

Windsor Castle: identifying, conserving and enhancing the contribution made by setting to its heritage significance

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Slough Borough Council
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Fig. 1: Cover image: The Long Walk, depicted in 1862 [Source Royal Collection Trust RCIN 700742 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

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Foreword from Historic England

Windsor Castle is of exceptional significance, both for its core of extraordinary buildings and collectively with its associated historic parkland and ancillary structures. Attracting millions of visitors worldwide every year, it is the longest occupied royal residence in Britain. However, until now, the degree to which its surroundings – otherwise known as setting – contribute to that significance has not been explored in detail.

This study provides a fuller understanding of the contribution of setting to the Castle's significance, explaining how the interrelationship of the Castle and its environs lies at the heart of its significance, both having heavily influenced each other's development.

The report gives planners, developers and decision-makers a clear baseline of information to inform new development within that setting.

Interest in large-scale development proposals in Slough, only a few miles north of the Castle, is increasing as the town becomes increasingly attractive for a range of investment. This welcome pressure for growth needs to be carefully managed to avoid or minimise harm to the Windsor "ensemble". It was in response to this pressure that Historic England, working in partnership with Slough Borough Council, commissioned this study.

While the study was conceived with a focus on Slough, it soon became clear that the Castle's setting is broad and should be assessed holistically. Focusing only on the Castle's northern setting would fail to recognise the Castle's visual dominance across this section of the Thames Valley. As a result, the study considers the Castle's setting

in the round, while also identifying considerations that are especially relevant to planning policy and development management at Slough Borough Council.

By adopting this broader scope, the project will help not only decision-makers in Slough but also in other local planning authority areas to meet their needs for residential and employment development in a manner that is sensitive to the great significance of Windsor Castle.



Tom Foxall, Regional Director, London & South East, Historic England



Foreword from Slough Borough Council

Slough Borough Council is proud to have supported the development of this document. As one of the most iconic and historically significant landmarks in the United Kingdom, Windsor Castle not only represents a vital piece of national heritage but also serves as a living part of our shared cultural landscape – that Slough as a neighbouring authority is uniquely positioned to appreciate and contribute to.

Our support for this project stems from a deep recognition of the importance of place making, landscape preservation and enhancement which are all vital contributions towards thoughtful and positive Planning. Slough is set to go through a period of positive change through town centre regeneration, the intensification of the Slough Trading Estate and opportunities associated with the potential expansion at Heathrow, amongst others.

This study provides a robust framework for understanding the visual and environmental sensitivities and opportunities associated with Windsor Castle’s setting and we are pleased to have contributed to this collaborative and forward-thinking initiative. We are looking forward to positively influencing development proposals that respond to the Castle’s setting whilst delivering a regenerated, vibrant and refreshed Slough.

Daniel Ray, Chief Planning Officer & Director of Planning Services, Slough Borough Council



Non-technical executive summary

Part 1: Introduction: purpose and methodology (Sections 1.1-1.2)

Windsor Castle is one of the most significant heritage assets in the United Kingdom. As the oldest and largest continuously occupied castle in the world, its historical, cultural, political, and religious importance spans nearly a millennium.

This report was commissioned jointly by Historic England (HE) and Slough Borough Council (SBC) in response to development pressure within SBC and more widely in this part of the Thames Valley. It was authored by Alan Baxter Ltd, undertaken between December 2024 and July 2025, and benefits from consultation with key stakeholders.

This report's primary purpose is to explain how and why the current setting of Windsor Castle is important, adopting the staged approach to proportionate decision making set out in Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3). It undertakes step 1 (identification of affected assets and their settings) and step 2 (assessment of how setting and views contribute to significance) of this approach, leaving steps 3-5 (assessment of the effects of proposals on significance; avoid or minimise harm and maximise enhancement; and make and document the decision and monitor outcomes) to be completed by others, albeit informed by this report. While it does not set policy, it is intended for the findings of this report to inform the local plan making process for relevant local planning authorities.

In a heritage context setting means 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced' (National Planning Policy Framework). The setting of Windsor Castle is vast. Understanding its extent and importance will help policy and decision makers to assess how the contribution made by setting to significance might be impacted by new development. The study is therefore intended to support local planning authorities in managing change in ways that preserve and enhance heritage significance.

The methodology (see [Appendix 5.4 on page 145](#)) integrates qualitative assessments of historic and modern views and landscape character. For Part 3, 18 representative views were selected to assess vulnerability and sensitivity to change within the Castle's setting and explore how this can be positively managed. These views are indicative, not exhaustive, and should not replace detailed view analysis for individual development proposals.

Part 2: Evidence base: the context, history and significance of Windsor Castle and its setting (Sections 2.1-2.5)

Context, historical development and artistic representations (Sections 2.1-2.3)

The evidence base begins by identifying the assets and their settings in context, before outlining the historical development of Windsor Castle as England's primary royal residence outside London from its eleventh-century origins as a Norman military fortress to today's 'Home of the Constitutional Monarchy'.

The evolution of Windsor Castle and its surrounding landscape is deeply interwoven. Successive monarchs have altered the Castle to reflect changing tastes, military needs, and ceremonial roles. Each phase of alteration has left its imprint on the Castle and its relationship with its surrounding parkland, most forcefully demonstrated between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. In the wider landscape the presence of the Castle has influenced historic transport routes and the development of nearby settlements such as Windsor, Eton, and Slough.

The many historic artistic representations of Windsor Castle emphasise the role played by its setting in how it is experienced and portrayed, with artists often using the surrounding landscape, including the rocky escarpment and riverbanks, to artistic effect.

Significance (Section 2.4)

Windsor Castle, as both a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I listed building, benefits from some of the highest levels of heritage protection. However, it is much more than a heritage asset. It is a living community encompassing two great historic institutions of the Royal Household and the College of St George. The Castle is part of a wider ensemble that includes the Home and Great Parks, both of which contain other significant heritage assets.

The summary assessment of significance concludes that Windsor Castle is of outstanding national and international significance for its uniquely long and close association with the Royal Family, and for the way in which both demonstrates and symbolises changing perceptions of the role of the Monarchy in the government and daily life of the country. As a castle with over a thousand years of use, it demonstrates to a remarkable degree the development of castle architecture (in its widest sense) in England from the eleventh to the twenty-first century. It remains a focal point for key national events of celebration and commemoration, most recently the funeral and burial of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

The contribution of setting to the significance of Windsor Castle (Section 2.5)

According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the setting of a heritage asset comprises the surroundings in which it is experienced. This includes both physical and perceptual elements and is dynamic, evolving with time. Importantly, 'setting' is not limited to what is visible: sensory experiences such as sound, movement, and the overall landscape character are equally important.

Typically, the setting of most castles inherently make an important contribution to their significance. They are designed to impose on the landscape and townscape around them. As a royal castle and the longest occupied royal residence in Britain, at Windsor this contribution is magnified. The siting of the Castle, on a chalk outcrop in the wide floodplain of the Thames, gives it an unparalleled dominance in a landscape context which stretches from Richmond upon Thames in the east to Maidenhead in the west (see [Fig. 7 on page 18](#) and [Fig. 9 on page 24](#)). The physical and visual connection between the Castle and the landscape contributes significantly to its heritage significance.

Key attributes and the inherent contribution made by setting

The report lists key attributes of the Castle's significance where setting is either intrinsic to significance or necessary to understand and appreciate it (Section 2.5.2), including: its landmark siting and the role played by the Thames Valley in our perception and understanding, the symbiosis with its associated historic landscape and designed approaches, and its relationships with the river, Windsor town and Eton College. These attributes are cross referenced in Section 2.5.4, where

it is explained which attributes are demonstrated in different areas of experience.

