁴ *The True Story of Sally-in-the-Wood: Crystal Payne, 2015*

¹⁵ www.valleyparishesalliance.org.uk

¹⁶ *History of English Vineyards* (<https://hogsheadwine.wordpress.com>)

It seems that once the manorial estate passed into Ralph Allen's ownership the vineyard became neglected. In 1966 the wall of the vineyard was still standing but today only the name survives.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- The possibility of a link road between the A36 and the A4 has long been an aspiration to relieve traffic congestion in Bath caused by vehicles from the A36 being unable to bypass Bath. The existing communications routes through the valley are largely well integrated, in part because they run along the grain of the valley and in part because they are mostly well screened by trees. A link road or bridge cutting across the valley between the A4 and A36 goes against the grain of the valley landform and would inevitably be visually highly prominent and discordant in such a rural and harmonious landscape. It would also break the physical and visual links between the Bathampton Meadows area and the Limpey Stoke Valley.

- The woodlands in the valley appear to be in variable states of management. In the Warleigh and Conkwell woods, notices were seen during survey work, advertising blocks of the overall woodland for sale. It is unknown how the overall woodlands are managed but management is key to their healthy longevity and to the essence of the character of the area.
- The valley is a popular recreational area and although many people walk or cycle into the valley, there is increasing pressure from cars coming into the valley to visit for walks and parking is restricted. There is also a problem of litter left on the water meadow by picnickers at Warleigh Weir.
- Agricultural activity in the valley appears to be in a well-managed state overall. In the event that uses for grazing or arable were to become unviable, novel uses such as solar farms or any activities using plastics for mulching would be visually very discordant in the landscape of the valley floor in particular, as would development of tall structures. New vineyards may well be appropriate on the valley sides given the past history in the valley.
- There are a limited number of high quality vernacular buildings on the valley slopes and these add positively to the character of the valley. Conversions or new developments of building on the valley slopes which deviated from the vernacular style, in particular buildings with large areas of glazing or using novel building materials would be highly discordant. Any new building needs to be designed to work positively with the setting and character of the valley.
- The skyline through the valley is almost entirely wooded and apart from tiny glimpses of the hamlet of Conkwell, there has been no development breaking the skyline. An erosion of the skyline is being noticed in the Bathscape area and it would be important to resist such change here in order to retain the integrity of the character area.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The agriculture landscape appears to be in good condition overall. Woodland appears healthy when viewed from a distance, however when driving through Home Wood, Warleigh and alongside Conkwell Woods there appears to be little active management. Woodland condition is therefore of some concern in the long term.

No detracting elements were noted apart from litter on the water meadow beside Warleigh Weir.

2.2.7 ELV7: PERRYMEAD AND WIDCOMBE

Location and Boundaries

Perrymead and Widcombe is a small, roughly fan-shaped area of largely undeveloped hillside, located on the south side of the River Avon, close to the centre of Bath and just outside the developed area of Widcombe and Bear Flat. It lies roughly between Bathwick Hill in the east, the A367 Wellsway in the west, with Fox Hill and Claverton Down to the south. To the north-east, east and south of the area are the character areas of Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Tributary Confluences (south-west end), and Bathampton and Claverton Down. The area includes Beechen Cliff and Alexandra Park.

Summary Landscape Character

- Although small, the Perrymead character area makes a significant contribution to the landscape setting of the City of Bath, especially with its close proximity to the city centre. The undeveloped hillsides have a balance of pasture and tree cover largely unchanged since the Georgian period. Deciduous woodlands and tree belts line the upper slopes and skyline, with pasture fields and parkland clothing the slopes below. The main areas of settlement, themselves limited but with some elegant Georgian buildings, are largely hidden within the Lyn Brook Valley at Perrymead and Lyncombe Vale, leaving the historic buildings of Prior Park Mansion, Crowe Hall, Widcombe Manor, St Thomas à Becket Church, Macauley Buildings and the chapels within the cemeteries as the only other buildings set within this harmonious landscape. The mellow gold of the Bath Stone buildings throughout the largely green agricultural landscape is a unifying feature.

- The character area although comprising three distinct, small valleys and the associated Lyncombe Hill and Beechen Cliff, presents one united curving hillside and wooded skyline backdrop to the city centre. This backdrop is formed due to the asymmetrical nature of the three valleys. The extensive southern, eastern and north-eastern valley sides of the Lyn Brook, Widcombe Brook and Smallcombe Brook valleys respectively, rise up increasingly steeply to around 150m. With the wooded Beechen Cliff rising only to 127m in the

foreground of the character area when viewed from the city, there is a perception from the city of a continuation of woodland from ground level up to the backdrop at 150m.

- From within the character area the three valleys form distinct character entities separated by largely tree-lined roads.
- Smallcombe Brook Valley in the north is the smallest with generally shallower slopes except at the head of the valley; it is the most open both in terms of its landform and tree cover. There are limited

ELV7 Bath Skyline Walk



trees and hedgerows amongst the pastures with most of the tree cover being the ancient Smallcombe Wood at the head of the valley, the tree belts around the rest of its skyline and the trees within the Smallcombe Garden cemetery.

- Widcombe Brook Valley in the centre is intermediate in size, is the narrowest valley and has moderate to steep or steep slopes generally with an area of more shallow slope on the Crowe Hall Estate close to Widcombe Hill. It has a more enclosed character than Smallcombe especially within Prior Park and closer to the brook due to a combination of landform and a more patchwork agricultural landscape of small copses, grown-out hedgerows, scrub and parkland trees. The stunning Prior Park Mansion and its gardens with the lakes and Palladian bridge, run from the head of the valley down to Widcombe Manor following the brook, in the bottom of the valley and on the steep western valley side.
- Lyn Brook valley is the largest valley, it is the most asymmetric and has the steepest slopes overall. It also has a different orientation to the other valleys, running west to east rather than south or south-east to north and hence apart from its upper slopes,

it is hidden from much of the City. The steep slopes and extent of tree cover give a more intimate character to this valley. There is a strong patchwork of small pasture fields with wide overgrown hedgerows. There are small copses, tree belts, the tree-lined brook and heavily treed gardens all contributing to the enclosure.

- The Beechen Cliff/Alexandra Park and Lyncombe Hill area although a small round hill rather than a valley, is an inextricable part of this character area with strong visual, landform and cultural links to the whole. The southern and south-eastern slopes of the hill are the northern and north-eastern valley sides of the Lyn Brook. There is inter-visibility between all of the valleys and the hill; and the whole character was part of the Georgian visitor's essential itinerary with walks or rides usually starting with Lyncombe Hill. Beechen Cliff and its hanging beech and yew woodland is an iconic part of the city centre landscape today as it was in the Georgian period although at that time the woodland was less extensive. Today's Alexandra Park on top of the hill marks the city's late C19th/early C20th century determination to retain the hill top as a place for everyone to enjoy.

- The whole character area has ecological designations throughout. The ecological value is clear in the landscape character with spring and early summer bringing abundant wildflowers, birds and insects into the detail of the landscape, adding colour, texture, movement and interest to the landscape experience. The National Trust's agricultural management is focussed on restoration of their extensive grassland areas to their former glory.
- There are spectacular views over Bath in its landscape setting from higher parts of Smallcombe Valley, Widcombe Hill; and from Beechen Cliff and Alexandra Park.
- There is a strong cultural interest throughout the area. Beechen Cliff, Lyncombe Hill and vale with its spa and pleasure grounds, Widcombe Manor, St Thomas à Becket Church and of course Ralph Allen's Prior Park Mansion and garden were essential destinations on the itinerary of the visitor to Georgian Bath. Apart from these places of interest, key to the visitor experience were and still are, the panoramic views over the city from all over the character area and in particular from Lyncombe Hill.

- For such a small character area, the large number of Cemeteries, five in all, bring a significant contribution to its landscape character.
- There is plentiful public access throughout the character area including large areas of National Trust open access land.

“The character area although comprising three distinct, small valleys and the associated Lyncombe Hill and Beechen Cliff, presents one united curving hillside and wooded skyline backdrop to the city centre.”

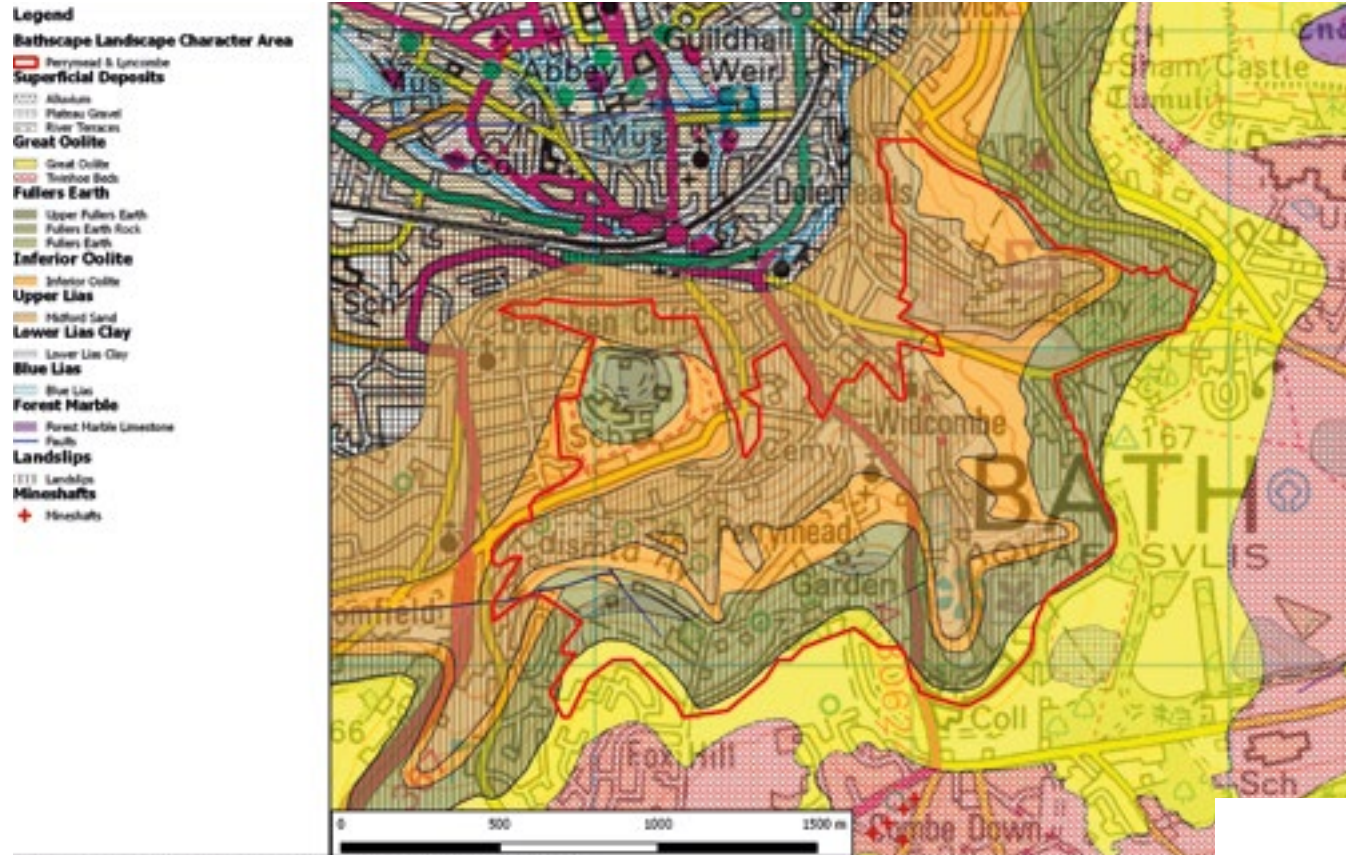
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The Perrymead and Widcombe landscape character area comprises three tributary stream valleys which feed eventually into the River Avon. Cold springs at Prior Park to the south of Widcombe feed Widcombe Brook which joins Lyn Brook before entering the River Avon. A series of springs around Oakwood, Bathwick Hill coalesce to form Smallcombe Brook draining Smallcombe valley and running into the Kennet and Avon Canal at Abbey View Lock. A further series of cold springs on Bathampton Down originally flowed down into the River Avon but were conducted to reservoirs in the late C18 and early C19.

These valleys are generally steep-sided, undulating and indented although all have areas of more shallow slopes. The southern slopes of the Lyn Brook valley are particularly indented and curving. All the valleys are asymmetrical in shape with the eastern/north-eastern sides of the Widcombe Brook and Smallcombe Brook valleys having more extensive slopes; and the southern side of the Lyn Brook valley also being more extensive. These more extensive slopes all rise up much higher than their opposite valley sides, to or

ELV7 Perrymead & Lyncombe - Geology



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towards the plateau at Bathampton and Claverton Down and at Fox Hill at around 150m. This marked asymmetry in height gives a relatively open valley form.

The uppermost and generally the steepest slopes of the Perrymead character area in the south are underlain by Fuller's Earth. The lower slopes, and fingering up the length of the three tributary streams are all Midford Sand. These are also generally steep slopes. Between the Midford Sand and the Fuller's Earth is a layer of Inferior Oolite of variable thickness. These are the shallowest and mostly convex slopes and are roughly midway up the hillsides. Beechen Cliff is Midford Sand throughout and is very steep indeed, essentially a river cliff. The Alexandra Park and Lyncombe Hill area is a small rounded outlier of Inferior Oolite topped by a dome of Fuller's Earth. The Oolite of Lyncombe Hill gives steep slopes to the east and moderate to steep slopes in the south. With the exception of the areas of Inferior Oolite, the whole of the rest of the character area has been subject to landslips which can clearly be seen in the complex, highly undulating landform with slumping and undulations at a whole range of scales down to the very local.

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

Almost the entire area has SNCI designation, the main exceptions being improved fields south of Widcombe Hill and forming part of the Crowe Hall Estate; the gardens of Widcombe Manor; the Beechen Cliff school grounds; and settled areas such as along Lyncombe Vale and Perrymead although these are mostly included in the draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridor for Combe Down'.

In the Lyn Brook Valley there is unimproved limestone grassland with Yellow Meadow Ant anthills at Perrymead Fields and neutral grassland with badger activity in Lyncombe Vale. The whole of the Abbey Cemetery is included within the SNCI designations. Almost the entire valley is covered by the draft 'Horseshoe Bat Corridor for Combe Down'.

The Beechen Cliff SNCI includes the grassland within Alexandra Park, lowland meadow UK Priority habitat on the eastern slopes up to Alexandra Park, and Beechen Cliff woodland itself which is UK priority Habitat beech and yew woodland. The woodland covers the extremely steep north facing slopes running down from Alexandra Park to the Avon Valley.

Much of the Widcombe Brook Valley is unimproved limestone grassland, with the southern slopes including Prior Park being also UK Priority Habitat lowland limestone pasture. There are areas of Yellow Meadow Ant anthills forming a prominent local landscape feature especially on the steeper southern slopes.

In the Smallcombe Brook valley, the ancient Smallcombe Wood is a dominant feature in the south-eastern part of the valley, running down the slopes from the head of the valley, it is also designated as UK priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Smallcombe wood is the only ancient woodland within the City of Bath and contains many veteran oak trees.

The rest of the valley is all either unimproved lowland calcareous grassland or semi-improved neutral meadows. The Smallcombe Vale garden cemeteries are closed burial grounds and are included within the grassland SNCI designations

Much of the land within the Smallcombe and Widcombe valleys is within National Trust ownership with a management programme to restore the neglected pastures and remove scrub, taking cuts for hay and then grazing with cattle.

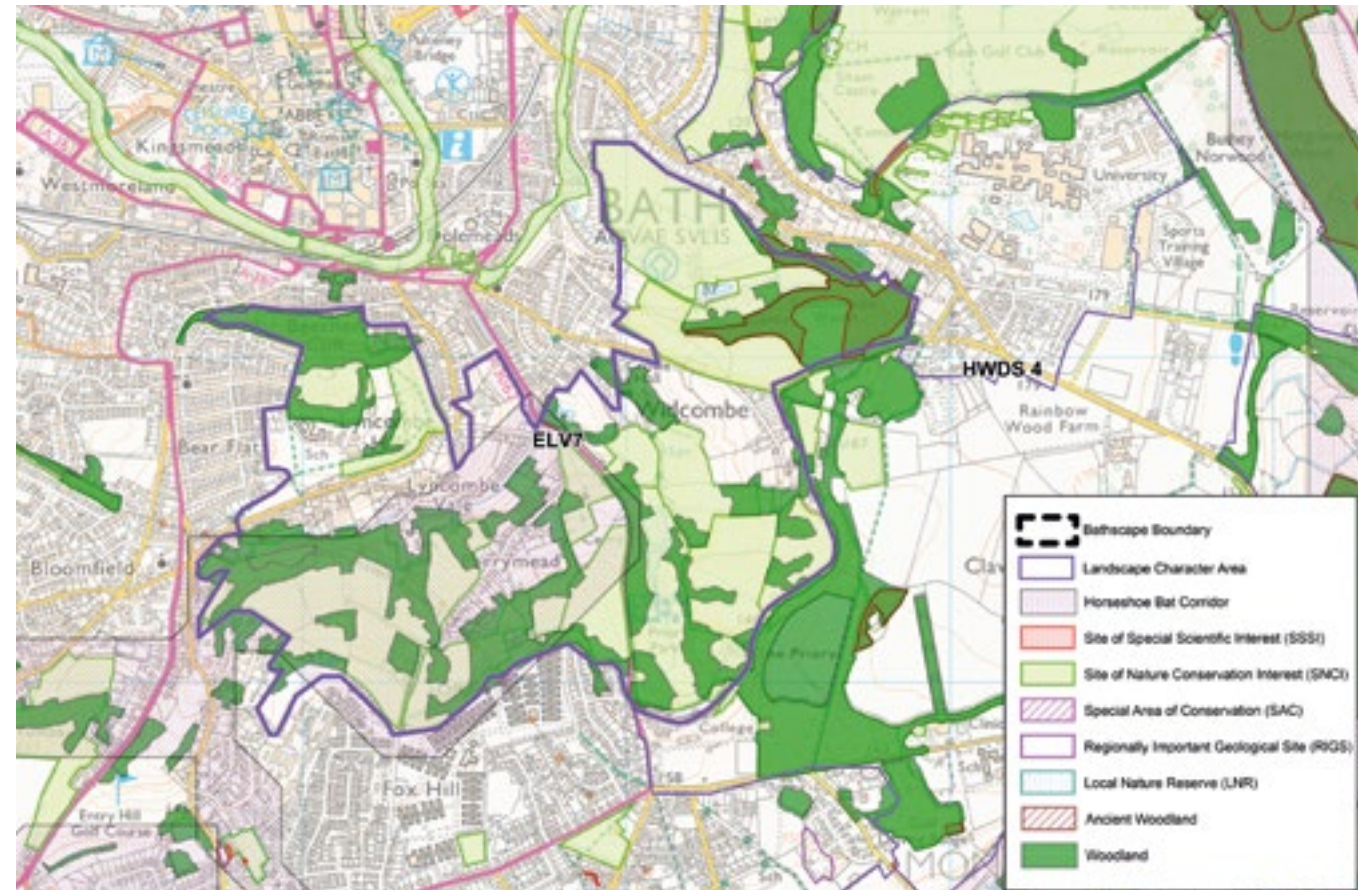
The Lyn Brook Valley, although primarily consisting of small pasture fields, has a well treed character. The bottom of the valley including the brook itself, the disused railway and the large gardens associated with properties in Lyncombe Vale, forms a significant tree belt. There are small copses scattered throughout the valley with areas of neglected fields becoming scrubbed over. All hedgerows are grown out and well-treed and there is a significant tree belt running along much of the steepest southern slopes below Fox Hill.

Widcombe Valley is also well-treed with tree belts all around Prior Park, an extensive tree belt running from the edge of Claverton Down onto the steepest slopes of the eastern valley side, a small copse and the remains of hedgerows which have become woodland belts and areas of scrub in the steeper eastern fields. There are large numbers of excellent parkland trees associated with Crowe Hall Estate and the well-treed grounds of Crowe Hall and Widcombe Manor.

The Smallcombe Brook Valley has the large Smallcombe Wood at the head of the valley but much of the rest of the valley is more open pasture land with the exception of the Smallcombe Garden Cemetery and the Smallcombe Farm area at the bottom of the valley.

Both Ralph Allan Drive above Widcombe Manor and at least half of Widcombe Hill are lined with large mature trees.

ELV7 Perrymead & Widcombe – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The majority of the Lyn Brook Valley is late medieval enclosure of steep slopes. At the east end of the valley is part of the post-medieval enclosure of Claverton Manor Deer Park. The Abbey Cemetery is a grade 2* registered historic park/garden.

Much of Widcombe Valley is post-medieval fields created from the medieval Claverton Deer Park. There are registered historic parks at Prior Park (grade 1 listed), Crowe Hall (grade 2 listed) and Widcombe Manor (grade 2 listed) with a relatively small area of late medieval enclosure of steep slopes.

Smallcombe Valley is largely late medieval enclosure of steep slopes.

Much of the character area remains in agricultural use as unimproved or semi-improved pasture, which is remarkable given its proximity to the centre of the City.

Within the Lyn Brook Valley, fields are very small indeed and rectangular. There is one exception which is the medium-sized triangular field at the eastern end of the valley which was once part of Claverton Deer Park. Fields are all bound by substantial grown out hedgerows. There is some horse grazing although not typical of normal urban intensive horseculture. In Lyncombe Vale a small sheep flock grazes and

there is small-scale cattle grazing. Whilst many fields appear to remain in active use, there are a number which are neglected with significant scrub encroachment.

All the National Trust owned pasture land in the Widcombe and Smallcombe Brook Valleys is managed to restore its ecological value mostly with cattle grazing or a regime of hay cutting followed by cattle grazing. Richen's Orchard in the Smallcombe Valley is grazed by sheep. Fields in the Smallcombe Brook valley are generally significantly larger and more irregular than in the rest of the character area although there are a few very small rectangular fields. Here hedgerows are managed but not clipped low. In the Widcombe Brook Valley the National Trust fields are mostly small and rectangular with tall grown-out hedgerows which have spread significantly into the fields. There is considerable scrub in these fields.

In Widcombe Brook Valley historic parks are a significant land-use, with Prior Park landscape garden being the jewel in the crown of the entire character area. The park runs straight down from the mansion at the head of the valley, through the centre of the valley following the course of the brook. Crowe Hall, its gardens and parkland occupy the north-western half of the eastern

ELV7 Cattle Grazing on NT land at Widcombe



Widcombe Brook valley side. The parkland is semi-improved pasture cut for hay and then grazed.

There are a remarkable number of cemeteries in the character area. These include the Abbey Cemetery, Perrymead Catholic Cemetery, the small burial ground with St. Thomas a Becket Parish church and the Smallcombe Garden Cemeteries.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

There is limited settlement within the character area. The main areas are Lyncombe Vale with houses in a linear pattern along the few roads. Other than that there is the distinctive area of Macauley Buildings near the top of Smallcombe valley, on and just off Widcombe Hill. The building form and age in the area is variable. Macaulay Buildings are early C19 paired villas; Perrymead has early and mid C19 detached villas as well as mid C20 houses; and Lyncombe Vale ranges from mid C18th to C20th with a predominance of early C19th. Buildings are mostly natural Bath stone ashlar with natural slate roofs. Post-war C20th housing is mostly reconstituted Bath stone.

Outside the areas of settlement are a limited number of individual properties, principal among which is the grade 1 listed early C18th Prior Park Mansion. Also the grade 2 listed mid C18th Crowe Hall and the grade 1 listed Widcombe Manor just

within the character area and adjacent to the C15th St. Thomas à Becket Parish Church listed grade 2*. Set in the Smallcombe Valley is Smallcombe Farm.

The two principal roads through the character area both start together at Widcombe Parade and then fan out to run out of the city and up onto the plateau between each valley and acting as partial visual separators.

The A3062 more commonly known as Ralph Allen Drive, runs between The Lyn Brook Valley and the Widcombe Brook Valley beside Prior Park. It enters the character area between Widcombe Manor and St. Thomas à Becket Church where the road is narrow and lined with high stone walls, the road then opens out somewhat with a high wall on the west side to the Abbey Cemetery and a low wall with trees to Prior Park. Beyond the Cemetery the wall is replaced by a hedgerow or low wall and thick trees whilst the low wall and trees continues along Prior Park.

Widcombe Hill runs between the Widcombe Brook Valley and Smallcombe Brook Valley and also enters the character area where the road is relatively narrow with high stone walls. Walls and trees continue with the wall alongside Crowe Hall and its estate remaining relatively high whilst it is lower on

the eastern side. There are excellent trees which arch over the road and meet. Further along the road the trees give way to a lower wall on the Crowe Hall side and reveal open views across the gently sloping fields in the foreground to the Lyn Brook Valley and its wooded skylines. Closer to Macauley Buildings the trees disappear from the east side of the road as well leaving a low wall and wide vistas across the Smallcombe Valley and down into the City.

There are few other roads in the character area and these are mostly narrow lanes with settlement along them.

There are limited footpaths in the character area outside the National Trust open access land. There are public footpaths around the slopes of Lyncombe Hill and an apparent informal path at the western end of the Lyn Brook Valley. However the open access land offers spectacular views and the National Trust's Skyline Walk goes through the Smallcombe Brook Valley with a

ELV7 Prior Park



Photo courtesy of National Trust

stop at a particularly stunning viewpoint at the head of the open access land in the Widcombe Brook Valley. There are also Alexandra Park and Springfield Park open space in the south-west of the Lyn Brook Valley and the cemeteries which are freely accessible.

The Two Tunnels Cycleway runs through the Lyn Brook Valley but mostly in tunnel.

Land Ownership

- B&NES have land holdings or management responsibilities at Beechen Cliff, Alexandra Park and much of the eastern slopes of Lyncombe Hill, Springfield Park open space and the cemeteries.
- The National Trust own much of the Smallcombe Brook Valley including Smallcombe Wood and the southern half of the Widcombe Brook Valley including a triangular field to the west of Ralph Allen Drive and opposite Prior Park.

Visual Significance

This character area has some of the most spectacular views to be had of the City set in its hollow within the hills, and its visual significance has been appreciated and documented since Georgian times. Most of the expansive views are to be had from Alexandra Park, Beechen Cliff and Lyncombe Hill eastern slopes, and within the Smallcombe and Widcombe Brook valleys, with views becoming increasingly extensive higher up the slopes.

Alexandra Park is renowned for having 360° views which are extensive in all except the views to the south which are contained by the higher slopes of the Lyn Brook Valley and in part blocked by Beechen Cliff School.

Views from within the Smallcombe and Widcombe Brook valleys do not have to be panoramic over the City to be remarkable however and there are beautiful views of the pastoral and well treed landscape dotted with elegant buildings, to be had in all directions and from any height within the valleys.

Within the Lyn Brook Valley visual experience depends on whether the views are within the western or eastern half of the valley although in general there is a more enclosed and intimate nature to the visual experience, the valley sides being

particularly steep and curving as well as well treed. There are some extensive views over to the Swainswick Valley from the eastern half including along Perrymead itself, which tend to be more narrow in extent and framed by landform or vegetation. It is possible to see the University development at Claverton Down on the skyline from places in the eastern part of the Lyn Brook Valley, from various places in the Smallcombe Valley and Lyncombe Hill/Alexandra Park. There are also views to the new housing at Ensleigh from various places within the character area.

There are views to the following character areas:

- Charlcombe and Swainswick Valley
- The skyline of Bathampton and Claverton Down
- Western Valley
- The edge of the Lansdown Plateau.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

Although so close to the City this character area has a strongly tranquil character whether it be within the intimate and enclosed parts of the Lyn Brook Valley or the more open Smallcombe and Widcombe Brook valleys. The experience of tranquillity in this character area is provided by:

- The particular beauty of this mostly undeveloped agricultural and parkland landscape,
- the wonderful views,
- the almost complete lack of discordant elements within the character area, and
- the ability to experience wildflowers, and grazing animals including the occasional cry of a cockerel.

Cultural Associations

This is an area rich in cultural associations and especially related to the Georgian period.

- Prior Park is without doubt the jewel of the Perrymead Character Area. Ralph Allen's mansion at Prior Park was built on the deer park, acquired by Allen, in 1728, which formerly belonged to the Prior of Bath. The house, designed by John Wood, was completed in

1741 just before he became Mayor of Bath and the landscaped gardens were designed by the poet Alexander Pope and the eminent landscape gardener Capability Brown and make perfect use of the Widcombe Brook, its valley landform and the prospect overlooking Bath. Georgian visitors flocked to see the mansion and the gardens.

A visit to the mansion and gardens was an essential part of the Georgian visitor's itinerary. The route from Bath was, as today, along what was then Ralph Allen's private drive and railway, the latter being itself an object of curiosity. Ralph Allen built his mansion 'to see all Bath...and for all Bath to see...' and his achievement in that is one of his greatest legacies.

“Ralph Allen built his mansion [at Prior Park] ‘to see all Bath... and for all Bath to see...’.”

- A visit to Lyncombe Vale was an essential part of the Bath experience in the C18th and the route from the city was well documented, by amongst others, John Penrose, Betsy Sheridan and Jane Austen. Visitors climbed up over Lyncombe Hill and into Lycombe Valley where they could drink the waters in Lyncombe Spa (now the Paragon School) or view the flower gardens in the Pleasure Ground known as King James's Palace (now "The Court"). This title seems to have been adopted because of a tradition that King James II stayed with his consort Mary of Modena at Lyncombe Vale when she was taking treatment at Bath. It was possible then to continue down to "Wicksteed's Machine", a cameo-engraving studio next to Ralph Allen's carriage drive and railway which later became the site of another pleasure ground called the Bagatelle (now Bagatelle House and Ashley Lodge).

From here it was possible either to return to the city centre or continue on to Widcombe Hill, viewing Mr Bennet's House (now Widcombe Manor) and Thomas à Becket Church. There were many illustrations of the surroundings produced from here.

- Widcombe Manor is situated in Church Road and immediately adjacent to St. Thomas à Becket Church, just on the edge of the character area. It is an important Bath building. Its setting next to the church is idyllic and is on a popular route for tourists. The story of Widcombe Manor is one of a climb to fame, with a succession of distinguished owners who reflected the social history of Bath at the time. Its known history begins in 1628 when the land (98 acres) was granted to Robert Fisher, an alderman and sometime mayor of Bath. The property is described as the farm at Widcombe and the tenement by the church. Robert Fisher seems to have been a market gardener who would have supplied the visitors to the spa who stayed at Bath lodging houses. Subsequently the house passed to a nephew Scarborough who built the original house, probably in 1678. In 1721 the house passed to Philip Bennet II. Philip lived here in the age of Beau Nash, John Wood and Ralph Allen. His sister married Ralph Allen's brother and Ralph Allen ran his stone tramway through Philip Bennet's mill grounds. It was Philip Bennet II who remodelled the house and produced the famous building which is known today. Documents suggest that at least 5

acres of orchards and mill grounds were left outside the formal gardens around the house. The hillock called 'the Mount' was erected at the time, also drawn by Robins. A spiral path wound up it. There were also ponds, fed by Widcombe Brook which runs down from the Prior Park site, crossing under lower Church Street, A Neptune statue came to preside over the two ponds.

There were many distinguished owners after that time through to the 1960s when the house was owned by Jeremy Fry who was a close friend of Anthony Armstrong-Jones, later Lord Snowdon, and Lord Snowdon and Princess Margaret often visited the house. Older Widcombe residents can still remember the music from parties sweeping over the valley. Jeremy Fry was a patron of the arts and is said to have saved Bath's Theatre Royal by buying and restoring it. Already an engineer, he established 'the Rotork Engineering Company Ltd' at Widcombe Manor in 1957.

After a succession of other owners the house was sold again and the new owners carried out an extensive programme of restoration of the house and grounds.¹⁷

- The area of Beechen Cliff and Lyncombe Hill was as already described, an essential stop for visitors to Bath. The top of Beechen Cliff and what is now Alexandra Park has always been the main viewing point from which the city can be seen in detail, as recommended by John Wood "... *for the eye to distinguish the particular buildings of the City.*..." Many artists have produced fine work from all of the prospects around the 360° view. In 1824 a particularly interesting 360° panoramic view was taken by Harvey Wood from a point a little back from the summit. The lithograph, 13ft long by 1ft high and in seven sections includes the whole of the southern prospect between Prior Park and Twerton Roundhill, and is annotated to show key sites in the town and surrounding landscape. Since the creation of Alexandra Park in the early C20th, practically all the views have become obscured, either by growth of trees on the cliff and around the Park, or by the building of Beechen Cliff School and houses at Bear Flat. In the 1980s a similar panorama was produced but it was necessary for the Twerton artist Roger Hallet to ascend above the trees in a balloon. His 360° panoramic canvas painting was 200ft long by 20ft high (said to be the largest

painting in the country) and was exhibited at the then abandoned Fuller's Earth Works on Odd Down. However despite formation of a consortium of shareholders to raise the £50,000 capital for its housing, it only appears to have been otherwise exhibited in London and its present whereabouts is unclear.

- There are a high concentration of cemeteries in the character area – the Abbey Cemetery, the Smallcombe Garden Cemeteries (St. Mary's churchyard and Smallcombe Vale), the Catholic Cemetery and the graveyard at St. Thomas à Becket Church with its additional area in Church Lane referred to as the Bowling Alley from its original use and now known as the Old Burial Ground. Most of these are closed cemeteries but are open to visitors.

The Abbey Cemetery is a remarkably peaceful and pretty spot and is listed as a place of special historic interest on English Heritage's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest'. Designed by John Claudius Loudon (1783–1843), the 'Brunel' of cemetery design, the cemetery adheres to its creator's vision, which was to dispose of the dead in a hygienic manner, to improve the morals and taste of the great masses of society, by its

architectural and botanical riches, and, most importantly, to serve as a historical record for future generations. Loudon also said that the Cemetery should be conspicuous from a distance, be an ornament to the surrounding countryside and an impressive memento to mortality.¹⁸

In 2015 the Smallcombe Garden Cemetery Conservation and Heritage Project was awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to support a two-year conservation project to ensure that a hidden social, historical and ecological gem did not become lost to neglect and decay. Smallcombe Vale was a meadow on the edge of a small wood until the 1820s, when part of it was laid out as a garden. It was probably a kitchen garden for vegetables when it was given over by the owner, the 3rd Duke of Cleveland, 'for the sole use of the Rector of St Mary's, Bathwick'. By 1850 the population of Victorian Britain had rapidly grown and the Parish of Bathwick was overwhelmed by demands for burials. The churchyards were full. Spurred on by Acts of Parliament to create burial grounds out of town, a fashion arose for cemeteries to be viewed as 'Gardens for the Dead'. Smallcombe was to be one of them. The kitchen garden was included in a larger piece of land

extending up the hill and into the woods which the Duke sold to the Church of England for a reasonable price and the cemetery was built c1855.

In 1859 there was a heated debate about 'The Cemetery Question' – what to do with dissenters – and in 1861, on land adjacent but separated by a wall, a second Smallcombe cemetery was built to accommodate the Non-Conformists; it contains its own small but elegant chapel, designed by Alfred Goodridge, and a curious row of stones going up the slope. The closer the Anglicans were to the stones, the cheaper the burial costs. The demand for more burials continued into the 20th century. By 1907 the population had doubled since the 1850s. The two cemeteries, now generally seen as a single entity, were expanded up the floor of the valley to the east. Smallcombe Garden Cemetery was closed to new burial plots in 1988 and has become partially relinquished to nature and time. Visitors are very welcome.¹⁹

Perrymead Cemetery is Bath's Catholic cemetery. It opened in 1856 and is still in use. It has a mortuary chapel and a separate chapel, the Eyre Chapel for the Eyre family, members of which are buried in its crypt to this day.

The Eyre Chapel at Bath (listed grade 2) is an outstanding example of mid 19th century Gothic Catholic Revival architecture. Built between 1859 and 1863 as a burial place and chantry chapel for John Lewis Eyre (1789–1880), it is one of four chapels associated with the Derbyshire Recusant Catholic family of Eyre and the only one outside Derbyshire.

