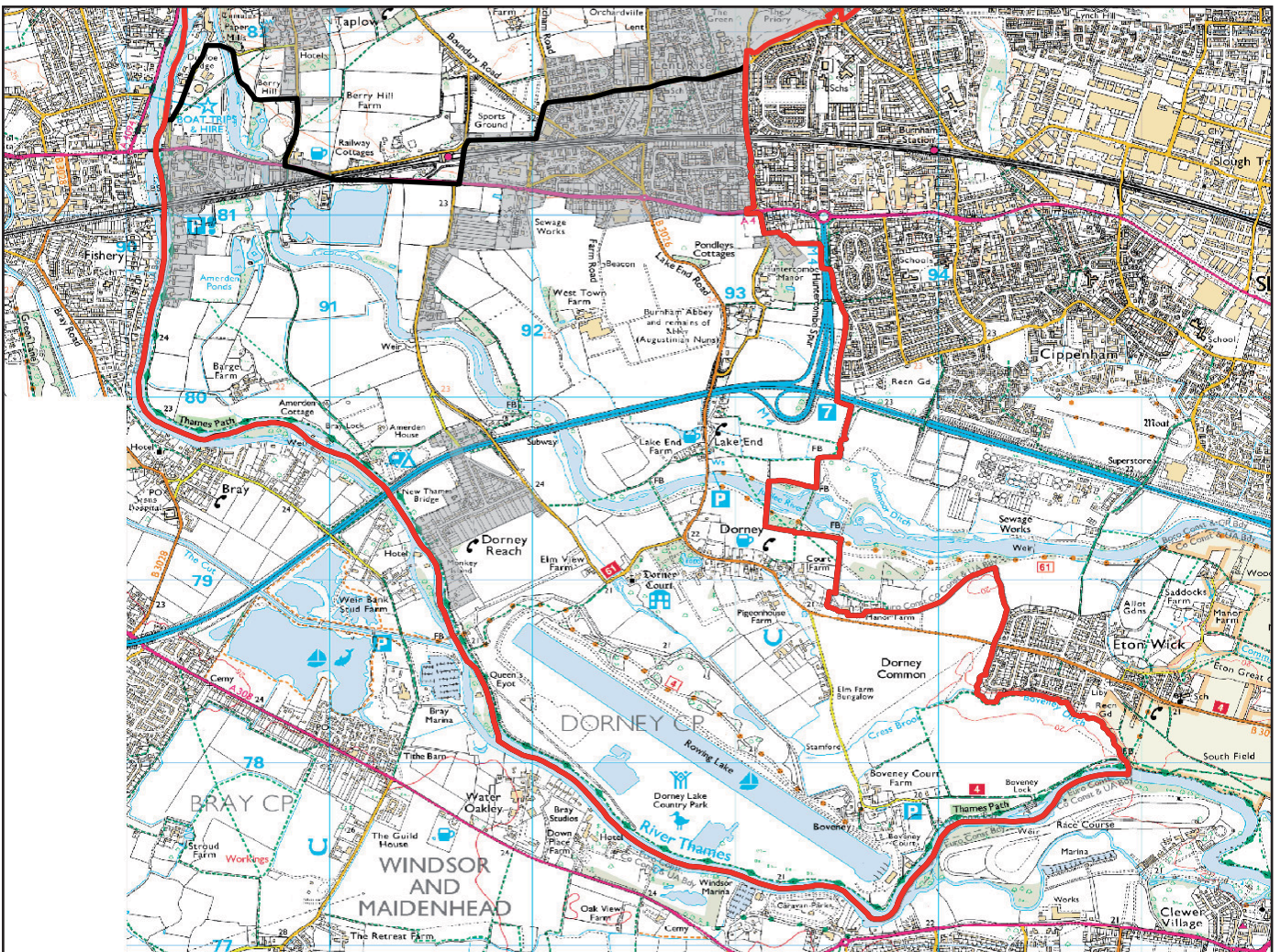
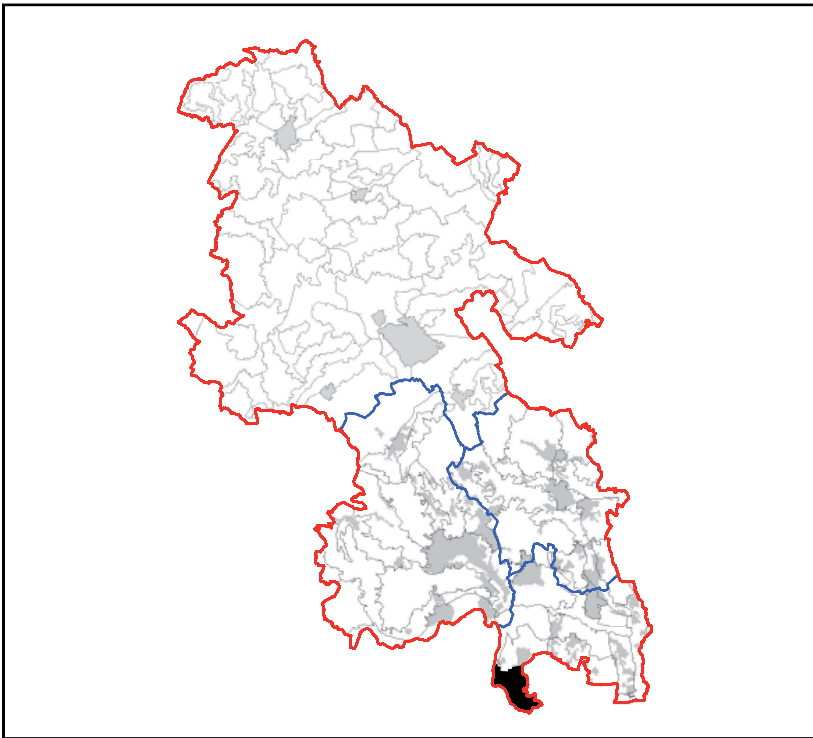