This is followed by an analysis of the inherent contribution made by setting to the Castle's significance (Section 2.5.3) made with reference to two component areas (see [Fig. 52 on page 73](#)):

The historic core (Section 2.5.3.1)

This includes areas under the long-term control or influence of the Castle, namely the Castle, the Great and Home Parks, Windsor and Old Windsor, distinct from the wider landscape setting. Ways in which the historic core contributes to significance include:

- The historic and continuing shared ownership and functional relationship between the Castle and its associated parkland, including the Great Park and Home Park and the assets within them; these assets are often seen as an ensemble, the significance of which is greater than the sum of its parts.
- The historic relationship with Old Windsor and later parallel evolution of (New) Windsor with the fortunes of the Castle, as a settlement founded to serve the royal court.
- The deep-rooted historic relationship with the river Thames, being a key reason for its existence and contributing to the picturesque character of its immediate setting.

The wider landscape (Section 2.5.3.2)

The Castle remains as it has always been, absolutely dominant in its position watching over a very wide area of the Thames Valley, reinforcing its role as an enduring symbol of Monarchy and country and heavily reflected in many artistic representations. It heavily influenced the development of transport networks and settlements, through its social and political draw and from the nineteenth century as a tourist destination. The remnants of ancient woodland reflect the large extent of medieval hunting forest once associated with the Castle. Close historic links with Eton College endure, with a strong visual connection between the Gothic Chapels of St George and Eton College.

How the Castle is experienced in its setting (Section 2.5.4)

Discussion of the way that the Castle is experienced in its setting is explored through three sub-sections, firstly how it is experienced from the historic core, secondly from the wider landscape, and lastly in views looking out from the Castle. This is done with reference to a series of modern views (see [Fig. 59](#), [Fig. 71](#) and [Fig. 84](#)).

From the historic core (Section 2.5.4.1)

The prominence of the Castle within much of the historic core area of its setting is striking, its intricate silhouette read either against a clear sky or a neutral backdrop of the Chilterns, both of which contribute positively to the visual experience. Alongside more informal experience of the Castle from the Home Park and Great Park, the designed approaches of the Long Walk and Queen Anne's Ride create key views and offer a platform for the Castle to be appreciated as a ceremonial 'object' in a greater landscape, allowing the appreciation of the deep symbiotic connection between the Castle and its associated parkland, despite some aural interruption from aircraft noise.

From the wider landscape (Section 2.5.4.2)

The immensely broad extent to which the Castle is experienced in the Thames Valley is illustrated by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility ([Fig. 9 on page 24](#)). Its siting is neither fortuitous nor incidental, chosen for its early defensive role and to maximise its prominence, it enhances its architectural effect. The landscape has experienced development and change, most evidently in Slough where the cumulative spread of suburban and industrial buildings has significantly eroded what were previously extensive views towards the Castle, so that the visual connection is now far less obvious than it once was. Surviving views are thus of critical importance to understanding the significance of the Castle and there is potential to recover lost views. The Castle's powerful presence is particularly felt from the river, the flood plain and from Eton to the north. Some modern transport infrastructure and new development have offered new ways to experience the Castle.

From the Castle (Section 2.5.4.3)

The Castle looks out over a landscape of contrasts. To the south is the Great Park, which has developed under its control and in harmony and remains rural. To the west the settlement of Windsor has developed from its historic core and now spreads over a large area towards the higher ground of Windsor Forest. To the north across the Thames Valley, viewed from the publicly accessible State Apartments and North Terrace, the setting is a landscape which (with the exception of Eton College) has largely developed in parallel but entirely independently of the Castle. It is also an active landscape, with a centuries long process of change and development, epitomised by the growth of Slough from small village to a major centre of growth in the Thames Corridor. This history of change and development is an integral part of the Castle's setting ([Fig. 49 on page 70](#)). The M4 and aircraft from Heathrow Airport are aurally intrusive elements in this setting.

Part 3: Protecting and enhancing Windsor Castle's setting: considerations for Local Planning Authorities

This chapter addresses, in general terms, how the setting of Windsor Castle can be protected and enhanced through sensitive management, planning, and development control. It builds on the earlier analysis of the Castle's historical and geographical significance and the role of its setting in shaping how that significance is experienced.

It is intended to inform those undertaking Steps 3-5 of Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) on The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3). It should be considered by Local Planning Authorities as part of the local plan-making process, contributing to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (as per the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance), and inform decision-making regarding the setting of Windsor Castle.

Vulnerability and sensitivity to change (Section 3.1)

This section begins by examining some of the vulnerabilities of the Castle's significance to change from development within its setting. Informed by Part 2, the Castle's setting is divided into two principal areas: the historic core and the wider setting, and the analysis is supported by a selection of Representative Views (RVs).

The historic core (Section 3.1.2; RV1-14)

This includes the Castle itself, the town of Windsor, a section of the River Thames, the Great Park, Home Park, and Old Windsor. These elements have developed in close historical association with the Castle and are sensitive to both direct and indirect change.

Views out from the Castle (Section 3.1.2.1; RV1-7)

Views out from the Castle connect with the historic core and extend far beyond into the wider landscape. The remarkable 360° panorama from the Round Tower (RV1-4) demonstrates how well the Castle is situated to dominate, visually and militarily, this section of the Thames Valley.

Views from the Castle's elevated North and East Terraces (RV5-7) offer sweeping perspectives over the Thames Valley, the Home Park, and parts of Slough, with scope to appreciate the natural beauty of the historic landscape. Recent tree growth of the Terrace slopes has compromised the panoramic nature of these views but not irreversibly.

Key features of these views today are:

- The widest setting, which extends from Maidenhead to Richmond and beyond. It includes Heathrow Terminal 5, recent higher rise developments in Maidenhead, and London (RV1-2, RV5-6);
- Eton College, which forms a highly important group with the Castle (RV1,2,5,6);
- Slough Trading Estate which is highly (and distractingly) visible, with its prominent power station (which breaches the Chiltern skyline) and its low spread of pale clad industrial buildings (RV1,2,5)
- Slough town centre, also clearly visible as a sprawl of generally pale clad buildings, some of which also break the Chiltern skyline (RV1,5).

The visible presence of Slough is not intrinsically harmful. The history of its development and expansion to take in a number of historically discrete settlements (such as Upton), is part of the later history of the wider setting of the Castle. The breaching of the skyline (where it does not form part of the backdrop of the designed views from the

Great Park) is not necessarily harmful, as it denotes the presence of a modern and growing urban centre. However, the current view reflects its uncontrolled and uncoordinated expansion, which has led to its sprawling and unenticing presence in views today. Furthermore, the impact of large-scale development in this panorama has the potential (individually and cumulatively) to cause harm, though this could be mitigated to an extent through sensitive location, design, colour and use of materials.

More generally, the tranquillity of the Castle has been eroded most recently by the M4 and aircraft from Heathrow (see [Fig. 49 on page 70](#)).

The Great Park (Section 3.1.2.2; RV8-11)

The seventeenth and eighteenth designed picturesque views (the Long Walk and Queen Anne's Ride), focussed on the Castle with the line of the Chilterns as a backdrop, survive to a remarkable degree. Higher up (RV8), by the statue of King George III, the panorama is wide, taking in Slough Trading Estate and Slough town centre. Appreciation of the Castle's silhouette would be compromised by unsympathetic development, either behind the Castle or immediately adjacent in this view. Lower down, the views narrow down on the Castle. In these closer views, in particular, the unbroken skyline and neutral backdrop of the Chilterns is a vital component. The Castle's heightened impact within closer proximity along the Long Walk hinges on the scale of the building and the lack of modern intrusions. On Queen Anne's Ride the experience is sensitive to new development intruding into the neutral backdrop. The noise of aeroplanes from Heathrow compromises the historic rural tranquillity which characterises how the Castle is experienced in its setting in these critically important views.

The town of Windsor (Section 3.1.2.3; RV12-14)

Historically and visually subservient to the Castle, the town has remained generally low rise and secondary in the experience of the setting of the Castle, as characterised by the view up Peascod Street (RV12), the planned view along Queen Anne's Ride (RV10) and the panorama from the Round Tower (RV1-4). Changes to the town's layout, density, or skyline could directly alter how the Castle is experienced on approach and from within the Castle.