- The Two Tunnels Greenway passes through and mostly under the Lyncombe Brook Valley. The route follows the disused railway track bed of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway from East Twerton through the Bath suburb of Oldfield Park to the Devonshire Tunnel. It emerges into Lyncombe Vale before entering the Combe Down Tunnel, and then coming out to cross Tucking Mill Viaduct at Tucking Mill into Midford.
- Richen's Orchard which is now part of the National Trust Land in Smallcombe Valley was planted about 10 years ago around an existing walnut tree. It was a 90th birthday present for the grandfather of the Richen family.²⁰

¹⁷ Adapted from an essay Compiled by Elizabeth Holland for the Survey of Old Bath – The Widcombe and Lyncombe Local History Society

¹⁸ www.bathabbey.org/history/abbey-cemetery

¹⁹ www.smallcombegardencemetery.org

²⁰ Anecdotal from conversation with NT Warden

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- Given the particular importance and value of this landscape, the large area of land in National Trust ownership, and the very steep slopes in much of the area, there is unlikely to be large scale development pressure. However even small changes to land-use, buildings or roads due to traffic management requirements here could have significant negative effects.
- The agricultural landscape within the Widcombe and Smallcombe Valleys is largely protected and managed by the National Trust but that within the Lyn Brook Valley is not and there is already increasing neglect and resultant scrub encroachment happening in places. Such small areas of fields within the city can only be viable for very small-scale sheep or cattle grazing and there is a concern that either the valley will eventually scrub up completely or become horsiculture with subsequent loss of ecological value.
- Increasing development on the important skylines around the character area is a significant threat, especially the University developments at Claverton.

- Lack of management of tree belts, copses and hedgerows where outside National Trust ownership is likely to lead to their deterioration or loss over time. Levels of management are unknown.
- B&NES Council currently manage the cemeteries and Alexandra Park. Given levels of government cuts, it is possible that the quality of management may deteriorate.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The condition of the rather narrow tree belts around much of the skyline (not Smallcombe Wood) is unknown but could be cause for concern if un-managed, as these are vital to the screening out of development on the plateau areas to the south and east. Condition is likely to be deteriorating.

Overall the landscape in the Smallcombe and Widcombe Brook valleys appears in very good, good or improving condition but within the Lyn Brook Valley there are signs of deterioration in the unimproved pasture fields in places and lack of hedgerow management.

No detracting elements were noted within the character area itself but there are discordant views in places towards the University development on the Bathampton/Claverton Down skyline and to the new development at Ensleigh.

2.2.8 ELV8: CAM AND MIDFORD VALLEY

Location and Boundaries

The Cam and Midford Brook character area is the southern-most character area within the Bathscape Project area. It runs west to east between the A367 just to the west of Combe Hay and the A36 just to the east of Monkton Combe. To the north of the valley is the Sulis Plateau area, Combe Down and Claverton Down and to the South is the Bathscape boundary.

Summary Landscape Character

- This valley character area has a roughly flat valley floor with a narrow flood plain. The landform of the valley is complex reflecting the complex geology here and the impact of a number of small tributary valleys. There is a significant difference between the Midford Brook at the eastern end of the character area and the Cam Brook at the western end. The Midford Brook valley is relatively narrow, generally steep-sided but with some shallower slopes around Midford Castle and with valleys sides which are gently sinuous and undulating. The Cam Brook Valley is wider and highly asymmetric and here the geology is particularly complex on the

northern, wider valley side. Here the combination of geology and hydrology, with the presence of tributary stream valleys gives a rounded, indented and undulating northern valley side with steep upper slopes. There are significant areas of mid-slope bulges of shallower sloping land and then steeper slopes down to the valley floor.

- Agriculture in the valley is a mix of arable, short term leys and pasture with a tendency to permanent pasture and short term leys in the Midford Valley, and in the Cam Valley a more mixed landscape, with arable and short term leys on the shallower slopes and pasture on the steeper slopes. Fields are of all shapes and sizes but with clusterings of larger fields on shallower slopes, and clusterings

of smaller fields generally on steeper slopes with particular areas to the west of Midford, south of Southstoke and in Horsecombe Vale. Fields are bounded by hedgerows which are mostly clipped in the more intensively farmed areas and overgrown around the smaller fields.

- Woodland of various shapes and sizes is scattered throughout the character area favouring the steeper slopes. This has led to concentrations in the Midford Valley especially on the southern side, the north-eastern slopes of Horsecombe Vale, the north side of the Cam valley between Southstoke and Combe Hay in a tributary valley, and the south side of the Cam Valley opposite Combe Hay. The brooks and the disused railway lines are all lined with trees

giving the valley bottom a well treed character. There are few field trees apart from the parkland at Midford Castle.

- This is an ecologically rich area with ecological designations clustered in complexes throughout the valley outside of the mainly arable shallow sloping areas. Principal areas are Horsecombe Vale and the northern slopes of the Midford Valley, the ancient woodlands on the south side of the Midford valley, to the west and south of Southstoke, along the Cam Brook Valley floor, and the ancient woodlands to the South of Combe Hay on the southern slopes. The whole valley is designated as a horseshoe bat corridor.

- The valley has a rich industrial heritage focussed on transporting coal from the Somersetshire Coal Canal, Victorian railway development, and the Fullers Earth workings which served the local mills as well as being a valuable local export. Remnants of this heritage remain, with the tree-lined disused railways and their viaducts being the most prominent landmarks in the landscape and with smaller scale remains of the Somersetshire Coal Canal, the locks around Combe Hay and the Midford Aqueduct. There are also hints of William Smith's tramway above Tucking Mill.

ELV8 Cam Valley looking over Combe Hay



“From the brow of the hill above the church [South Stoke], the prospect is finely varied with in closures, woods, and projecting rocks; and to the southeast is very extensive, being bounded by the high ridge of Salisbury plain. In the lower part of the parish, are some fine meadows”

The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset

- Combe Hay, Tucking Mill, Midford and Monkton Combe are all small, compact and well-treed settlements situated on the valley floor with Monkton Combe having an additional higher level location high up on the valley side. Southstoke is a small spring-line village set just below the plateau and also well-treed. All the villages apart from Monkton Combe have largely C18th and early C19th century stone built cottages and villas with occasional larger properties. Monkton Combe has a greater variety of development age including Victorian and some C20th properties. Each village has its own special character. All the villages are extremely well integrated in the landscape. Elsewhere in the valley there are only a few farms and individual properties on the valley sides.
- The end of the Two Tunnels Greenway has brought a significant increase in recreational activity to the valley and numbers of recreational cyclists using the lanes and railway paths are now a common feature in the valley.
- There is a fascinating cultural heritage which is dominated by its industrial past and its links with the Somersetshire coal-field through the Somersetshire Coal Canal and in particular the fascination of the Georgians with the Caisson and locks at Combe Hay and the influence of William Smith the engineer and geologist. The fascinating gothic mansion of Midford Castle is a key valley landmark.
- The visual experience within the valley varies significantly with views being limited and contained by surrounding trees in the bottom of the valley and more open and expansive from viewpoints high up on the valley sides where there are views both across and along the valley. There are notable views across the valley from benches in Monkton Combe and Southstoke. From the A36 at the entrance to the valley, there are good views to Midford Castle with its backdrop of woodland.
- The character area has a different local character in each of the Cam and Midford valleys as well as the tributary of Horsecombe Vale. The Midford valley is narrower, steeper overall with more subtle undulations and indentations and a more wooded and well treed land cover. Its character is more enclosed by landform and trees, and has a more intimate feel than the Cam Valley. Horsecombe Vale which is a large tributary valley of the Midford Brook has a more open landform and character in contrast, even with the presence of significant woodland and is heavily influence by the edges of settlement surrounding and encroaching into it. The Cam Valley is wider and more open in character than the Midford Valley apart from on the lower slopes and valley floor which are enclosed and intimate. It has significant areas of shallower slopes on its northern side which are largely un-wooded. It has a more complex and sinuous landform with undulations and indentations at a variety of scales and two distinctive, steep sided tributary stream valleys. Its woodlands and tree cover are focussed in one of the tributary valleys, on the southern valley side and the valley floor.
- The whole valley apart from Horsecombe Vale perhaps, has an air of peace and tranquillity. There is a sense of separation from the world outside the valley especially in the Cam Brook part of the valley.

Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The geology of the Cam Brook Valley is essentially the same set of strata as is found in the other Enclosed Limestone Valley character Areas but with some highly distinctive differences. There is a strong differentiation between the Cam Brook Valley to the west of Midford and the Midford Valley to the east of Midford.

The narrower Midford Valley has the typical arrangement of Greater Oolite at the top of the valley sides, followed by a band of Fullers Earth extending a third or more of the way down the slope; then a narrow band of Inferior Oolite and on the lower slopes; and valley floor is Midford Sand.

In the much wider and highly asymmetric Cam Brook Valley, possibly because of the presence of significant faulting as well as the action of tributary streams cutting down through the northern valley side, there has been significant cambering which has caused large sections of Greater Oolite to be separated from the main mass of it on the adjacent plateau. In addition, there is a much greater thickness of Fullers Earth here than in the other valleys of the landscape type, particularly on the northern valley side. The result is that on the face of it the rocks appear to be out of order in places on the northern valley side.

The southern valley side however presents a more normal picture with Greater Oolite at the very top of the valley side apart from around Upper Twinhoe Farm where it is more extensive down the slope. This is followed by a moderate band of Fuller's Earth, a very narrow band of Inferior Oolite and on the lower slope and valley floor, Midford Sands overlaid by Alluvium.

High up on the northern valley side is generally a narrow band of Greater Oolite apart from where there is a considerable extension of it out along a narrow sloping ridge down almost as far as Midford and lying between Horsecombe Vale and the lower part of Southstoke. Below the Greater Oolite is a thick band of Fuller's Earth which, in Horsecombe Vale extends almost down to the tributary stream floor. Elsewhere on the northern valley side the Fuller's Earth is interrupted by three substantial outliers of Greater Oolite, to the west of Fortnight Farm and on beyond the character area boundary, between Fortnight Farm and Rowley Wood, and then around Hodshill. Each of these outliers is separated by tributary valleys. Below the outliers is another thick band of Fuller's Earth and then, near the bottom of the slope is a variable thickness of Inferior Oolite with Midford Sand below the 50m contour, close to and across the valley floor.

The Cam Brook is a small river approximately 18km long rising in Hinton Blewett in the Mendips to the west, becoming the Midford Brook at Midford where the Wellow Brook joins the Cam Brook, and then merging with the River Avon just east of Monkton Combe. The character area is the lower section of the brook between Combe Hay and its confluence with the River Avon valley.

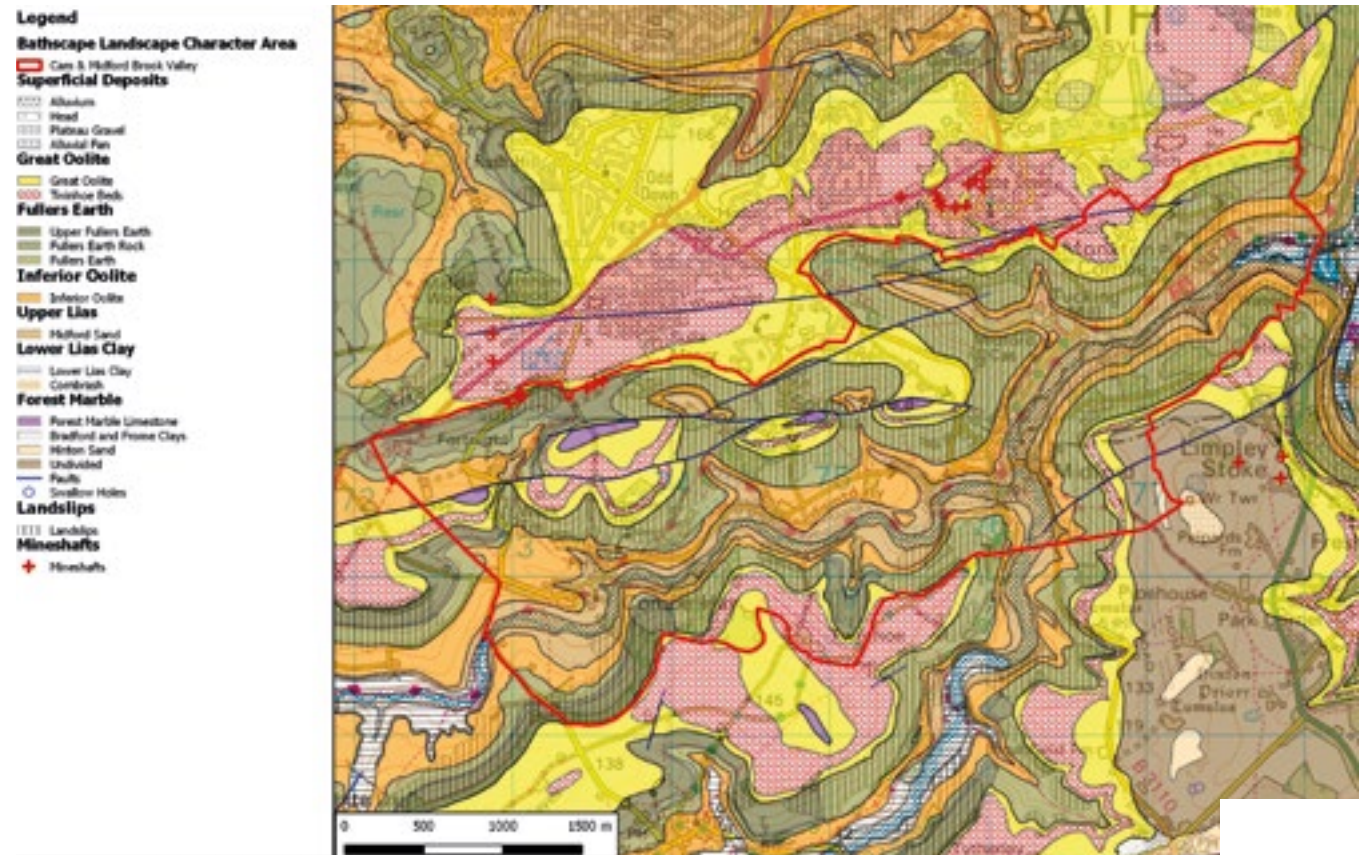
“William Smith, known as the ‘Father of English Geology’, has strong associations with the character area”

Within the character area the Cam Brook follows a sinuous course matching the indentations in the valley sides. The valley floor is relatively narrow, flat and sinuous at around 40m and the brook meanders freely across it.

There are many springs throughout the character area and a number of tributary streams. The largest tributary valleys are on the northern valley sides creating a complex and highly indented landform. The main tributary valleys are up to Fortnight Farm from Combe Hay, to the east of Combe Hay winding up through Engine Wood and Rowley Wood, below South Stoke, and Horsecombe Vale. On the southern valley side the tributary streams are small and create more gentle indentations.

The Cam Brook at the western end of the valley is moderately wide and highly asymmetric, with the northern valley side being more extensive than the southern valley side. The Midford Brook, eastern end of the valley is more even in shape and quite narrow. As a whole within the character area the northern valley side rises up to about 170m throughout whereas the south valley side only rises up to between 127 and 140m.

ELV8 Cam & Midford Brook Valley – Geology



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The effect of the complex geology is evident in the valley landform which is itself complex. Wherever there are large areas of Greater Oolite or Inferior Oolite, the valley slopes are quite gentle; elsewhere they are moderately steep or steep. This gives generally steep upper slopes; followed by areas of relatively shallow slopes interrupted by steep-sided tributary valleys; and then lower down the valley side the slopes vary between steep and relatively shallow.

In addition there is considerable land slippage over the Fuller's Earth areas creating all sorts of scales of undulations and slumping.

There are geological RIGS designations all along the Somersetshire Coal Canal and including the Combe Hay locks

“Limestone walls within and at the edge of the villages are characteristic and include the locally characteristic “Drungs” which are ancient narrow paths enclosed by walls.”

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There are a moderate amount of ecologically designated grassland and grassland/woodland complexes in the valley, generally but not always on steeper slopes and concentrated in tributary valleys. The most significant areas are in the tributary valley to the west of Hodshill and extending onto the shallower slopes further west towards Odd Down, Horsecombe Vale which then links to the area between Horsecombe Vale and Monkton Combe, and finally on the southern side of the valley, the ancient woodland and grassland SNCI complex to the west of Upper Twinhoe Farm. In addition the whole brook and some areas of valley floor meadows are SNCIs. There are also smaller areas of grassland SNCI scattered through the valley.

There is a moderate amount of woodland in the valley with some good groupings of small ancient woodlands. These are:

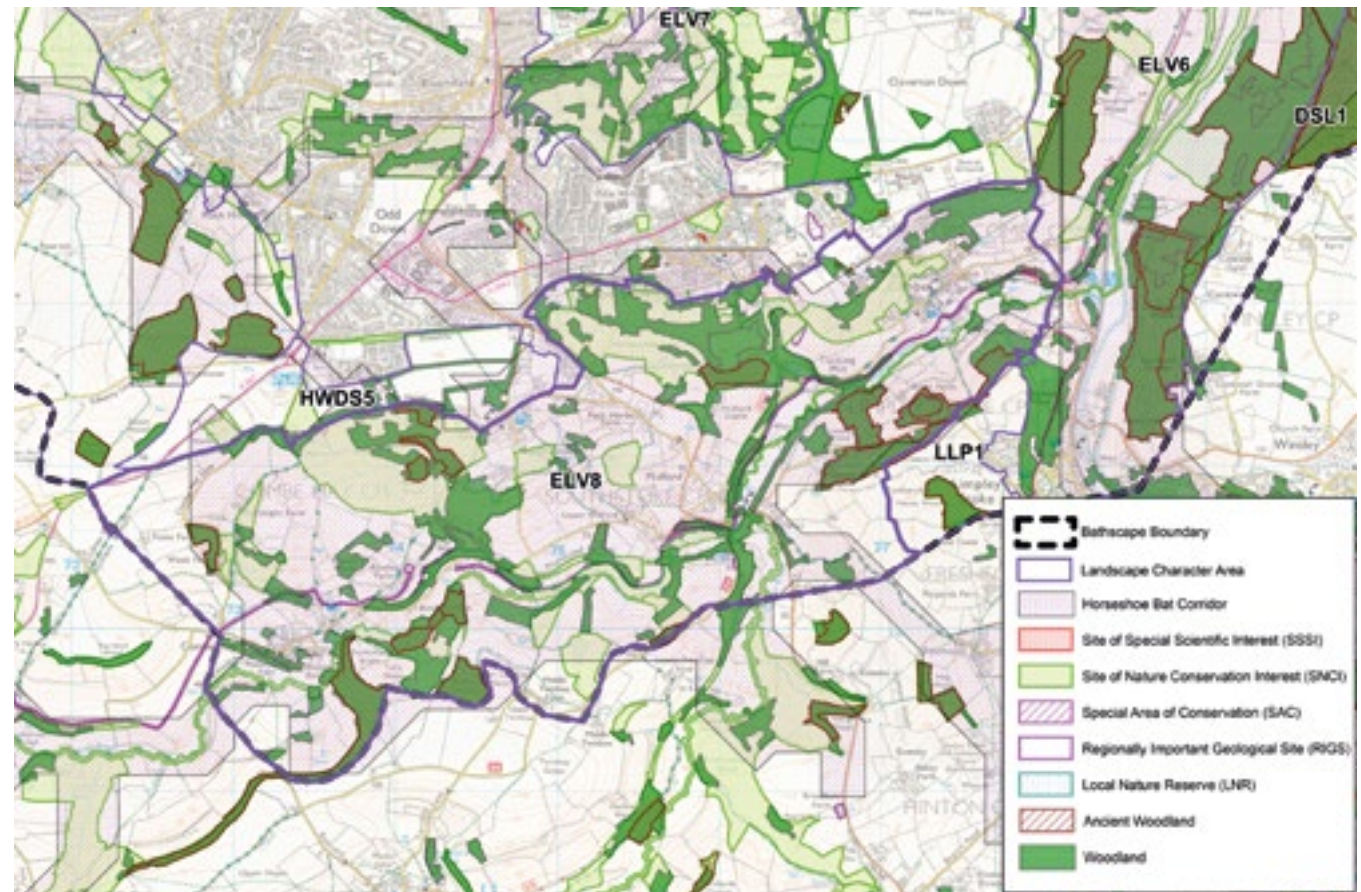
- Dunnyham, Brake and Underdown woods forming a significant grouping on southern valley side to west of Upper Twinhoe Farm and extending down valley sides;
- Short Wood, Sliterns Wood and Dodleaze Wood on the upper slopes and in places dropping down to the valley floor of the southern valley side opposite Monkton Combe; and

- a smaller grouping of Rowley Wood, Grove Wood and an un-named wood in the tributary valley on the northern valley side to the west of Hodshill.

In addition to the ancient woodland there are numerous small woods of all sorts of shapes and sizes scattered through the valley although focussed mostly on steeper slopes with woodland also along much of the disused railway close to the valley floor.

The entire valley apart from a small area at the far north-western end is designated as a draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridor for Combe Down'. Bath Asparagus was observed on lanes and tracks during the field survey and many of the pastoral fields have a diverse range of calcareous flora. A swift colony was noted at Southstoke during the fieldwork for the assessment.

ELV8 Cam & Midford Brook Valley – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The majority of the valley is late-medieval enclosure apart from the ornamental landscapes associated with Combe Hay Manor, Midford Castle, Combe Grove Manor and the large property at Hodshill.

There is a large range of field shapes and sizes in the valley, from very small to medium-large and although mostly relatively regular or even rectangular, the effects of field amalgamations and the varied landform have introduced a great deal of variety. Field boundaries are hedgerows mostly kept clipped in more arable areas and where there are larger fields. Around smaller fields, hedgerows are mostly tall and overgrown. Small fields predominate around Southstoke, to the west of Midford and in Horsecombe Vale.

Field trees are not characteristic in the valley apart from the extensive parkland trees around Midford Castle.

Agricultural land-use appears to show an interesting split between permanent pasture predominating to the east of Midford through the Midford valley and, to the west of Midford a balanced mix of arable, seeded leys and permanent pasture with arable primarily on the shallower Oolitic limestone areas. During field survey cattle were the main livestock seen and sheep are also found within the area. In Horsecombe Vale there is evidence of horsiculture.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

Combe Hay, Tucking Mill, Midford and Monkton Combe are all small settlements situated on the valley floor with Monkton Combe having a separate area high up on the valley side. Southstoke is a small spring-line village set just below the plateau. All are well treed which helps to integrate them into the surrounding valley landscape.

All the villages apart from Monkton Combe have largely C18th and early C19th century stone built cottages and villas with occasional larger properties. Monkton Combe has a greater variety of development age including Victorian and some C20th properties as well as the old brewery buildings and remains of its Mill complex.

Each village has its own special character. Combe Hay is centred around Combe Hay Manor and church. Southstoke is a Conservation Area for its special architectural and historic interest and its spectacular setting overlooking the valley. Monkton Combe is dominated by Monkton Combe School with many of its buildings used by the school. Tucking Mill, although a tiny hamlet, has strong associations with William Smith the “Father of English Geology”. Midford has a particularly notable location and setting at a pinch point in the valley and where the Wellow Brook joins the Cam Brook to become the Midford Brook. Here the disused Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway passes over the Bristol and North Somerset Railway’s viaduct on an even taller viaduct, and a number of lanes including the B3110 also meet and cross. The Midford Aqueduct a small but important architectural structure associated with the Somerset Coal Canal is also located close to Midford.

These villages are small and compact and apart from where locations are up on the valley side, they are well hidden on the enclosed valley floor. Outside of the villages there are only a small number of farms and large isolated properties on the valley sides including Combe Grove Manor and the landmark of Midford Castle.

Building materials are predominantly Oolitic limestone with red tile and some slate roofs. Limestone walls within and at the edge of the villages are characteristic and include the locally characteristic “Drungs” which are ancient narrow paths enclosed by walls.

Only minor roads run through and across the valley, the principal road being the B3110 Midford Road which runs across the valley southwards, heading to Hinton Charterhouse and beyond. There is a narrow lane running along the valley floor linking the villages as well as a lane running from Monkton Combe to Combe Down and lanes linking Southstoke with Midford and on across the valley up to the Twinhoe area. All these very minor roads are almost entirely hidden in the landscape.

There are numerous footpaths criss-crossing the valley with primary one being the Limestone Link which runs all along the valley floor, sometimes closely following the meanders of the Cam Brook and other times using the narrow lanes, going across fields and also utilising the route of the old Combe Hay locks which were part of the Somerset Coal Canal.

The Two Tunnels Greenway uses the old Somerset and Dorset Railway line and enters the valley above tucking Mill and runs down into Midford where it links with the Colliers Way south to Wellow also using the Somerset and Dorset line.

There is one small area of open access land on the south-west side of Horsecombe Vale near the head of the valley.

ELV8 Drung at Monkton Combe



ELV8 Cyclists and Signs



3. Industrial Heritage

The Cam and Midford Brook Character Area has a significant industrial heritage which is focussed on the transportation of coal from the Somersetshire Coal Fields, Fuller's Earth working and Mills:

- The Somersetshire Coal Canal was built in the 1790s to serve the Somersetshire coalfield and ran from Paulton to connect eventually with the Kennet & Avon Canal. It entered the Cam Brook Valley via a tunnel, at Combe Hay and then ran more or less along the valley floor. A feature of the Canal was the Caisson Locks which employed novel techniques to move boats to the required level. These were subsequently replaced by the 22 Combe Hay Locks. The Canal was eventually abandoned in 1898 due to the decline of the coalfield and the route through the valley taken over by the Bristol and North Somerset railway. However there are significant remains of the Locks in the area of Caisson House at Combe Hay as well as the aqueduct at Midford.

- The Somerset and Dorset railway ran across the valley and the Bristol and North Somerset along the valley utilising the route of the Somersetshire Coal Canal. Where the routes crossed at Midford their viaducts run one over the other. Today the Somerset and Dorset is a Sustrans National Cycleway route but the Bristol and North Somerset has not been re-used.
- Within the valley the main Fullers Earth workings were at Horsecombe Vale and around Southstoke. At Tucking Mill there was the Fullers Earth factory from 1883 to the end of WW2. The factory had an 80ft high chimney and was linked with Tucking Mill.

- Tucking Mill hamlet is named after a process in the woollen industry known as "Tucking " or "fulling", in which woven cloth was cleaned with Fullers Earth. The original mill was demolished in 1931 but the mill pond has been restored by Wessex Water and is now used as a small storage reservoir with disabled fishing.

Monkton Combe Mill buildings including the chimney still stand at the bottom of Mill Lane adjacent to sluice gates and a millpond. From the early 1900s to the end of WW2 it was used to turn old rags into flock for the upholstery trade. Today the buildings are used for a variety of small businesses.

- The Somersetshire Coal Canal, the railways and roads have left a significant bridge heritage with and at the end of the valley including the A36 viaduct which forms the eastern boundary of the character area, Tucking Mill viaduct which carried the Somerset and Dorset Railway, the two railway viaducts at Midford, and Midford Aqueduct which, although a small landscape feature, is considered to be the most significant architectural structure on the Somersetshire Coal Canal.

Land Ownership

There is only one area of known landownership which is Hignett Family Trust land to the west and south of Southstoke.

Visual Significance

The relatively broad nature of the valley allows for some excellent panoramic views across the valley from a variety of locations higher up on the valley sides with, in places, views up and down the valley, although these tend to be curtailed by landform. From Monkton Combe and higher points in the Midford valley there are views out of the valley across to Conkwell woods in the Limpley Stoke valley. There are some good vistas from southern valley side across to Midford Castle and at western end down of the valley, to Combe Hay and Combe Hay Manor. Driving along the A36 over the viaduct on the character area boundary there are also excellent views into the well-wooded Midford Brook section of the valley and the eye is drawn to Midford Castle nestling against a backdrop of woodland.

From the centre of Southstoke a bench above the Green has excellent views, with the village in foreground, which extend right across valley and far beyond into Wiltshire including to the Westbury White Horse. There are similar views from a Jubilee 2012 commemorative bench in the upper part of Monkton Combe, which look out over the village to the opposite side of the valley and the wider countryside beyond. Here this lovely view is likely to be lost due to tree planting in a garden immediately below viewpoint.

Closer to the valley floor there is a more enclosed landscape which is generally well treed and views are generally limited, often glimpses, and framed by landform and trees.

There are views to the following character areas:

- Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley
- Limpley Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

The highly rural nature of the valley with its small settlements, quiet lanes and plentiful countryside full of birdsong, results in a peaceful and tranquil character throughout.

Cultural Associations

- Midford Castle is a grade 1 listed, eccentric “Gothic Mansion” in trefoil plan, built high up on the valley side just north-east of Midford. It was built around 1775 for Henry Disney Roebuck after a design by Jon Carter and is situated in extensive park grounds which still contain such picturesque elements as embattled gatehouse, stables, chapel, “priory” tea-house and rustic hermitage. It was later owned by Charles Connolly whose business association with William Smith led to the latter’s imprisonment for debt in 1819.
- The Caisson and Locks on the Somerset Coal Canal: When the canal was built in the 1790s Robert Weldon’s experimental Caisson Lock at Combe Hay enabled boats to be transferred inside a submersible vessel to the required level. Many thousands attended to watch it in operation in 1799, including the Prince of Wales, and Jane Austen wrote in 1801 of her

uncle's intention to visit the site. However the ground in which it was constructed proved unstable, and the Caisson chamber had to be filled in and replaced by a flight of 22 conventional locks. This was itself a considerable engineering feat completed in 1805.

- William Smith, known as the "Father of English Geology", has strong associations with the character area. Whilst supervising the building of the Somersetshire Coal Canal through Tucking Mill he was so impressed by its beauty that he bought an estate there in 1798 for his own home. Below his house he created a fishing lake behind the canal to drive a small mill which was intended to provide income to support the estate. All of this, he lost after his bankruptcy in 1819. However, Smith's house still remains together with a gothic cottage which adjoined the mill which was itself demolished in 1927. The fishing lake, after being filled in later for the Fullers Earth works, has been restored by Wessex Water as a disabled fishing lake and storage reservoir

- William Smith's tramway was built between his stone quarry on Combe Down and his mill at Tucking Mill where stone was sawn into ashlar for export via the canal. The lower section of the old tramway now serves as a public footpath and stone sleeper blocks are still visible in places.
- Combe Grove mansion was built around 1706 overlooking the Midford Valley, by the Poole family who sold Prior Park grounds to Ralph Allen. John Wesley stayed and preached here when he visited Bath in 1764.
- Combe Hay Manor, Combe Hay was built in about 1730 for the Smith family, together with the landscaped park which includes a serpentine river on the Cam Brook and an artificial lake. John Smith became M.P. for Bath and, as Grand Master of the Province of Somerset, played an important role in the development of freemasonry in the city. In the 1790s it passed to his son whose friendship with the Prince of Wales (later George IV) presumably led to the Prince's visit to witness the operation of the Caisson Lock.
- Monkton Combe railway station featured in the 1953 Ealing comedy, *The Titfield Thunderbolt*. The film centres around the efforts by villagers to save their local railway line.
- Monkton Combe Church contains the grave of Harry Patch, known as the "Last Fighting Tommy" and the last surviving soldier to have fought in the trenches of World War 1. He was buried there following his death in 2011 at the age of 111, alongside members of his family.
- In and around Monkton Combe and elsewhere in the valley are a number of locally characteristic "Drungs". These are very narrow stone paved paths usually walled on either side which take their name from the old English word for "squeeze". Monkton Combe village grew up at the junction of the drungway, an ancient droving route in Bath and the road from Brassknocker Hill up to Combe Down .

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- Horsecombe Vale with its significant area of ecological designations is showing signs of neglect with encroaching scrub in many areas and what appears to be extension of gardens into the neglected fields. There is also evidence of horsiculture. Within the Cam and Midford Brook character area this tributary valley is the only area affected by urban fringe activity, it also penetrates further into the city than the rest of the valley and has overlooking houses.
- The opening of the Two Tunnels Greenway has brought a significant increase in recreational activity to the valley, particularly from cyclists who use the lanes to connect with the Kennet & Avon Canal. Any urbanising works which might be considered on the lane in the bottom of the valley to cope with increased traffic would be required to be highly sensitive to its attractive, often tree-lined and narrow character.

- Apart from at Horsecombe Vale, the majority of the skyline of the valley is wooded and entirely free of views to the urban edge of Bath to the north, but development on the plateau adjacent to the valley, as at Odd Down would be very detrimental to the character of the valley if it was to break the skyline.

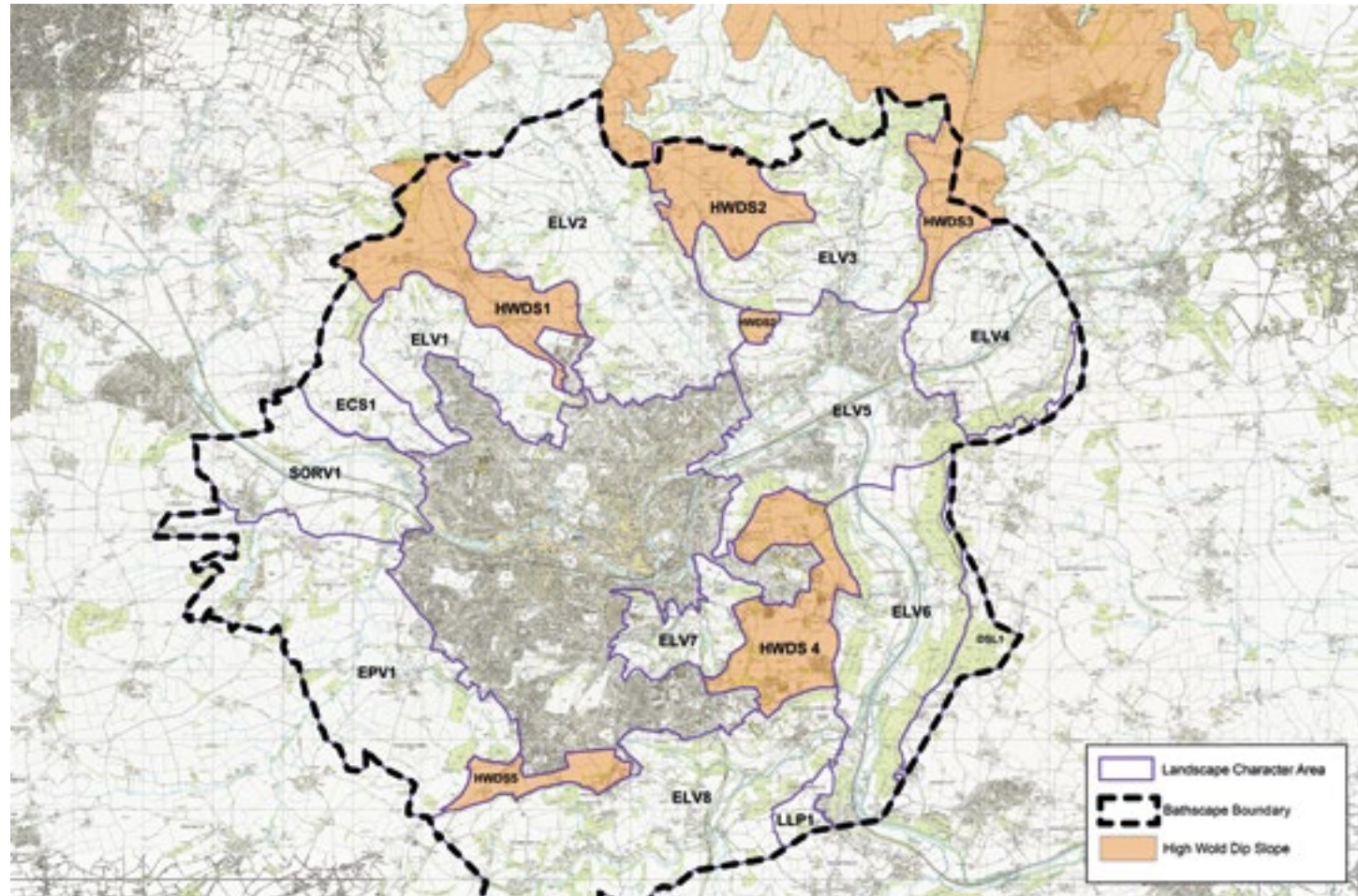
2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The agricultural landscape appears to be in good condition and well managed, apart from within Horsecombe Vale. The state of management and condition of the many woodland areas is unknown and deterioration, especially of woodland up close to the skyline would be a cause for concern.

The recent developments at the Fullers Earth Works on the plateau above Combe Hay are a significant detractor.

2.3 BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE TYPE: HIGH WOLD DIP SLOPE

High Wold Dip Slope Landscape Type



Key Characteristics

- Soft, gently undulating rolling landscape dissected by a series of predominantly south-east flowing rivers;
- Transitional landscape displaying many of the characteristics of the neighbouring High Wold and Dip-Slope Lowland landscape character types;
- large scale open arable fields with little tree cover, as well as a more complex mosaic of smaller scale arable and pasture contained within a strong framework of hedges and woodland;
- stone walls less prevalent than on the High Wold, but notable adjacent to roads and in vicinity of settlements;
- intermittent long distance views towards the high wold and across neighbouring lowlands;
- sparsely settled with intermittent isolated farmsteads and dispersed hamlets, many marking fording or bridging points;
- evidence of small scale quarrying in shallow delves, often overgrown by trees and scrub;

- grain of landscape patterns often aligned along the course of Roman roads that cross the area;
- intermittent occurrence of airfields on shallow sloping elevated landscapes.