LCA 26.2 DORNEY FLOODPLAIN



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KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- A flat, low lying floodplain, with very slight local topographic variation, underlain predominately with alluvium, and supporting free draining, loamy soils.
- Large open arable cultivation, with smaller field enclosures of rough grazing and some pasture in the north and south.
- A network of rivers, ponds and streams, with the River Thames running along the western and southern boundary and the Jubilee River meandering through the centre of the character area. Scattered ponds are located along the course of these two rivers.
- Low hedgerows commonly define fields, with scattered or clumped trees along these boundaries. Trees are often associated with watercourses. Isolated trees and small pockets of woodland are widely dispersed, and overall woodland cover is sparse.
- Settlement is dispersed and spread linearly along roads or as common edge settlement, with a strong historic character (e.g. Dorney and Dorney Common). Isolated properties and farmsteads are also scattered through the landscape. With the exception of Dorney Reach, a denser, more nucleated settlement.
- Dorney Rowing Lake, a large purpose built rowing lake and designed landscape, occupies the south west portion of the area. A long, expansive water body surrounded by grassland and enclosed by woodland.
- A mixture of 19th century enclosure and parliamentary enclosure (18th -19th century), with some interspersed 18th century fields.
- Numerous historic and archaeological features, including Burnham Abbey, a Medieval Tudor manor and fishponds, several Bronze Age, Iron Age, Mesolithic, and Neolithic cropmarks, and Grade II listed medieval historic parkland at Berry Hill, Taplow and Huntercombe Park.
- The area is cut by the M4, which forms a prominent feature in the landscape, and has a strong visual and audible impact on the area. Elsewhere roads are small and winding.
- The low lying, flat and open landscape allows for long views and panoramic vistas particularly towards Slough, and also to higher ground in the north and south. The open character of Dorney Common allows for long views towards Windsor Castle. Views are occasionally interrupted and enclosed by wooded field boundaries.
- Varying levels of movement within this landscape, with pockets of tranquillity and calm, away from busy roads and settlement.

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DESCRIPTION

Location and Boundaries: *Dorney Floodplain* lies entirely within the South Bucks District. The character area boundaries are largely dictated by the district boundary itself, and it extends into Windsor and Maidenhead borough, in the south and west, and Slough borough in the east. The north boundary is dictated by the rising topography and the distinctly wooded nature of the landscape.