The wider setting (Section 3.1.3, RV15-18)

Beyond the historic core, the Castle's setting includes towns, villages, and landscapes across the Thames Valley, including Eton, Datchet, and Slough. This wider setting supports an understanding of the Castle's changing role in English society. It includes kinetic views such as from railways (RV16) and long views from places like Richmond Hill and Upton Court Park in Slough (RV17). Many of these views are increasingly blocked by suburban sprawl, though some, like those from the Horlicks development (RV18), offer new opportunities to reinforce the Castle's architectural prominence.

Finally, a relatively new addition to views of the Castle in its wider setting is from aeroplanes taking off from or landing at Heathrow. While these clearly enable the Castle in its setting to be better appreciated, they come at the cost to the tranquillity of the setting, particularly from the Great Park.

Considerations for future development within the setting of Windsor Castle (Section 3.2)

The second half of Part 3 outlines practical considerations for development management. For development proposals that fall within the setting of Windsor Castle, it advises that planning authorities and applicants integrate heritage considerations into every stage of the development process.

Planning legislation, policy and guidance require Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to conserve designated heritage assets, the significance of which can derive not only from their physical presence but also from their setting. Furthermore, they must have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings in their consideration of applications for planning permission. As the setting of Windsor Castle is so exceptionally wide, these duties fall on a wide range of LPAs, including:

- Slough Borough Council (SBC)
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Buckinghamshire Council
- The London Borough of Richmond on Thames
- The London Borough of Hounslow
- The London Borough of Hillingdon
- The Greater London Authority
- Spelthorne Borough Council

The vulnerability of the setting of the Castle to developments in these authorities varies widely, from the highly vulnerable (particularly in relation to views from the Great Park) to the minimally vulnerable (the very long views from Richmond Hill or Maidenhead). All, however, have the potential to impact on the contribution made by setting to the significance of the Castle, so require careful consideration as part of the planning process, whether through preparation of Local Plans and other development plan documents, and when determining proposals for development.

As mentioned above, this study supports implementation of Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) on The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3). Steps 1 and 2 from GPA3 have been completed for this report (as part of chapters 1 and 2), which leaves:

- Step 3: Assess the effect of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: Explore Ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: Made and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

During each Step, the emphasis is as much on potential benefits to setting and maximising the potential for enhancement, as well as the consideration of harm. In such instances potential benefits could take the form of creating new views and additional wayfinding.

Specific application within Slough (section 3.2.2)

Part 3 of the report concludes with specific considerations for SBC (as joint commissioner of this report) on how it might manage development within the setting of the Castle, both in its forthcoming Local Plan and in its day-to-day development management.

The section acknowledges the need for urban regeneration in Slough but warns that unmanaged growth—particularly tall buildings—could harm the setting of Windsor Castle unless carefully mitigated.

Although principally directed at SBC, many of the considerations (which offer significant potential for enhancing setting) are also relevant to the other LPAs which fall within the Castle’s setting.

The considerations are arranged in relation to both the historic core and the wider landscape.

The historic core (section 3.2.2.2) (RV8-13)

For views from the Castle towards central Slough:

- A strategic approach to development quantum and massing in the town should be considered. This would contribute to creating a sense of place and wayfinding, and enhance visual interest when looking from the Castle.
- Proposals and new policies should support external building forms, materials and colours that may help developments harmonise with their setting.
- Developers are encouraged to provide designs that achieve a lively, varied and well-articulated roofscape across Slough, with the impact of rooftop plant part of the design considerations from the beginning of projects.

From the Great Park:

- Careful consideration is needed of the effect of breaches of the Chiltern skyline by way of development on the Castle’s prominence, dominance and architectural beauty.
- Appreciation of the Castle’s architectural beauty depends on the ability to discern its silhouette. Careful testing of new proposals for large-scale development can demonstrate the extent to which such legibility would be maintained.
- Proposals should adhere to the Design Code for the Simplified Planning Zone of the Trading Estate. Any development within the Trading Estate should consider the principles for design, height and materiality applied to development the Simplified Planning Zone.
- Consideration should be given to where individual development blocks, including tall buildings, could be introduced in central Slough with opportunities explored with regard to the wider skyline and potential clustering of buildings.
- As above, proposals and new policies should support external building forms, materials and colours in central Slough that may help developments harmonise with their setting.
- As above, designs that achieve a lively, varied and well-articulated roofscape across Slough are encouraged, with the impact of rooftop plant part of the design considerations from the beginning of projects.

In lower views within the Great Park:

- One of the areas of greatest potential harm to the Castle's significance comes from proposals that challenge its prominence, dominance and majestic silhouette, its intricate detail visible with increasing clarity as one heads north along the Long Walk. As above, careful testing of new proposals for large-scale development can demonstrate the extent to which such legibility would be maintained.
- Proposals for new buildings in Slough should respond sympathetically to the exceptional significance not only of the Castle but also associated designated heritage assets (including Windsor Great Park) individually and as an ensemble.

The wider Thames Valley (section 3.2.2.3) (RV15 -18)

Development in the wider Thames Valley should also be sensitive to cumulative visual impact.

- Important designed views of Windsor Castle within the wider landscape, for example from Upton Court Park, should be identified and protected through plan-making and considered as part of the assessment of impacts in the development management process.
- The opportunity to create new views (or reinstate lost views) should be explored in all new developments, such as through the layout of future development and the incorporation of communal gardens at ground or upper levels.

Part 4: Conclusions

Planning positively for new development within the setting of heritage assets can be a complicated process, particularly where that setting makes an important contribution to significance (as is the case at Windsor Castle). At the heart of the exercise is the need for a clear understanding of what it is we are trying to protect in the first place and why it is important.

This report provides an evidence base for those responsible for planning and managing future change within the setting of Windsor Castle and a crucial starting point to inform future assessment of the potential for development to affect its significance, to help avoid or minimise harm and seek opportunities to maximise enhancement.

Windsor Castle is a heritage asset of exceptional significance in both a national and international context (transcending its formal heritage designations as a scheduled monument and Grade I Listed building) and one that cannot be understood in isolation. It is a majestic landmark building, designed and depicted by some of the foremost architects and artists of their day. As the oldest and largest continuously occupied castle in the world, its historical, cultural, political, and religious importance spans nearly a millennium, created an enduring and highly visible symbol of the British Monarchy and nation, illustrative of the evolving purpose, appearance and function of royal castle architecture over an immense time depth.

Setting makes an inherent contribution to the Castle's significance and enhances the ways in which it is experienced by so many across an extraordinarily wide area. Its associated historic parkland shapes the way the way the Castle is experienced along the Long Walk. Also notable are its relationship with the river Thames and the town of

Windsor, which combine with the parkland to form an historic core of the Castle's setting. Its dominance over this wide section of the Thames Valley, including its relationship with landscape features, transport routes and settlements, further demonstrates the fundamental contribution made by setting to the Castle's significance.

Windsor Castle is vulnerable to future development within its setting, with varying levels of sensitivity ranging from the highly vulnerable (particularly in relation to designed views from the Great Park and the dynamic experience along the Long Walk) to the minimally vulnerable (the much longer distance views from Richmond Hill or Maidenhead).

It is important that future change is positively managed. It is therefore important that all Local Planning Authorities in the wide area of the Castle's setting have policies in place to enable potential impacts to be assessed. The Castle's exceptional significance and the potential for impacts upon it need to be considered in both plan making and decision making, as well as any masterplanning exercises undertaken for major new development. Relevant policies should encourage opportunities not just to conserve but also to enhance significance through positive change within the setting of Windsor Castle, and to contribute positively to the understanding and protection of its extraordinary significance.

Part 1: Introduction: setting the scene



1.1 Introduction

Windsor Castle holds exceptional and unique historical, cultural, political and religious significance to the story of the United Kingdom and the development of its Monarchy. It is one of only three occupied royal palaces used by the British Sovereign for both state functions and, significantly, as a home. It also houses the Royal Collegiate Chapel of St George, where many religious occasions, including royal marriages and funerals, have occurred and where many British monarchs are buried (also at the Frogmore Royal Burial Ground). The chapel is the central focus of the College of St George, founded in 1348 by Edward III at the same time as the Order of the Garter. The College is a specific religious community residing within a distinct complex of buildings occupying a quarter of the grounds of Windsor Castle.