Landscape Character Areas

HWDS1 - Lansdown Plateau

HWDS2 - Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill

HWDS3 - Bannerdown and The Rocks

HWDS4 - Claverton and Bathampton Down

HWDS5 - Sulis Plateau

2.3.1 HWDS1: LANSDOWN PLATEAU

Location and Boundaries

The Lansdown Plateau character area is located north of Bath. It runs in a north-westerly direction between the Lansdown area of the city and the Civil War battlefield site at the Bathscape boundary. Adjoining the area to the west and south-west is Weston Valley character area, to the north-east and south-east is the Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley character area and to the north-west outside the Bathscape area is Piplely Bottom Valley and parts of the Boyd and Hamswell valleys.

Summary Landscape Character

- Distinctive narrow plateau area with a predominantly open and exposed landscape to the north-west of the hamlet of Lansdown and also in the smaller agricultural areas to the north-east of the playing field areas. The south-eastern end of the plateau has more trees giving a more enclosed landscape.

- Agricultural areas have arable and pasture or grass ley fields which are all bounded with Cotswolds stone walls the traditional boundary material on the Cotswolds plateaus.
- Distinctive clumps of beech trees scattered along the Lansdown Road but overall trees do not detract from the openness of the plateau. Many areas around the plateau edge have some visual containment provided by woodland on the upper slopes of surrounding valleys.
- Historically important sites and monuments scattered over the plateau: Beckford's Tower and Lansdown Cemetery, the Racecourse, the Civil War Battlefield and Grenville's Monument, Little Down Hill Fort. Associations with "Riding out" in Georgian times.
- Lansdown Road running along the centre of the plateau with the hamlet of Lansdown a prominent feature associated with the racecourse and set about halfway along the plateau.
- Proliferation of playing fields and the Lansdown Park and Ride dominate the character south-east of Lansdown giving a suburban feel.
- Important expansive views and vistas from close to the plateau edges, from Beckford's Tower and from Prospect Stile.
- A sense of tranquillity towards the edges of the plateau enhanced by the sound of skylarks, the expansive views, the openness and large skies. This is slightly marred by traffic noise along the busy Lansdown Road.
- Recreational uses on the plateau have had a significant impact on the plateau since Georgian times and continue today witnessed by the golf course, the racecourse, the playing fields, Beckford's Tower and the many footpaths.

“Recreational uses on the plateau have had a significant impact on the plateau since Georgian times and continue today witnessed by the golf course, the racecourse, the playing fields, Beckford's Tower and the many footpaths.”

HWDS1 Arable Field & Drystone Wall



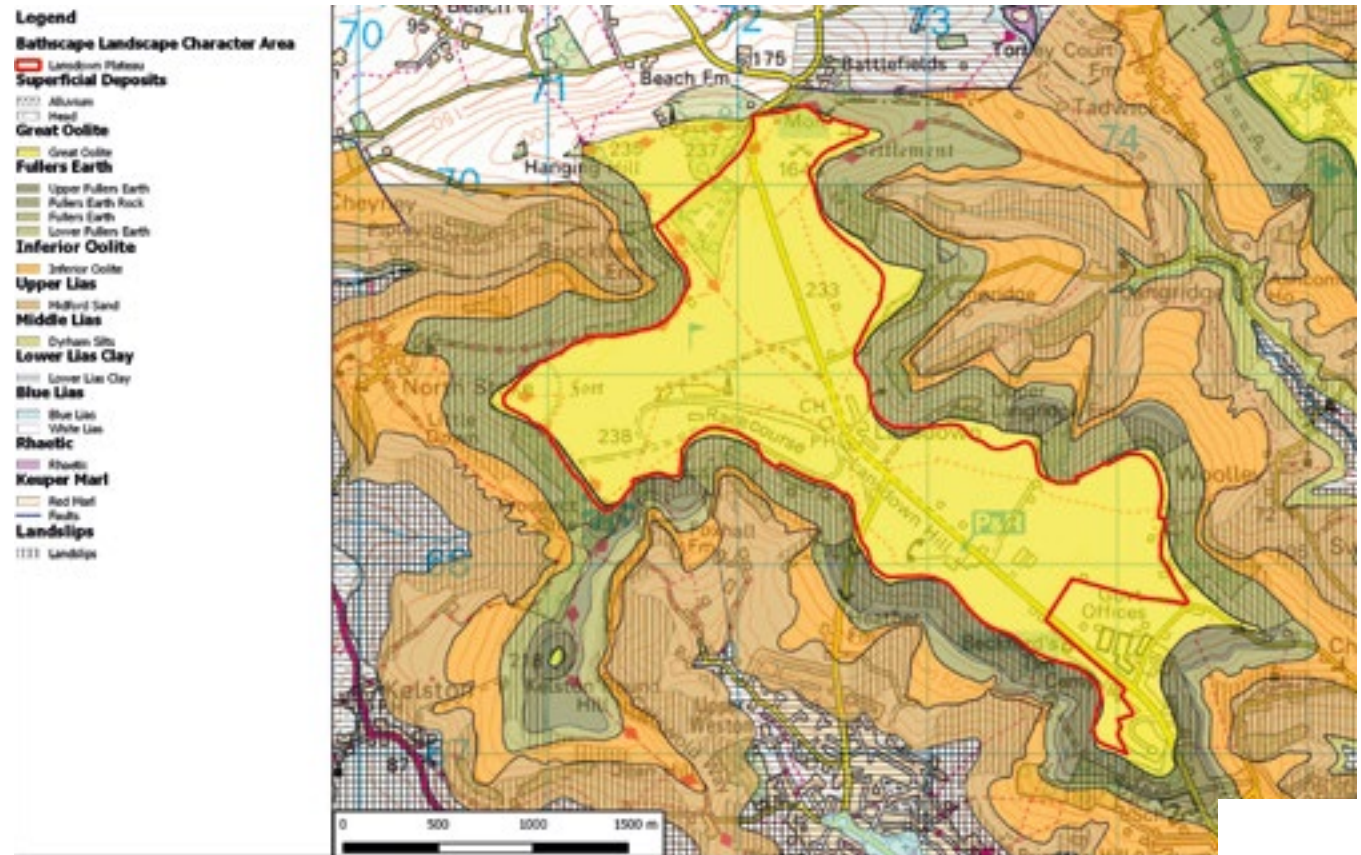
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The Lansdown plateau is a narrow, elongated and irregular shape with indented edges which relate to the valley formations surrounding it. To the eye it appears as almost entirely flat but there is a subtle south-eastward dip which is just perceptible on the eastern side of the plateau. The highest point is 238m on The Bath Race Course west of Lansdown Lane with an average of 230m in the centre of the plateau and a lowest point of 220m on the eastern edge.

The geology of the area is simple, with hard Greater Oolite limestone covering the entire area and responsible for its relatively high plateau nature. Technically it is a part of the gentle south-easterly sloping dip slope of the Cotswold Hills. However, it has become separated from the main area of the Dip-Slope landscape character type by the steep landform associated with the escarpment further north of Bath, the valley of the Lam Brook, and the series of tributary valleys, including the Piplely Stream Valley, which together define the eastern perimeter of the plateau.

HWDS1 Lansdown Plateau - Geology



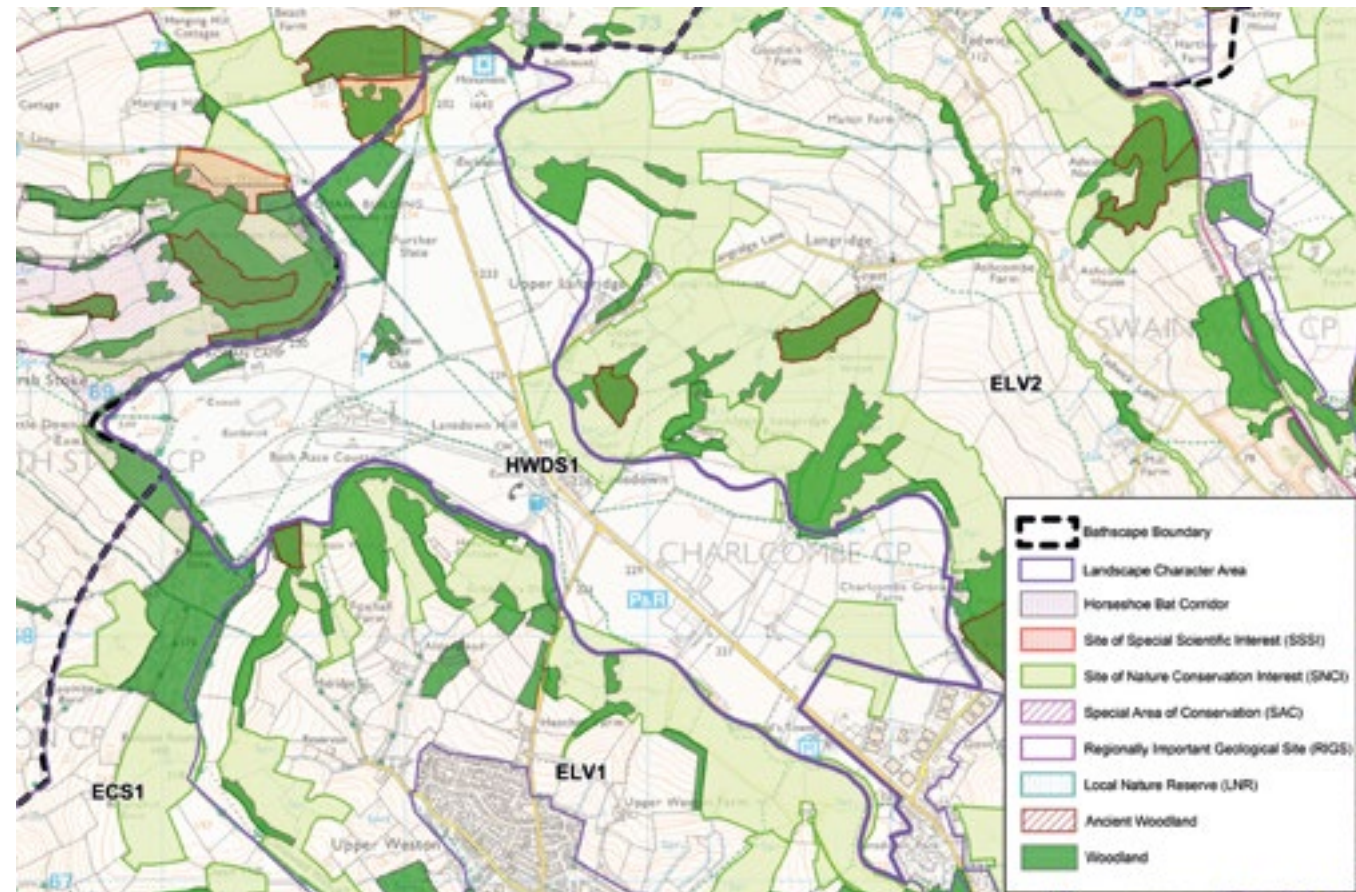
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2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There are only two ecological designations on the plateau. Just to the east of the hamlet of Lansdown is a very small extension to the Langridge-Woolley Complex SNCI which comprises a wide variety of habitats and is focussed in the Swainswick Valley. The second area is part of Kingsdown School playing fields and comprises a rich field of calcareous grassland. At the time of the landscape character survey this was full of flowering early purple orchids. The combination of school playing fields with rich calcareous grassland habitat may seem unlikely to be successful especially as the field is used as rugby pitches but the school manages the grassland to protect the habitat. It would be useful to know whether a management plan is followed and what advice has been received. The boundary of the SNCI as currently existing may not be entirely accurate.

There is little woodland on the plateau, limited to one angular, almost trapezoid shaped block of mixed deciduous woodland adjacent to the north-western boundary of the area and two very small copses on the Golf Course. Elsewhere trees are limited to small clumps and linear shelter belts some of which add significantly to the character of the plateau. There are narrow lines of semi-mature

HWDS1 Lansdown Plateau – Biodiversity



trees and shrubs associated with the golf course, around four notable clumps of beech trees along Lansdown Road, a strong line of mature trees including some pines along both sides of Lansdown road south-east of the Lansdown Lane turn off, a number of angular mature tree belts including conifers associated with various playing fields, a strong clump of trees around Beckford's Tower and Lansdown Cemetery, and finally a limited number of narrow tree belts just on the plateau edge close to the Park and Ride. Parts of the edges of the plateau appear to be quite well visually contained by trees but these are actually tree canopies of woodlands high up on the adjacent valley sides.

Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The plateau was not enclosed until the late 18th century through parliamentary enclosure.

Only about a third of the plateau area is used for agriculture currently, with medium to large regular-shaped fields farmed as arable, as well as grass leys and pasture with dairy and beef cattle particularly to the north-west of the hamlet of Lansdown and west of the race course. Elsewhere farming is limited to some smaller areas east of Lansdown and Kingswood School playing fields, where fields are smaller, mostly rectangular and a mix of arable, improved and seeded pasture. Field boundaries are primarily stone walls many of which are in quite good condition. There is also a limited amount of post and wire fencing.

Since the 1970s there has been a considerable expansion of playing fields on either side of Lansdown Road between the south-eastern end of the plateau and the junction with Lansdown Lane. Many of these playing fields are flood-lit and have associated fencing, goal posts, various sheds, and recently a large building complex belonging to Kingswood School with car parking. Flood-lighting of pitches on such a narrow plateau is a particular problem with light pollution affecting surrounding areas.

Lansdown Park and Ride occupies an expanding site on the south – west side of Lansdown Road between Beckford's Tower and Lansdown Lane.

Beckford's Tower itself is located within Lansdown Cemetery.

North-west of Lansdown Lane is Bath Racecourse and adjacent to the racecourse is a golf course.

All these non-agricultural uses give an increasingly suburban feel to the plateau although it is the playing fields and Park and Ride which have the greatest effect.

HWDS1 Lansdown Racecourse



The landscape contains a number of important historic sites. Little Down, an Iron Age hill fort site overlooks the valley to the west of the racecourse, and as is typical, sits at the edge of the Escarpment. It is considered to be at risk.

The far north of the area is part of the site of the Battle of Lansdown Hill (1643), a Registered Battlefield.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

About halfway along the plateau adjacent to the Racecourse is the hamlet of Lansdown which includes a pub called the Blathwayt after the family who ran the racecourse.

Further towards the South-eastern end of the plateau the old MOD Ensleigh site is now being developed for housing and slightly to the north on the southern side of Lansdown Road is Beckford's Tower and Lansdown Cemetery.

Lansdown Park and Ride and its associated buildings occupy an expanding site on the south-west side of Lansdown Road between Beckford's Tower and Lansdown Lane.

North-west of Lansdown Lane is Bath Racecourse which now includes a conference centre with its new grandstand.

Adjacent to the racecourse is a golf course with associated club-house.

Lansdown Road which is a very busy and noisy B-road, runs through the centre of the plateau and is joined by Lansdown Lane on the left which is also a busy commuter route. On the right hand side of the plateau two very minor lanes link Charlcombe and the Swainswick Valley to Lansdown Road.

There are a number of footpaths criss-crossing the plateau including the Cotswolds Way which runs past the Battlefield; and there is a small area of open access land at the far north western end of the plateau

3. Land Ownership

There is limited information available about land ownership on the plateau.

Visual Significance

Beckford's Tower is currently open to the public on a limited basis although it is hoped to increase this. At the top of the tower is a belvedere which offers spectacular 360° views including important views showing Bath in the context of its surrounding bowl of hills. There are also excellent views over Weston Valley and beyond to the south, from Lansdown Cemetery.

Elsewhere there are many excellent panoramic views to be had from footpaths running close to the plateau edges and even from more central area of the plateau due to its narrowness. There are views over the Swainswick Valley, over Charlcombe, over Weston Valley and towards countryside further to the south and east in particular. Prospect Stile, at the south-western end of the Racecourse is one of the most important viewpoints within the World Heritage site setting. It was recognised in Georgian times and remains a major destination for stunning panoramic views including over the city, which can be seen in its context of surrounding hills.

Looking across the top of the plateau from various footpaths there are some discordant elements mainly relating to playing field developments and the Park and Ride. The new grandstand building for Bath Racecourse is visible on the

skyline from Weston Valley, parts of Lansdown Plateau away from the racecourse and places within the Swainswick Valley. The building has a bright white sail-like canopy which appears very discordant in these views. The fact that the building is set back some way from the edge of the plateau illustrates how sensitive plateaus are to development of any height.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

There is a definite and increasing sense of tranquillity away from the areas of Playing fields and also away from the Lansdown Road. The plateau gives a sense of open expansiveness with large skies and panoramic views over beautiful countryside. There are the sounds of Skylarks and other birds but there is also always the sound of traffic on the Lansdown Road.

Moving away from the playing fields there are darker skies but the pressure for flood-lighting of playing fields has caused increasing night sky light pollution problems.

Cultural Associations

- Lansdown was one of the most popular of the Downs for riding out and airing in Georgian times and there were many noted the views from the plateau which no doubt included those from Prospect Stile. From the late 18th century there was also the attraction of the races and, for artists such as Thomas Baker, the old fair, which was still a notable event until the early 20th century. For many visitors a visit to the Grenville Monument erected in 1720 on the Civil War battlefield was obligatory.

- The English Civil War battle of Lansdown was fought on 5 July 1643. The battle was a major confrontation of the English Civil War where Parliamentary lines defending the hill met Royalist troops who were positioned on Freezing Hill to the north. Although the Royalists under Lord Hopton forced the Parliamentarians under Sir William Waller to retreat from their hilltop position, they suffered so many casualties themselves and were left so disordered and short of ammunition that an injured Hopton was forced to retire. Sir William Waller and Sir Ralph Hopton were lifelong friends. The day after the battle, Hopton was injured and his old friend Waller offered him hospitality in Bath, though he refused it.²¹ The open grazed grassland over which the battle was savagely fought still remains.

- Sir Bevil Grenville's Monument is a monument erected in 1720 on Lansdown, then called "Lansdowne Hill". It is designated a Grade II* listed building on and a scheduled ancient monument. The monument commemorates the heroism of the Civil War Royalist commander Sir Bevil Grenville (1596-1643), who on 5 July 1643 fell mortally wounded leading his regiment of Cornish pikemen. It was erected by Grenville's grandson and has been.

HWDS1 Grenville Monument



maintained by his descendants. This has included the repair of inscriptions carved on the base of the monument, eulogising Grenville and his forces.²²

- In 1826 Beckford built his Tower on Lansdown, with its gilded belvedere to take advantage of what he proclaimed “*The finest prospect in Europe*”, and which he likened to the paintings of Claude or to the Roman Campagna. His mile-long ride laid out between the Tower and his house in no. 20 Lansdown Crescent, consisting of gardens, plantations, and rustic seats with views over the Avon Valley, was all to be seen as a sequence of linked landscape episodes which culminated at the summit. This popular attraction has long been lost to a variety of developments.
- Lansdown Road or the Old Gloucester Road as it was called is thought to be on the line of the ancient Jurassic Way which was later adopted as a Roman Road. During the 18th century the road was popular for riding out. Visitors and residents complained when access over the Downs was curtailed after enclosure in the 1790s.

- Bath Racecourse has a long history with horse racing moving from Bathampton Down to Lansdown in 1811 with the local Blathwayt family holding the first race there. Traditionally one meeting was held a year but this has now increased to over twenty.

“Beckford built his tower on Lansdown, with its gilded belvedere to take advantage of what he proclaimed ‘The finest prospect in Europe’.”

²¹ Wikipedia - Battle of lansdowne

²² Wikipedia - Battle of lansdowne

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- Although a small element on the plateau, the clumps of mature beech trees along Lansdown Road are an important landscape character feature. These trees are mature and appear to have no management, which will eventually lead to their deterioration and loss.
- Possible pressure for further extension of the Park and Ride towards Lansdown Lane which will extend the suburbanisation of the plateau and further reduce dark skies.
- Pressure for increase in playing fields and also additional lighting and high fencing. Any further development beyond the current extent would be unacceptable to the sensitive plateau landscape character.
- Possible masts and/or wind turbines.
- Deterioration of the characteristic boundary stone walls.
- Additional buildings on the plateau with potential visual impact on the surrounding countryside due to skyline effects and the narrowness of the plateau.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

Condition appears to be good in general and much of the stone walling is in good or relatively good condition although an audit would be helpful.

The proliferation of playing fields and sport's facilities with accompanying fencing, buildings and lighting is a detracting element on the plateau with the lighting having effects in the adjacent countryside.

The racecourse grandstand, situated some distance back from the skyline, is also a detracting element in views from Weston Valley, parts of Lansdown Plateau away from the racecourse and places within the Swainswick Valley.

2.3.2 HWDS2: CHARMY DOWN AND LITTLE SOLSBURY HILL

Location and Boundaries

Charmy Down and Little Solsbury hill are located to the north-east of Bath just to the east of the A46, in between the Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley character area to the west and the Northend and St. Catherine's Valley character area to the east and south. Charmy Down is separated from Little Solsbury Hill which lies just to the south, by Chilcombe Bottom, a tributary valley of the St. Catherine's Brook Valley.

Summary Landscape Character

Charmy Down

- Open, flat and extensive, rounded plateau with a sense of elevation given by the views to distant skylines all around.
- Intermittent visual containment from woodland just below plateau. Two small copses on top of plateau within the old airfield area are prominent features but slightly discordant.

114 2.3 High Wold Dip Slope

HWDS2 Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill

- The majority of the plateau area still retains a strong airfield character and a sense of the historical use of the plateau in World War 2. The runways remain visible and derelict airfield buildings such as the control tower, old hangars and gun emplacements still exist as well as an array of old fencing.
- The southern end of plateau was never used as part of the airfield and retains its historical field enclosure pattern in contrast to the open, unenclosed landscape in the airfield area.
- A tree and stone-wall lined track runs along the spine of Holts Down in the south-east of the plateau and is a very distinctive local landscape feature.
- Much of the old airfield is designated for its calcareous grassland habitat and for the disturbed ground habitat on the runways. Skylarks sing over the plateau and may nest there.
- There is a sense of tranquillity and remoteness on the plateau top enhanced by the expansive views, the exposed elevated and often windy character and the song of Skylarks with little human activity. Negative features reduce tranquillity in places, such as when close to the communication mast and in the areas where there is most derelict and ugly fencing.

“Open, flat and extensive, rounded plateau with a sense of elevation given by the views to distant skylines all around.”

HWDS2 Charmy Down



Little Solsbury Hill

- Distinctive small, round hill top, isolated from the rest of the plateau by a steep sided valley and with a commanding position over-looking the Avon Valley.
- The complete lack of trees and scrub giving an absolute openness and the ability to see the strong form of the plateau and surrounding landscape.
- The ramparts of the hill fort all around the hill top giving a sense of connection with history.
- Excellent grassland habitat with ramparts covered with wild flowers at many times of the year.
- Nesting skylarks on the hill top.
- Stunning, uninterrupted and panoramic views, near and far, from all around the hill top. Particularly notable are the views over the eastern part of Bath seen in its context of surrounding hills.
- Strong sense of tranquillity provided by the sounds of Skylarks, the exposed and often windy character, the expansive views ranging from the valley floor landscape laid out down below, out towards far, hazy hills and ridgelines in the distance and often few visitors to disturb the peace. City sounds and road hum rarely intrude.
- The association with the Peter Gabriel's song: Solsbury Hill.

“Peter Gabriel’s first single after leaving Genesis was Solsbury Hill released in 1977. His words ‘Climbing up on Solsbury Hill, I could see the city light. Wind was blowing, time stood still, eagle flew out of the night’ remain evocative of the place.”

HWDS2 View over City from Little Solsbury Hill



Physical Influences

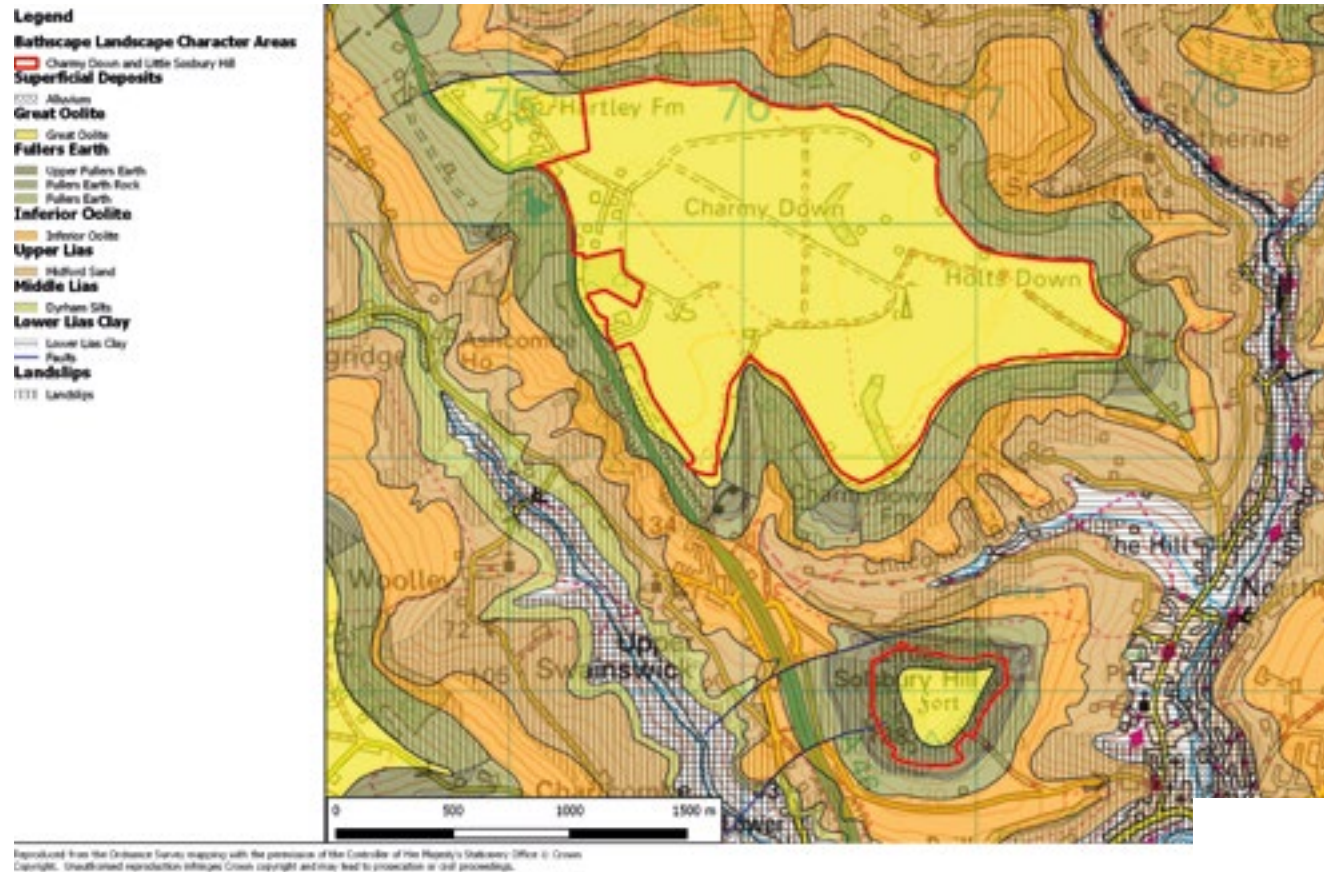
1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

Charmy Down is a larger, roughly amoeboid-shaped area, than the almost circular Little Solsbury Hill which is barely 8ha in area. Both areas appear flat at first glance but Charmy Down is slightly dipped in the centre and Little Solsbury Hill is slightly domed.

The highest point on Charmy Down is at around 212m towards the south east of the airfield. The top of Little Solsbury Hill stands at 191m with a spring line at around 170m just within the area boundary.

These plateau areas are capped with hard Greater Oolite (Bath Oolite specifically) limestone covering the entire area and responsible for their relatively high plateau nature. Technically they are part of the gentle south-easterly sloping dip-slope of the Cotswold Hills. However, they have become separated from the main area of the High Wold Dip-Slope landscape character type by tributary valleys of the River Avon cutting through the landslip prone, alternating limestone and mudstone layered geology of the area around Bath.

HWDS2 Charmy Down & Little Solsbury Hill – Geology



2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

Both Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill have significant ecological designations.

Charmy Down

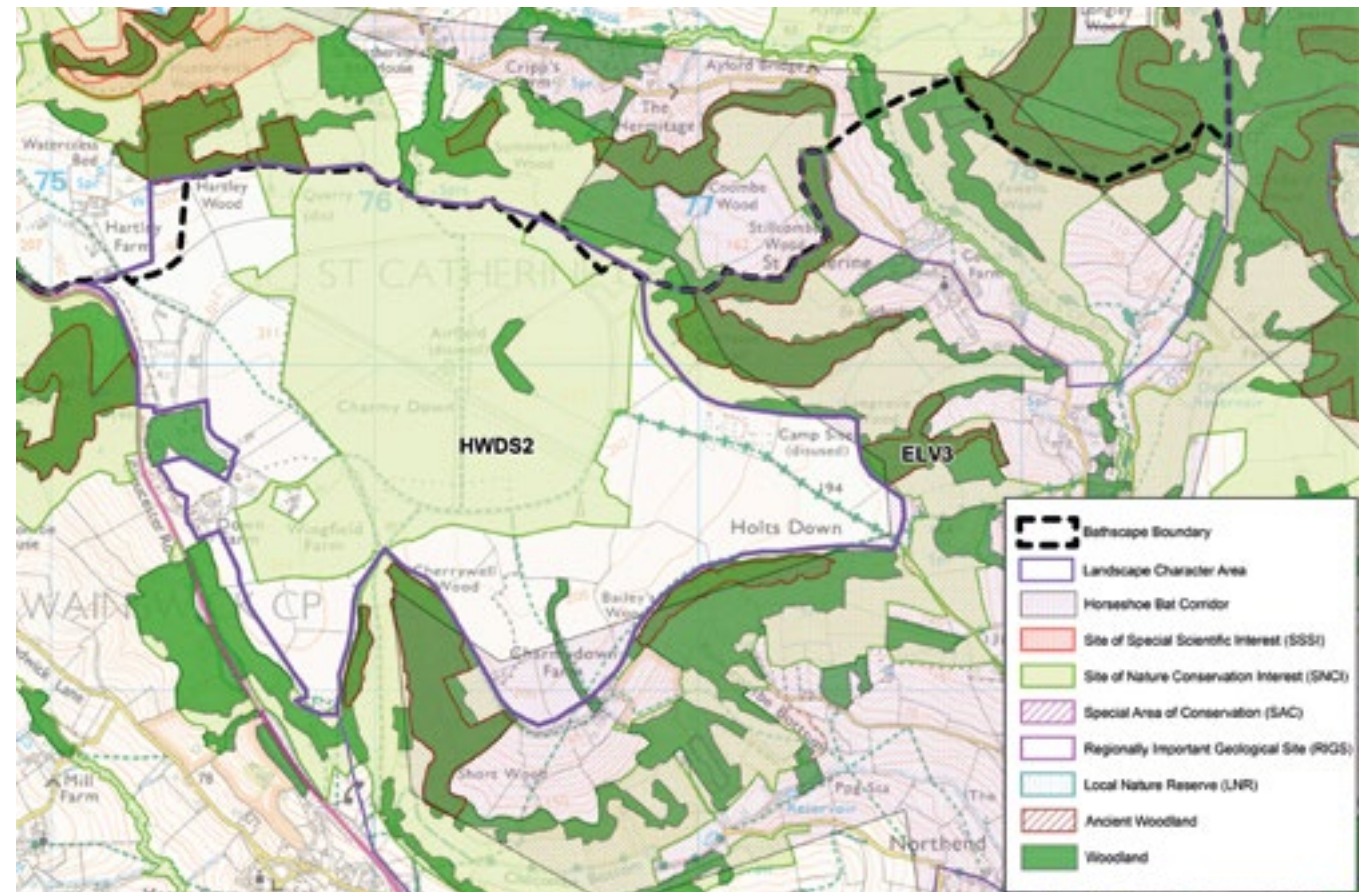
The area of the old airfield is designated an SNCI for grassland. This includes UK Priority habitat for lowland meadow, lowland calcareous grassland and for open mosaic habitats on previously developed ground following some of the old runways. There is also at least one field on Holts Down in the south east corner of the area which is owned and managed by Wessex Water for its lowland meadow habitat although this is not designated as an SNCI.

The far south-western corner of the plateau lies just within a draft 'Key Horseshoe Bat Corridor' giving likely foraging areas.

Skylarks were noted during the site visit.

There is little tree cover at all on the plateau. The little there is comprises a small shelter belt within the airfield area and another long and thin shelter belt in the south-western corner. Although the edges of the plateau appear to be relatively well treed, these are actually the canopies of woodland areas on the adjacent valley sides.

HWDS2 Charmy Down & Little Solsbury Hill – Biodiversity



There are very few hedgerows on the plateau and these are found in places off the airfield area. Some of these are grown out and have some trees. There are also trees lining the track across Holt's Down. There is some patchy scrub developing around the northern and eastern edges of the plateau off the airfield area.

Little Solsbury Hill

The whole of the Little Solsbury area apart from the small plot around a long empty property, is a designated SNCI which is part of the South Charmy Down Complex extending from Little Solsbury northwards through Chilcombe Bottom Valley. On Little Solsbury Hill the habitat is grassland which is particularly rich on the rampart areas around the top. These are UK Priority Habitat lowland calcareous grassland. The top of Little Solsbury

Hill is owned by the National Trust and is also a designated common managed on behalf of the National Trust by the Batheaston Freeholders Association. The Freeholders manage the common under a Higher Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England. They also work with Avon Wildlife Trust to manage the grassland as well as the skylark habitat. At the time of our assessment a notice asked walkers to keep dogs on a very short lead and to avoid walking over the top of the hill between March and August in order to protect the nesting skylarks.

There are no trees within the Little Solsbury Hill area.

Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure and 2. Settlement and Infrastructure

Charmy Down

The area of plateau between the south central end of the airfield and Charmydown Farm was enclosed in medieval times by assart which is the process whereby common land (usually woodland) was cleared and then became private, mostly hedged, fields. In this location the fields are a mix of hedges and walls. The remainder of the plateau was enclosed in the 18th-19th century through parliamentary enclosure.

Charmy Down is dominated by the remains of the disused Charmy Down WW2 Airfield. Now the outline of runways is grassed over but still visible, most of perimeter track remains as do several derelict buildings including the control tower as well as scattered brick built gun emplacement blocks. A few Blister hangars remain and are used for farm storage.

Almost all of the land on the plateau including the airfield is grazed by cattle and most is permanent pasture. Some on Holts Down is sown, possibly for a small amount of arable or a grass ley.

Fields around the airfield are mostly medium-sized (a few in the assarted enclosure area are smaller), are roughly rectangular and mostly walled apart from some hedges in the assarted enclosure area.

The old airfield area has an array of old original fencing, some high with concrete or metal posts, some is standard height. All of it is in poor condition and an eyesore. There is also a significant amount of electric fencing. Just off the southern edge of the airfield is a fenced-off communication mast with associated metal sheds. The sheds present as more of an eyesore as the tower itself.

Around the western and southern side of the plateau are a few properties including three farms according to the OS map although it is unlikely that all are now functional.

There are a number of farm and access tracks especially to the west of the airfield, linking up the various farms and properties there, and connecting with the A46. A much older track, walled on both sides and lined with trees, runs along the spine of Holts Down and onto the main plateau area. Footpaths run around and across the site accessed from the A46 and from St. Catherine's Valley.

Little Solsbury Hill

Little Solsbury Hill is a registered Common and is open access land. It has been owned by the National Trust since 1930 when it was donated by the Hicks family. It is managed for grassland conservation and for public access, in part by the National Trust and also by the Batheaston Freeholders Association.

Little Solsbury Hill was occupied as a hill fort during the early Iron Age no doubt making use of its spectacular dominant position over the land to the south and west. At that time a 20ft wide rampart was created around the settlement which remains today in various states of repair having been a useful source of building and walling stone for enterprising locals up until relatively recent times.

The hill fort is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The site has a long history of agricultural use and barley was known to have been grown on the summit at the end of the 18th century and remaining still under cultivation well into the 19th century.

Now the common is grazed by beef cattle after the skylark nesting period.

There is only one building within the Little Solsbury Hill character area and this is a property which has lain empty for many years and sits just below the plateau top by the lane entrance to the hill fort.

3. Land Ownership

There is no information available as to ownerships on Charmy Down except for the one field known to be owned by Wessex Water on Holt's Down.

As stated above, Little Solsbury Hill is owned by the National Trust and managed in large part by the Batheaston Freeholders Association.

Visual Significance

Charmy Down

There are 360° panoramic middle and longer distance views to the tops of hills from many parts of the old airfield. These include to nearer landmarks such as Beckford's Tower and distant hills such as the Wiltshire Downs. In places the trees just below the edges of the area contain views from within the plateau itself.