Landscape Character: A distinctive low lying, flat floodplain landform, with an open character. Medium sized arable fields predominate, with smaller field enclosures of rough grazing and pasture in the north and south, defined by low hedgerows and scattered tree boundaries. Long views towards Slough and to higher ground in the north and south, are occasionally fragmented and enclosed by wooded field boundaries. An important vista exists across Dorney Common to Windsor Castle. The area has varying levels of tranquillity, with the busy M4 cutting the landscape and creating a significant visual and audible impact. Away from the transport corridor, the floodplain retains pockets of tranquillity and calm. Numerous water bodies occupy the landscape, with the Jubilee River meandering through the area, plus associated scattered ponds. These provide a valuable wildlife corridor and important recreational opportunities. Settlement is relatively low density, with a strong historic element, and dispersed linearly along roads, or as loose common edge settlement. Isolated farmsteads and clusters are scattered throughout the landscape. Dorney Rowing Lake, a designed purpose built lake in the south west of the character area, provides a contrast to surrounding farmland.

Geology: Alluvium largely underlies this character area, with a small section of Shepperton Gravel in the east. Freely draining, loamy soils are dominant throughout.

Topography/Landform: A typically flat, low lying floodplain landform, with very slight local topographic variation.

Hydrology: The character area is classed as the Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 and 3. The River Thames runs along the western and southern boundary and the Jubilee River meanders through the centre of the character area, forming a significant feature in the landscape. There are also several ponds scattered along the course of these two rivers. A distinctive feature of this character area is Dorney Rowing Lake, and the surrounding landscape. This large, designed water body occupies the south west corner of the character area and is an expansive and distinctive hydrological feature.

Land Use and Settlement: Land use is dominated by farmland, mainly medium sized, arable fields, with smaller field enclosures of rough grazing and some pasture in the north and south. Rough, low hedgerows define field boundaries, with occasional wooden post and wire fence sub divisions.

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A unique feature within the character area is Dorney Rowing Lake, a designed landscape owned by Eton College, with a large open expansive, artificial lake surrounded by amenity grassland, and enclosed by an arboretum. This recreational land use occupies a large proportion of the south western area.

The M4 dissects the character area centrally, and provides a major transport corridor through the landscape. Elsewhere, there are a limited number of smaller winding roads. The Great Western railway line cuts through the north of the character area.

Settlement is relatively low to medium, and dispersed. It is spread linearly along roads, or around the edge of Dorney Common, generously spaced, with a loose, open character. Isolated properties and farmsteads are sparsely scattered across the landscape. The small village of Dorney Reach is located on the western boundary, and the edge of Slough in the north, present denser and more urbanised modern settlement edge character.

A small network of footpaths provides public rights of way across this landscape. Excellent access along the Jubilee River and Thames path, the latter running along the edge of the character area. Two official cycle routes also pass through the area.

Tree Cover: Hedgerow trees are scattered or clumped along field boundaries and road side edges, with tree cover mainly associated with watercourses. Isolated trees and small pockets of trees are dispersed around the area, but overall woodland cover is sparse. A mix of coniferous and deciduous trees have been recently planted around Dorney Rowing Lake, and provide significant tree coverage in this area. .

Perceptual/ Experiential Landscape: A low lying, flat landscape, with a strong horizontal form. An open landscape, which contrasts with the surrounding wooded character areas to the north. Repetition of geometric field enclosures and hedgerow boundaries, contribute to an organised and rhythmic landscape pattern. This is however, occasionally fragmented and interrupted, by elements such as the M4, and the Jubilee River. Occasional long views and panoramic vistas are provided across open landscape, towards Slough in the north east, and to higher ground in the north and south. There are important views across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle. Intermittently, field boundaries fragment and limit views within this area. Varying degrees of tranquillity exist within the landscape. The motorway, provides a noticeable visual and audible impact on the area, however, away from this areas of calm and peacefulness exist, particularly close to areas of water. The town edge of Slough, with tall industrial towers occasionally provides a backdrop to the character area, which reduces the sense of rural character. In the south of the character area, the designed landscape of Dorney Rowing Lake, is enclosed and contained by woodland, however extensive views are still possible across the lake and towards Slough. Well maintained amenity grassland and woodland boundaries within this recreational space, provides a contrast to surrounding farmland, which often demonstrates a rough and scrubby texture, with unmanaged field boundaries.