It is the world's largest and oldest occupied castle, having been in continuous royal use for nearly a millennium since its foundation as a defensive fortress by William the Conqueror in c.1070. Subsequent British monarchs have also recognised the powerful message that the architecture of the Castle can convey and have shaped its development in various ways. The decision in 1917 to change the Royal Family dynasty name to Windsor reflects the strength of the Castle as a symbol. In that sense Windsor Castle can be seen as a physical reflection and symbol of the evolution of the role, image and function of the British Monarchy.

Windsor Castle is designated both as a Scheduled Monument and as a Grade I listed building (with other associated listed buildings in the Royal Mews and the Home Park), forms part of the Windsor Castle and Home Park Grade I registered park and garden, and is located within the Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area. There are many other associated and highly Graded designated heritage assets, particularly the registered landscapes of the Home and Great Parks and assets within them. Collectively they form an important ensemble that, taken together, contribute towards the immense sense of history and place associated with Windsor Castle. [Appendix 5.1 on page 138](#) includes more information on specific heritage designations.

The Castle has always sat proudly within the wider landscape setting of the Thames Valley with which it has an important and interwoven relationship. The location was specifically selected for its strategic and defensive advantages as a point of high ground at a convenient crossing point on the river Thames, asserting dominance and authority over its surroundings. The presence of the Castle has in turn influenced the development of the surrounding area, through the evolution of the town of Windsor and other settlements, including the founding of Eton College. Therefore, the Castle's setting makes a fundamental contribution to our understanding of its significance. Today it remains an iconic landmark that is experienced both near and far within a very wide area from Richmond to Maidenhead; its distinctive and familiar silhouette remaining for many the most tangible way to engage with and understand its architectural, historic and cultural importance.

Fig. 2: Previous page: Looking north along The Long Walk towards Windsor Castle, with Slough visible in the far distance [© Slough Borough Council]

The setting of the Castle has evolved considerably over time and will continue to do so. The Castle's historic core setting, including the Home and Great Parks and the town of Windsor itself, has emerged over centuries and constitutes an important ensemble. The wider Thames valley setting to the north has experienced great change since the mid-nineteenth century (notably with the arrival of the railways, development of Slough, the M4 and Heathrow Airport). In recent years, the pressure for residential and commercial development along the Thames Corridor has increased and the speed and scale of redevelopment within Slough has radically accelerated.

This report was commissioned jointly by Historic England and Slough Borough Council (SBC) in response to this pressure. It aims, firstly, to enable a clear understanding of how and why the current setting of Windsor Castle is important. Through identifying what elements of the Castle's setting are vulnerable to future development, it also provides considerations for SBC and other affected Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to inform local plan-making and decision-making. The overarching aim is to minimise harm to significance (at the least) and ideally to seek opportunities to enhance and better reveal the significance of the Castle.

The structure of the report is in two main parts: Part 2 serves as an evidence base for understanding the history and significance of Windsor Castle and the contribution made by its setting, both inherently and in terms of how this is experienced today. Part 3 provides some more targeted considerations for SBC in response to specific development pressures, although many of these considerations may be equally applicable to other LPAs in the wider area of the Castle's setting.



Fig. 3: 2022 aerial image of Windsor Castle from the south east [Source: Getty images]

What is setting and how should it be protected?

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) defines the setting of a heritage asset as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.’ (NPPF Annex 2).

The Castle is designated as a Scheduled Monument, meaning it is a nationally important archaeological site and protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) [Scheduled Monuments Policy Statement](#) (2013) states that the significance of ancient monuments derives not only from their physical presence but also from their setting.

It is also a Grade I listed building. Under the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#) Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a duty to assess the impact of development proposals on the setting of heritage assets. They must have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings both in their development control policies and, specifically, in the consideration of applications for planning permission.

National planning policy requires a proportionate assessment of significance, including the contribution made by setting, to be undertaken by local planning authorities and applicants (NPPF

paragraphs 207-208), with great weight to be given towards conserving significance in decision making (paragraph 212), and opportunities to be sought for new development within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance (paragraph 219).

For LPAs to be able to meet these requirements, there needs to be a clear and common understanding of what constitutes the setting of a given heritage asset, and the exact way in which setting contributes to its overall significance.

Historic England’s [Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 \(Second Edition\): The Setting of Heritage Assets](#) (GPA3) states:

All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.

For more information on relevant policy and legislation, refer to the Appendix ([Appendix 5.2 on page 141](#)).

1.2 Authorship, engagement and representative views

1.2.1 Authorship and appointment

This report, prepared by Alan Baxter Ltd., was commissioned in December 2024 by Historic England working in partnership with Slough Borough Council. The final version was issued in July 2025.

1.2.2 Engagement and consultation

Representatives from the following bodies were consulted during the preparation of this report. This included a workshop with stakeholders on 3rd March 2025, following which stakeholders were invited to comment on the draft report. A revised draft was shared with stakeholders in July 2025. Historic England and Slough Borough Council contributed throughout the project.

- Buckinghamshire Council
- The Royal Household Property Section
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- The College of St George
- The Crown Estate
- The Royal Collection Trust
- The Gardens Trust
- The Berkshire Gardens Trust

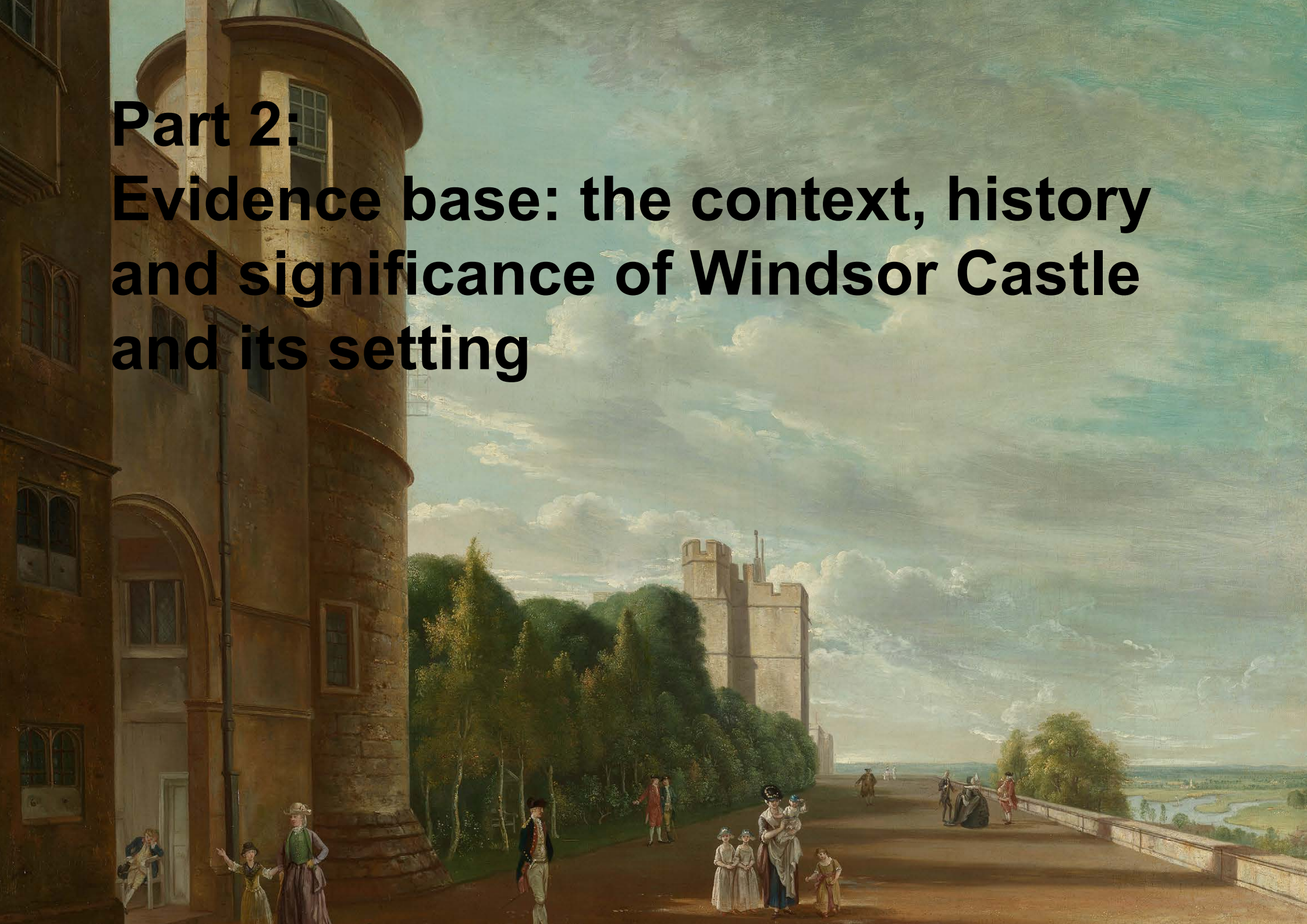
1.2.3 Note on methodology and representative views