Within the plateau internal views are somewhat marred by the array of fencing much of which is in poor condition and likely to date from when the airfield was active.

Little Solsbury Hill

Has stunning 360° panoramic views from all around the edges of the hill top which are only limited in terms of distance on the north side of the hill which looks over Chilcombe Bottom valley towards the woodland around the edge of Charmy Down. Elsewhere on a clear day there are views as far as Wales, the Mendips and the Wiltshire Downs. Looking south there are particularly fine views over the Avon and By Brook valleys and to the City of Bath laid out below.

The views towards the city include prominent and discordant views to the new housing on the upper slopes of Charlcombe valley just over to the west, below the Ensleigh MOD site. In addition, the housing currently being built actually on the Ensleigh MOD site is also clearly visible although this is up on the plateau on the previously developed site which was however, single storey whereas the new homes are up to 4 storey.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity Charmy Down

Charmy Down has a definite sense of tranquillity even though there are some visually discordant elements such as the communication mast and its buildings and the ugly fencing over the old airfield which detracts from the experience of remoteness and of nature. Positive features which contribute to tranquillity are:

- the expansive openness and the distant views;
- the large skies;
- the sounds of bird song (particularly skylarks when the site was visited);
- the remoteness from people and development all of which have a peaceful and calming effect.

Little Solsbury Hill

Here the sense of tranquillity is strong:

- There is sense of continuity with history;
- the sky is huge and unimpeded by any obstruction;
- the views all around are beautiful and expansive;
- the birdsong especially the sound of skylarks is evocative;

- although this is a popular walking destination it is often completely empty and the wind usually mutes any city sounds from below.

Cultural Associations Charmy Down

- Opened in 1941 and closed in 1945 it was initially used by the RAF and then by the US Army Air Forces. Its function was primarily as a night fighter interceptor airfield. Subsequently it was used as a Gliding School, by the Air Training Corps and then as home to the Personnel Resettlement Centre for Australians. It has stood derelict for many years.
- The artist Thomas Robins drew a prospect from Nicholas Farm (now Charmy Down Farm) in the early C18th with an unusual view looking south towards the Limpley Stoke Valley from the curious gothic summer-house above the farm.

Little Solsbury Hill

- To those who remember the 1970s, Peter Gabriel's first single after leaving Genesis was Solsbury Hill released in 1977. His words "*Climbing up on Solsbury Hill, I could see the city light. Wind was blowing, time stood still, eagle flew out of the night*" remain evocative of the place. At that time Peter Gabriel lived at Ashcombe House in the Swainswick valley just to the north-west of Little Solsbury Hill and within walking distance.

A recording of the natural sounds on Solsbury Hill forms the track "*A Quiet Moment*" on Peter Gabriel's 2011 album, *New Blood*, which precedes the orchestral version of his song.²³

- Legend has it that in previous times there was a temple on the top to Bladud, the legendary King of the Britons. It is also thought of as a possible location of the Battle of Badon, fought between the Britons (under the legendary King Arthur) and the Saxons c. 496, mentioned by the chroniclers Gildas and Nennius.²⁴
- People protesting against the building of the A46 Batheaston bypass road cut a small turf maze into the hill during the construction of the bypass in the mid-1990s which still exists today and is kept very well maintained. In one day of protests, 11 people, including George Monbiot, were hospitalised as a result of beatings by the security guards.²⁵

²³ Wikipedia - Peter Gabriel

²⁴ Wikipedia - Little Solsbury Hill

²⁵ Wikipedia - Little Solsbury Hill

HWDS2 Turf Maze at Little Solsbury Hill



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HWDS2 Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill

HWDS3 Bannerdown and The Rocks

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

Little Solsbury Hill, owned by the National Trust and managed by the Batheaston Freeholders Association is largely protected from changes other than perhaps those caused by:

- A sudden increase in visitors to the detriment of the skylark habitat and the excellent grasslands;
- the future use of the dilapidated property just by the lane entrance to the hill could be a cause for concern;
- or by discordant changes of land-use in the view.

Charmy Down is not such a protected area and in the past there has been a proposal for a Park and Ride which would have been a significant change to a part of the area. Possible forces for change would be:

- Any new use which removed all reference to the WW2 airfield use – negative
- Any new use which enclosed the open plateau top – negative
- Any new use which reduced the panoramic views such as increase in woodland on or just off the plateau – negative
- An increase in masts, towers or siting of wind turbines – probably negative
- re-use for flying or gliding which could be an appropriate change
- Farming practises which cause deterioration of the grassland habitat (there may well be some evidence of this already happening or an increase in unsightly fencing
- Deterioration of the stone walls on the plateau.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

Condition is very good on Little Solsbury Hill. On Charmy Down condition is not necessarily good for the conservation of the grassland and disturbed ground habitats, and the proliferation of old and new fencing is discordant in the view.

2.3.3 HWDS3: BANNERDOWN AND THE ROCKS

Location and Boundaries

Bannerdown and The Rocks character area runs south-wards on the western side of the Fosse Way, from Hunters Hall in the north to Steway Lane where it then expands across the Fosse Way to include the whole plateau area down to the southern tip of Bannerdown. It is widest in the area between Steway Lane and the northern boundary of Bannerdown Common. The area lies between St. Catherine's valley to the west and the By Brook valley to the east and south-east. Batheaston village is situated just to the south of Bannerdown.

Summary Landscape Character

- Narrow, mostly open plateau in an elevated position with some spectacular and expansive views especially towards the east over the By Brook valley, including to Colerne and to Browns Folly above Bathford, as well as far off to the Marlborough Downs.

- The Fosse Way Roman road running north-south through the plateau is a strong, straight landscape feature.
- There is an interesting split between arable farming on the eastern side of the Fosse Way; and pastoral farming on the western side.
- Stone field boundaries are a typical Cotswold plateau landscape feature.
- Limited trees apart from a strong beech shelter belt along the Fosse Way beside the Rocks Estate and the avenue and parkland trees within The Rocks Estate.
- Tops of trees in woodlands just below the plateau area a feature of the character in places on the plateau and more prevalent on the western side and towards the north and south.
- Bannerdown Common is a distinctive landscape feature which is a very popular walking destination with its own more enclosed landscape and wildflower grasslands. The careful opening up of one small vista westwards through the surrounding trees is a thoughtful feature which does not detract from the strong enclosing character which is provided by the surrounding woodland. The lay-by parking encourages walkers and especially dog walkers from further away within Bath.

HWDS3 Fosse Way



- At the north-western end of the plateau is the parkland landscape of The Rocks Estate with glimpse views through road-side trees and the boundary wall, to the more pastoral parkland landscape with a dairy herd grazing amongst the parkland trees. The high boundary wall along the Fosse Way is a distinctive feature north of the Beech shelter belt.
- Planes and helicopters from the RAF airfield at Colerne frequently pass over.
- The scattered farm buildings are characteristic of the Cotswolds Plateau landscapes.
- The Three Shire Stones is a clearly visible feature along the Fosse Way with an interesting history as is Hunters Hall right at the northern end of the character area.

“Narrow, mostly open plateau in an elevated position with some spectacular and expansive views.”

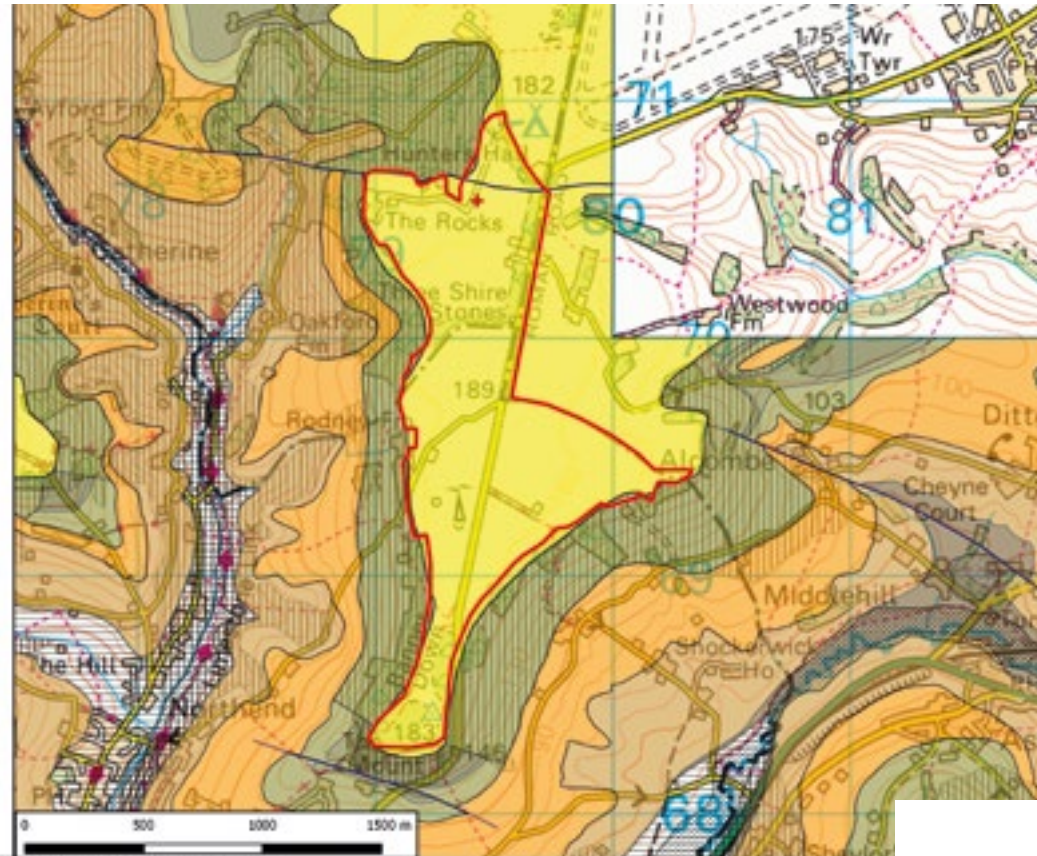
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The Rocks and Bannerdown character area is part of a narrow, triangular shaped extension to the High Wold Dip Slope further to the north. The plateau here has an average height of 180m but is overall slightly domed with a high point of 189m close to the Three Shires Monument on the Fosse Way and lowest points at 175 to the west and 165 to the east.

This plateau area is characteristically capped with hard Greater Oolite (Bath Oolite specifically) limestone covering the entire area and responsible for its relatively high plateau nature.

HWDS3 Bannerdown – Geology



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2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

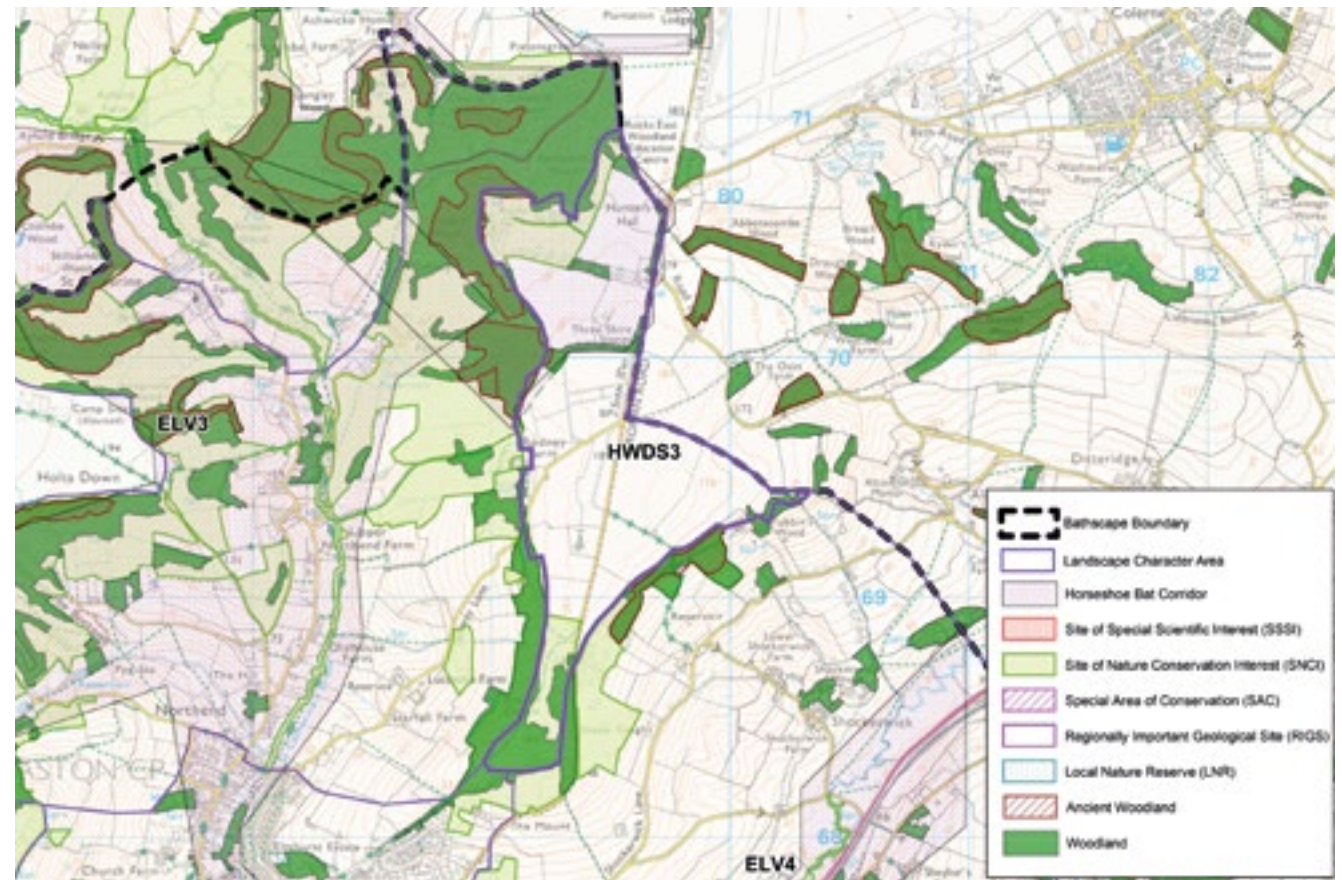
The whole of Bannerdown Common plateau top is designated as an SNCI for its unimproved and semi-improved calcareous and neutral grassland and scrub. The Common is managed by the Batheaston Freeholders Association. As stated on the Batheaston Commons Website: *“The function of the Freeholders Committee is to administer the Common Lands having regard to the maintenance of public access for permitted recreational purposes and the conservation of the wildlife habitat. Because the Commons are designated as Access Land we work in partnership with Natural England in achieving these objectives.”* The Freeholders have entered into a Higher Level Stewardship agreement with Natural England.

The Freeholders also work closely with Avon Wildlife Trust, Plantlife and Buglife to promote the conservation of the habitats on the common and the wildlife they support.

For part of the year Bannerdown is grazed by cattle to help reduce scrub and to graze off the pasture to help keep nutrient levels down.

At the northern end of the plateau the Rocks Estate is designated as a draft ‘Key Horseshoe Bat Foraging Area’ and a small part of the north-western end of the plateau, also on the Rocks Estate is included in a

HWDS3 Bannerdown & The Rocks – Biodiversity



larger SNCI designation called Oakford Valley and Woodland.

There is little woodland within the character area. The southern end of Bannerdown Common is a designated Ancient Woodland forming part of a larger woodland area on the steep valley sides of St. Catherine's valley. Elsewhere there is a shelterbelt of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees running along the Rocks Estate southern boundary, meeting the Fosse Way at the Three Shire Stones Monument on the Fosse Way, and a beech shelterbelt running along the Fosse Way again within the Rocks Estate. This shelterbelt appears to be associated with a deep ditch and bank running alongside the road.

Elsewhere there are parts of the edges of the plateau which appear well treed but these are actually woodlands high up on the adjacent valley sides.

Within the designated historic parkland of The Rocks Estate there are large numbers of excellent parkland trees and an avenue of which about half remains intact.

There are also trees along the Fosse Way boundary of Bannerdown Common.

The only areas of scrub are on Bannerdown Common.

Human Influences

Land Use and Enclosure; Settlement and Infrastructure

The area of the plateau south of the Three Shires Stones as far as Bannerdown Common was enclosed in the 18th-19th century through parliamentary enclosure. Bannerdown Common itself is classified as an ancient unenclosed common.

The Rocks Estate is a registered Historic Park and is currently grazed by dairy cattle. The pasture appears to be improved. The original Rocks mansion was demolished in 1957 and its site is marked by the presence of a large group of ruinous remains and outbuildings, some now being restored.²⁶

Bannerdown Common is managed for wildlife conservation and as part of that it is grazed by beef cattle in late summer.

Just to the south of The Rocks Estate to the west of the Fosse Way is a cricket pitch. The rest of the central section of the plateau is a mix of arable and improved pasture with a marked differentiation between arable primarily east of the Fosse Way and pasture primarily west of the Fosse Way. Fields in this central section are medium to large-sized east of the road and small to medium to the west of the road. Field boundaries

are stone walls with some having trees and scrubby vegetation growing out of them.

There are very few buildings on the plateau. Within the Rocks Estate boundary is the derelict mansion remains and a few other estate properties. There is a visually prominent clustering of large modern barns and vehicles on the northern boundary of the area along Road Hill but this is actually located outside the character area. There is a small isolated and partially screened corrugated barn just off the track running east of the Fosse Way and Rodney Farm which is on the western boundary of the area just off Steway Lane and is well screened by trees.

A little to the north of Bannerdown Common is a mast which is screened by trees.

Located at the junction point between the old Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset county boundaries is the Three Shire Stones. This is a grade 2 listed building. The Listing text is as follows:

"Boundary marker, in the form of a sham megalith. Erected 1859, but incorporating an earlier marker of 3 small stones which were erected in 1736. 3 coarsely cut large stone uprights support a similar horizontal slab. Constructed in the 1850s and replacing an earlier waymarker of stones from the early/mid C18th."

²⁶<http://www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people/site>

The stones are around 2m high with a capping stone.

Running north-south along the plateau is the Fosse Way Roman road which joins Bath to Cirencester. There is just one other road, Steway Lane which runs westwards from the Fosse Way (a little south of the Three Shire Stones), off the plateau and down to Northend in the St. Catherine's Valley. There is very little other public access on the plateau apart from the open access land on Bannerdown. A bridleway runs through Bannerdown connecting via a trackway, down into Batheaston, and a byway runs eastwards from the Fosse Way to join Shockerwick Lane in the Lower By Brook valley.

3. Land Ownership

There is no information available as to land ownership.

Visual Significance

There are expansive views especially eastwards from the plateau, north of Bannerdown Common. These easterly and south-easterly views stretch far into the distance along the By Brook Valley and right across to the Wiltshire Downs. There are also prominent views to Colerne and the airfield.

To the west of the plateau views are more limited in part by woodland rising up from adjacent valley and also by slightly higher plateau areas at Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill which block views further to the west.

Bannerdown Common is more enclosed all around by trees. One fairly narrow vista has been opened up through the trees just down below the Common on the western side to allow views from the Common. Here there are views across to Lansdown which are in direct line with the visually discordant new housing just below Ensleigh.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

The Fosse Way is a busy road running down the centre of the plateau. This has an impact on tranquillity within the area when pulses of traffic pass along it. However away from the road and even walking alongside it, the open, expansive views across and beyond the plateau coupled with the large skies, lack of development or people, all combine towards a relatively tranquil character overall.

Cultural Associations

- The Three Shire Stones mark the point where the historical boundaries of the counties of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset meet. There are a number of similar Three Shire Stones scattered throughout England. Whilst the current stones are known to have been erected in 1859 local tradition has it that the stones originally came from a Neolithic chambered tomb. Another version is that the original monument was erected in about 1736, re-using stones from an existing tomb. When a hole was excavated to support the Gloucestershire stone, the bones of three skeletons were unearthed along with a coin from the reign of James II. The Heritage England listing for the stones does state that there was an original monument in 1736.²⁷

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HWDS3 Bannerdown and The Rocks

- The Batheaston Freeholders Association of which the Batheaston Freeholders Committee is the active member dates back to a deed of 1719 and administered the rights of common thereafter.²⁸ The Batheaston Freeholders manage the Common actively and effectively. There is an informative sign at the entrance to the Common.
- Hunters Hall, which is on the A4 just north of The Rocks and right on the northern boundary of the character area, used to be Hunters

Hall Inn. It was closed about 230 years ago (or 140 years ago as stated in the original 1930 article) by John Taylor, "Squire Taylor" of The Rocks after some of the grooms managing his extensive hunting establishment made too frequent use of the Inn. The Inn was a meeting place at one time for sportsmen as far away as Bristol and Bath and was known for sports such as cock-fighting, pigeon shooting, pony racing and even prize fighting.²⁹

- Found in the Mead Tea Gardens web site is the following: "A GRIM

RELIC. —The tablet inscribed "E.R. 1761," located in the wall on Bannerdown about forty yards on the Bath side of the lodge of The Rocks, marks the spot where Edward Roach, of Marshfield, was robbed and murdered. His gravestone is in Marshfield Churchyard."

- The Rocks mansion was built on the edge of a cliff in the C17th. In the 1760s Gainsborough produced several paintings of the Jacobs family, owners of The Rocks and would have been familiar with the romantic landscape gardens including ornamental woodland gardens and ponds below the cliff. (Remnants of these lie within the Rocks Woodland in the adjacent Northend and St. Catherine's Valley character area).

HWDS3 Three Shire Stones 2017



HWDS3 Three Shire Stones C19th



"The Three Shire Stones is a clearly visible feature along the Fosse Way with an interesting history."

²⁷ <http://www.britainexpress.com> - piece written by David Ross, Editor.

²⁸ <http://www.batheastoncommons.co.uk>

²⁹ <http://www.marshfieldparish.org.uk> and extracted from an article by F.C. Thomas "HUNTERS HALL INN" Circa 1930

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

There are no obvious signs of landscape change currently. Just outside the area a small area of horticultural land was noted with a whole area of raised grow bags or similar perched on a framework with irrigation pipes supplying the bags. Any extension of this type of use over the currently arable and pastoral character area would be discordant.

Potentially damaging changes would be:

- any use which brought enclosure to the distinctive open landscape including any extensive woodland planting
- Additional masts or wind turbines
- Development of sports pitches as has happened on Lansdown plateau causing suburbanisation of this rural agricultural landscape
- Any development with associated lighting in this dark sky area

- Development of large farm building complexes without appropriate softening tree planting. Large farms and barns are characteristic of the plateau landscapes but the large modern barns and their modern materials and lighting do not integrate well without some softening tree planting.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The condition of the landscape appears to be good with the exception of the field boundary stone walls which are showing signs of significant deterioration, as is typical across the Cotswolds plateau.

2.3.4 HWDS4: BATHAMPTON AND CLAVERTON DOWN

Location and Boundaries

The Bathampton and Claverton Down character area is located south of the River Avon on the eastern edge of the City of Bath. To the east is the Bathampton and Limpley Stoke valley character area and to the west is the Perrymead and Widcombe character area.

The character area is part of a larger area of Down but the large University of Bath campus has been omitted due to its highly developed nature. There are three distinct remaining areas which are Bathampton Down to the north, Claverton Down to the south, and these are linked by Bushey Norwood, a relatively narrow strip of Down which runs alongside the university campus to its east.

Summary Landscape Character

- This is a gently domed, flat or slightly dipping plateau landscape which divides into the three distinctive and linking local character areas, of Bathampton Down, Bushey Norwood and Claverton Down.

130 2.3 High Wold Dip Slope

HWDS4 Bathampton and Claverton Down

- Bathampton Down is characterised by a slightly domed landform which is occupied by Bath Golf Course and all the leisurely recreational activity associated with it. The landscape of the golf course is typical with greens, fairways and areas of “rough” all interspersed by clumps and lines of trees and scrubby areas. The special element to the golf course is that the “roughs” are mostly important areas of flower-rich limestone grassland. Much of Bathampton Down is

surrounded by woodland on the upper slopes of the adjacent valleys but the land is sufficiently domed to allow some expansive views over the countryside to the north and west. Close to the golf club-house is Ralph Allen’s Sham Castle, once an important visual landmark but now shrouded in trees. The adjacent University campus is out of view, hidden behind trees.

- Bathampton Down has significant ecological interest throughout, focussing on limestone grassland across the top of the Down and bat interest on the eastern side.
- There is very significant archaeological interest on Bathampton Down, with the Celtic field system, enclosure and pillow mounds, now mostly under the golf course.
- Bushey Norwood is a flat, relatively narrow, rectangular strip of land on the eastern edge of the University campus which links between Bathampton Down and Claverton Down. It comprises one large and one much smaller field and contains many large individual trees and an intriguing area of bushy scrub. Its eastern edge is bounded by the mature woodland on the adjacent valley slopes and its western edge by a rather sparser tree screen to the University. It is a more intimate and enclosed space than Bathampton Down.

- Claverton Down is a traditionally farmed landscape centred around Rainbow Wood Farm. The well-managed pasture fields are bounded by walls and hedgerows, some with excellent hedgerow trees. The land is grazed by sheep and cattle and even an Alpaca was seen at the time of the site visit. On the western and southern edges of the Down are wooded areas and tree belts including the Council-owned Rainbow Wood, which is a popular area for walking. This is an enclosed landscape with no views out of the area and has a comfortable and intimate character from within.
- The Downs are rich in Georgian cultural interest from the race-course, to “riding-out”, to Ralph Allen’s Sham Castle, the “Fir Forest” and carriage rides.

HWDS4 Bushey Norwood



“The National Trust’s popular Bath Skyline walk runs all around the edge of the character area.”

Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

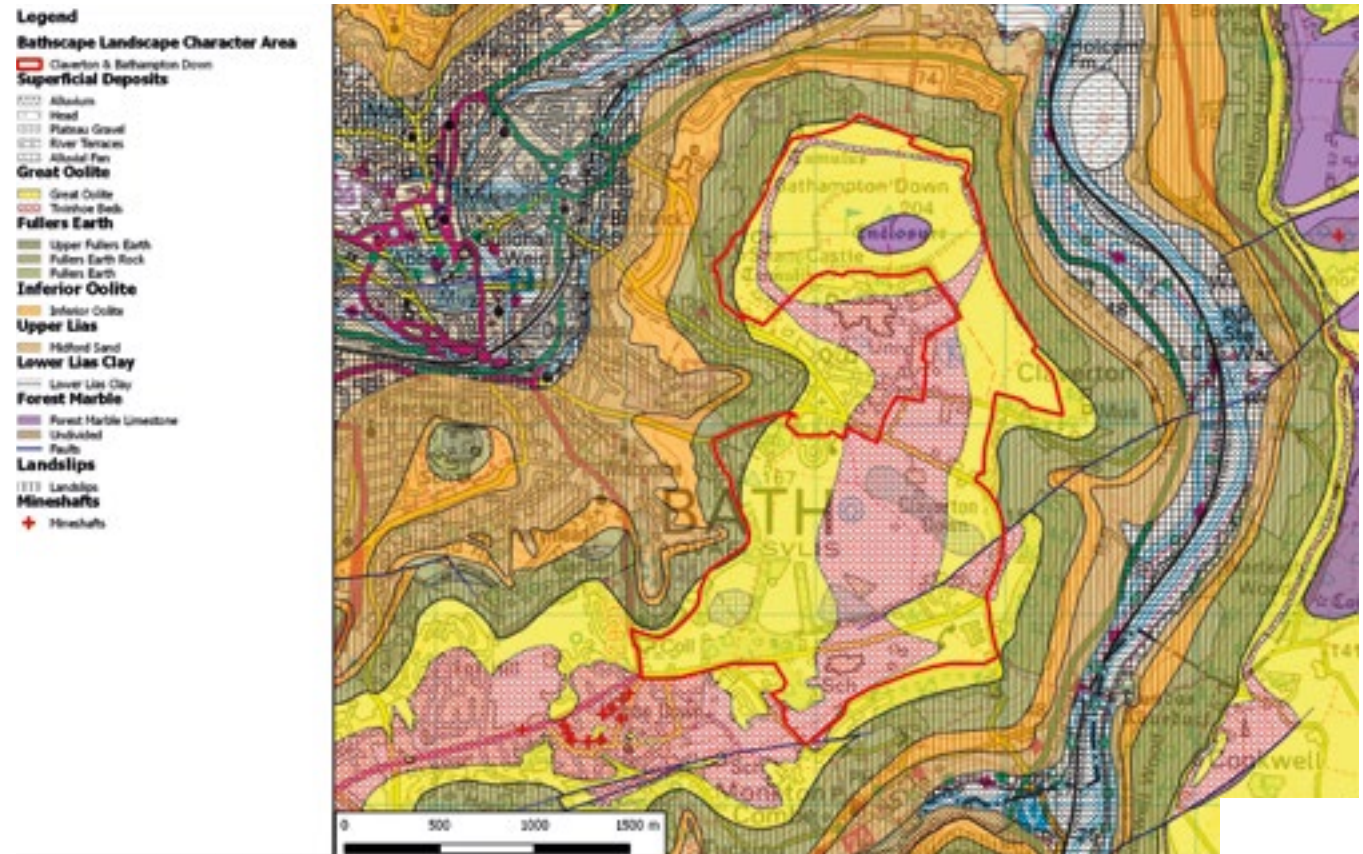
The Bathampton and Claverton Down Character Area represents a detached area of Dip-Slope landscape. The downs rise to 204m AOD dipping southwards to 150m AOD. Many thousands of years ago, this area was contiguous with the Dip-Slope landscapes extending across Lansdown and onto the Cotswolds High Wold Dip-Slope. However, the River Avon and Midford Brook have eroded deep valleys that almost encircle it, and leave the area as a detached remnant of the Dip-Slope landscape.

The plateau at Bathampton Down has a slightly domed appearance, rising up to 204m; Bushy Norwood is relatively flat; and Claverton Down appears flat although it dips gently to the south.

The plateau area is characteristically capped with hard Greater Oolite (Bath Oolite specifically) limestone covering the entire area and responsible for its relatively high plateau nature.

There are no springs, streams or ponds on the plateau.

HWDS4 Claverton & Bathampton Down – Geology



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2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

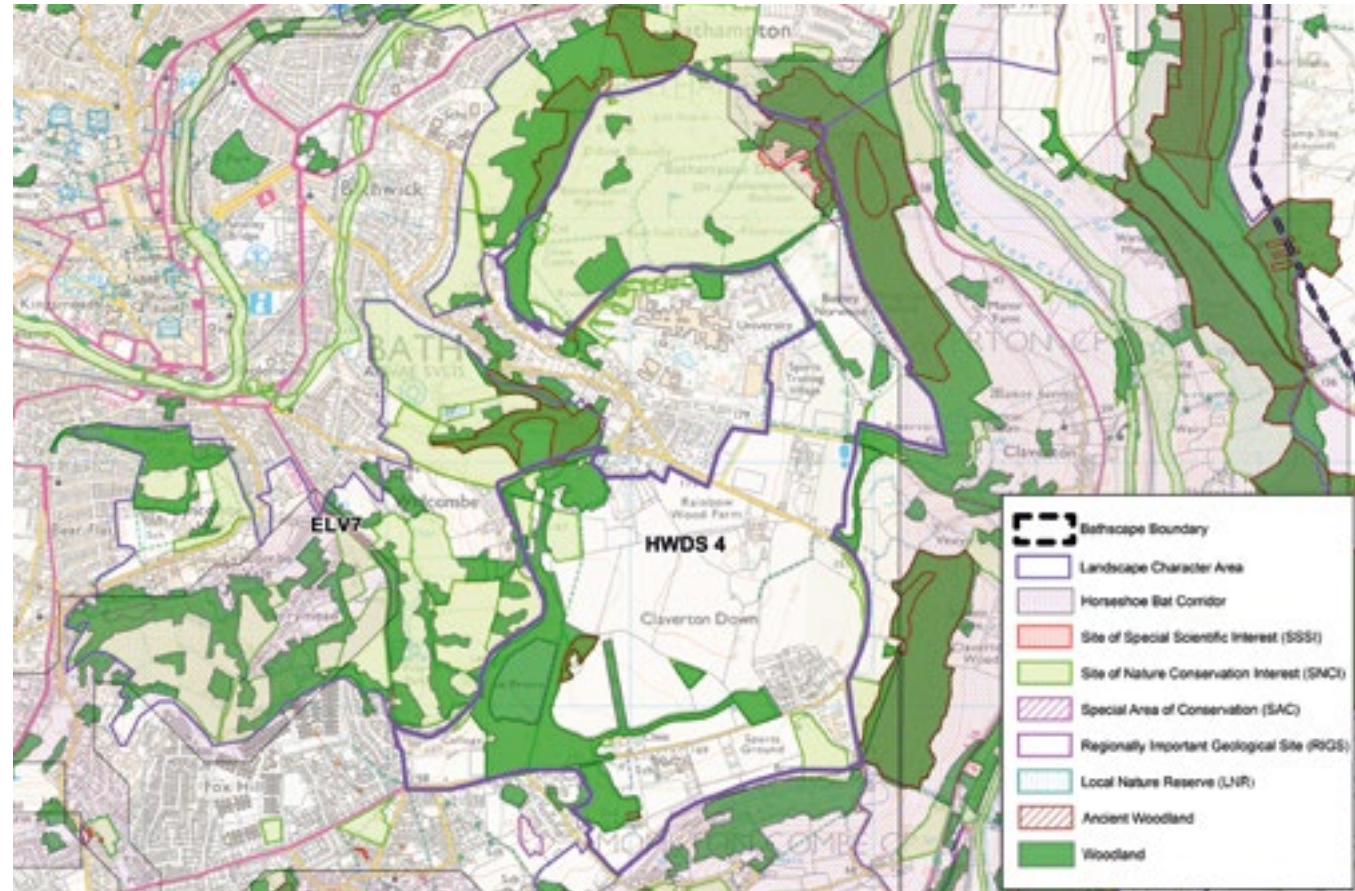
The whole of Bathampton Down has ecological designations including an SSSI and candidate SAC at the Combe Down and Bathampton Down mines. SNCI designation for unimproved and semi-improved grassland covers the whole top of the Down including the golf course. It is part of a larger complex which also included the Bathampton Down slopes. There are areas of UK priority habitat for lowland calcareous grassland scattered through the golf course and around the northern and western edge of the down.

Bushey Norwood has little ecological interest just the edge of the draft 'Horseshoe Bat Corridor for Iford' runs along the east side.

HWDS4 Bathampton Down



HWDS4 Bathampton and Claverton Down – Biodiversity



The western and southern parts of Claverton Down have woodland and a small area of unimproved calcareous grassland SNCI designations.

Most of the Down is open land but there is considerable woodland including Rainbow Wood on the western side of Claverton Down as well as a long tree belt linking the main woodland to a copse. Elsewhere there are tree clumps and individual trees on the golf course and Bushey Norwood has many individual trees and an area of bushy scrub. Claverton Down Road is also lined with large trees.

Rainbow Wood suffered much loss of trees in the devastating 1987 gales and the woodland today is full of dense, young re-growth.

In addition the whole plateau is enclosed around the edges by woodland and tree belts on the upper slopes of the surrounding valleys.

Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The Claverton Down fields are largely the remains of original post-medieval enclosure of a medieval park. Elsewhere Bathampton Down and Bushey Norwood were subject to C18th and C19th parliamentary enclosure although there are hardly any fields, and Bathampton Down is now largely covered by Bath Golf Course.

Bathampton Down is characterised by a slightly domed landform which is occupied by Bath Golf Course and all the leisurely recreational activity associated with it. The landscape of the golf course is typical with greens, fairways and areas of “rough” all interspersed by clumps and lines of trees and scrubby areas. The special element to the golf course is that the “roughs” are mostly important areas of flower-rich limestone grassland.

HWDS4 Claverton Down



134 2.3 High Wold Dip Slope

HWDS4 Bathampton and Claverton Down

On Claverton Down which is part of Rainbow Wood Farm, the fields are mostly medium or relatively small in size, regular and irregular in shape and bounded by a mix of walls and hedges, some clipped and most tall. The whole area is cut for hay and the farm keeps sheep, pigs, cows and hens.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

The only settlement in the character area is a small, modern housing estate at the south-eastern end of Claverton Down. The few remaining buildings are Sham Castle and Bath Golf Club club-house on Bathampton Down, Rainbow Wood Farm on Claverton Down, and a few scattered buildings along Claverton Down Road.

The only roads are the busy Claverton Down Road which curves around the east side of Claverton Down, and Claverton Hill.

There are footpaths around the edge of much of Bathampton Down, through the golf course, Bushey Norwood, and there are various permissive routes through Claverton Down which are well sign-posted by the National Trust.

The National Trust's popular Bath Skyline walk runs all around the edge of the character area, around Bathampton Down, through Bushey Norwood and the outer edge of Claverton Down.