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Biodiversity: This area is dominated by farmland, frequently arable cultivation, with limited biodiversity value. Hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and scrubby field boundaries, provide key ecological features, although hedgerows are often gappy and unmanaged. The River Jubilee, River Thames and associated ponds do however provide valuable corridors for wildlife and important habitats, especially for birds. Dorney Common and Cress Brook Local Wildlife Site comprise a large area of neutral grassland and streams. Biological Notification sites in this area are, Amerden Gravel Pit, a small lake in the north and a small area of neutral grassland at St James churchyard.

Historic Environment: There is evidence of occupation dating back to Prehistoric times. The area's proximity to the Thames and its position upon the gravel of the former Thames terraces makes it rich area for archaeological sites, many dating to Palaeolithic, and Mesolithic periods. Aerial surveys have revealed a number of cropmarks which indicate the presence of later sites dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

There are a number of historic sites and monuments of note, including Burnham Abbey, a medieval abbey, previously a house for Augustinian nuns; the medieval/Tudor manor and fishponds at Dorney Court, historic buildings and parkland at Berry Hill, Taplow and Huntercombe Park. Historic building materials in this area are frequently handmade brick and red clay roof tiles.

The historic landscape of the area mostly comprises 19th century enclosure and Parliamentary Enclosure (18th -19th century), interspersed with some earlier, 18th century irregular enclosure fields. Of historical importance are the surviving areas of common land at Berry Hill, Taplow and Dorney Common. However a considerable proportion of the landscape has been altered in the 20th century, with the creation of new fields and pony paddocks, the impact of mineral extraction at Dorney and the creation of the Jubilee River for flood attenuation.

Designations:

- Registered Parks/Gardens: Berry Hill, Taplow; Huntercombe.
- Archaeological Notification Areas: 26 No.
- Conservation Areas: Taplow Riverside, Boveney, Dorney and Huntercombe
- Biological Notification Sites: 2 No.
- Local Wildlife Sites: 2 No.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Potential landscape and visual sensitivities are:

- River courses, ponds and lakes, and the associated habitat and wildlife value.
- Occasional long views and panoramic vistas. Particularly across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle and towards higher ground in the north.
- Hedgerow field boundaries and scattered trees.
- The public rights of way access, particularly along the Thames path and Jubilee River.
- The flat landscape and the limited woodland, accentuates the visual sensitivity of the landscape.
- This distinctive loose common edge settlement pattern at Dorney Common and the historic character of settlements.
- Historic elements, such as Archaeological Burnham Abbey, Medieval Tudor manor and fishponds at Dorney Court, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Mesolithic, and Neolithic cropmarks, and large areas of Palaeolithic deposits, which are visible reminder of the historic use of land.
- Historic parkland located at Berry Hill, Taplow and Huntercombe Park.
- The open grassland Dorney Common.

Strength of Character/Intactness: The strength of character and intactness of the *Dorney Floodplain* is **moderate**. Evidence of human impact, such as the M4 fragments the landscape and reduces the distinctiveness of character. Field boundaries are often, unmanaged, and with gappy hedgerows.

Strategy/ Vision: To conserve and enhance the character of Dorney floodplain, with its important water bodies of important ecological and recreational value and proving a valuable green infrastructure resource. To conserve elements of historic interest and maintain pockets of tranquillity away from overt human influence.

Landscape Guidelines:

- Monitor water quality in the rivers, lakes and ponds, seeking to reduce run off and water pollution from surrounding farmland and roads.
- Encourage management and protection of water bodies, and seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity interest.
- Encourage management and restoration of hedgerows, filling in gaps where necessary and seek opportunities to recreate and extend these habitats.
- Conserve open views, particularly across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle and towards higher ground in the north.

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- Monitor vertical development along the floodplain, which will impact greatly on the low lying, open character.
- Consider opportunities to reduce traffic noise, and consider further screening/buffering of motorways through sensitive tree planting.
- Protect and ensure good management of public rights of way.
- Maintain the historic openness of Dorney Common and conserve the loose linear settlement character preventing infilling and nucleation.
- Conserve historic elements, such as archaeological features and parkland, which provide evidence of past use of the land.

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Jubilee River, meanders through the landscape. Scattered trees associated with waters's edge.



A flat, low lying floodplain, with large open arable cultivation,



Expansive views towards Slough.



Historic character of settlement. Typical old red brick buildings.



Dorney Lake, a purpose built rowing lake. Open expansive water and wooded periphery.