The methodology for the study is outlined in [Appendix 5.4 on page 145](#). A range of historic and modern views of and from Windsor Castle are explored in Part 2 of this report, selected to inform the understanding of the contribution to significance made by setting in each component area. Part 3 also includes 18 'representative views' to assess vulnerability and sensitivity to change within the Castle's setting and explore how this can be positively managed. They are not intended to become reference views for the assessment of development proposals, which should be agreed on an individual basis. Rather, they are included to illustrate key points. They were photographed using a digital SLR camera but are not verified views.

It is also important to stress that a 'view' used to understand setting is about much more than what is being looked at (see [Part 5, Appendix 5.3 on page 143](#)). It is equally about the context in which the viewer experiences the view: are they looking from or across an already developed area? Are there other non-visual impacts (such as noise) which affect the experience? It is important to distinguish too between 'designed views', which are specifically focussed on the Castle, such as that down the Long Walk or in Upton Court Park, and views in which the Castle is a feature within a wider landscape.

Fig. 4: Next page: North Terrace, looking west, attributed to Paul Sandby c. 1774 [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 402416 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

**Part 2:
Evidence base: the context, history
and significance of Windsor Castle
and its setting**



2.1 Introducing Windsor and the Thames Valley

2.1.1 Geology and topography

Windsor Castle is situated on a prominent chalk outcrop overlooking the wide flood plain of the Thames where it significantly meanders, providing very wide-ranging views. The course of the Thames (shown in Fig. 6) was altered by the creation of the Jubilee River, a manmade flood relief channel laid out in the late-1990s / early-2000s, which splits from the Thames near Maidenhead and rejoins downstream from Eton and Windsor (see Fig. 7 on page 18).

The chalk outcrop is surrounded by a circle of Lambeth formation clay and silt, which extends to the north including the Slough area. This is overlain by superficial layers of gravel in the Windsor and Slough area, and silt and sand in the valley bottom.

To the south, the fertile Thames valley gives way to less fertile higher ground comprised of a thick layer of London clay, creating an undulating landscape of heath and scrub. Beyond Slough to the north, the underlying chalk of the Chiltern Hills produces a more densely wooded landscape.

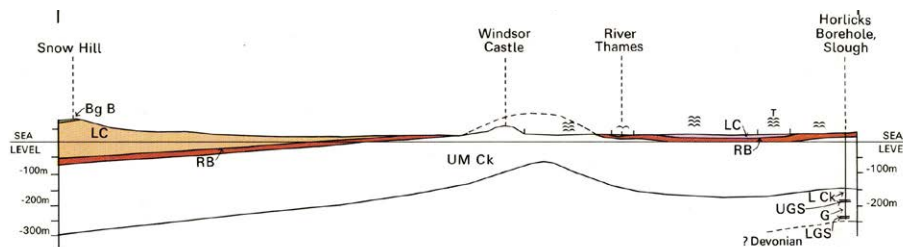


Fig. 5: Section through Windsor, detail from geology map [C12/003-LSCSL British Geological Survey. © NERC. All rights reserved]

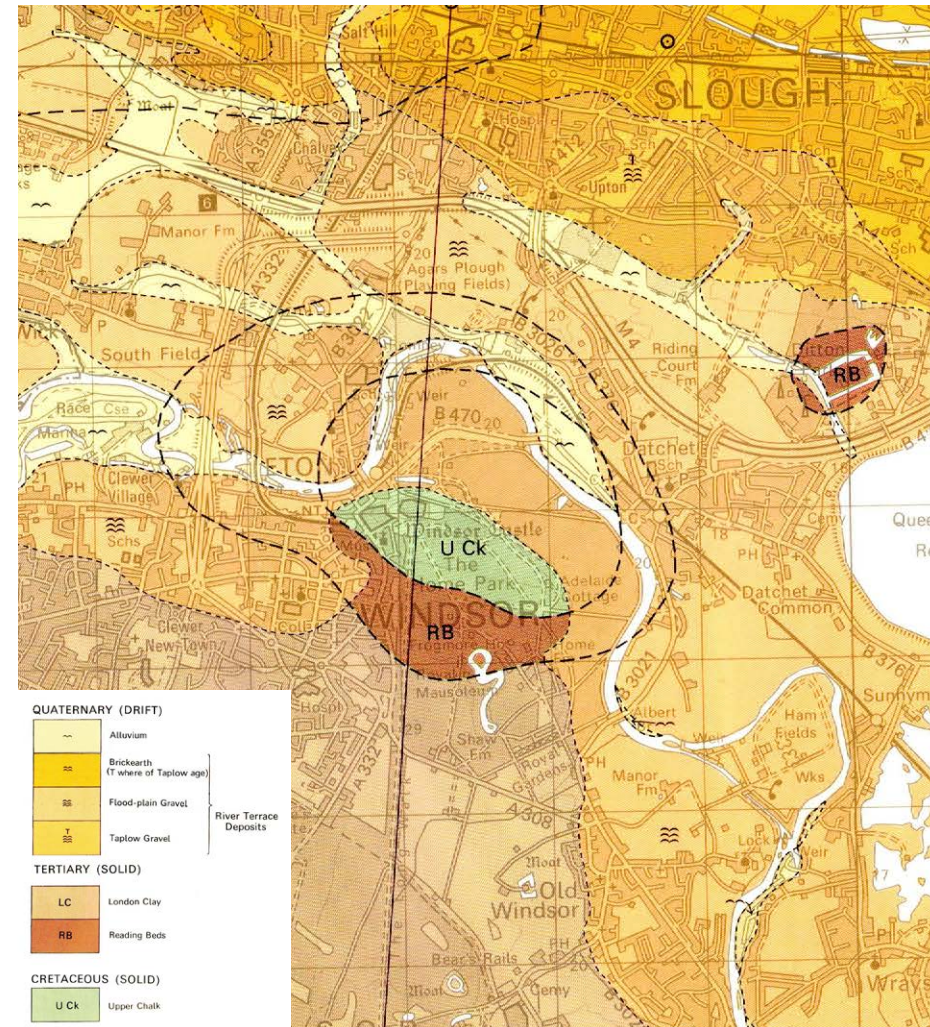


Fig. 6: Geology of the Windsor area, detail from 1981 geology map [C12/003-LSCSL British Geological Survey. © NERC. All rights reserved]