3. Heritage

On Bathampton Down, overlooking the heart of the city, sits a large enclosure named Caer Badon comprising of a mound and ditch. No evidence has been found for occupation, and it is widely thought to represent a large stock enclosure. There is also evidence for extensive Celtic field systems, and earlier barrows, obviously sited on a dramatic location overlooking the Avon valley. Much of Bathampton Down was also a Warren and was covered with pillow mounds for the rabbits.

Land Ownership

The National Trust owns the whole of the undeveloped area of Claverton Down and Bushey Norwood; and a small area below Sham Castle. Sham Castle is in B&NES ownership.

Visual Significance

From the higher parts of Bath Golf Course on Bathampton Down there are expansive, high level views out over to the west as far as the Dundry area at least and to the north over the surrounding Cotswolds plateau skyline including views over the discordant new housing at and just below Ensleigh on the edge of the Lansdown Plateau. From the northern edge of Bathampton Down, there are glimpse, framed views through trees down on to Bathampton Meadows and the flood plain area between Bathampton and Bathford with the building works for the new housing on the flood plain by the railway, being prominent at the time of writing.

There are no views out from Bushey Norwood or Claverton Down, these being rather flatter or dipping areas enclosed by woodland and tree belts. From the public paths through Bushey Norwood there are more local views through the area itself and also some views into the adjacent University campus. From

within Claverton Down, views are limited and compartmentalised, by hedgerows and tree belts, to individual fields with glimpses through to adjacent fields.

There are views to the following character areas:

- Lansdown Plateau skyline and upper parts of Charlcombe and Swainswick Valley
- Glimpses to Little Solsbury Hill Skyline
- Glimpses to Bannerdown Skyline
- Upper parts of Weston valley and the Dean Hill to Prospect Stile escarpment skyline
- Glimpses down onto Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Tributary Confluences.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

Whilst much of Bathampton Down is dominated by the activity of the golf course and is remarkably peaceful but not really tranquil, Claverton Down with its timeless farmed landscape and enclosing trees is a more tranquil landscape unless one is visiting when the adjacent Bobsleigh training run at the University is in action, when the noise is very loud, unworldly and a little alarming.

Cultural Associations

- The Fir Forest: In the early C18th the west side of Bathampton Down was called Bathampton Warren, having been a rabbit warren since the middle ages. On acquiring Bathampton Manor in 1742, Ralph Allen immediately covered the area of open grassland with a large plantation of scots and spruce firs known as the “Fir Forest”. Together with others he planted on the top of Widcombe Hill and at Combe Down, these “extensive and noble plantations” had a considerable impact on the previously bare skyline on the eastern and southern side of Bath and were universally acclaimed as “the pride and ornament of the surrounding country”.

- Sham Castle: In 1762 Ralph Allen built Sham Castle on the site of the earlier Anstey’s Lodge. Collinson, writing in 1791, noted that the castle and plantation together “... *appear pleasing objects, not only from almost every part of the city, but through a great extent of the country westward to the other side of the Severn, the light colour of the stone forming a conspicuous contrast with the deep mass of shade from the grove close behind it*”.

Today the fir forest is long gone but the castle is less visible, being shrouded now in deciduous trees, apart from a narrow vista being maintained free of trees to allow views of the castle at the edge of the plateau. The castle is best seen when illuminated at night.

- Claverton Down: The open grassland on the northern side of Claverton Down was one of the most popular areas around Bath for its views or for riding out, and there are frequent literary references to it, including Spencer Cowper, Jane Austen and William Pitt. From 1722 the Corporation leased Claverton Down for public use, particularly for horse-races which were held over a two-mile course around the perimeter of the Down, and could be attended by as many as 800 carriages and at least 20,000 spectators.

However, under Ralph Allen's ownership of Claverton, these events were discouraged, and were eventually moved to Lansdown.

- Ralph Allen's Carriage Rides
- The old quarry workings at Hampton Rocks on the north eastern edge of Bathampton Down were a favourite haunt for artists in the late C18th. A rock in this area is known as "Gainsborough's Palette".

"The Downs are rich in Georgian cultural interest from the race-course, to 'riding-out', to Ralph Allen's Sham Castle, the 'Fir Forest' and carriage rides."

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

This is a very well-managed area. The National Trust manages the land to conserve and restore the landscape, and the Golf Course, although sited on important archaeological remains, has been in existence for over a century and is managed in part to protect the ecological limestone grassland and heritage interests as well as that of the golfing interests. It is unlikely that significant change is likely to occur to these current regimes.

The most likely forces for change which could impact on the Downs are from additional building construction by the adjacent University. Currently the extensive new building works have had most impact on the visual landscape outside of the Downs with existing and new tree screening protecting the more local area of the Downs.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

The landscape is generally in good and improving condition and the only detracting elements are from the adjacent University campus with occasional noise from the Bobsleigh run and some discordant views across to the campus from Bushey Norwood.

2.3.5 HWDS5: SULIS PLATEAU

Location and Boundaries

Sulis Plateau is a narrow fragment of undeveloped plateau on the southern edge of Bath south of Odd Down, which extends slightly south-westwards of Combe Hay Lane to form a narrow diamond shape on either side of the A367 road to Radstock.

Summary Landscape Character

- This is a small, narrow and gently dipping plateau landscape falling away gently from a high point along the A367 both towards the north-west and the south and south-east.

HWDS5 Odd Down East



- There are three distinctive local character areas: the arable field to the north-west of the A367; the land between the A367 and Combe Hay Lane; and the land to the east of Combe Hay Lane.
- The gently dipping, arable field owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, to the north-west of the A367 is a large open agricultural landscape heavily influenced by the open and expansive views to the lower countryside to the north-west which is almost all, coincidentally, also owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. At the time of the site assessment skylarks were seen over the field. This area appears

completely rural and separated from the urban activity of the city.

- The land between the A367 and Combe Hay Lane is occupied by the Odd Down Park & Ride and the Fullers Earth Recycling Centre both of which give the area a distinctly urban fringe character. The Park & Ride is visually well-screened by trees but within is dominated of course by cars and activity.
- The land to the east of Combe Hay Lane is a partially enclosed agricultural landscape which is largely open and relatively featureless apart from the wooded Sulis Manor and some relatively

young tree-belts. It is heavily influenced by the urban edge of the city on its northern border which intrudes into the north-western corner of the area. This consists of a 1980s housing estate along with a tall communications mast. Part of this land is allocated for housing and would be subsumed into the city.

- The historic Wansdyke runs along the northern boundary of the eastern plateau area.

Physical Influences

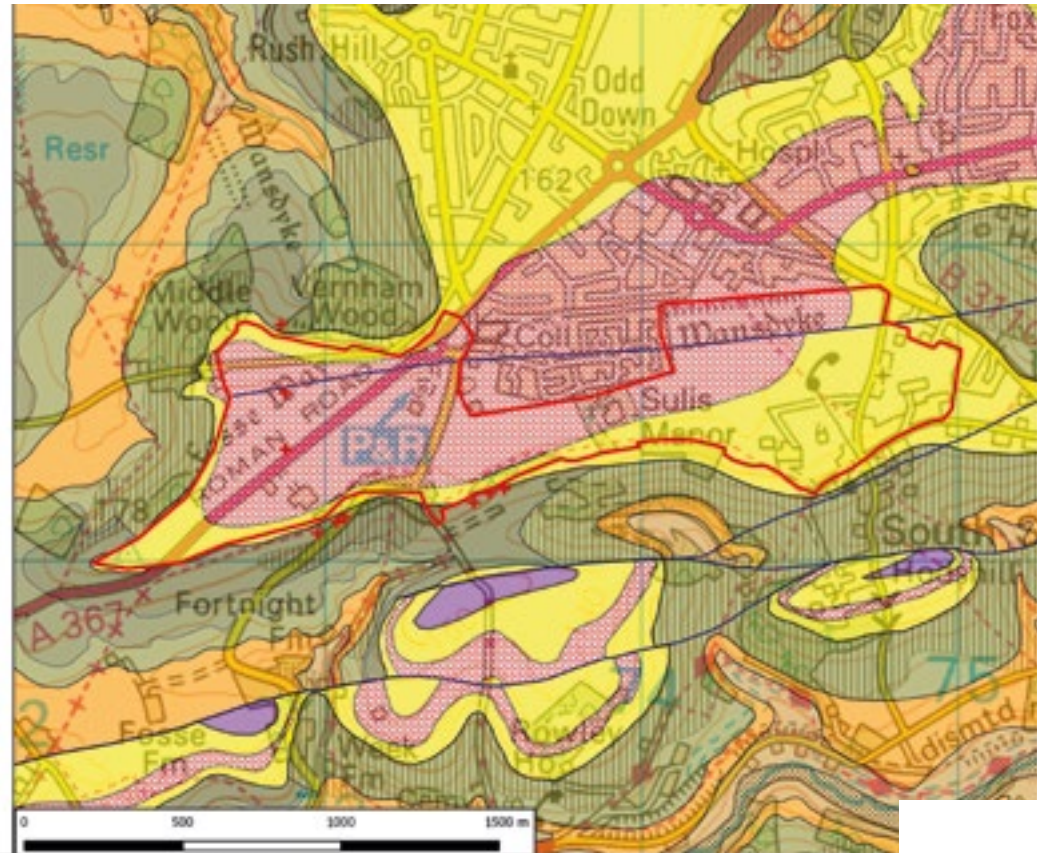
1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The plateau area is characteristically capped with hard Greater Oolite (Bath Oolite specifically) limestone covering the entire area and responsible for its relatively high plateau nature.

There are no springs, streams or ponds on the plateau.

The plateau is at its highest along the A367 to the south-west of the area at around 180m, dipping away gently to both the north-west and towards the south, south-east and east. The southern edge of the plateau overlooking the Cam Valley is at around 170m.

HWDS5 Sulis Manor – Geology



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“This is a small, narrow and gently dipping plateau landscape.”

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There is limited ecological interest on the plateau. There are two small areas designated as SNCI, one rather incongruously covering much of the Fullers Earth Recycling Centre and the other, a triangular semi-improved field on the east side of Combe Hay Lane. Both are part of the larger Fullers Earthworks - Southstoke complex of grassland and woodland. There are also small extensions of draft 'Horseshoe Bat Corridors' by Combe Down.

HWDS5 Sulis Plateau - Biodiversity



Although without designation currently, there are many verges and areas of grassland at Odd Down Park and Ride with a very rich limestone grassland/lowland meadow flora. The Park & Ride was constructed over a rich limestone grassland meadow and at the time the topsoil was stripped and then intentionally re-used on the planting beds to provide a seed-source for re-establishment of some of the meadow flora.

There is little woodland or tree cover on the plateau apart from that surrounding Sulis Manor itself and some young tree belts around the southern edge of the area, either side of Sulis Manor and running east-west through the centre of the land to the east of Sulis Manor. There is also a small scrub woodland copse adjacent to the well treed Southstoke Lane and residential area of Southstoke in the south-east corner of the plateau. Combe Hay Lane which separates the two areas of plateau is well-treed as are the boundaries of the Odd Down Park and Ride.

HWDS5 Common Spotted Orchid Odd Down Park and Ride



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The plateau to the west of Combe Hay Lane comprises C18th-C19th century enclosure fields whereas to the east of the lane the land is primarily late medieval enclosure of open fields.

The plateau area to the west of Combe Hay Lane comprises one large triangular field to the west of the A367 and on the right of the A367 are the Odd Down Park and Ride and the Fullers Earthworks recycling centre. The land to the east of Combe Hay Lane comprises primarily small to medium rectangular fields. All the agricultural land is currently arable apart from the semi-improved triangular field to the east of Combe Hay Lane. At the time of survey, wheat and barley crops were evident.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

The only settlement within the character area is part of the village of Southstoke in the south-east corner of the plateau and comprising a mix of primarily C20th century detached properties in large or medium-sized, well-treed gardens. At the far north-western edge of the character area along Kilkenny Lane there is a grouping of small old stone cottages.

In addition Sulis Manor sits at the centre of the eastern plateau area,

surrounded by trees and there is a group of modern agricultural barns adjacent to the residential area in the south-east.

Immediately to the north of the character area and jutting into it are the urban residential areas of Odd Down and the more recent Sulis estate and adjacent secondary school and sports fields. In the centre of the Sulis Manor estate is a tall communications mast bristling with saucers.

The only roads are the busy A367 Radstock Road to the west, the narrow, tree-lined Combe Hay Lane and Southstoke Lane and a small section of the narrow Kilkenny Lane which cuts across the large field to the west of the A367. Almost all of these roads run across the plateau roughly north to south.

There is good public access on the land either side of Sulis Manor with a network of well-used permissive paths courtesy of the landowners, the Hignett Family Trust. There is also a footpath all along the southern edge of the plateau and along the Wansdyke on the northern edge of the plateau. There is no public access to the west of Combe Hay Lane.

3. Heritage

The Wansdyke runs along the northern boundary of the plateau to the east of Combe Hay Lane.

Land Ownership

The large triangular field to the west of the A367 is part of the Duchy of Cornwall Estate. All the land east of Combe Hay Lane apart from the small semi-improved triangular field and Sulis Manor itself, is owned by the Hignett Family Estate; and the Odd Down Park & Ride is owned by B&NES Council.

Visual Significance

The plateau to the east of Combe Hay Lane is enclosed to the south, west and east by trees and tree-belts and by the residential development of Odd Down to the north. This precludes views out beyond the plateau apart from glimpses through trees on the footpath along the southern edge of the plateau and from the south-western corner of the plateau which is more open to the south close to Combe Hay Lane. Where there are views out along the southern edge, these are wide and expansive views out beyond the edge of the plateau to the lower countryside beyond. These views are widely panoramic and stretch southwards to Somerset and the Mendips.

Within this eastern part of the plateau, its openness gives views across the featureless agricultural land where the eye is drawn to the central communications mast.

To the west of the A367 the landscape is open and there are expansive views from the A367 and Kilkenny Lane, across the lower open countryside to the west.

There are views to the following character areas:

- Cam and Midford Brook Valley
- Corston and Newton Brook Valleys.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

Walking within the open fields to the east of Sulis Manor, although close to the urban edge, there is a sense of peaceful countryside and along Kilkenny Lane the open and rural countryside to the west is a strong influence and give a sense of tranquillity. Elsewhere the urban influence of the busy A367, the Park & Ride, Fullers Earthworks site, school and housing all detract from any sense of tranquillity.

Cultural Associations

- The Combe Hay Mine was a Fullers Earth mine which operated until 1979. It is located next door to the Odd Down Park & Ride and today a few remnants of its buildings exist in the current recycling centre. Photographs exist showing a full-size windmill which was used to drive the machinery in the 1890s. It must have been quite a sight on the plateau top but sadly it burned down in 1904³⁰.

“The Combe Hay Mine was a Fullers Earth mine which operated until 1979. Photographs exist showing a full-size windmill which was used to drive the machinery in the 1890s – sadly it burned down in 1904.”

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

- The land to the east of Combe Hay Lane is allocated for residential development and a planning application is being considered at the time of writing.
- The Park & Ride is also expected to expand into the small field between it and the Fullers Earth Recycling Centre.
- To the west of the A367 there are no changes foreseen to the current agricultural management.

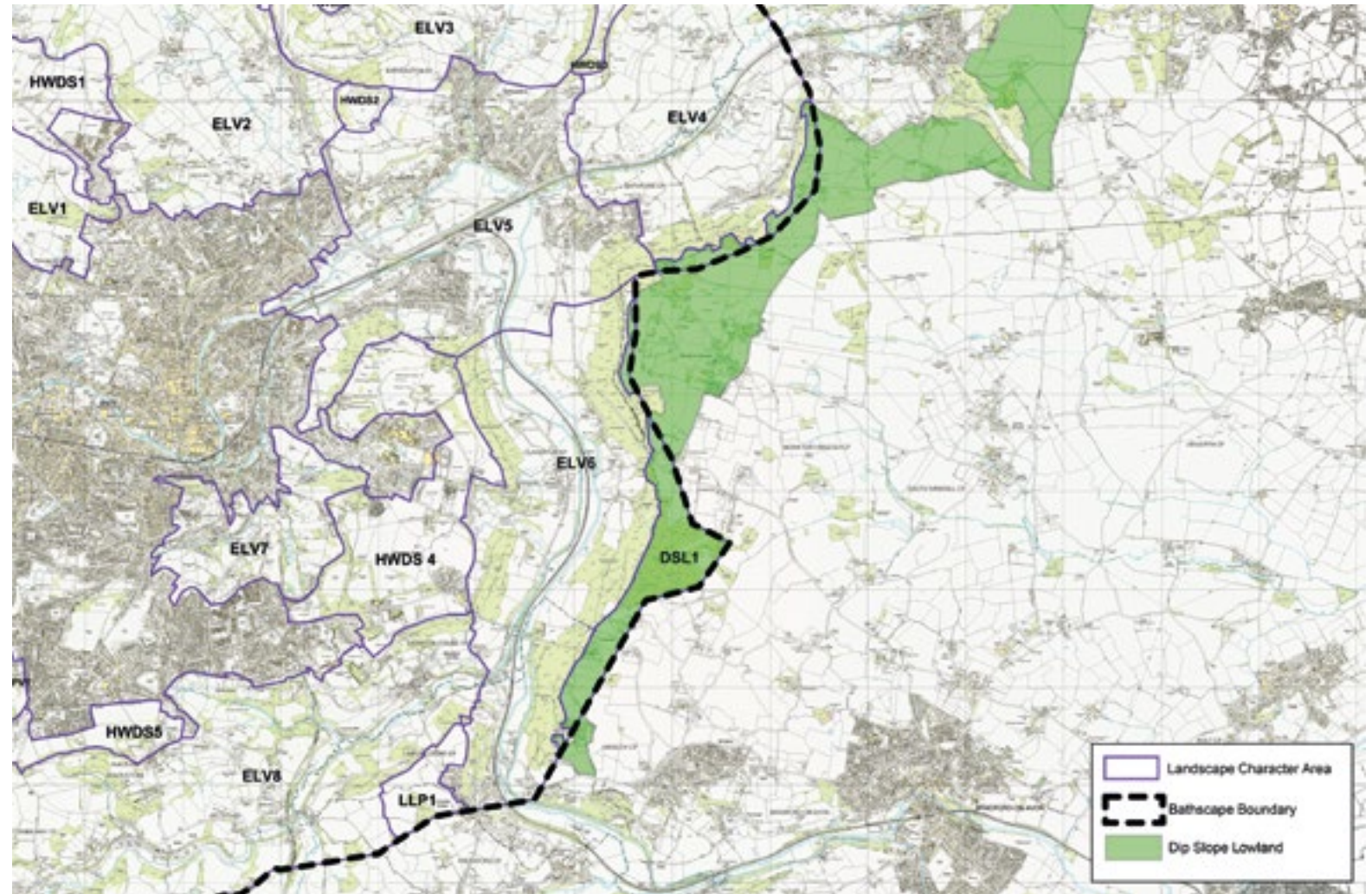
2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

Currently the whole agricultural landscape is well managed although there are clearly some radical changes to come. The Fullers Earth Recycling centre buildings, particularly the large new barn structure is prominent and a detracting feature, however this primarily affects the A367 locally and the Cam and Midford Valley character area to the south.

³⁰Weigh-House: The newsletter of the Somersetshire Coal Canal Society. No. 45 May 2006. A Walk – The Canal and The Fullers Earth Mines at Combe Hay, Sunday 19th June 2005 – Mike Chapman

2.4 BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE TYPE: DIP-SLOPE LOWLANDS

Dip-Slope Lowland Landscape Type



The area of Bathscape land within the Cotswolds AONB Dip-Slope Lowland Landscape Type is very small indeed, comprising four separate slivers of land just onto the dip-slope to the east of the adjacent valleys. They vary from less than 100m wide to, at the most, 500m wide. These areas although technically dip-slope landscape, are heavily influenced by the woodland on their immediate boundaries and are really transition areas between two adjacent and contrasting landscape types – enclosed limestone valleys and dip-slope lowlands.

For context the key characteristics of the Cotswolds Dip-Slope Lowland Type are set out below:

Key Characteristics

- Broad area of gently sloping, undulating lowland with a predominantly south-easterly fall, changing to a north-easterly fall in the southern perimeter of the area.
- Lowland landform gently dissected by infrequent small watercourses flowing into the main rivers that cross the area, reinforcing the general grain of the topography.
- strong and structured farmland character, more intimate and smaller in scale than the High Wold and High Wold Dip-Slope.
- Well managed, productive agricultural landscape of mixed arable and improved pasture, together with more limited areas of permanent pasture, mainly within the valley bottoms.
- Seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with mixed arable farming.
- medium to large-scale, regular fields predominate mainly enclosed by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees, together with some stone walls or post and wire fencing.

- Woodland cover limited to intermittent copses and shelterbelts within agricultural land, but balanced by extensive broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantations within the large estates and associated farmland areas.
- Limited areas of ancient woodland and species rich grassland.
- Settlement pattern of intermittent small nucleated villages, hamlets, and isolated farmsteads, together with occasional larger settlements.
- Distinctive pattern of large estates and associated planned parkland landscape and woodland occurring throughout the Dip-Slope Lowland.
- Evidence of long period of occupation of the area.

Landscape Character Areas

DSL1 Plateau Edges around Monkton Farleigh

2.4.1 DSL1 PLATEAU EDGES AROUND MONKTON FARLEIGH

Location and Boundaries

This character area comprises four slivers of land on the eastern edge of the Bathscape area within Wiltshire, lying just onto the dip-slope lowland plateau above the Limpley Stoke and Lower By Brook valleys.

Summary Landscape Character

- These four very narrow slivers of land are at the western edge and highest part of the Dip Slope Lowland landscape Type and form a skyline to the adjacent valleys to the north and west. They are very rural areas although the most northerly is the far western edge of Kingsdown Golf Course. The two smallest areas above Bathford are parts of arable fields and the largest most southerly area is

dominated by Innwood ancient woodland with very small permanent pasture fields interspersed by individual houses and a farm in semi-wooded settings on its southern side and small arable fields north of the woodland. All four areas dip slightly down towards the wooded plateau edge rather than the wider dip-slope to the east, and their characters are dominated by the woodland settings which they face.

DSL1 Pylon at Plateau Edge



Physical Influences

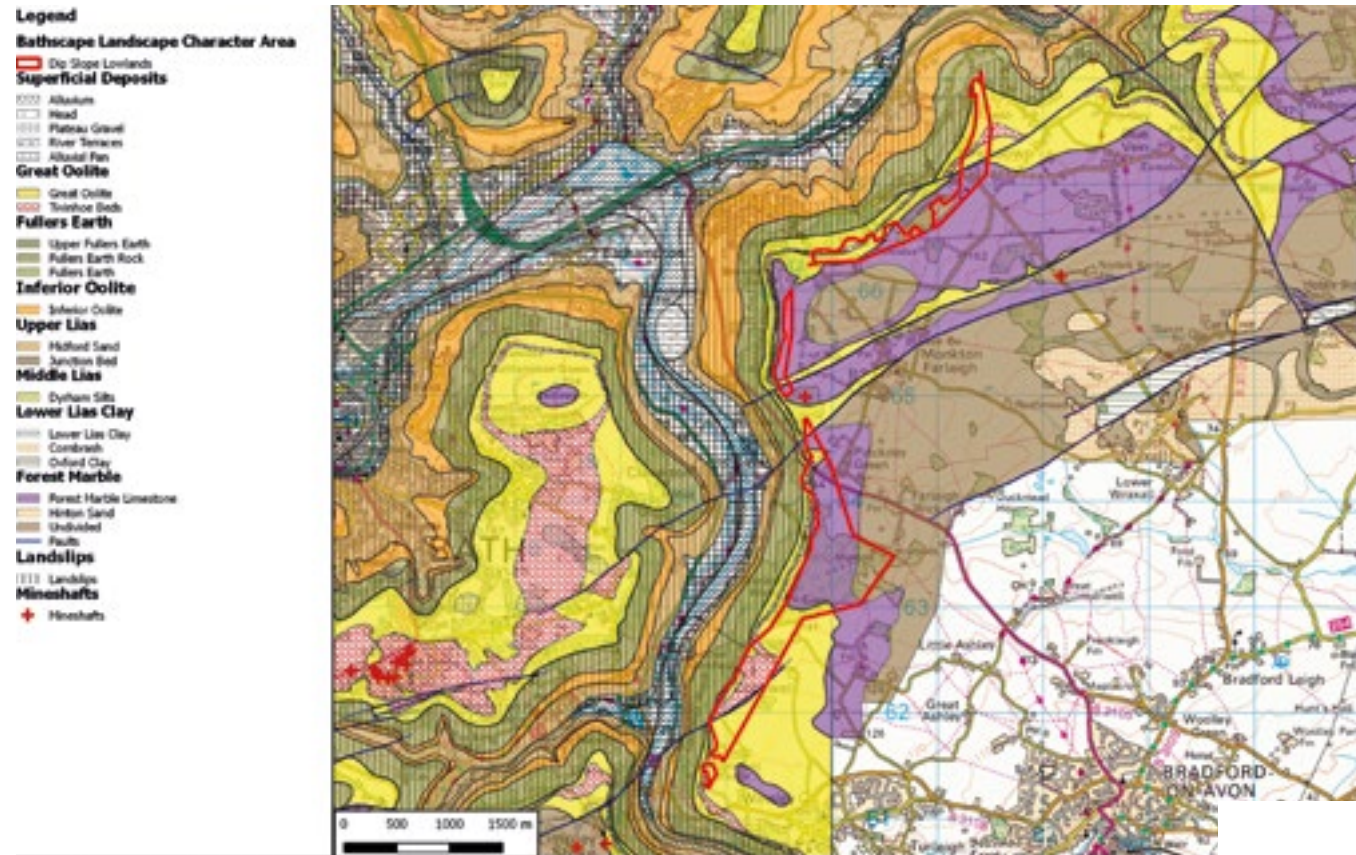
1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The wider dip-slope/plateau landscape here dips away gently to the east and south-east from a high point around 190m above Brown's Folly. However most of these very small slivers of land locally dip slightly down to the plateau edges towards the valleys below.

These areas are all either Forest Marble overlying greater Oolite or Greater Oolite limestone.

There are no springs, streams or ponds within these small areas.

DSL1 Dip Slope Lowlands – Geology



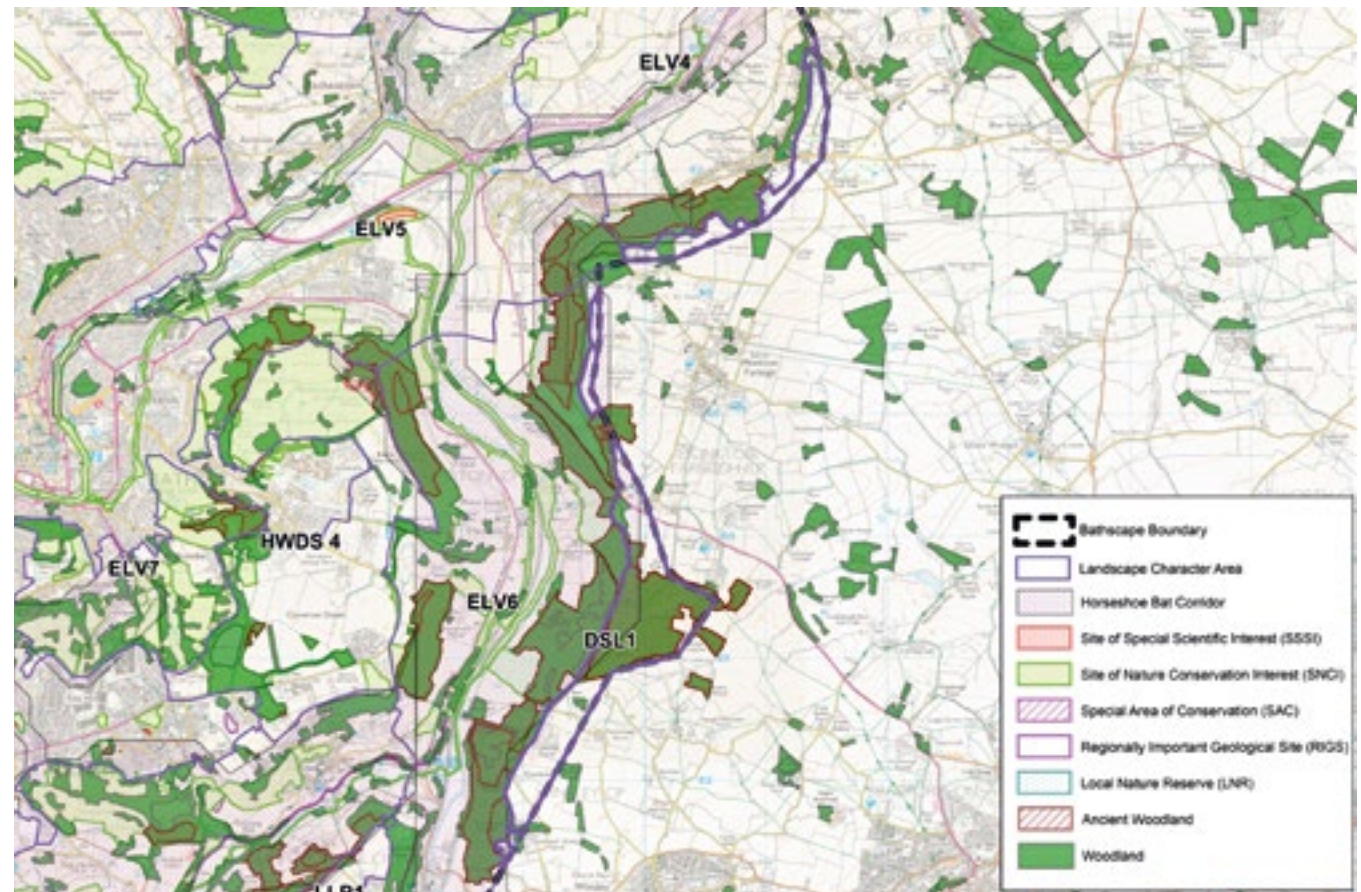
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2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There is limited ecological data available for these areas. However the southernmost area which is the largest area contains a substantial ancient woodland SSSI, Innwood at Warleigh. In addition the sliver to the east of Browns Folly and part of Innwood are included in the draft 'Horseshoe Bat Corridor for Iford'. The remaining land within these three smallest areas is all improved pasture, arable or golf course and is unlikely to have any ecological designation. South of the woodland in the southern area are a number of small and narrow fields which may in part be unimproved or semi-improved grassland and so may have some ecological interest.

The southernmost area has the substantial Innwood ancient woodland and two small copses. There are no woodlands, copses or tree belts in the remaining areas, however all the areas are bounded to the west or north-west by the mature woodland areas which line the upper slopes of the adjoining valleys and all are heavily influenced by their presence.

DSL1 Plateau edges around Monkton Farleigh - Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The larger, southernmost area has very small, narrow permanent pasture fields bounded by thick grown-out hedgerows to the south of Innwood. All the other areas are parts of arable fields with clipped hedges apart from the northernmost area which is the westernmost edge of the Kingsdown Golf Course.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

The only settlement within these areas is in the southernmost area, south of Innwood and is made up of a few detached houses, including the small Conkwell Farm, in semi-wooded gardens in amongst the area of small fields and forming part of the hamlet of Conkwell. A very narrow lane runs along the edge of the plateau in the southernmost area and through Innwood eventually descending off the plateau to Warleigh in the valley below.

There are three relatively unintrusive masts close together, beside Conkwell Farm in the southernmost area.

A pylon line passes through the northern edge of the area below Kingsdown Golf Course, and then cuts through the woodland down into the By Brook Valley.

Land Ownership

No information is available

Visual Significance

All the areas dip towards the strong woodland fringed western or north-western boundaries and are visually contained by them as well as being heavily influenced by them, giving them an enclosed visual character. Within the ancient Innwood there is an enclosed and intimate landscape.

There are no views to adjacent character areas.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

These are very rural areas apart from the Kingswood Golf Course which has a semi-rural character but within all the areas is a sense of peace and tranquillity especially within Innwood.

Cultural Associations

- Kingsdown Golf Club is the second oldest golf club in the west of England dating back to 1880.
- Monkton Farleigh Bath Stone Mine tunnels and caverns under much of area, with its post mining history of munitions storage particularly active in WW2. Evidence of the army camps associated with this can be seen just outside the area.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

This is a very rural landscape and limited forces for change are likely to radically affect these areas apart from the possibility of additional or taller communications masts in this skyline location which themselves would be likely to make their greatest impact on the Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley below and possibly the landscape extending further to the north, west and east.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

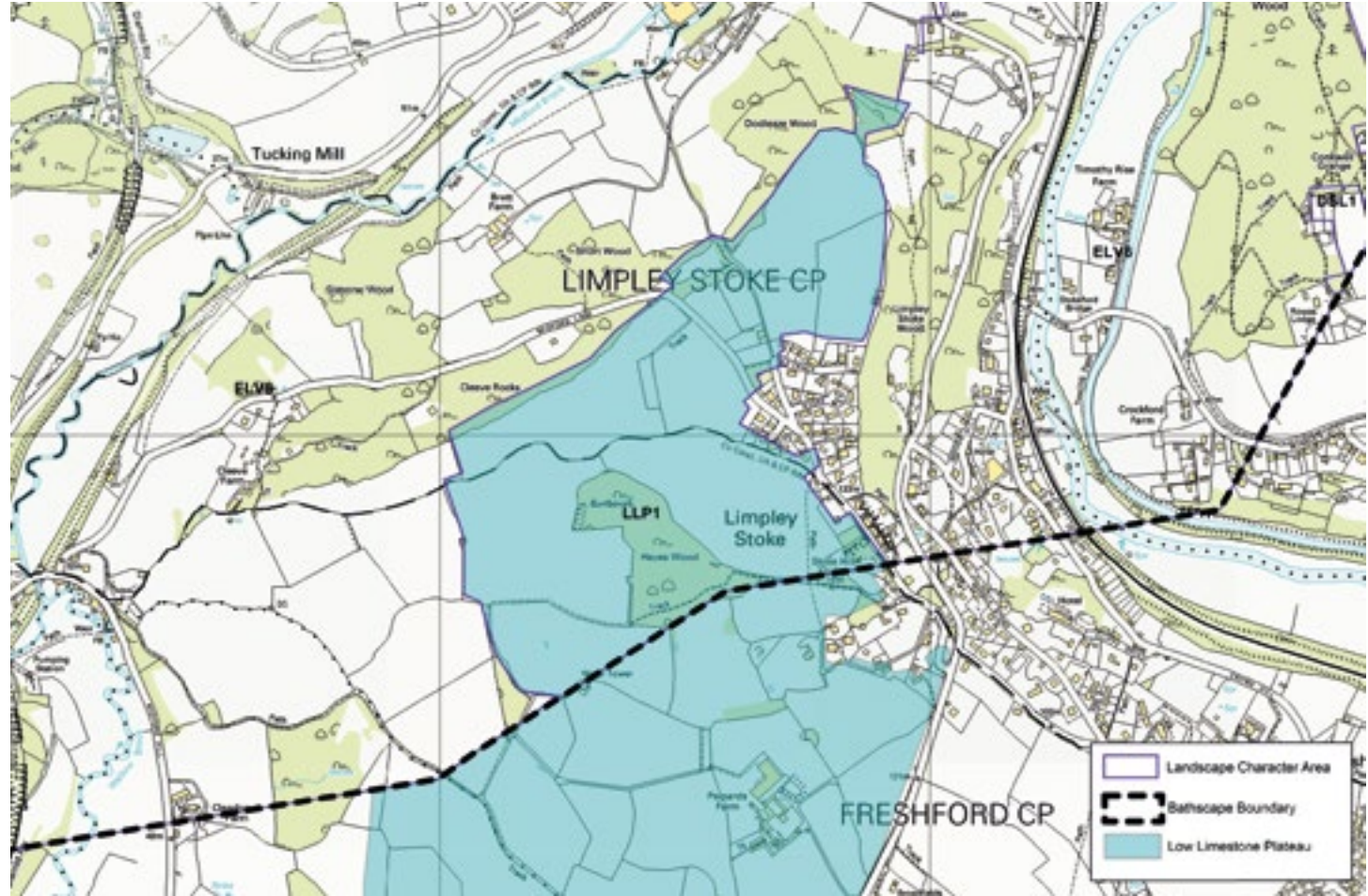
This landscape appears to be in good condition and the SSSI designation statement for Innwood suggests that its management status is favourable.

There are only minor detracting elements in the small masts and the pylon line.

2.5

BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE TYPE: LOW LIMESTONE PLATEAU

Low Limestone Plateau Landscape Type



Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating open plateau;
- Expansive long distance views across the open plateau to distant hills and immediate surrounding valleys;
- Generally equal distribution of arable and pastoral land of medium and occasionally large-sized, geometric fields enclosed principally by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees;
- Sparse woodland cover of small farm woodlands and shelterbelts limiting the sense of exposure;
- Limited areas of species-rich grassland on the fringes of the landscape type;
- Sparsely settled with little settlement beyond isolated farmsteads;
- Communication routes principally limited to minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings; and
- Limited number of archaeological remains, although their presence verifies the long history of settlement and use of the area.