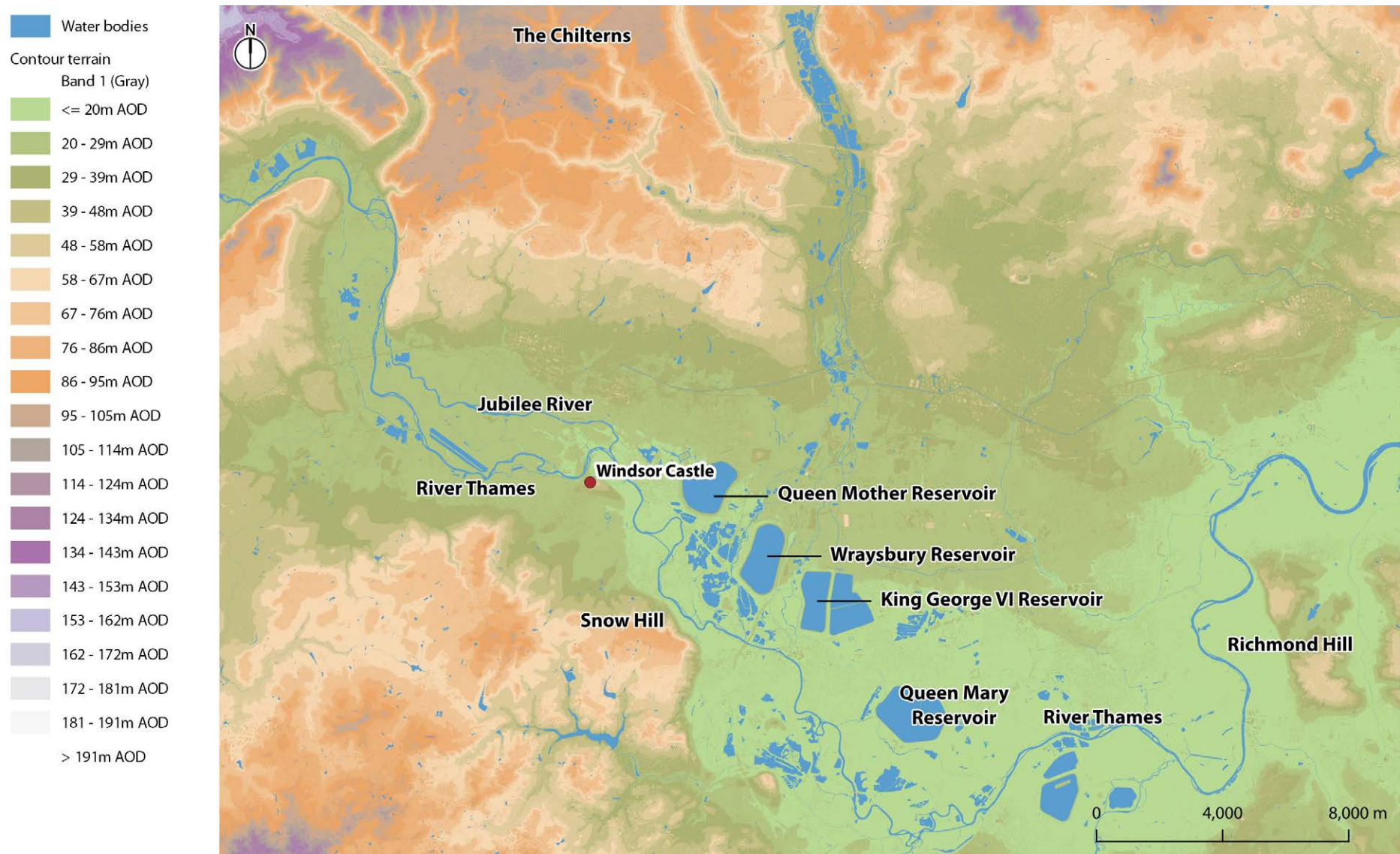


Fig. 7: Terrain within the Thames Valley, showing land levels and the extent of river basin and flood plain

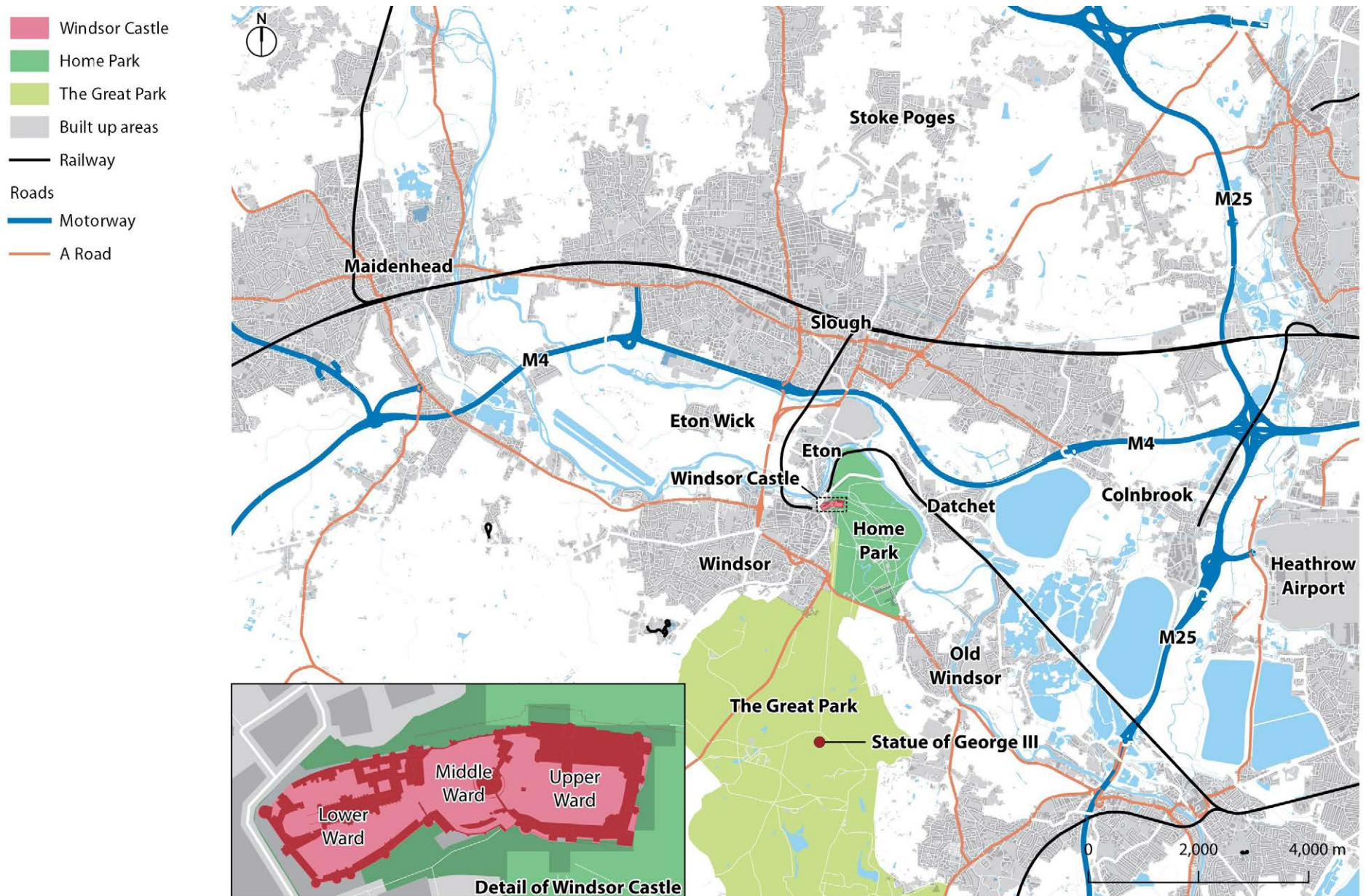


Fig. 8: The context of the Windsor Estate: the Home and Great Parks, key settlements, landmarks and transport routes within the Thames Valley

2.1.2 The surrounding landscape, settlements and key transport routes

The Castle and its context are inextricably linked and have constituted an interdependent relationship for nearly a thousand years.

Unpicking a deep and complex layering of natural landscape and man-made settlements is beyond the scope of this study, but in simple terms it is possible to set out the Castle's siting as it exists today:

2.1.2.1 The Castle and associated parkland

The Castle

Windsor Castle occupies a prominent position on a ridge overlooking the River Thames to the north. Its layout reflects its historic, dual role as a fortress and a royal palace, with distinct elements that have evolved to accommodate changing needs.

The Castle is divided into three main sections, or wards:

The Upper Ward comprises the principal built elements of the Castle and serves as the main residential area. Enclosing The Quadrangle (a central lawn) are the State Apartments and private quarters which provide access to the North and East Terraces.

The Quadrangle serves as the focal point for ceremonial events, whilst the East Terrace Garden is a formal garden that sits between the Castle and Home Park and provides panoramic views north and east across the Thames Valley.

The Middle Ward acts as a transitional space between the Upper and Lower Wards. It is dominated by the Round Tower, which sits atop a

motte and houses the Royal Archive. The Round Tower is a feature which represents the Castle's defensive origins, and its elevated position provides long-distance views of the surrounding landscape.

The Lower Ward includes the College of St George, the Military Knights' Residences and St. George's Chapel, effectively the spiritual heart of the Castle, which hosts royal weddings, funerals, and the annual Garter Day ceremony.

The Castle's perimeter is defined by a stone curtain wall with several towers, including the Edward III, George IV, and Curfew Towers. These walls and towers were built to aid the Castle's defensive capabilities while simultaneously creating a visually striking profile.

Beyond the Castle's perimeter walls are:

The Great Park: Historically serving as a royal hunting ground, today this is a semi-public park managed by The Crown Estate. Some areas are beyond public access and include royal residences. The Long Walk is the most identifiable feature of the Great Park: a straight, tree-lined avenue running 2.6 miles south from the Castle's South Gate to a raised statue of King George III. Running southwest, to the west of The Long Walk, is Queen Anne's Ride, another straight, tree-lined path.

Home Park: Home Park lies on the eastern side of the Castle and includes the Frogmore estate, which comprises 33 acres and is home to Frogmore House and the Royal Mausoleum (which houses the tomb of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert). The area of Home Park that lies north of King Edward VII Avenue is publicly accessible and is principally used as playing fields for Windsor Rugby Club.

2.1.2.2 Neighbouring settlements

Windsor

The town of Windsor developed around the Castle, its compact layout reflecting its historical role as a settlement to aid the function of the royal residence. The medieval street layout remains clearly discernible, centred on 'Guildhall Island', which contains a dense collection of medieval buildings and alleys covering part of the historic market area next to the parish church of St John the Baptist and the Guildhall, located immediately to the south of the Castle's Lower Ward.

Thames Street wraps around the northwest end of the Lower Ward. Between Guildhall Island and the Castle, the ancient crossroads of Peascod Street, High Street, Castle Street and Thames Street, now marked by the statue of Queen Victoria and the Queen Elizabeth II memorial fountain, forms a central node in the town. From here the key approach leads up Castle Hill to the Castle's main entrances of Henry VIII Gate and the tourist entrance through Lower Yard.

Later expansion of the town includes residential Georgian and Victorian neighbourhoods with many intact terraces as well as later twentieth-century developments. Legoland Windsor Resort is located on the south-east outskirts of the town.

Datchet

Datchet is a village east of Windsor, located on the river Thames with rail connections to London. The village is mainly residential, with some notable historic buildings, including the Grade II listed St. Mary's Church.

Eton, Eton Wick and Eton College

Eton is a small town lying between Windsor and Slough, connected to Windsor by the pedestrian Windsor Bridge. Eton Wick is a small village west of Eton, known for its open spaces and woodland. Eton College is a school founded in 1440 and contains some of the grandest historic buildings on the north bank of the river, including Eton College Chapel.

Slough

Slough is a large town with a population of nearly 160,000. It has a strong business and industrial culture, being home to Slough Trading Estate and large commercial buildings. It has good transport links, including Crossrail (Elizabeth Line), making it a popular home for commuters to London. The town has a large population and various commercial and residential developments. Slough is ethnically diverse, with over 60% classed as an ethnic minority and nearly half of residents defining themselves as 'Asian or Asian British' in the 2021 census.

Stoke Poges

Stoke Poges is a village north of Slough, in what is now a semi-rural suburb. The village is on the edge of Stoke Park Registered Park and Garden (Grade II), which is home to Stoke Park golf and country club and Stoke Park mansion (Grade I listed building), the latter providing limited long-range views south towards Windsor Castle.

Maidenhead

Maidenhead is a town on the River Thames, northwest of Windsor and west of Slough. It is an established commercial centre and commuter town, with a mix of residential, commercial, and leisure buildings.

2.1.2.3 Undeveloped landscapes in the Thames Valley

Despite the extent of settlement across the Thames Valley, areas of undeveloped landscape remain. These serve as remnants of ancient woodland areas and as important spaces for the local community.

- Burnham Beeches, north of Slough, is an ancient beech and oak woodland, with heathland and ponds that is now a National Nature Reserve (NNR).
- Black Park, north of Slough, now a country park, with 500 acres of woodland, a large lake, and trails.
- Braywick Nature Reserve near Maidenhead comprises woodlands, wetlands, and meadows.
- Farnham Common and Woodlands is an area of mixed woodland with footpaths and bridleways that forms an important component of the Chilterns National Landscape.

2.1.2.4 Transport infrastructure

Windsor has a well-developed transport network. Despite its size, Windsor accommodates two railway stations with frequent branch line connections to the Great Western Mainline (north, via Slough) and the mainline that runs southwest from Waterloo to Reading (via Staines). It is connected to the M4 motorway (via Junction 6), providing fast, direct access to London and Reading, as well as the A308, A332, and A355, which connect Windsor to nearby Maidenhead, Ascot, and Bracknell. These roads also carry direct bus services.

The river, once historically an important arterial route to and from London, is now primarily used for private leisure services. During the summer, regular leisure cruises run between Windsor and Maidenhead.

Windsor's most notable piece of nearby transport infrastructure is Heathrow Airport, one of the world's busiest airports and only 16km to the east. Transport links to Heathrow from London extend the reach of the city deep into the Thames Valley: where Heathrow is connected to London by the underground, for example, London's other airports (Gatwick, Luton, and Stansted) are only reachable by train or coach.

2.1.2.5 Local governance

Berkshire had a county council until 1998, after which the county's six existing district councils became unitary authorities: Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham. Windsor falls within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Buckinghamshire Council is a unitary authority, created in 2020.

2.1.3 Theoretical visibility of Windsor Castle in the wider landscape

A key feature of the Castle's setting (discussed further within this report) is the historic presence and visibility of the Castle from long distances. The Castle's location on a steep ridge, contrasted with the low-lying valley floor of the river, would have been a defining feature of its appearance for those arriving at the Castle. Even modest structures on top of the motte would have provided a silhouette when viewed from low-lying areas.

By the late-nineteenth century within low-lying areas the Castle's long-range visibility would have still been clearly discernible, as evidenced by historic photographs. However, twentieth-century development, particularly suburban development following the Second World War, has gradually reduced such views, as has the growth of and increased protection for mature trees (so river views now increasingly offer only glimpsed views in summer).

On the following page a 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' diagram illustrates both the wide views afforded from the Castle on its high chalk outcrop but also the strong visibility of the Castle from the wider landscape, today. The purple areas indicate areas visible from the tallest point of the Round Tower, and conversely, areas from which the Round Tower can be seen. The diagram is based on 'last return' lidar data, which excludes the majority of tree canopies, meaning that visibility will be considerably less than illustrated when trees are in full summer leaf.

The diagram confirms that the Castle is visible from a very wide and diverse set of viewpoints. Where these views are roads or rail routes, such views will be glimpsed and kinetic. Where they fall within

managed landscapes, the landscape may be arranged in such a way to reveal the Castle (most often through a tree-cutting). In broad terms, the Castle is visible across the following areas:

- Low-lying areas such as meadows and the flood plain either side of the River Thames. Today, this survives in areas north of the river, such as the Brocas, Eton Wick, Dorney and Dorney Common.
- Developed settlements such as Slough (to the north); Datchet and Runnymede (to the east); and tall buildings within Maidenhead (to the west). On particularly fine days, the Castle is also visible from Heathrow airport and Richmond Hill (both to the east).
- Medium-range views looking north from Windsor Great Park, often through designed viewing corridors (described further, later in this section).
- Long-distance views on clear days from localised areas of the Chilterns to the north, looking south.

The historic positioning of the Castle is clear in this diagram, as the ideal strategic position to control and assert dominance over the valuable land and transport routes of the Thames Valley. For the purposes of this study, this ZTV model has been used as starting point to assess how the Castle is experienced from a range of distances.