Landscape Character Area

Bathscape LLP1 – Limpey Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau

2.5.1 LLP1: LIMPEY STROKE WATER TOWER AND HAYES WOOD PLATEAU

Location and Boundaries

The Limpey Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau character area is a small area comprising the northernmost part of the Hinton Charterhouse character area identified in the Cotswolds AONB LCA. It forms a wide promontory of high ground surrounded by river valleys with the River Avon valley on the east side, the Midford Brook on the north side and the Wellow Brook on the west side. Limpey Stoke village lies immediately to the east on the slopes up to the plateau and just onto the plateau to the south-east of the character area. Adjacent Bathscape character areas are the Bathampton and Limpey Stoke Valley to the east and north-east and the Cam and Midford Brook Valley to the west. The southern boundary of the character area is also the Bathscape Project boundary.

Summary Landscape Character

- This is a small area of relatively low, open, limestone plateau forming a slightly domed hill rising to 152m, which is topped by Hayes

Wood, an ancient woodland with, close by, the prominent local landmark of Limpey Stoke concrete water tower which can be seen from some miles around.

- The plateau forms a broad promontory with river valleys to the north, west and east and as such it can be seen from within all three.
- This is an entirely farmed landscape with a mix of arable and grazing and a small area of horsiculture.
- Hedges are notably sparse and clipped very low, with some good hedgerow trees. In places the hedges have almost disappeared leaving the trees as prominent linear landscape features. Apart from hedgerow and roadside trees there are few other trees apart from a length of beech avenue along a short length of track.
- There is no public access to this area and only a very short length of road passing through it from Limpey Stoke in the north-east.
- There is an Iron-Age enclosure adjacent to Hayes Wood although this is not visible on the ground. Neolithic and Bronze age finds as well as a Roman pot have been found in the enclosure area.

152 2.5 Low Limestone Plateau

LLP1 Limpey Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau

Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

The landform is slightly domed in this area rising to 152m at the centre, which is one of the highest points in the wider Cotswolds AONB, Hinton Charterhouse character area. The geology here is typical of the Low Limestone Plateau character type being of the upper parts of the

Greater Oolite Group. Forest Marble extends over the top of most of the character area including the highest points, giving way to greater Oolite and Twinhoe Beds in the north-eastern third of the area. This geology gives rise to calcareous brashy clay soils suited to both arable and pastoral land use.

LLP1 Hayes Wood Plateau



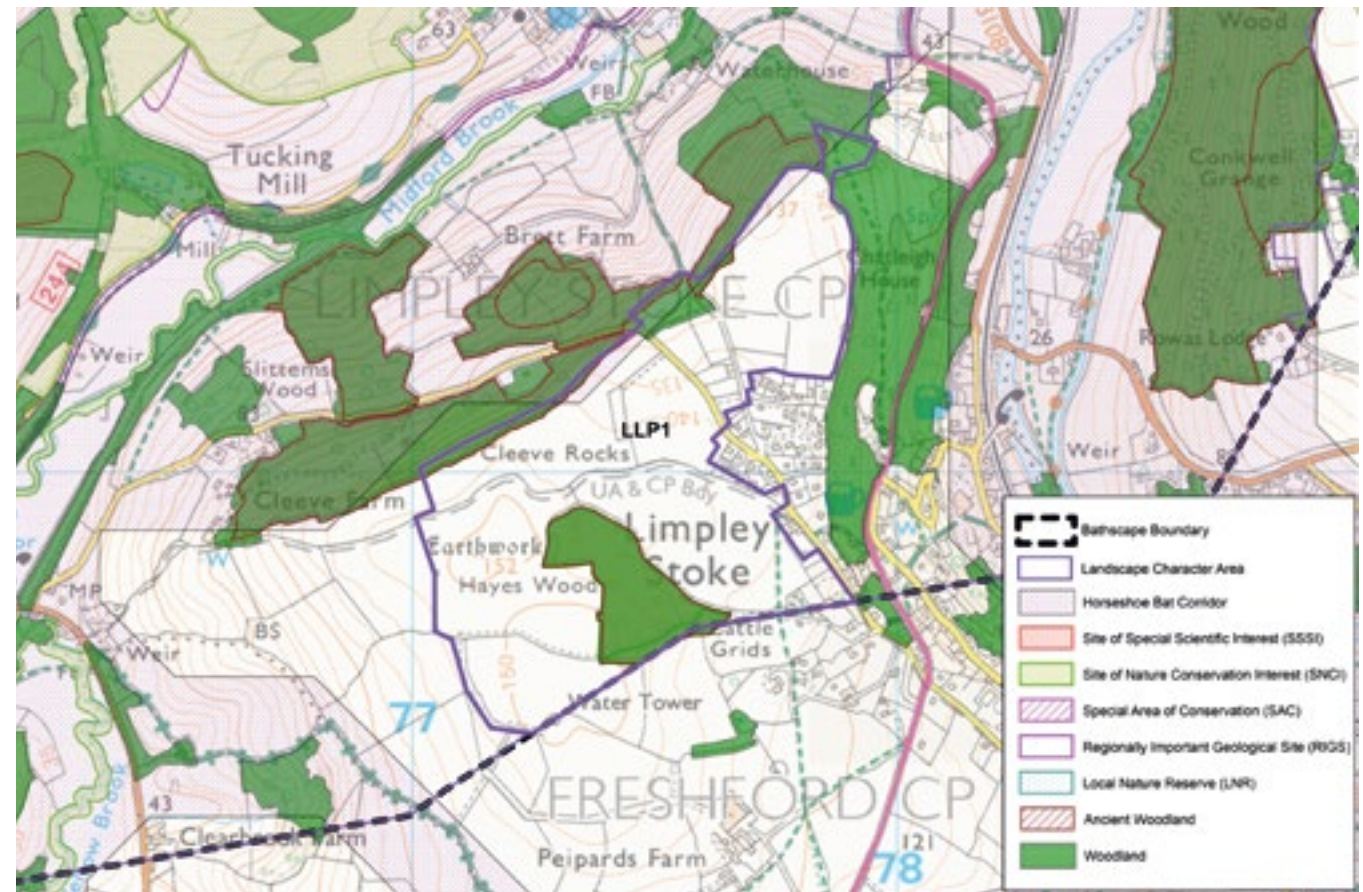
2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There is one ecological designation within the character area, this is Hayes Wood which is a 5.5ha ancient woodland and a UK priority habitat, lowland mixed deciduous woodland. The SNCI designation notation states that it was surveyed in 1979 and there is no information regarding the current management or species status of the wood since then.

Woodland, partly ancient covers the northern and eastern adjoining upper valley slopes and although barely 0.25km away, the only habitat link is a tightly clipped hedge with some hedgerow trees running along the county boundary between Hayes Wood and the ancient Short Wood to the north.

There are some good hedgerow trees but these are generally part of short clipped hedges.

LLP1 Limpey Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The northern half of the plateau area lies within Wiltshire, with B&NES to the south. Historic Landscape Characterisation data is available for the B&NES area and this shows that the fields were enclosed in the post medieval period by local arrangement and exchange. At the highest part of the plateau is evidence of an Iron Age enclosure and the outline is visible in satellite photos.

There are 6 medium to large fields, bounded by clipped hedges with some good hedgerow trees. The fields are generally roughly rectangular. Land use appears to be a mix of arable, grass leys and north-east of Midford Lane there is an area of permanent pasture. Although no animals were seen on the site visit, the satellite photos suggest there is grazing over about half of the overall area. Adjacent to Midford Lane just into the site area on the edge of Limpey Stoke, there are a number of over-grazed horse paddocks with horse tape and a shelter.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

There are only two small barns and a horse shelter in the character area but there is one very prominent local landmark structure which is the Limpey Stoke Water Tower which lies right on the southern boundary of the character area. The water Tower is apparently owned by Wessex Water and is a very distinctive concrete tower with an open, funnel-shaped top. It can be seen from about 6 miles all around.

There is only a small section of one road, Midford Lane within the area. This is a partly tree-lined lane and runs from Limpey Stoke north-west over a short section of plateau character area and then down into Midford. There are no footpaths within the character area.

3. Land Ownership

There is no information available as to land ownership.

4. Visual Significance

The lack of public access means that there are no publicly accessible views from the character area apart from those on the short section of Midford lane giving views over to Conkwell Wood high up on the eastern side of the Bathampton and Limpey Stoke valley. There are however views into the area from the Cam Valley from where the water tower can be clearly seen on top of the plateau.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

The inaccessibility, entirely agricultural use and open plateau nature makes this a locally tranquil area.

Cultural Associations

- The Limpey Stoke Water Tower with its distinctive 1960's concrete form has its own facebook page and is a local landmark but there appears to be little known about it and no evidence of when exactly it was built.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

There is a small area of horse paddocks which appear to be over-grazed. In the event that Hayes wood is unmanaged it is likely to deteriorate both as a prominent landscape feature and ecological asset.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

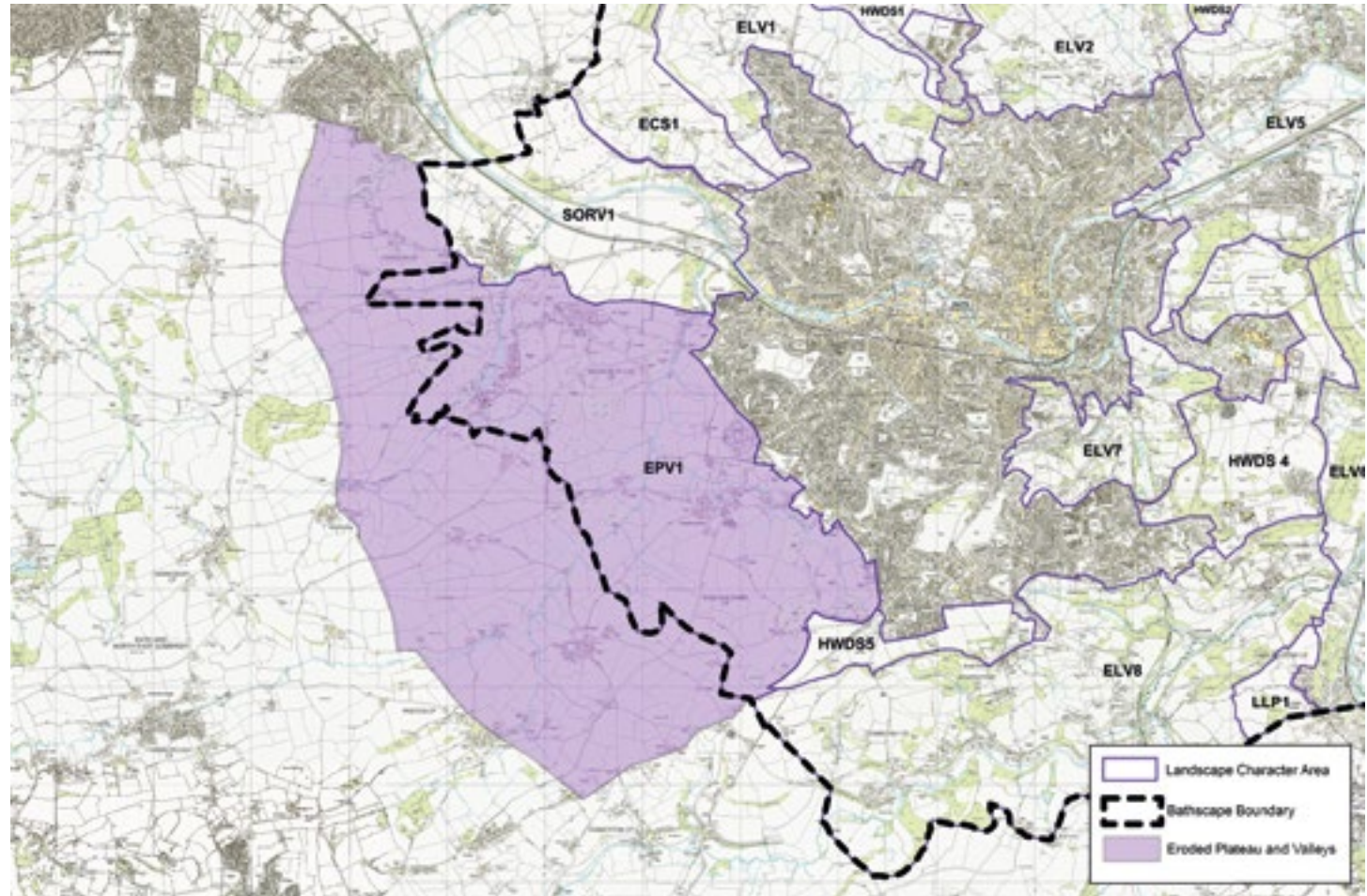
This small area appears to be in good agricultural condition overall although the hedges are heavily clipped and rather 'gappy' in places putting them at risk of being lost altogether. The management status of Hayes Wood is unknown. This is a visually prominent, ancient woodland which is an important landscape and wildlife asset in the landscape. Overall the landscape condition is good with signs of deterioration of hedges.

The character here is a good example of the Low Limestone Plateau type.

“This is a small area of relatively low, open, limestone plateau forming a slightly domed hill with the prominent local landmark of Limpey Stoke concrete water tower.”

2.6 BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE TYPE: ERODED PLATEAU & VALLEYS

Eroded Plateau and Valleys Landscape Type



This area is outside the Cotswolds AONB and so was not described in the Cotswolds AONB LCA. It is covered by the B&NES Rural Landscapes of Bath & Northeast Somerset: A Landscape Character Assessment – Landscape Character Area no. 6 Hinton Blewett and Newton St. Loe Plateau Lands. Published in 2002 and prepared prior to that, as an early assessment, it did not take the Landscape Type and Area approach which was subsequently recommended in guidance. The Hinton Blewett and Newton St. Loe Plateau Lands area has now been reviewed and a Landscape Type which covers the whole area has been recognised.

Key Characteristics:

- Eroded plateau and valleys comprising gently rolling plateau area, hills and ridges divided by relatively narrow valleys.
- Significant area of coal measures of Somersetshire Coalfield with mining into early C20th concentrated around Clutton/High Littleton/Timsbury.
- Scattering of notable small and mostly conical hills stand out from the plateau as at Farmborough Common, Duncorn Hill and Winsbury Hill.
- Overall a linear landscape with east-west running ridges and valleys.

- Relatively open, mixed farming landscape with a predominance of arable in some areas.
- Extensive views over the rolling landscape from the plateaus and ridges with valley bottoms often hidden from view.
- Woodland limited overall but concentrated in two areas – to the north around Englishcombe and Newton St. Loe where there are numbers of small woods and copses; and through the coalfield where there is one large woodland (Greyfield) as well as smaller areas often associated with past mining activities.
- Tree-lined, tightly meandering brooks set down into steep-sided valley bottoms.
- Characteristically well-trimmed hedges.
- Scattered villages and hamlets, with settlement concentrated in the coal field area. Most are located on valley sides and floors with notable exceptions being plateau villages of Timsbury and Marksbury.

Bathscape Landscape Character Areas

EPV1: Corston and Newton Brook Valleys

2.6.1 EPV1: CORSTON AND NEWTON BROOK VALLEYS

Location and Boundaries

This character area lies on the south-west side of Bath, immediately adjacent to the south-western developed edge of Whiteway, Southdown and Rush Hill along Pennyquick Lane and Whiteway Road. It extends northwards to include Newton St Loe Village and exclude Corston. The River Avon Valley West and Kelston Park character area lies beyond to the north. The south-western boundary is the Bathscape boundary although the character area would continue further to the south-west beyond the boundary.

Summary Landscape Character

- This is an open, gently rolling landscape of interweaving indented ridges, two main valleys and their tributary valleys. It lies at a significantly lower level than the Cotswolds plateau immediately to the east, and is overlooked by it. The lack of extensive tree cover enables the characteristics of the landform to predominate in the landscape character.

- This is a patchwork, mixed farming landscape of variable fields sizes, mainly clipped but with some tall hedgerows, occasional small woods, tree-lined meandering streams and lanes, and a predominance of arable over pastoral farming.
- Ecological interest is limited to areas on the steep slopes on the eastern edge of the character area, as well as the Newton Brook.
- Largely hidden in the steep-sided Corston Brook valley is the Newton Park Estate with its C18th mansion and registered historic park, with artificial lakes along the line of the brook and with excellent parkland and avenue trees. There has been considerable modern building which has taken place as part of the Bath Spa University

campus development within the centre of the park both to the south-west and north-east of the mansion.

- A network of distinctive, narrow and poorly sign-posted lanes sunk between tall hedge-banks runs through the area around both Newton St. Loe and Englishcombe although, strangely there is no lane which connects both these villages.
- Newton St. Loe and Englishcombe are two small, compact, Duchy villages within the character area, dominated by attractive 17th and 18th century freestone or ashlar buildings with tiled and occasionally thatched roofs. They both have medieval churches, and Englishcombe is also known for its medieval Tithe Barn and the remains of Culverhay Castle.

Outside of these two small villages and Newton Park Mansion with the more modern buildings now associated with Bath Spa University, there are just four farms scattered through the area and one or two isolated properties including the large C19th Barrow Castle close to Englishcombe.

- The excellent and coherent management by the Duchy of Cornwall and its tenants, of land, trees, woods, hedgerows and buildings within the area adds to its character.
- The character area and in particular Englishcombe, became a popular rambling destination for Bath residents once the trams brought easy access out from the city in the early C20th. Visitors were drawn by the cut flower

nursery and by the historic features of the village.

- There are extensive open views over the distinctive and lower, rolling countryside of the character area from the higher plateau areas of the Cotswolds to the east and north. These views extend well beyond the character area especially to the south and south-west. Within the character area the alternating hills and valleys allow a variety of visual experience, sometimes looking over wide areas of the ridge and valley landscape, and other times contained down within the valleys by landform and trees.
- Tranquil and peaceful farming landscape.

EPV1 View over Character Area



EPV1 Newton St Loe



EPV1 Englishcombe Church



Physical Influences

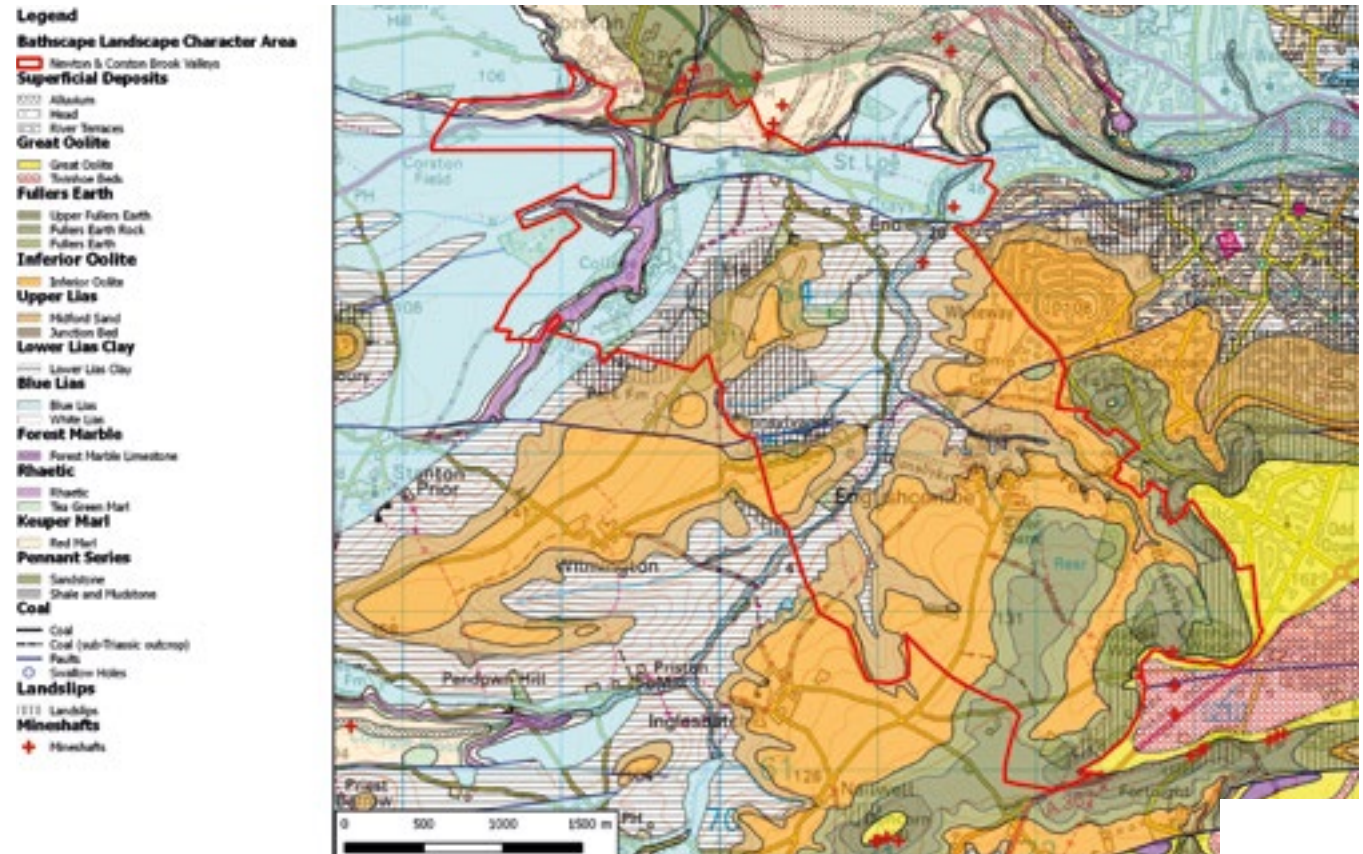
1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

Overall this is a rolling, ridge and valley landscape with convex rounded valley sides especially where they are underlain by harder, Inferior Oolite limestone; and steeper-sided tributary valleys. The indentations of tributary valleys bring variety into this rolling landscape and many views which overlook the area show an interweaving pattern of ridges, hills and valleys, dips and rises. The Land is highest at 150m in the east and south east where the character area abuts the Cotswolds plateau. There is then a sharp drop down to around 130m on the ridge lines with valley floors at around 40m.

The geology here shows a change to that experienced around the rest of the Bathscape area. This is an area where the greater Oolite of the Cotswolds Hills and dip-slope has been eroded away and the underlying strata now dictate the landform.

To the south, between the edge of the plateau at odd Down and Englishcombe is a rolling ridge and part of an upper tributary stream valley where Fullers Earth limestone rock forms the highest areas, underlain by Fullers Earth and then Inferior Oolite, this being extensive towards Englishcombe and Inglesbatch (just outside the

EPV1 Newton & Corston Brook Valleys - Geology



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character area) and in the area of Haycombe Cemetery where it forms the upper slopes of the Newton Brook Valley.

The Newton Brook Valley on its south-eastern valley side has primarily Inferior Oolite slopes with Midford sands where there are tributary stream valleys, and Lias Clay on the lower slopes and valley floor. On the north-western side of the valley Lias Clay predominates on the slopes, with a small area of Inferior Oolite and Midford Sand.

The narrow ridge between Newton Brook and Corston Brook, is topped by Midford Sand and a small area of Inferior Oolite. Just outside the character area to the south-west there is a fault line and there is a sudden change with Inferior Oolite predominating on top of the ridge and the Midford Sand forming the upper valley sides.

The small part of Corston Brook within the character area has Lias Clay forming the south-eastern valley sides and Blue Lias Limestone forming the valley floor and north-western valley sides. Just to the north of Newton St. Loe village is a small area of Keuper Marl of the Triassic Period and marking the beginning of a transition area further to the west and south-west from rocks of the Jurassic Period to rocks of the older Triassic Period.

There are two tributaries of the River Avon running parallel to each other from south-west to North-east in the character area. These are the larger Newton Brook which meanders through its valley and forms the most extensive landform feature in the character area, and Corston Brook in the north-west of the area.

There are numerous springs within the Newton Brook Valley which also has a number of tributary streams forming distinct separate valley features as well as indentations in the valleys sides. There is a particularly notable steep-sided tributary valley, Padleigh Brook, which runs between Englishcombe and the edge of the Cotswolds plateau to the north-east.

Corston Brook runs through a small, steep-sided valley and has two small, tributary stream valleys within the character area. A significant area of the brook has been modified and impounded to form the lakes and cascades within Newton Park.

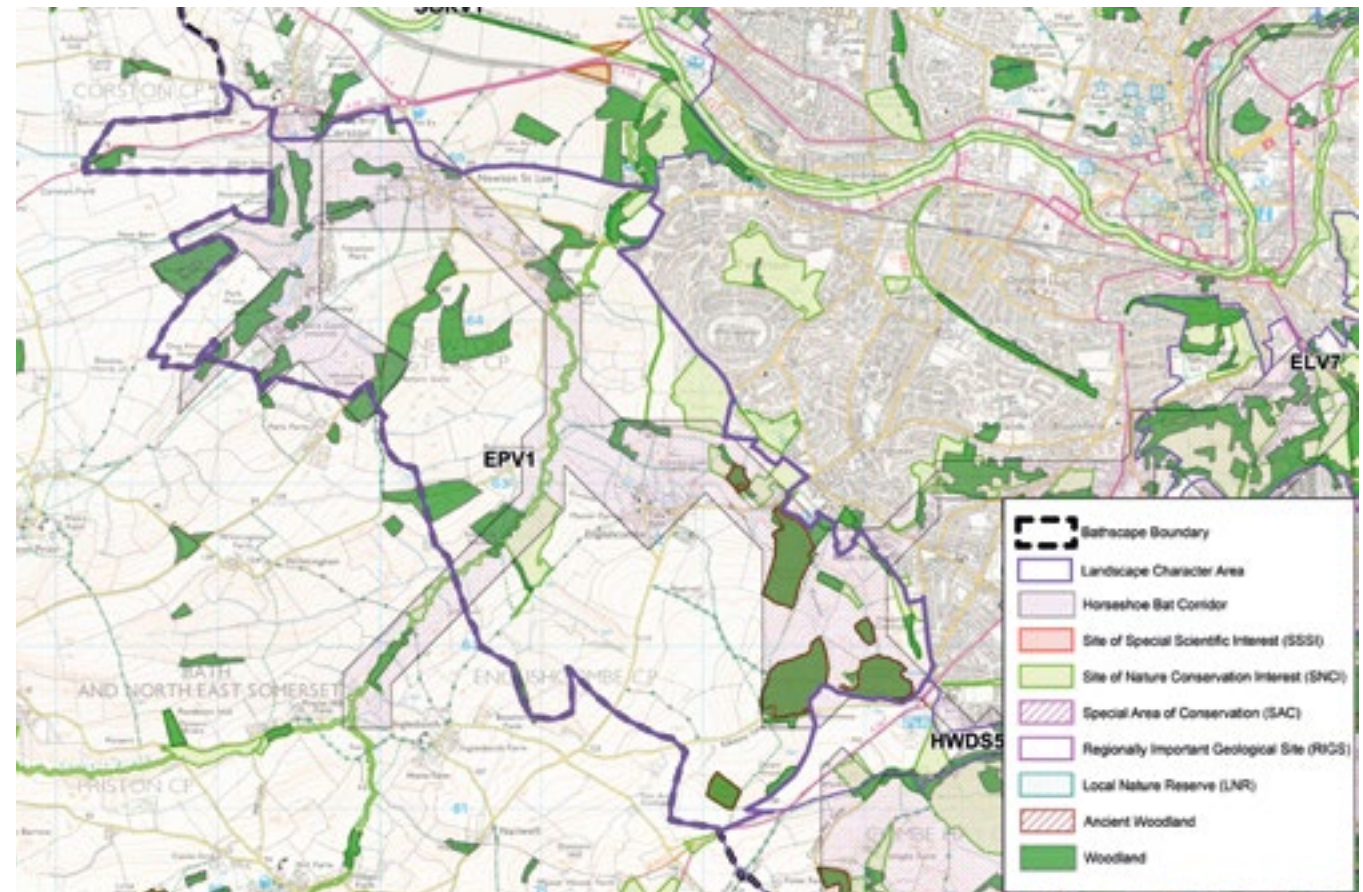
“This is an open, gently rolling landscape of interweaving indented ridges, two main valleys and their tributary valleys. It lies at a significantly lower level than the Cotswolds plateau immediately to the east, and is overlooked by it. The lack of extensive tree cover enables the characteristics of the landform to predominate in the landscape character.”

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

There are limited ecological designations within the character areas with the exception of an extensive area of draft 'Horseshoe Bat Corridor for Combe Down and Newton Park' which follow Newton and Corston Brooks and their tributaries, as well as around the village of Newton St. Loe.

Elsewhere within the character there are small areas of grassland SNCI, mostly unimproved lowland meadow along the steep slopes running down into the Newton and Padleigh Brook valleys from the Cotswolds plateau. There are four notable ancient woodland SNCIs – Middle Wood, Vernham Wood, Breach Wood and West Wood which are clustered at the head of the Padleigh Brook close to Odd Down and along to Newton Brook itself. The site survey of the area noted Bath Asparagus on roadside hedge banks.

EPV1 Corston & Newton Brook Valleys – Biodiversity



In addition to the important clustering of ancient woods at the head of Padleigh Brook tributary valley close to Odd Down, there are scattered copses and small woods throughout the area but notably concentrated around Newton Park and on the ridge line between the Corston Brook and Newton Brook valleys. Much of the small woodland is either recently-planted, young or early-mature, and is actively managed.

There are large numbers of parkland trees associated with the Newton Park Estate and also above Pennsylvania Farm on the western slopes of the Newton Brook.

Newton Brook and its tributary streams are all lined with trees which mark their route through the landscape. There are also some good hedgerow trees scattered through the area.

Newton St. Loe, Englishcombe and Haycombe Cemetery are also all well treed.

EPV1 Lane by Newton Brook



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

Outside of the designed ornamental parkland areas at Newton Park Estate and also in a substantial block of the Newton Brook valley between Claysend and Englishcombe, the rest of the character area is all late medieval enclosure.

Fields in the character area are generally irregular in shape and vary considerably in size, from large through to small. There appears to have been only limited field amalgamation at least since the 1885 OS Somerset Series map. However, a detail from the 1742 map – Bath and Five Miles Around by Thomas Thorpe, shows the majority of fields were regular in shape and smaller in size. Today the larger fields are concentrated on the ridge tops and in areas on shallower slopes, and the smallest fields are on the steepest slopes.

Field boundaries are hedges mostly clipped around arable fields and taller around pasture fields and the smallest fields.

This is a well-managed, mixed farming area with arable dominating over pastoral. There are dairy herds in the area and some sheep.

Newton Park is a grade 2* Registered Historic Park owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and currently under restoration. The fields within the park are a mix of arable and pasture.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

There are two small, compact villages in the character area, Newton St. Loe in the north-west of the area and Englishcombe which lies just within the steep-sided Padleigh Brook tributary valley, extending from the upper southern slopes of the valley down into the valley bottom. These are both Duchy of Cornwall villages with Englishcombe having been in and out of Duchy ownership since the early C15th. There are many listed buildings in these villages and the majority of houses in both villages date from the C17th and C18th and are all freestone or limestone ashlar with pantile or slate roofs. Newton St. Loe has some thatched cottages. St. Peter's Church in Englishcombe is grade 1 listed and dates from the C12th. The Holy Trinity Church in Newton St. Loe is grade 2* listed and dates from the C14th.

Englishcombe also has a grade 2* listed early C14th Tithe Barn built by the monks of Bath Abbey and a mound representing the remains of Culverhay Castle, a medieval motte and bailey and Scheduled Ancient Monument.

There are very few buildings outside the villages. The most significant being Newton Park Mansion; the others include Barrow Castle a C19th "mock castle", Claysend Farm, Haycombe Farm and Pennsylvania Farm with Park farm just over the western border of the area.

Haycombe Cemetery is included within the character area and lies on the edge of the plateau and upper slopes of the Newton Brook Valley.

The busy Pennyquick Road is the largest road in the character area. It cuts through the north-eastern corner of the character area and is a continuation of Whiteway Road which runs along the south-eastern boundary of Bath. Apart from that there is a network of very narrow and mostly sunken lanes in two groupings which do not connect. There is a network of lanes centred around Newton St. Loe and Claysend which coalesce to form two which then lead out to the South-west of the character area. One runs through the bottom of the Newton Brook valley and then past Pennsylvania Farm, the other runs along the ridgeline and past Park Farm. The second network is around Englishcombe, Inglesbatch (just outside the area) and Kilkenny in the south-east of the area. These lanes mostly run between hedge-banks and are well integrated in the landscape.

Public footpaths in the area are focussed around the Newton Park Estate and around Englishcombe with two old greenways connecting into Englishcombe.

3. Heritage

Newton Park is a C18th grade 1 listed mansion surrounded by a grade 2* listed Registered Historic Park which was designed by Capability Brown and later modified by Humphrey Repton. It was laid out on land containing the C14th keep and gatehouse of St. Loe's Castle, a fortified medieval manor house.

Culverhay Castle is a medieval motte and bailey and Scheduled Ancient Monument at Englishcombe.

Coal mines operated around Newton St. Loe and the bottom of Pennyquick from the early C18th to around 1845, although today there is little evidence apart from the occasional crop marks. There was also Fullers Earth working to the south-east of Englishcombe for a period around 1800.

Englishcombe village is on the route of the Wansdyke which is visible in the landscape on either side of the village.

EPV1 Newton Park Lake



Land Ownership

With the exception of the steep valley sides running down into Padleigh Brook valley from the plateau to the south-east of Haycombe Cemetery, the whole of the rest of the character area lies within the Duchy of Cornwall Estate.

Visual Significance

From the highest areas around Haycombe Cemetery and along parts of Pennyquick and the Old Fosse Road on the north-eastern side of the character area there are some exceptional and expansive views right across the character area and beyond to the north-west and south. Looking over the character area the patchwork agricultural landscape is set out below as open interweaving, rolling ridges and valleys, the landform being highlighted by the limited amount of woodland and tree cover within the landscape.

From the narrow ridge line between the Newton and Corston Brooks it is possible to see over into both valleys and there some excellent views looking down over the Newton Park Estate towards the Mansion. There are also views across to the skyline which marks both the edge of Bath and the edge of the plateau. Here trees screen most of the city development apart from where the residential area of

Twerton has extended over the edge of the plateau. Haycombe Cemetery extension is currently visually prominent and a little discordant in the views from the ridge.

From these higher ridge lines and plateau edge the expansive views extend way beyond the character area especially to the south and south-west. Views to the north are limited by the higher landscape of the Cotswolds hills and escarpment.

Within the valleys, the visual experience is enclosed by steep slopes and tree cover. From within Newton Park there are views taking in the lakes in their intimate valley surrounds and also the more sweeping landscape of the wider parkland and parkland trees.

From a few higher locations there are views across to Kelston Park in the River Avon Valley West and Kelston Park character area and further to the Escarpment character area of Dean Hill to Prospect Stile.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

This very rural character area has little settlement and only the quietest network of narrow rural lanes amongst its gentle, farmed landscape. This is a quiet and peaceful area with some beautiful views and a definite sense of tranquillity.

Cultural Associations

- The Newton Park Estate was owned by the Gore-Langton family who played an active part in the political life of Georgian Bath. Joseph Langton built the present mansion house, designed by Stiff Leadbetter, in 1762–3. The grounds were laid out by Capability Brown and later modified by Humphrey Repton, reorganising the original medieval park and old castle grounds to include artificial lakes and cascades. Newton Park is now occupied by Bath Spa University under the ownership of the Duchy of Cornwall.
- Culverhay Castle was a medieval ringwork castle comprising motte and elliptical bailey, it was built by Nigel de Gourney the tenant of Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances and probably dates from the late C11th or early C12th.

- Inglescombe Nursery: In 1890 a specialist nursery business for cut flowers was set up by Walter T. Ware around Haycombe Farm and Barrow Castle at Englishcombe across the Padleigh valley from the main village. It became a major employer for local people, sending cut flowers, chiefly daffodils, roses, tulips and lilies-of-the-valley, away daily as far as London.
- The coming of the trams to Bath in the early C20th with stops out at the Globe, Newton St. Loe brought the countryside around the western edge of Bath to the attentions of ramblers, and Englishcombe with its attractive flower nursery and other historic features became a destination. Englishcombe drew so many visitors then that a tea-garden opened at Blakes Farm sometimes entertaining over 100 visitors although this is long gone and the area no longer attracts many ramblers. The Nurseries themselves closed in the 1960s and the business eventually became the current Hillier's Garden Centre on Whiteway Road.
- The Pennyquick Road on the edge of the character area, running south-east from the Globe Inn was the ancient Frome Road, crossing Pennyquick Bottom and climbing past High Barrow Hill to Rush Hill on Odd Down and on towards Midford. This is the most likely road taken by the Duke of Monmouth in 1685 when he led his army from Keynsham, calling on Bath en route to Norton St Phillip and eventually Sedgemoor.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

This is a very rural landscape within the WHS setting. In the recent past there have been proposals for a new settlement on the edge of Newton St. Loe but this has been resisted by the Council as inappropriate in the setting of the WHS.

There has been some rather discordant intrusion of buildings on the edge of Bath over the skyline at the edge of the plateau on the north-eastern edge of the character area including a substantial area of housing on the western edge of Twerton in the 1980s. Currently this intrusion of development is just about balanced by an otherwise well-treed skyline. Part of the special quality of the City of Bath is its containment visually and physically within the hollow in the hills of the Cotswolds, and the inability to see the city from outside it. This quality has helped to retain the rural character of this distinctive character area right on the edge of Bath. Any further skyline development would be likely to tip the balance away from the desired containment of Bath as well as having an additional damaging effect on the Corston and Newton Brook Valley character area. Any development which breaks the skyline here would be a highly negative force for change.

There are currently no novel agricultural activities such as solar farms or the use of ground covering plastics to force the growth of crops in this very open landscape. However in the past there have been significant areas of glasshouses around Englishcombe which would have been visually discordant in the landscape. This type of agricultural land-use change in such an open landscape would be likely to have a negative impact over a wide visual area without very careful siting.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

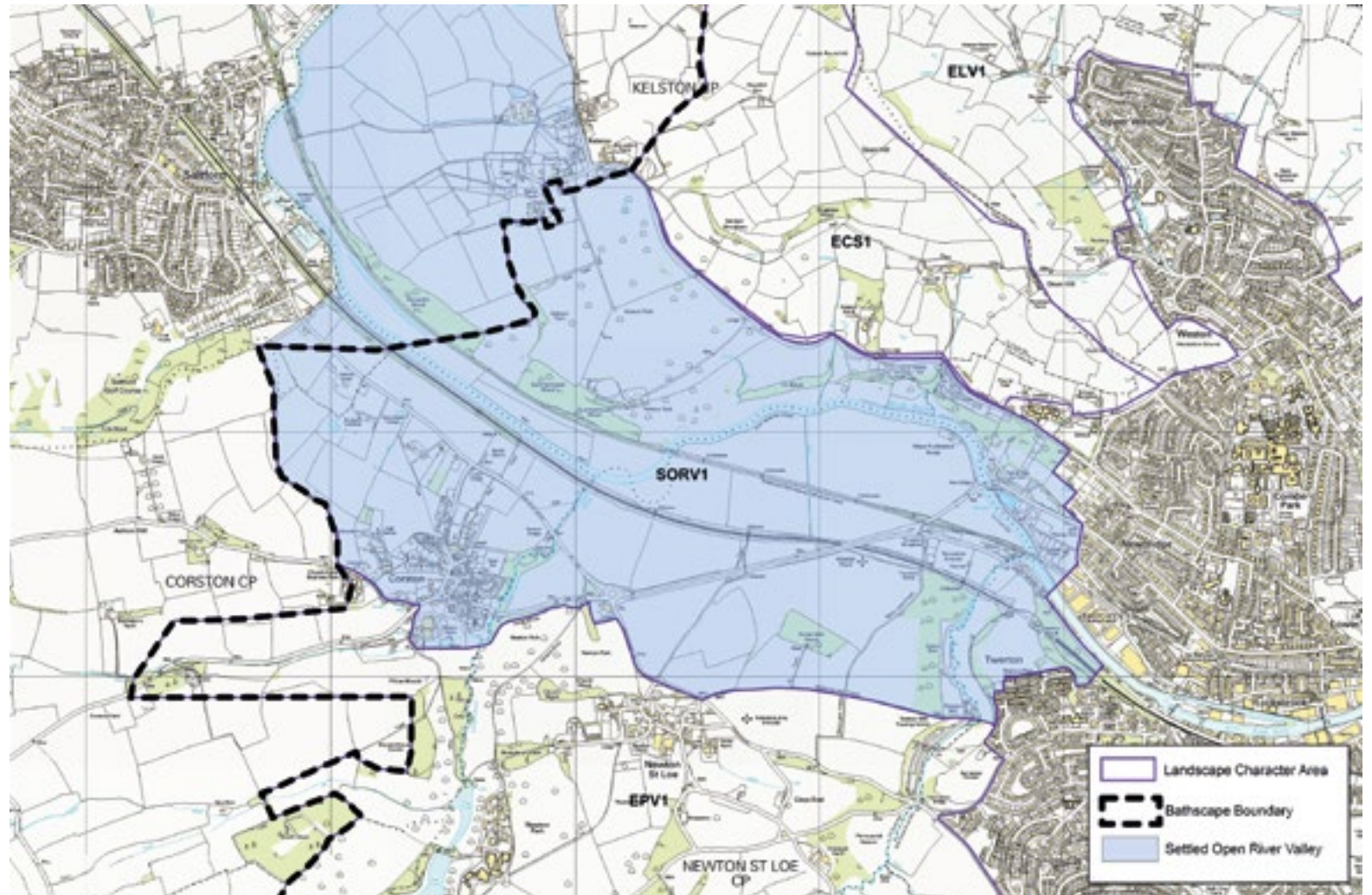
This landscape, its land, hedgerows, woodland, trees and buildings, is in good condition and has a sense of coherence and harmony which is likely to be in large part due to the management by the Duchy Estate.

There are only minor detracting elements such as the extension of Haycombe Cemetery.

2.7

BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE TYPE: SETTLED OPEN RIVER VALLEY

Settled Open River Valley Landscape Type



This area is partly outside the Cotswolds AONB. It is covered by the B&NES Rural Landscapes of Bath & Northeast Somerset: A Landscape Character Assessment – Landscape Character Area no. 14 Avon Valley. Published in 2002 and prepared prior to that, it did not take the Landscape Type and Area approach which was subsequently recommended in guidance. The Avon Valley area has now been briefly reviewed, a Landscape Type categorised and key characteristics are described below.

Key Characteristics

- Open river valley with shallow to moderately sloping, low valley sides which run up to the Cotswolds escarpment in the north giving an overall asymmetrical valley form throughout.
- Settlements of Saltford, Corston, parts of Keynsham and Kelston on valley slopes.
- Largely undeveloped flood plain with tree-lined freely meandering river.

- Largely arable farming on flood plain and pastoral farming on valley slopes with clipped hedgerows predominant in arable areas and overgrown hedgerows predominant in pastoral areas.
- Limited woodland with small copses on valley sides and wooded river cliff below Kelston.
- Open views across and along valley limited by valley sides and Cotswolds hills.
- Important transport corridor with A4 and GWR main line railway as well as Bristol – Bath Cycle Path on disused railway line.
- Historic parkland at Kelston Park.

Bathscape Landscape Character Areas

SORV1: River Avon Valley West and Kelston Park

2.7.1 SORV1: RIVER AVON VALLEY WEST AND KELSTON PARK

Location and Boundaries

This character area lies on the west side of Bath and extends westwards to the Bathscape Boundary. It forms part of a more extensive B&NES Landscape Character area. Adjacent to the north is the Dean Hill to prospect Stile character area and to the south is the Corston and Newton Brook Valleys character area.

Summary Landscape Character

- This is a largely open valley landscape with the River Avon leaving the constraints of a narrow, wooded valley on the edge of the city and suddenly entering an area of wide flood plain. The river curves around the northern edge of the flood plain, up against the river cliff, before straightening out through a more narrow and enclosed section at the western end of the character area. To the north the valley butts up against the Cotswolds escarpment giving the appearance of high northern valley sides whereas to the south the valley sides are lower, especially in the section of slope topped by Seven Acre Wood. This allows strong visual links with the

countryside to the south when viewed from the northern valley sides and reinforces the open character overall.

- On the north side of the valley the steep, wooded river cliff with Kelston Park Mansion looking out from the top of the cliff over the valley, is a key focus to the character area and an important landmark in views both from the valley floor and the valley sides. The Mansion is flood-lit at night,

emphasising its dominant presence looking over the valley.

- The parkland setting to the Mansion with its many parkland trees laid out on the gently sloping area of land above the river cliff, has a distinctive character of its own, slightly separate from the valley floor below.

- The southern valley side is much lower than the northern valley side appears to be and divides into two sections with distinctive characters of their own. To the West of Corston village the valley side is higher and has a well treed appearance; to the east the valley side is considerably lower and appears as a separate rounded hill. It has sweeping, open, arable farmed slopes up to the distinctive Seven Acre Wood.

SORV1 View over Kelston Park to Avon Valley



“Kelston Manor was designed by John Wood the Younger in collaboration with Capability Brown who landscaped the park grounds creating a prominent vista across the Avon Valley.”

170 2.7 Settled Open River Valley

SORV1 River Avon Valley West and Kelston Park

- The wide valley flood plain at the eastern end of the character area with its arable land-use, its one field oak tree and tantalising glimpse of the river beside the Boathouse pub, draws the eye when driving along the A4 and over Newbridge Bridge.
- There is an important transport corridor along the flood plain with the busy A4 dual carriageway, GWR main line railway and disused railway route carrying the Bristol-Bath Cycle Path. The largely well-treed embankments carrying these routes break up the flood plain into sections and visually isolate the tree-lined river itself which runs along the northern edge of the flood plain.
- Playing Fields predominate along the western, narrower flood plain between the railway and the A4. At the narrow eastern end of the character area, Newbridge Park & Ride, a caravan park and small marina are hidden in trees.
- The well treed Corston village climbs up the hill to the west of the Corston Brook, straddling the A39 Wells Road, and then spreads out over a small section of the higher part of the southern side of the River Avon Valley above the Globe Inn. It is glimpsed through trees in views from the north.
- Ecological interest is limited to the River Cliffs and ancient woodland, and to the river corridor, with a geological SSSI by the slip road from the A4 to Newbridge Bridge.
- The winding, tree-lined river is a busy recreational area with boating on the river, particularly rowing and the popular River Avon Trail walking route. The river also has permanent moorings for a few narrow boats and the Boathouse Pub is right on the river edge beside Newbridge Bridge. The river abounds with wildlife and in summer there are large numbers of dragonflies and butterflies, and birds such as swifts, swallows and house martins gather to feed on the insect life.
- There is a strong sense of tranquillity on the valley floor close to the river and away from the noisy A4.
- The distinctive and historically interesting Globe Inn sits beside the Globe roundabout at the junction of the A4 with the A39 and the Pennyquick Road towards Newton St. Loe and across to Odd Down.
- Past history of coal mining around The Globe Inn was a source of fascination in the Georgian period. Today its presence can only be hinted at from darker areas of soil when the fields are ploughed.

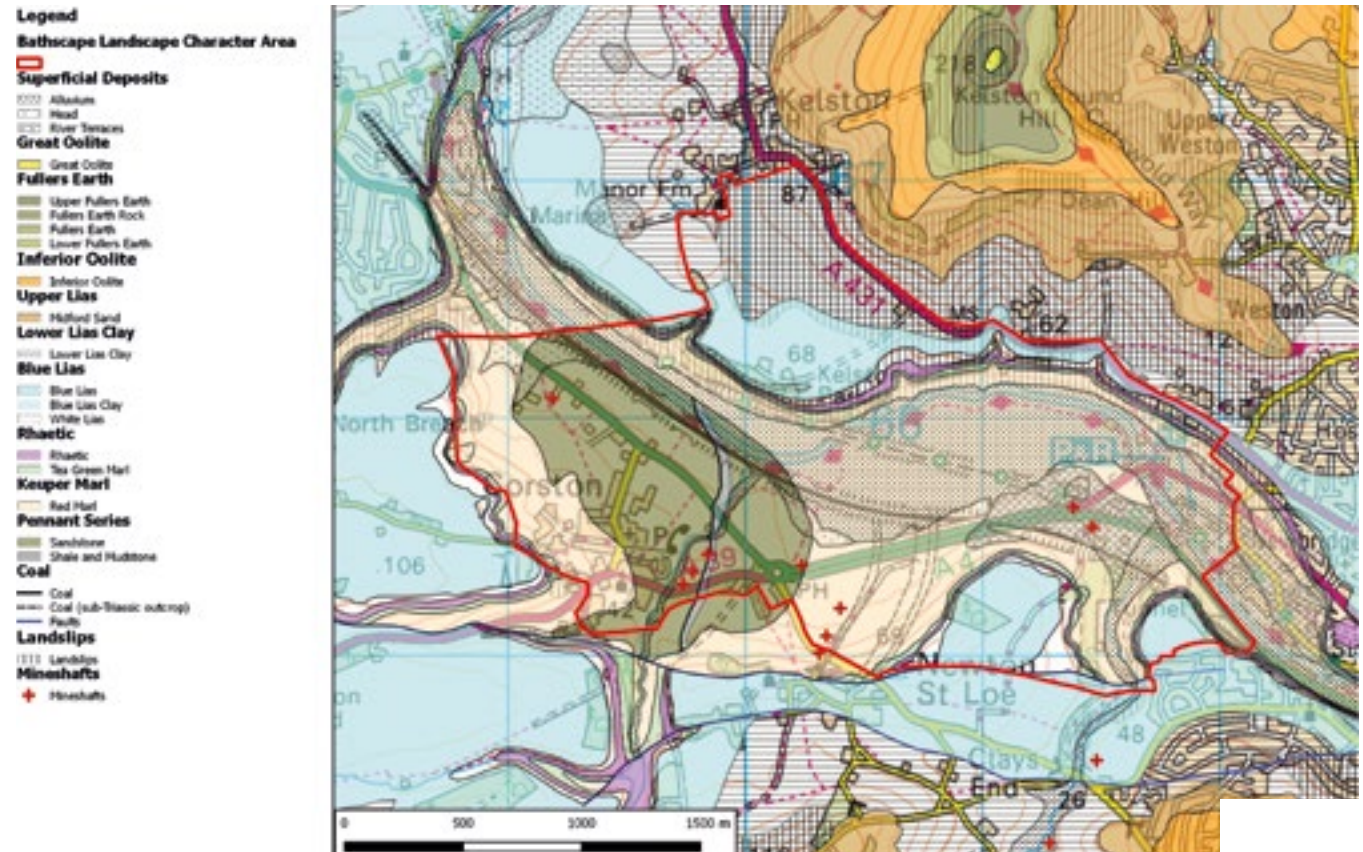
Physical Influences

1. Geology, Hydrology and Landform

This is an open river valley. The flood plain is widest in the eastern half and narrower in the west. To the north is a steep river cliff with gently sloping land above that to the north-west at around 60m but rising to 70m at the character area boundary. The character area boundary marks the boundary between the valley side and Cotswolds Escarpment. With the straight transition into the steep escarpment slope, the overall appearance of the northern valley side is that it is much higher than the southern side.

The relatively low valley side to the south is completely cut through by the Corston and Newton Brooks creating two distinct sections of slope. The slope to the west of Corston rises steeply to 95m and then continues more gently on up to 110m, to the south of the character area. The slope with Seven Acre Wood on top is considerably lower at 70m as is Carrs Wood although the land to the south of that continues to rise as a continuation of the Cotswolds dip slope.

SORV1 River Avon Valley West & Kelston Park – Geology



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The River Avon flows westwards in one large, gently curving meander close to the northern edge of the valley floor beside the river cliff. Corston Brook runs along the eastern edge of Corston to join the River Avon just to the north; and Newton Brook joins the river just to the west of Carrs Wood by the disused railway bridge over the river.

The Newton Brook where it joins the River Avon, flows through a narrow, steep-sided and well-treed valley.

The man-made embankments of the two railway lines cutting across the valley floor add linear landform features to the otherwise flat valley floor.

The geology here shows a rapid transition from the rocks of the Jurassic period found throughout that area of Bathscape within the Cotswolds Hills, to rocks of the earlier Triassic period and even the much earlier Carboniferous period.

North of the River Avon is an area of higher land and steep river cliff where the valley abuts with the Cotswolds escarpment to the north. The gently sloping higher land above the river cliff is underlain by Lower Lias clay and Blue Lias limestone with a narrow band of White Lias limestone. The river cliff is made up of narrow bands of shales and marls of the Triassic period. There is a similar pattern on the bulge of higher land to the north-east of Newton St. Loe on the opposite side of the valley floor, and at Carrs Wood, with Lias Limestone of the Jurassic on top and bands of Triassic shale and marls on the slopes.

The majority of the valley floor and southern valley sides are Keuper Marl of the Triassic period with an intriguing and substantial area of much older Pennant Sandstone of the Carboniferous period in the central part of the valley floor and lower slopes including much of the village of Corston.

The whole of the valley floor has superficial alluvial deposits.

“This is a largely open valley landscape with the River Avon leaving the constraints of a narrow, wooded valley on the edge of the city and suddenly entering an area of wide flood plain.”

2. Land Cover: Biodiversity

The vast majority of ecological interest is on the steep slopes and river cliff to the north of the river and the river corridor itself. The whole of the slopes are designated SNCIs and form a grassland and woodland habitat complex. There is unimproved calcareous and neutral grassland and scrub interspersed with lowland mixed deciduous woodland with the notable Tennant's, Summerhouse and Kelston Park Woods being ancient woodland.

The only other SNCI designated area is the Carrs Wood LNR to the south of the river right at the far eastern end of the character area and comprising woodland, scrub and semi-improved grassland.

At the time of the field survey for this area in July 2017, a large combined flock of swifts, swallows and house martins was seen feeding over the river and a skylark was seen over one of the arable fields, flying up and then plunging down amongst the crop.

There is a geological SSSI on either side of the A4 at the eastern end of the character area.

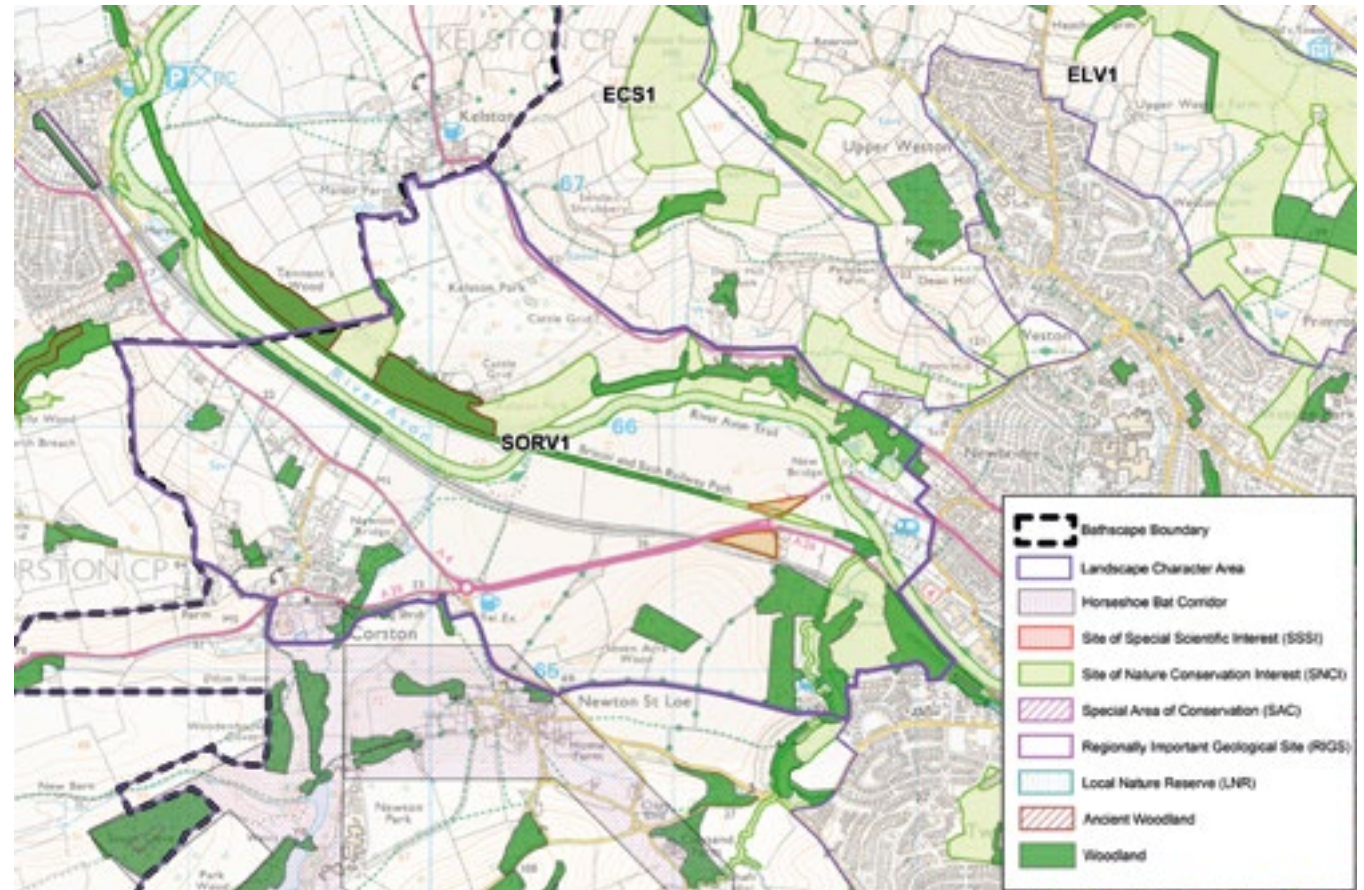
The ancient woodlands on the river cliff are the largest areas of woodland with additional narrow wooded belts east of these on the steep slopes. South of the river there is deciduous woodland on

steep slopes at Carrs Wood and the adjacent lower section of the Newton Brook Valley including a substantial area of young woodland planting on the western side of the Newton Brook valley. Isolated at the top of the central area of southern valley side is Seven Acre Wood with some significant areas of recent woodland planting around it. Finally there are some small copse areas and tree belts scattered on the valley side north-west of Corston and including the Globe Roundabout area, and the Corston Brook runs through a narrow and wooded valley feature.

The River Avon and the Bristol-Bath Railway Path are both thickly lined with trees and the village of Corston has a well-treed character with many properties set in semi-wooded gardens. Newbridge Park and Ride is at the north eastern end of the character area and has significant new tree planting and mature hedgerows with trees, around and within it. The caravan park opposite the park & ride is also well-treed.

There are large numbers of parkland trees associated with Kelston Park but elsewhere there are few individual trees although there is one notable field oak in the flood plain field adjacent to Newbridge Bridge. There are also trees scattered along the A4.

SORV1 River Avon Valley West & Kelston Park – Biodiversity



Human Influences

1. Land Use and Enclosure

The river floodplain was enclosed in the medieval period or even earlier and the southern valley slopes were generally late medieval enclosure. There has been considerable field amalgamation on the larger areas of floodplain.

Fields in the character area are generally irregular in shape and large or medium to large on the shallower slopes and wider floodplain area, and rectangular/regular and small to medium on the steeper areas of valley side and narrower areas of floodplain. Field boundaries are hedges, mostly clipped around arable fields and taller around pasture fields and the smallest fields.

The larger areas of floodplain and shallower slopes of the southern valley side are arable and the narrower area of floodplain and steeper valleys sides are mostly permanent pasture or seeded leys with a little arable.

Kelston Park is a grade 2* Registered Historic Park around Kelston Park Mansion and extending down onto the river cliff below to include the ancient woodland and pasture areas. The fields within main part of the park are a mix of arable and cattle-grazed pasture.

2. Settlement and Infrastructure

The only settlement in the character area is the small, compact village of Corston on the southern slopes of the Avon valley running down to the Globe roundabout on the A4 and including a lower area in the Corston Brook valley. The village lies either side of the A39 with the largest part being on the valley slopes north of the road. Corston can be dated back to Saxon times and its church, All Saints, was largely built in the C13th. Buildings in Corston range widely in age from around the mid C17th to C20th.

Beyond the village north-westwards on the valleys side are a few detached properties in large gardens and along the northern boundary of the character area at the top of the steep valley sides are a few C18th and more modern detached properties.

Kelston Park Mansion is grade 2* listed and situated on the edge of the area of higher land on the north side of the valley it has a commanding position overlooking the valley.

There are two pubs in the area, the 18th Globe beside the Globe roundabout and the modern Boathouse below Newbridge Bridge on the northern bank of the river.

There are a few permanent narrow-boat moorings along the river close to the Boathouse pub.

In the narrower western part of the floodplain between the railway and the A4 are a number of playing fields. In the far eastern part of the character area in a very narrow, well treed section of the valley, the Newbridge Park and Ride, a caravan park and a small marina are all distinctive land-uses which are well concealed by trees.

The A4 runs east to west through the area at the base of the southern valley side. From Bath it crosses over the river at Newbridge Bridge.

SORV1 Train on Valley Floor



At the Globe roundabout beside the Globe pub, the A39 and Pennyquick road join the A4 from the south. The only other road in the area is a lane running from the A4 on the north-western outskirts of Corston which runs through the village and then down to the A39.

The GWR main-line railway runs east to west along the valley floor on an embankment.

There are a number of public footpaths running up the valleys sides in and around Corston, two accessible tracks on the slopes around Seven Acre Wood, and some

short footpath routes up the steep valley side from Newbridge Park and Ride to the A431. However the most important routes are the popular and well-used River Avon Trail along the southern bank of the river, and also the Bristol-Bath Cycle Path.

There is an actively used stretch of the River Avon here. There is activity from passing narrow-boats and other pleasure boats and also rowing, with the Salford Rowing Club being close by downstream to the west.

3. Heritage

Kelston Park is an C18th grade 2* listed mansion surrounded by a grade 2* listed Registered Historic Park which was designed by Capability Brown.

There is evidence of a 3rd century Roman villa on a site close to Newton St. Loe which was discovered in 1837 during construction of the Bristol-Bath railway. Two mosaics were removed, one of which, known as the Orpheus Mosaic was moved to Keynsham Railway Station where it remained until 1851. It is now in Bristol Museum.

Coal mines operated around Newton St. Loe and the bottom of Pennyquick from the early C18th to around 1845, although today there is little evidence apart from the occasional crop marks.

New Bridge, the road bridge at Newbridge is a grade 2* listed structure built originally in 1727 probably as part of the improvements to the River Avon navigation. The existing bridge dates to the late C18th.

SORV1 Rowers downstream of Newbridge Bridge



SORV1 View to Kelston Park Mansion



Land Ownership

All of the land south of the river apart from the village of Corston and the individual properties along the A4, are part of the Duchy of Cornwall Estate.

Visual Significance

As with all valley landscapes, the visual experience varies significantly depending on whether the viewer is on the over-looking valley slopes or down on the valley floor.

From the A431, Upper Bristol Road which runs along the northern boundary of the character area and in particular from the wide entrance to Kelston Park and the properties along the road, there are extensive panoramic views which extend out in stages, firstly looking over Kelston Park to the mansion and then beyond down onto the valley floor, next to the valley slopes on the southern side topped by Seven Acre wood, and finally beyond over the Corston and Newton Brook character area to the wider countryside in the south. The wider countryside views are enabled due to the lower and more open nature of the central part of the southern valley slopes.

Kelston Park Mansion was built in a commanding position right on the edge of higher, gently sloping ground to the north of the river cliff, to take advantage of the views over-looking the river valley and the countryside beyond, and of course to be seen from all around.

From the southern slope around Corston there are views northwards across to Kelston Park and the Cotswolds escarpment although views down onto the valley floor are more limited by tree cover on the southern valley sides. From tracks by Seven Acre Wood are more open views over the valley floor and across to Kelston Park and the Cotswolds escarpment.

Driving along the A4 from Saltford and entering the character area there are prominent views ahead to the distinctive sweeping valley side slopes up to Seven Acre Wood.

From down on the valley floor, views are contained within the valley, with relatively short views across the valley which tend to be limited by the embankments and trees of the railways or the A4, and slightly longer views east and west along the valley particularly to the west, with views over to Corston and the valley sides between Corston and Saltford. There are some excellent views from the valley floor to the busy Newbridge Bridge and also excellent views over the wide flood plain from the A4 and slip road to Newbridge Bridge.

Walking along the River Avon Trail the visual experience is radically different depending on whether the walker is looking across the wide, open arable fields to the south, or looking over the more intimate and enclosed, tree-lined river with its steep, wooded river cliff backdrop and moored narrow boats.

There are visual links to the Cotswolds escarpment Dean Hill and Prospect Stile character area to the north and to the Corston and Newton Brook Valleys character area to the south.

Perceptual and Cultural Associations

Tranquillity

Once away from the area around the A4 which is very noisy, busy and dirty, there is a remarkable sense of remoteness and tranquillity especially down by the river. The Railway embankments act as visual as well as noise buffers between the river and the A4.

Cultural Associations

- Kelston Manor and Park: The park estate at Kelston had belonged to the Harrington family since Elizabethan times; however in 1767 the estate passed to Sir Caesar Hawkins, Surgeon to George III, who demolished the Jacobean manor house and commissioned the present mansion. The mansion was designed by John Wood the Younger in collaboration with Capability Brown who landscaped the park grounds creating a prominent vista across the Avon Valley.
- By the early C18th pits supplying coal to Bath were already being worked in Corston by a member of the Harrington family of Kelston Park, and by the 1730s others had been sunk in and around Newton St. Loe on and close to the river valley floor. John Wood gives a description of the winding-houses in the meadows adjoining the

Globe Inn which would have been an object for curiosity for visitors passing along the Bristol Road. By the 1780s pumping-engine houses also began to appear, and new shafts were in operation by the Cross Post turnpike house near Newbridge. By 1845 the pits had all closed, the coal being exhausted. It is difficult to imagine this noisy, dirty, industrial past today – or that it should have been an object of curiosity.

- The Lower Bristol Road or Keynsham Road, now part of the A4 was a turnpike road in the C18th. At the Globe it was possible to turn off to view Newton Park and Mansion, newly landscaped by Capability Brown in 1761. The Globe Inn was a notable landmark, surrounded (until the mid-C19th) by the Newton Coal Pits and after which, one was named.

Landscape Evaluation

1. Forces for Change

The flood zone status of the River Avon flood plain precludes any significant development on the valley floor. In the recent past there have been proposals for a new settlement on the edge of Newton St. Loe but this has been resisted by the Council as inappropriate in the setting of the WHS.

The most likely force for change which will have a very negative impact on the landscape character of the valley, especially the valley floor and views over it is the forth-coming but currently delayed, electrification of the GWR main-line railway.

There are already playing fields and some small associated buildings on the narrower flood plain between the A4 and the railway. Any extension of playing fields and their associated lighting and buildings, into the wider area of flood plain would be a negative force for change bringing an urban fringe character to this pocket of remarkably rural landscape immediately adjacent to the City.

The Kelston Park mansion and parkland has changed hands a number of times in recent years which may represent a cause for concern in terms of management of the historic park.

In the 1990's the arable use of the parkland was restored back to pasture and new parkland trees were planted under a Countryside Stewardship agreement. However it is noted that the fields are now in arable use again giving a rather discordant character to the parkland.

During the 1970s there was interest in creating a possible Saltford bypass which was never pursued. In the event that a bypass was considered the most likely route would bring it down the southern valley slopes between Saltford and Corston to join the A4. This would have a significant impact on the character of the river valley and on views from the Cotswolds escarpment and Kelston Park.

2. Landscape Condition and Detracting Elements

This landscape, its land, hedgerows, woodland, trees and buildings, is in good condition generally and has a sense of coherence and harmony which is likely to be in large part due to the management by the Duchy Estate and the presence of the Kelston Park Mansion and its parkland setting. There is slight cause for concern in relation to the management of the Kelston Park estate parkland (see above), especially with successive changes in ownership in recent years.

The only real detractor currently is the busy A4 dual carriageway section, its noise and fumes.



03 REFERENCES

REFERENCES

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04 APPENDICES

Appendix 1
Methodology

Appendix 2
Review of Existing
Character Area Reports

Appendix 3
Survey Form

Appendix 4
Suggestions Arising for
Bathscape Project Areas

APPENDIX 1

METHODOLOGY

Background

The Methodology for the Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) has been informed by the two preliminary review reports (See Appendix 2):

Report 1: Existing Landscape Character Assessments
- Comparisons

Report 2: Principal Issues to be addressed in a new Landscape Character Assessment for Bathscape

These reports showed that the new assessment should be based on the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Landscape Character Assessment 2004 and its methodology, updating it where necessary to take account of the smaller Bathscape geographical area and its specific requirements and focus.

The Bathscape LCA has followed the guidance set out in “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment 2014” published by Natural England. This guidance builds on the original 2002 guidance which was used to prepare the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment.

The Bathscape LCA is a character area focussed assessment in contrast to the landscape type focus of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment, reflecting the more detailed and local scale of the Bathscape assessment.

The character assessment is of the landscapes around Bath and does not cover the urban area of the City of Bath which is beyond the scope of this assessment.

Geographic Extent

The character assessment boundary is the Bathscape project area which extends out of Bath to the boundary of the City of Bath World Heritage Site (WHS) Setting. In order to assess the landscape character of the land on the western edge of Bath which is not within the AONB, the desk study has extended to a rapid review of the Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Landscape Character Area no. 6 Hinton Blewett and Newton St. Loe Plateau Lands.

Scale of Assessment

The scale of assessment is in a range from 1:75000 for the Bathscape area as a whole to 1:10000–1:25000 for assessment of individual areas.

To be informative for the Bathscape projects, the level of detail in relation to character area descriptions is greater than that currently provided in the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment. This has led to a focus on the character areas themselves rather than landscape types which is the case in the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment.

Desk Study and Baseline Review

Existing Character Assessments

Extensive use has been made of the assessments listed in reports no. 1 and 2 (Appendix 2). This information has been brought up to date through the use of current GIS data and documentary research for information on natural factors and cultural/social factors.

An initial GIS overview was carried out of the Bathscape area as a whole with the Cotswolds landscape types and areas overlaid. This was then expanded to look in more detail at each existing Cotswolds landscape type and individual area, critically examining existing designations, boundaries and descriptions in relation to the more detailed Bathscape area and to the Bathscape project focus. Where necessary revised typology and area changes were made and draft characterisation maps and descriptions prepared.

Having reviewed and revised the Bathscape areas covered by the Cotswolds AONB LCA, the areas not part of the AONB were assessed, making extensive use of GIS data sets and where necessary looking at a wider area than Bathscape to enable an accurate assessment of landscape typology in particular. This applied

particularly to land to the west of Bath in the Avon valley (Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment April 2003 Character area 14 Avon Valley) and around Newton St Loe and Englishcombe previously included as part of Character Area 6 Hinton Blewett and Newton St Loe Plateau Lands. The Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment April 2003 was carried out prior to the publication of the 2002 character assessment guidance and did not make use of the landscape type and area approach.

Field Survey and Review of Draft Landscape Types and Areas

Field Survey

The field survey was carried out between May and early July of 2017. An assessment form (sample provided in Appendix 3) was devised and tested during the assessment of the first character area with subsequent modifications made.

For each character area, photographic viewpoints were determined during the desk study and then refined after an initial drive through. For the first seven areas, assessment forms were completed at each viewpoint location. However it became clear that there was insufficient time available to complete the remaining area assessments using this method. Subsequent character areas were assessed by making at least one thorough drive through, utilizing photographic viewpoints as before but completing one overall assessment form on the basis of notes made at each viewpoint. This enabled a much quicker and equally accurate assessment process.

Review of Draft Landscape Types and Areas

On completion of the field survey, landscape type and character area boundaries were reviewed and the draft character area descriptions reviewed and written up.

APPENDIX 2

REVIEW OF EXISTING CHARACTER AREA REPORTS
USED TO INFORM THE BATHSCAPE LANDSCAPE
CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Report 1: Existing Character Assessment Comparisons for Bathscape Area

1. Existing Assessments

- Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment: 2003 (desk and field study 1999–2000)
- Wiltshire County Council Landscape Character Assessment: 2005
- South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment: 2005 and Revised 2014
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment: 2004
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines: 2016
- Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal: 2005
- City of Bath World Heritage Site Setting SPD: 2013 (not a landscape character assessment but largely character focussed and lies at the heart of the Bathscape project)

Notes for Bathscape:

1. Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Appraisal (B&NES LCA) was largely completed before the publication of the Countryside Agency’s Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland 2002. The draft of this publication was available and guided the assessment.

All the other character assessments used the guidelines as the basis for assessment with the exception of the Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal where the guidelines contributed in part to the methodology and City of Bath World Heritage Site Setting SPD which is not a character assessment.

2. With the exception of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines 2016 and South Gloucestershire’s revised landscape character assessment in 2014, all the other assessments are now at least 12 years old. The B&NES LCA is 14 years old with much of the research undertaken for it being around 18 years old. There is a pressing need for an up to date assessment for the Bathscape area and to inform the purposes of the Bathscape Project.

2. Purpose of Assessments

• Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment (B&NES LCA)

Set out generally in introduction, the aims are broadly to guide planning policy and aid in determining planning applications. It is also to be of use to the community as a whole in guiding the activities that impact on the landscape.

• Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

The main purpose is to document current status of the Wiltshire landscape, furthering the understanding of the landscape resource available in the area and giving an indication of areas in need of enhancement and of conservation. This will enable better informed decisions to be made on the future management of the landscape and provide an objective basis for developing policies and enhancement and restoration projects.

• **South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment**

The principal aims of original and revised assessment are to inform planning policy and aid in deciding planning applications. The revised assessment provides a statement of existing character of the landscapes in South Gloucestershire and their distinctive attributes and features. It assesses present condition, recent and potential future change including land use/management and built development. It assesses the sensitivity of the landscape to future change.

• **Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment**

Aims to provide a detailed understanding of the Cotswolds landscapes, the forces shaping them in the past and now in order to help direct future management. The main objectives are summarised as follows:

- To provide an assessment of the character, distinctiveness and qualities of the AONB and to identify and describe landscape character Types and areas

- To summarise key characteristics associated with each type to inform the principles in respect of landscape change and guidelines
- To promote awareness of landscape character in the AONB, and the importance of landscape conservation, enhancement and restoration
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

Aims to help manage change in a sustainable and positive way.

Objectives:

- To identify forces for change impacting on each of the 19 landscape character types and considers the implications of these changes on landscape character, with particular reference to identified key characteristics
- To develop broad landscape strategies and guidelines to inform the decision making process and help to manage change in a sustainable and positive way

- To provide a framework within which the Cotswolds Conservation Board and other stakeholders can review and add to the landscape strategy and guidelines, and identify opportunities for their involvement in long term delivery and strategy.

Expected uses:

- Planning – policy; studies of development potential; Development management – siting, scale and design etc; input to EAs; framework and context for production of more local LCAs and village design statements
- Landscape conservation, management and enhancement – basis for preparation of landscape management strategies; helping guide landscape change positively and sustainably; informing the targeting of resources for land management and agri-environment schemes and evaluating effectiveness of funding.
- **Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal**
The Bath city-wide character appraisal reviews:
 - The historical development of Bath

- Key elements that contribute to Bath's character
- Variations across the area of the city and its immediate environs
- and provides a summary of the issues that affect Bath's character.

The aims and objectives of the Bath city-wide character appraisal are to:

- Identify character
- Inform decisions

By identifying key elements of character and highlighting variations across the city this document will help to retain, conserve, maintain and enhance Bath's character and quality through the development control process and by informing other projects such as public realm enhancements.

Notes for Bathscape:

All the assessments have a principal aim to document and describe landscape character and then to use the assessment to guide planning policy and development management. Additional aims and objectives are related to the specific assessments.

3. Methodologies

- As stated above, all the assessments follow the guidance in the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland 2002 (Draft document used for B&NES LCA). Overall a similar process is followed for all assessments although there is a wide variation in the level of attention paid to evaluation/judgements made about landscapes, to changing landscapes, landscape strategy etc (see notes below).
- For Wiltshire and the Cotswolds AONB a scale of 1:50,000 was used to determine boundaries. No information was found for Bath & North-East Somerset or South Gloucestershire with regard to scale, being district level assessments these are likely to have used 1:25000 or similar.
- All assessments except the B&NES LCA and the Bath City-wide Character Appraisal, make use of the draft National Typology for England as a basis for deriving landscape character types and character areas for their areas. South Gloucestershire's original assessment pre-dated the national typology and a typology was specifically developed for the district.

- For Wiltshire and the Cotswolds AONB the assessments are typology-based with most of the detail of the assessments described for landscape types and a short written description provided for each area.
- For South Gloucestershire the typology aids in the derivation of landscape character areas and most of the detail of assessment is character area-based.
- For Bath & North-East Somerset both the B&NES LCA and the Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal area entirely character area-based but use very different methodologies making comparison difficult.
- None of the existing character assessments look in any detail, if at all, at the cultural associations associated with character and which form one of the Five key principles for Landscape Assessment set out in the Revised version of "An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment" 2014.

Notes for Bathscape:

1. There is now a revised version of the 2002 Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland: An approach to Landscape Character Assessment: 2014, Natural England. A new Landscape Character Assessment for Bathscape would follow this updated guidance.
2. Given the focus of the Bathscape project on re-connecting people with landscape it will be important to look much more fully at the area of cultural perceptions – the relationship between people and landscape and in particular their perceptions and experience of landscape. This is the third key principle for Landscape Assessment set out in the Revised version of "An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment" 2014.
3. There will be a need to go beyond the basic landscape character assessment to look at evaluation and judgements about landscape, inherent landscape sensitivity and landscape change.

The following table 1 shows the various different approaches taken in the different assessments.

Table 1: Bathscape Existing Landscape Character Assessments Comparison: Dealing with Evaluation/judgements/landscape change etc

RURAL LANDSCAPES OF B&NES: A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT	WILTSHIRE COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (2014)	COTSWOLDS AONB LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (2004); LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES (2016)	BATH CITY-WIDE CHARACTER APPRAISAL
<p>For each area there is a short paragraph on landscape change and condition.</p> <p>There is no strategy for dealing with landscape change.</p> <p>There is no assessment of inherent sensitivity.</p>	<p>This has the most thorough landscape evaluation; an overall strategy principle set out for landscape types which is derived from both landscape condition and its strength of character; and broad management objectives.</p> <p>There is a detailed methodology developed for evaluation of landscape character Types. The following headings are used in evaluation assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive landscape features of significance • Forces for change • Condition • Strength of Character • Inherent Landscape Sensitivity. 	<p>The 2014 revision adds statements on the changing landscape for each character area plus a simple landscape strategy tailored to each character area.</p> <p>Includes assessment of inherent landscape sensitivity.</p>	<p>The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines are typology based. For each landscape type they include a general section with key characteristics, summary description and inherent sensitivity and then a detailed table listing forces for change with potential landscape implications, outline landscape strategy and guidelines, potential indicators for monitoring landscape change and potential opportunities for stakeholder involvement.</p>	<p>Straightforward character description, no evaluation.</p>

4. City of Bath World Heritage Site SPD and Bath World Heritage Site Attributes

The World Heritage Site Setting is central to the Bathscape Project and the setting boundary forms the boundary to the Bathscape Project Area.

The World Heritage Site and its setting is a living and evolving environment whose long term protection and appreciation relies on changes and decisions about the management being informed by an understanding of the significance of the World Heritage Site and its setting. The City of Bath World Heritage Site Setting Supplementary Planning Document provides this understanding as summarised below.

- It supports policies for the protection of the World Heritage Site including recognising that changes in the Site itself and in the Site's setting can have either a positive, neutral or negative effect.
- It seeks to facilitate appropriate management in support of the World Heritage Site Management Plan through guidance to ensure the characteristics that are significant are protected, conserved and enhanced.

- It identifies aspects of significance as defined in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.
- It provides understanding of the implications of any proposed changes and provides a framework for assessing effects using available methodologies and best practice.

It is designed to be used by developers, statutory undertakers and their advisors so that the issues can be fully taken into account when considering the siting and design of new development as well as to be used by policy and development management planners when considering development opportunities and development proposals.

The Supplementary Planning Document describes the important characteristics of the World Heritage Site setting in chapter 5. In summary these include:

- The distinctive character provided by the topography, the townscape and land-use including the green undeveloped farmland, green spaces, and trees and woodland, landscape features and the qualities such as tranquillity which characterise the surroundings of the Site.

- The views afforded within the setting, from the city to the green hillsides, woodland, farmland and open spaces and conversely the opportunities provided by the surroundings to view the city in the context of the setting. Typically views into the city are few which reflects the compact form of the city which appears to be contained within a hollow and is surrounded by hills.
- The historical associations with the city from the key Roman and Georgian periods. These include archaeological sites such as Roman villas, historic buildings such as Kelston Manor and Bailbrook House, historical sites, walks and rides appreciated in Georgian times through to the present day including opportunities for the enjoyment of the natural landscape and activities and features within the landscape including the interpretation and appreciation of the 'picturesque' qualities of the landscape.

As well as:

- Routes into and out of the city and the quality and character of their environs and views to and from them.
- The River Avon, the Kennet and Avon Canal and surviving evidence of the Somerset Coal Canal and the quality and character of them and their environs and the views to and from them.

Attributes

Unesco requires that key characteristics which convey or express the Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS) are identified for all World Heritage Sites. These have been identified for the City of Bath WHS and those relevant to the setting of Bath are set out below:

Headline Attribute: The Green Setting of the City in a Hollow in the Hills.

Attributes:

- no. 42 – The compact and sustainable form of the city contained within a hollow in the hills.
- no. 43 – The distinct pattern of settlements, Georgian houses and villas in the setting of the site, reflecting the layout and function of the Georgian city.
- no. 44 – Green, undeveloped hillsides within and surrounding the city.
- no. 45 – Trees, tree belts and woodlands, predominantly on the skyline, lining the river and canal and within parkland and gardens.
- no. 46 – Open agricultural landscape around the city edges.
- no. 47 – Fingers of green countryside which stretch right into the city.
- no. 48 – Oolitic limestone mines, quarries, outcrops and historic features including Ralph Allen's tramway, inclines and structures used to exploit the stone from which the city was constructed.

Notes for Bathscape:

1. A review of the various Landscape Character Assessments covering the Bathscape Area shows that there is a mismatch between them and the key WHS Setting characteristics and relevant attributes. There are strong landscape characteristics described for the WHS Setting which are clearly Bath "centric" and which show the strong interrelationship between the setting character and the City of Bath. However none of the numerous landscape type and area descriptions in the various assessments give any real hint of the strong and coherent landscape character which is so central to the setting of Bath and to the WHS itself.

Table 2: Bathscape – Existing Character Assessment Comparison between existing County/ District wide LCAs and the Cotswolds AONB LCA focussing on Landscape Areas and Types

EXISTING COUNTY/ DISTRICT WIDE LCAS	EXISTING LANDSCAPE TYPES	EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS	COTSWOLDS AONB LCA	
			TYPES	CHARACTER AREAS
B&NES	None	Area 6: Hinton Blewett and Newton-st-Loe Plateau Lands	None	None
		Area 12: Cam and Wellow Brook Valley	4: Enclosed Limestone Valley	4a: Cam and Wellow Brook Valleys
		Area 14: Avon Valley	Majority not covered (19: Un-wooded Vale)	Majority not covered (19a: Avon Valley)
		Area 16: Cotswold Plateaux and Valleys	2: Escarpment	2a: Bath to Beech Farm
			4: Enclosed Limestone Valleys	4c: Lam Brook & St. Catherine's Brook Valleys
				4d: Lower By Brook Valley
				4e: Perrymead Slopes
			9: High Wold Dip Slope	9a: Sulis Manor Plateau
			9b: Bathampton & Claverton Down	
			9c: Lansdown	
	9d: Cotswold High Wold Dip Slope			
Area 17: Hinton Charterhouse and Baggeridge Plateau	13: Low Limestone Plateau	13b: Hinton Charterhouse Plateau		
Area 18: Bathford & Limpley Stoke Valley	4: Enclosed Limestone Valley (Bathampton Meadows excluded)	4b: Bathampton & Limpley Stoke		
		4d: Lower By Brook Valley		

Table 2: Bathscape – Existing Character Assessment Comparison between existing County/District wide LCAs and the Cotswolds AONB LCA focussing on Landscape Areas and Types – continued

EXISTING COUNTY/ DISTRICT WIDE LCAS	EXISTING LANDSCAPE TYPES	EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS	COTSWOLDS AONB LCA	
			TYPES	CHARACTER AREAS
Wiltshire	Type 10	Area 10a: By Brook	4: Enclosed Limestone Valley	4d: Lower By Brook Valley
		Area 10b: Avon	4: Enclosed Limestone Valley	4b: Bathampton & Limpley Stoke
			11: Dip Slope Lowland	11a: South & Mid Cotswold Lowlands
			13: Low Limestone Plateau	13b: Hinton Charterhouse Plateau
South Gloucestershire	Plateau and Scarp	Area 3: Ashwicke Ridges	4: Enclosed Limestone Valley	4c: Lam Brook & St. Catherine's Brook Valleys
			9: High Wold Dip Slope	9d: Cotswold High Wold Dip Slope
Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal	N/A	22 character areas identified of which, 3 areas are largely rural and overlap with Cotswolds AONB areas: Area 16: Bathampton Slopes Area 18: Entry Hill, Perrymead & Prior Park Area 19: Bathampton Down & Claverton Down	N/A – urban areas	N/A – urban areas

5. Relationships between Different Assessment Coverage

Table 2 below shows the coverage of the various assessments and overlaps where they occur. The table focuses on landscape types and areas.

Notes for Bathscape:

1. The table demonstrates the much higher number of character areas identified in the Cotswolds AONB assessment than in the B&NES LCA. For B&NES LCA Area 16 – Cotswolds Plateaux and valleys there are 3 Cotswolds AONB landscape character types and 8 landscape character areas. The table also shows that for the very small Wiltshire Character Area 10B within the Bathscape area there are parts of 3 Cotswolds AONB types and 3 areas which highlights an area of confusion needing to be resolved in a new Bathscape character assessment.

2. The table highlights the one major gap in coverage of the Cotswolds AONB character assessment within the Bathscape Area which is the south eastern area covered by B&NES LCA Area 6 – Hinton Blewett and Newton St Loe Plateau Lands and Area 14 – Avon Valley, and which lies outside the AONB. There is also a small area on the eastern edge of Bath within B&NES Area 18 – Bathford and Limpley Stoke Valley which is outside the AONB and therefore not in the AONB assessment.

6. Sample Assessment Comparisons for Specific Locations within the Bathscape Area

A brief comparison was made where various different assessments cover the same area and also to see how good the fit was in terms of describing the character of an area.

Three areas were chosen:

- Weston Valley
- The section of By Brook valley lying within the Wiltshire Assessment Area.
- Small areas within the Ashwicke Ridges LCA of the South Gloucestershire Assessment

Weston Valley

Weston Valley lies within Area 16: Cotswolds Plateaux and Valleys of the B&NES LCA and within Type 2 (Escarpment), Area 2A: Bath to Beach Farm of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment.

Area 16 is a very extensive character area covering a much bigger area around Bath than the Weston valley and similarly character type 2 and area 2A are also both extensive areas which extend far beyond the Weston Valley and north into Gloucestershire.

The B&NES LCA makes no specific reference to the Weston valley and overall the valley descriptions are so general as to be of little use.

The Cotswolds assessment places Weston Valley within Type 2: Escarpment. Looking at the key characteristics of Escarpment and comparing it with the key characteristics of Type 4: Enclosed Limestone Valleys, there is a much better fit between the character of Weston Valley and the characteristics described for Enclosed Limestone Valleys than for those of Escarpment.

Within the description for 2A: Bath to Beach Farm, there are a couple of references to Weston Valley, one of which identifies the importance of Beckford's Tower and one which makes a brief comment about field sizes in part of the valley, other than that the description does not give any real idea of the character of Weston Valley.

Overall neither assessment gives a true sense of the character of the valley and there is no indication of the inherent sensitivity of the valley and its condition.

By Brook Valley

The Wiltshire section of the By Brook valley is covered by Wiltshire LCA Type 10: limestone Valleys, Area 10A: By Brook Limestone Valley. These are both rather larger than the area in question.

The area is also covered by Cotswolds AONB LCA Type 4: Enclosed Limestone Valleys, Area 4D Lower By Brook Valley. Again these are rather larger areas than the area in question.

The Key characteristics described for the Wiltshire Type 10 have a reasonable fit with this part of the By Brook valley but the character area description is only loosely relevant and omits any reference to the presence of both the A4 and the main line railway running through the bottom of the valley as well as the presence of the Box tunnels.

The Wiltshire Type 10 evaluation section is relatively accurate for the area but could be more refined.

The Key characteristics of the Cotswolds Type 4 are again broadly a reasonable fit and the character area description is rather better fitted than the Wiltshire character area description.

The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for Cotswolds Type 4 gives a reasonable general description including sensitivity and a large number of potential forces for change some of which are highly appropriate for the specific area. There is a reasonable correlation between the evaluation and strategy parts of the Wiltshire assessment and the Cotswolds Landscape Strategy.

Small Areas Within the Ashwicke Ridges LCA of the South Gloucestershire Assessment

These areas although part of one South Gloucestershire character area – Ashwicke Ridges, are separated within the Bathscape area but form parts of the upper Lam and St. Catherine's valley. These two areas fall within two Cotswolds Landscape Types Type 4: Enclosed Limestone Valleys and Type 9: High Wold Dip Slope; and two Landscape Character Areas. Area 4C: Lam Brook and St. Catherine's Brook Valley and area 9D: Cotswolds High Wold Dip Slope.

The South Gloucestershire Ashwicke Ridges Character area describes the two small areas quite well as part of a larger area. The Landscape Strategy section also relates well in part to the areas.

The Cotswolds AONB assessment is reasonable in relation to Type 4 and Area 4C but rather inaccurate in relation to Type 9 and Area 9D. Both are very large areas and the area in question is at the very southern edge of both.

Notes for Bathscape:

This very brief look at specific areas shows that there is no one existing assessment which accurately depicts the character of these areas. Overall it is likely that the Cotswolds AONB Assessment will form a good basis for the new Bathscape Assessment but there will be a need to:

- carefully review areas and boundaries
- look at the current typology designations to check they are correct such as for Weston Valley which is included within Escarpment where it would be more appropriately included within Enclosed Limestone Valleys
- Carry out the assessment at an appropriate scale such as between 1:10000 and 1: 25000 to bring out more locally relevant detail
- Look at evaluation/judgement/change and strategy issues at a more detailed level.

Report 2:

Principal Issues to be Addressed in a New Landscape Character Assessment for Bathscape

1. Base the assessment on the Cotswolds AONB LCA and the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. Consider the contribution which methodology used for the Wiltshire Assessment's Evaluation section could make.
2. Use the 'Approach to Landscape Character Assessment: 2014, Natural England' to inform and guide the process.
3. Decide on a suitable scale for the assessment. likely to be between 1:10,000 and 1: 25,000 to bring wout sufficient detail.
4. Consider how to address landscape evaluation, making judgements, assessing condition and change, assessing inherent sensitivity, developing the Cotswolds AONB strategy and guidelines to be a better fit for Bathscape areas.
5. Address and assess the areas of Bathscape landscape covered by B&NES LCA Area 6, part Area 14 and part Area 18 but which are not within the AONB and therefore not covered by the Cotswolds AONB Assessment.
7. Check all Type and area boundaries. In particular:
 - look at the current designation of the Weston Valley both in terms of Type and Area
 - look at the area around LCA 10B of Wiltshire Assessment
 - Consider separating Lam Brook Valley from St. Catherine's Valley
 - Address the poor fit of the Cotswolds AONB Perrymead LCA
 - Look particularly at Cotswolds character areas which form a small part within Bathscape of a much larger character area outside it. Decide whether character area boundaries should stop at the Bathscape boundary – how should they tie into the surrounding area and surrounding assessments?
8. Address the disparity between the strongly coherent City of Bath WHS Setting characteristics and Attributes and the lack of reference to them within the existing assessments. There is a noticeable lack of reference to the City of Bath in the rural character assessments and a similar lack of reference to the surrounding countryside in the Bath City-wide Character Appraisal when both have such strong influences on each other.
9. Consider how to address the urban area covered currently by the Bath City-wide Character Appraisal but not by the Cotswolds Assessments. Urban character assessments do not have guidance which is relevant to them and the National Landscape Typology does not cover urban areas. The current situation in terms of existing assessments serves to emphasise the separation between the City and the landscape around it.
10. Look at how the new assessment can best serve the Bathscape aims and objectives and the detailed requirements of the Bathscape Projects – see below in Table 1:

Table 1

BATHSCAPE	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
Bathscape Aims: Reconnecting....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscapes are all about people – the LCA provides a current snap shot of the character of the different Landscapes in the Bathscape area – a baseline • the LCA will rely on the contributions of local people to identify places which are special to them, which need improving, etc
Bathscape Projects	
1. Conserving and Restoring	
Grasslands for the Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA will show where grasslands are/were important features of Bathscape character • The LCA could show where there are clusterings of meadows or calcareous grassland which are valued by local people? • The LCA will be able to relate grasslands to features like steep slopes, hydrology and geology
Grassland Restoration Volunteers	N/A
Woodlands of Bathscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA will show where woodland is important to character and where it is not characteristic and should not be planted or should be removed • The LCA will show where woodland condition is deteriorating • The LCA will act as baseline for monitoring change and effectiveness of Bathscape
Trees of Bathscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA will show where individual field, hedgerow, street or parkland trees are important to character • The LCA will act as a baseline for monitoring change and effectiveness of Bathscape
Bathscape Small Grant Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA will, for example help to locate suitable areas for woodland creation, orchard planting or field tree planting
Looking after the Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of important views and vistas which contribute to character
Caring for Heritage at Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA will show where heritage feature contribute strongly to character

Table 1 - continued

BATHSCAPE	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
Therapeutic Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA can identify areas of character easily accessible to settlement edges • The LCA can indicate character which is accessible in terms of steepness of terrain
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above plus the LCA can indicate areas which are unsuitable for certain types of access, where issues of tranquillity need to be considered etc
Learning, Training and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCA explains the landscape which is the basis for all the learning, training and skills development

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY FORM

A field survey was carried out of each character area using an assessment form for each viewpoint or set of viewpoints as appropriate. The following information and aspects of character were recorded on the forms.

		DESKTOP SUMMARY DESCRIPTION
Viewpoint No.		
Location		
Date		
Photo No.s		
LC Type		
LC Area		

TOPOGRAPHY/LANDFORM (additional to desktop assessment)

Flat/rolling/Undulating/Sloping/Steep/Vertical/Plain/Plateau/Scarp/Hills/Ridge/Broad valley/Narrow valley/High/Intermediate/low

DOMINANT ELEMENTS (additional to desktop assessment)							
BUILT:	HERITAGE:	FARMING:	OTHER LAND COVER:	WOODLAND/TREES:	HYDROLOGY:	COMMUNICATIONS:	RECREATION:
Urban	Vernacular buildings	Stone walls	Designed parkland	Deciduous woodland	River	Road	Footpath
Sub urban	Country house	Fences	Scrub/set aside	Coniferous woodland	Stream	Lane	Bridleway
Village	Field systems	Hedges	Water meadows	Mixed woodland	Brook	Track	Picnic site
Hamlet	Industry/mining	Arable	Disturbed ground	Shelterbelt	Dry valley	Footpath	Viewpoint
Isolated houses		Ley		Hedge trees	Winterbourne	Railway	Park
Farm buildings		Improved pasture		Orchard	Pond	Pylons	Sports
Industry		Unimproved pasture/Rough grazing		Clumps/copses	Lake	Communication masts	Historic monument
		Orchard		Isolated trees	Drainage ditch		Industrial/mining
		Farm stock		Parkland trees	Canal		Natural heritage
				Ancient woodland	Springs		

AESTHETIC CRITERIA (additional to desktop assessment)

PATTERN:	SCALE:	TEXTURE:	COLOUR:	VARIETY:	UNITY:	FORM:	ENCLOSURE:
Dominant	Intimate	Smooth	Monochrome	Uniform	Unified	Straight	Expansive
Strong	Small	Textured	Muted	Simple	Interrupted	Angular	Open
Broken	Medium	Rough	Colourful	Diverse	Fragmented	Curved	Enclosed
Weak	Large	Very rough	Garish	Complex	Chaotic	Sinuuous	Confined

PERCEPTION

SECURITY:	Intimate	Comfortable	Safe	Unsettling	Threatening	Straight	Expansive
STIMULUS:	Monotonous	Bland	interesting	Challenging	Inspiring	Angular	Open
NATURALNESS:	Undisturbed	Restrained	Tamed	Managed	disturbed	Curved	Enclosed

BRIEF DESCRIPTION (landform - degree of slope/levelness, land cover - distribution of different land covers, dominant cover, others, land use - distribution of different land uses, dominant land-use, others, enclosure - details of type of boundary, regularity, consistency, field size and shape, does the landscape feel expansive, funnelled contained, closed in?)

KEY LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS/DISTINCTIVE FEATURES and why they are important (landmarks, focal points, buildings and structures, routeways - classify and describe how they affect the landscape (eg dominate, well integrated))

CHARACTERISTIC OF THE VIEW AT THE SURVEY POINT (Panoramic, Framed, Intermittent, Channelled)

CHARACTERISTICS OF VIEWS WITHIN THE CHARACTER AREA AS A WHOLE

- Identify any viewpoints and the visual characteristics (Panoramic, Framed, Intermittent, Channelled)

CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING TRANQUILLITY and why they are important

POSITIVE ASPECTS conducive to tranquillity (peaceful, woodland, water, relative remoteness from development presence of wildlife)

NEGATIVE ASPECTS compromising tranquillity (noise/disturbance/human activity)

SOUNDS - the predominant characteristic and any others

LIGHTING - identify predominant characteristic (dark, scattered lighting, intensively lit) and any exceptions

ROUTEWAYS – classify and describe how they affect the landscape (eg dominate, well integrated, noisy, light pollution, tranquil, in harmony with the character)

KEY DETRACTING ELEMENTS in the view

CONDITION (good, declining or poor)

SENSITIVITY (taking account of the value of the landscape, its condition, its characteristics and how they affect the ability of the landscape to accept potential change without adverse effects - consider new dwellings, employment, intensive agriculture, transport infrastructure, energy infrastructure, fragmentation into small holdings/horsiculture)

Identify **TRENDS AND FORCES FOR CHANGE** (signs of change such as new or different uses in contrast to the wider landscape type, evidence of pollution, erosion, bare or disturbed ground, condition of historic features, new planting, restoration work, changes in farming practice, evidence of climate change, tree loss, neglect,)

THREATS to the area's distinctiveness

SUMMARY LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION of 3-5 most important characteristics which define the landscape character

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CHARACTER AREAS

BATHSCAPE ISSUES (ISSUES TO ADDRESS, RECREATIONAL, TREE PLANTING AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES)

APPENDIX 4

SUGGESTIONS ARISING FOR BATHSCAPE PROJECT AREAS BY CHARACTER AREA

ESC1 Dean Hill to Prospect Stile

- **Views and Vistas.** To look at the impact of the recently planted Shiner's Wood on the iconic views, to liaise with the land owner and to resolve the problem which is likely to result in the loss of these views as well as have a significant impact on the WHS Setting.
- **Grasslands for the Future.** Potential for expanding the habitat restoration and management work being carried out around Kelston Roundhill.
- **Woodlands of Bathscape.** Help is needed with hedgerow management in particular but also with management of mature copses (this is true for almost all the Bathscape character areas).

ELV1 Weston Valley

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.** Increase understanding of the important landscape characteristics of the valley to local landowners especially with regard to new woodland or tree belt planting such that it develops in harmony with the overall landscape character:
 - Avoid linear planting against the contours
 - Ensure that new planting does not affect views to or from Beckford's Tower. Given the height of the tower it is unlikely that views to the tower itself would ever be lost but more importantly the landscape context of the Tower in relation to the valley could be harmed. For example, the valley feature which runs down the valley side from the tower forms a very attractive open sweeping landscape which would be harmed if woodland was created there
 - Ensure that no additional tree planting is carried out which obstructs views from the Cotswolds Way
- In general the current balance of woodland/copse planting in relation to pasture and grassland areas is considered to be in keeping with the landscape character of the valley. Some increase in orchard area close to the village would relate well to the historical landscape character however.
- **Grasslands for the Future.** There are signs that some of the SNCI and UK priority habitat areas are deteriorating with some scrub encroachment and likely species loss through possible management changes. Opportunities for re-survey should be taken as well as working with landowners to improve management perhaps focussing on the open access land.

ELV2 Swainswick and Charlcombe Valley

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.** This valley is partly characterised by its limited area of woodland and relatively open nature which shows off its complex landform to advantage. Whilst a small increase in small copses would be potentially tolerable on the landscape, overall the current balance in relation to pastoral use is very harmonious. An exception to this would be the urgent need to screen the visually jarring new housing at Ensleigh which has very significantly broken the skyline, by planting woodland on the upper slopes of Charlcombe valley. This would be in keeping with the character of skyline woodland and trees around the tops of the hillsides around the city. Woodland planting could be designed to allow glimpses of buildings as is common across the city. It would also be important to design a woodland on the upper part of slope only, leaving a significant amount of pasture between the new planting and the existing woodland around the Charlcombe village and enabling the continuing grazing of beef cattle. This would also maintain the attractive views over the city which are appreciated by walkers using the footpath.

- **Grasslands for the Future.** There are very large areas of SNCI grassland habitat in the valley which almost certainly benefit from re-survey and from management. The Langridge to Woolley habitat complex is potentially a very important biodiversity resource.
- **Access.** One small project which could perhaps be undertaken would be to find an alternative route for the public footpath which runs through a garden at Upper Swainswick. The church at Upper Swainswick is clearly very welcoming to walkers who are almost bound to make use of the garden route. An alternative route would bring relief to the cottage owner and make it easier to walk through this part of the valley. Upper Swainswick is one of the few areas in the valley where there is a small amount of parking for walkers coming from elsewhere in Bath or Bristol. Given the particular importance that the valley has had in the history of geology both as a science in itself and in developing an understanding of the importance of landslips in the Bath area, it would be interesting and educational to promote the occasional geological walk in the valley.

ELV3 Northend and St. Catherine's Valley

- **Woodlands.** This valley is characterised by its large number of small woods arranged in an intricate patchwork with small pastures and linking hedgerows. Key here is woodland and hedgerow management rather than more woodland.
- **Grasslands for the Future.** There are very large areas of SNCI grassland habitat in the valley which almost certainly benefit from re-survey and from management.
- **Community.** The Rocks East has classroom and camping facilities and may be a good location to bring children out for short residential stays to explore the valley's natural resources.

ELV4 Lower By Brook Valley

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.** This valley is characterised by its well wooded upper slope on the South-eastern valley side and by the wooded skyline on the north-western valley side. Elsewhere in the valley, the landscape is characteristically farmed and open with hedgerows, areas of parkland trees and tree clumps associated with properties and also tree-lined roads providing its tree structure. There is some scattered small woodland planting on both sides of the valley. The current balance of trees and agricultural land is well balanced. The existing woodland on the upper valleys sides is of great visual and wildlife value and its management status is unknown. There may be potential for help with woodland management as part of the Bathscape projects. Similarly the parkland trees close to Shockerwick house are of great local landscape importance and replacements are needed as the existing trees decline.

ELV5 Bathampton Meadows and River Avon Tributary Valleys

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.**

This character area has a strong distinction between wooded slopes mixed with some agriculture; and open, farmed, valley floor floodplain landscape. It is important to maintain this balance although it is recognised that there is already change occurring. There is increasing wet woodland associated with the large Ox Bow nature reserve which is changing the valley floor character and woodland is also increasing on the Bathampton slopes through increasing neglect of small pasture fields. The main current requirement is for management of the existing woodland and skyline on the upper slopes where this is currently not in place. If Beechen Cliff and the ancient woodland below Bathampton Down is not being managed there is a definite need which Bathscape could assist with especially as Beechen Cliff is in Council ownership.

- **Views and Vistas.** The continuing increase in scrub on the Bathampton slopes is limiting views over the character area from footpaths. Scrub clearance would potentially increase views. Favoured footpath routes could be checked for view opportunities and management instigated.
- **Grasslands for the Future.** There is a definite increase in scrub on the ecologically designated fields on the Bathampton slopes. Management such as that being carried out by the National Trust in similar areas around Widcombe and Bathwick would be appropriate here.
- **Access.** This attractive and fascinating character area is a potential hub for public access from Bath and the surrounding villages. It has public transport access from the city centre, boat access as far as Bathampton Weir on the river and the canal, plus footpath access especially along the canal. Once arrived, there is level access over the floodplain meadows with easy level links to St. Catherine's valley, the Limpley Stoke valley and the By Brook valley as well as steeper paths up to Bathampton Down for the fit and active. There is considerable potential to enhance these links with the city to enable easy exploration of several different character areas.

ELV6 Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Valley

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.**

This character area has a strong wooded character. Overall woodland is dominant over pasture or arable farming in the valley with almost continuous woodland cover on middle to upper slopes of the eastern side. The current balance of fields to woodland is harmonious and give a very distinctive character to this valley. Additional woodland should not be considered. The woodlands (excluding the Brown's Folly Nature Reserve) may well be in need of management but these are large areas for the scope of the Bathscape project.

ELV7 Perrymead and Widcombe

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.**

- Given the importance of the tree belts on and just below the skyline around this character area (excluding Smallcombe Wood and other areas managed by NT), it is important to try and find ways to ensure their management for the future.
- Beechen Cliff woodland is in B&NES ownership – is it managed? Is help needed through the project? If so there would need to be liaison with Views and vistas to ensure no conflicts.
- The increasing scrub and lack of hedgerow management in the Lyn Brook valley is very concerning, land ownerships are unknown but there may be potential for project work here. Would need liaison with grassland for the future potentially.

- **Views and Vistas.**

- Possible work with B&NES to extend some of the views at Alexandra Park where tree and shrub encroachment has reduced them over time; whilst ensuring there is no damage to important trees/plants in Beechen Cliff.
- possible arts project to create a 21st century 360° panorama from Alexandra Park. Also attempt to find the 1980s panorama and show with the original version.

- **Grasslands for the Future.** Much of the Lyn Brook valley SNCI grasslands appear to be becoming neglected and scrubbing up. This is the main part of the overall character area where this is happening (NT ownership in the other valleys is restoring grassland). It would be a really worthwhile project to find some way to bring this grassland into restoration management as well. Land ownerships need to be investigated.

ELV8 Cam and Midford Brook Valley

- **Views and Vistas.** There is an important local vista at Monkton Combe celebrated by the location of a commemorative Jubilee 2012 seat which will be lost if the recently planted woodland trees in the adjacent garden remain. It would require local community diplomacy and action to resolve the issue.
- **Grasslands for the Future.** Horsecombe Vale's important grassland and woodland habitat complex appears to be suffering from significant neglect and may well benefit from management and restoration work through this project.

HWDS1 Lansdown Plateau

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.** Whilst this character area is not considered suitable for additional planting (except as described below), the existing roadside beech tree clumps need a programme of management.
- **Views and Vistas.** The visual impact of the bath Racecourse grandstand canopy could be much mitigated by a woodland screen planting to fill in important gaps in the tree screen around the Race course. Work should be done where this would be required and the a programme implemented in consultation with the Racecourse owners.
- **Caring for Heritage at Risk.** Carry out an audit of the condition of boundary stone walls.

- **Grasslands for the Future.**

The stunning calcareous grasslands on the Kingsdown School playing fields could be more widely enjoyed. A possible highly appropriate project would be to twin the school with a school in one of the target "hard to reach" areas to carry out practical management activities and to promote greater understanding and a sense of wonder in both the beauty and variety in the grassland and the amazing plateau views.

In addition it would be an excellent project to collect seed from the grassland and use it to restore other areas on the plateau which must at one time have been very similar.

- **Access.** The large number of footpaths on this flat plateau would lend themselves to development of Access for all routes.

HWDS2 Charmy Down and Little Solsbury Hill

- **Grasslands for the Future.** The grasslands and disturbed ground habitat on Charmy Down have the appearance of some deterioration from the landscape assessment site visit. The area may benefit from a new assessment and from engagement with land-owners to promote suitable habitat management is nothing is already in place. This may well be a potentially important skylark nesting habitat which could be managed as such.
- **Access.** The World War 2 history on Charmy Down is still very much in evidence and there are footpath over and across the plateau from both the A46 direction and from St. Catherine's Valley. Themed walks would be interesting for in terms of local history and would take people to an area which is perhaps lesser known.

HWDS3 Bannerdown and The Rocks

- **Community.** The stone field boundaries are in need of repair and are an opportunity for community training and involvement.
- **Views.** There is very little public access in the character area outside of Bannerdown Common. There are some spectacular views from the plateau which could be better accessed and publicised.

HWDS4 Bathampton and Claverton Down

- **Views and Vistas.** Possibility of opening up and restoring views to Sham Castle.
- **Access.** Restoring some of the carriage rides has already been suggested for Bathscape.

LLP1 Limpley Stoke Water Tower and Hayes Wood Plateau

- **Woodlands of Bathscape.** Hayes Wood is an ancient woodland last surveyed in 1979 when it had a number of notable species. Its current management status is unknown. It would benefit from re-survey and may need management.

EPV1 Corston and Newton Brook Valleys

- **Access.** This area is in easy reach of Twerton, Whiteway and the whole of the south-west of Bath as well as being close to both Newbridge and Odd Down Park & Ride. There is currently apparently little use of this attractive character area for walking apart from in areas very close to the settlement edge. It would be interesting to re-engage some of the enthusiasm for rambling in the area which was apparent in the early C20th century. It would be simple to create some circular walks out of the Park & Rides, taking in some of this varied landscape and its views; and it may be possible to work with the Duchy to establish some more permissive paths.



**BATHSCAPE
LANDSCAPE
CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT**
2017