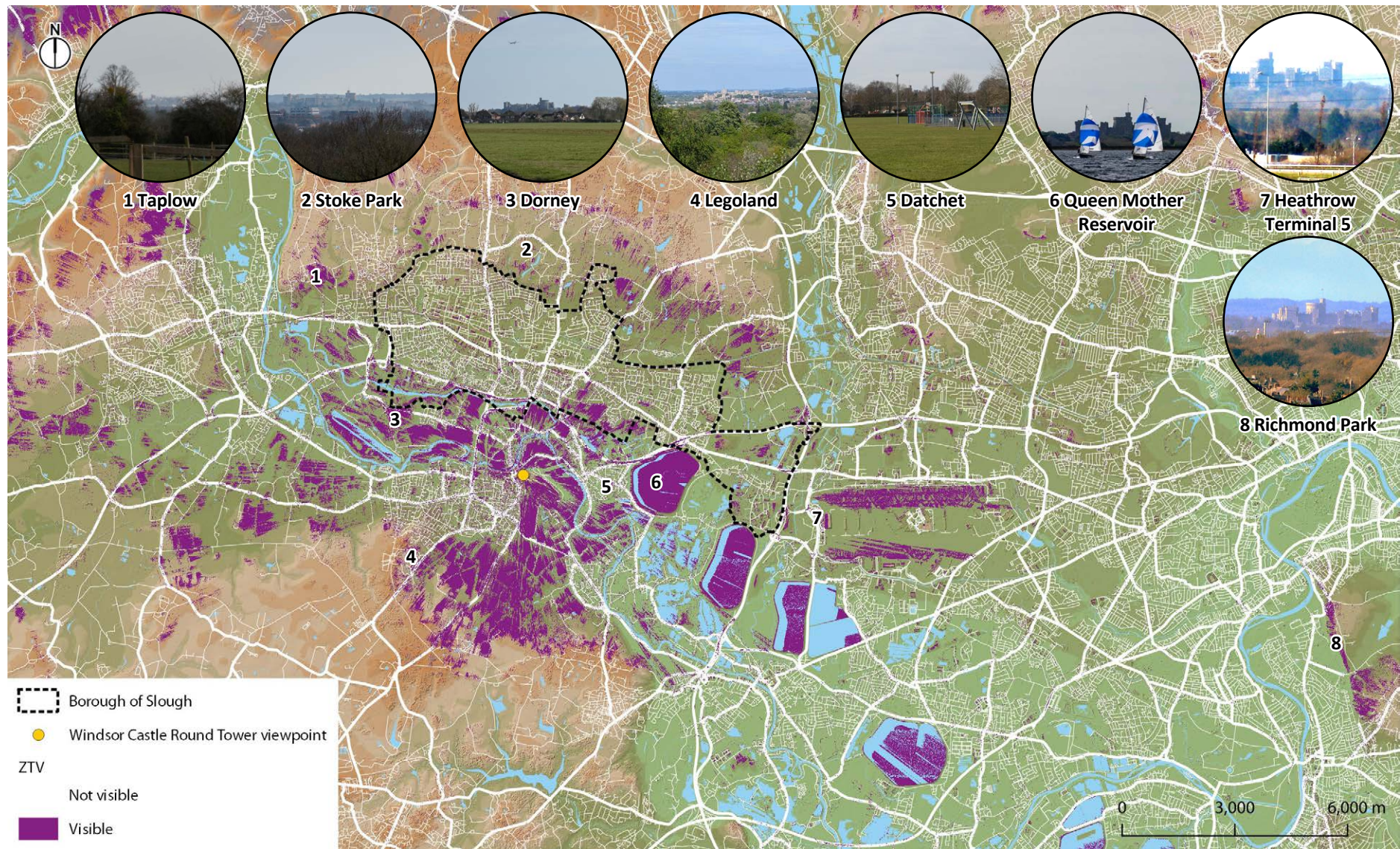


Fig. 9: A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) diagram, showing the general level of visibility of Windsor Castle today [Source: all photographs by Alan Baxter Ltd except 6 which is © David Dyson, 7 which is © Anthony Falla, and 8 which is sourced from AndyScott on Wikimedia]

2.2 Historical development of Windsor Castle, its estate and surroundings

The evolution of Windsor Castle is closely intertwined with its surrounding landscape: both the estate lands within its formal control and the wider areas that have developed independently. Tracing the evolution of such a wide area is complex and challenging, but historic analysis has identified relationships between alterations to the Castle and its setting, most forcefully demonstrated between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

This section begins with a summary timeline (on the following page) which provides an overview of this historic development with three parallel lines for the Castle, the historic parkland and Windsor town, and the wider landscape.

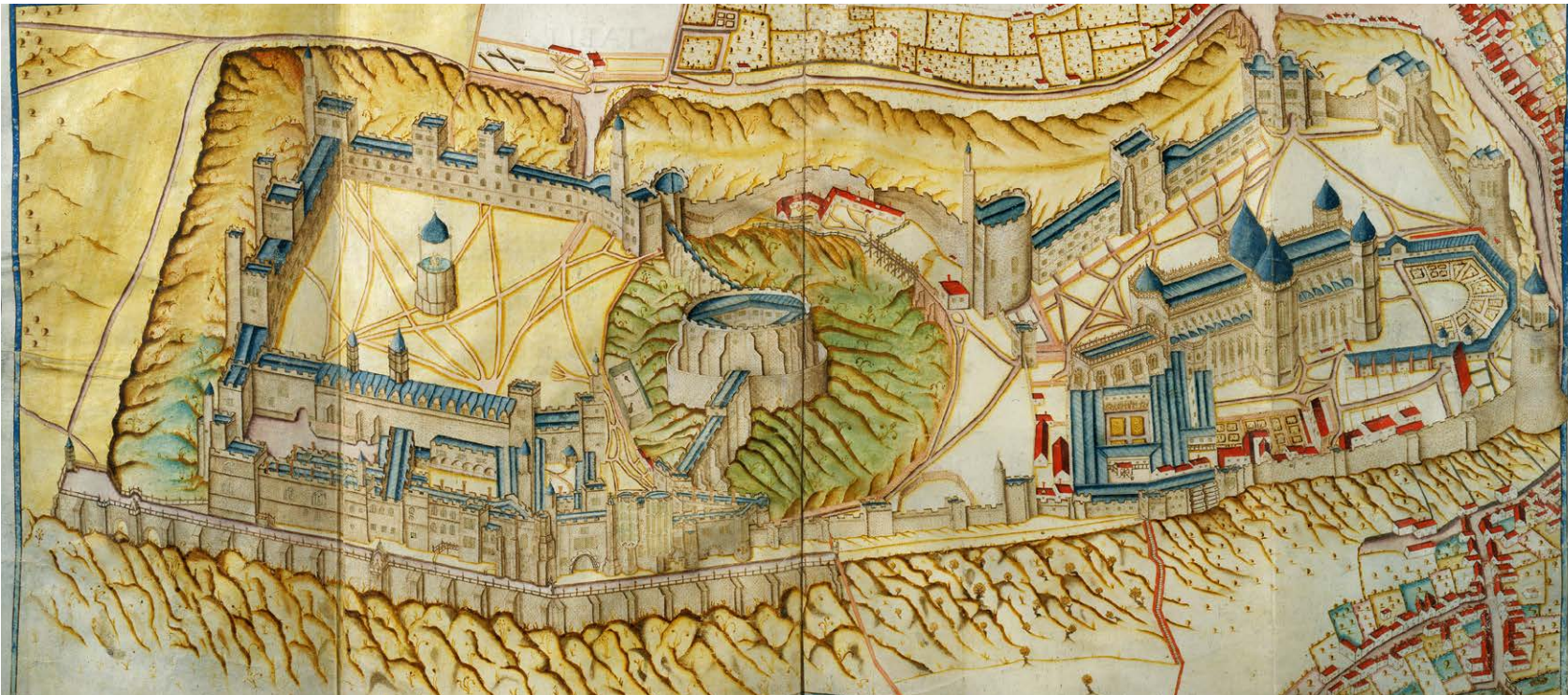
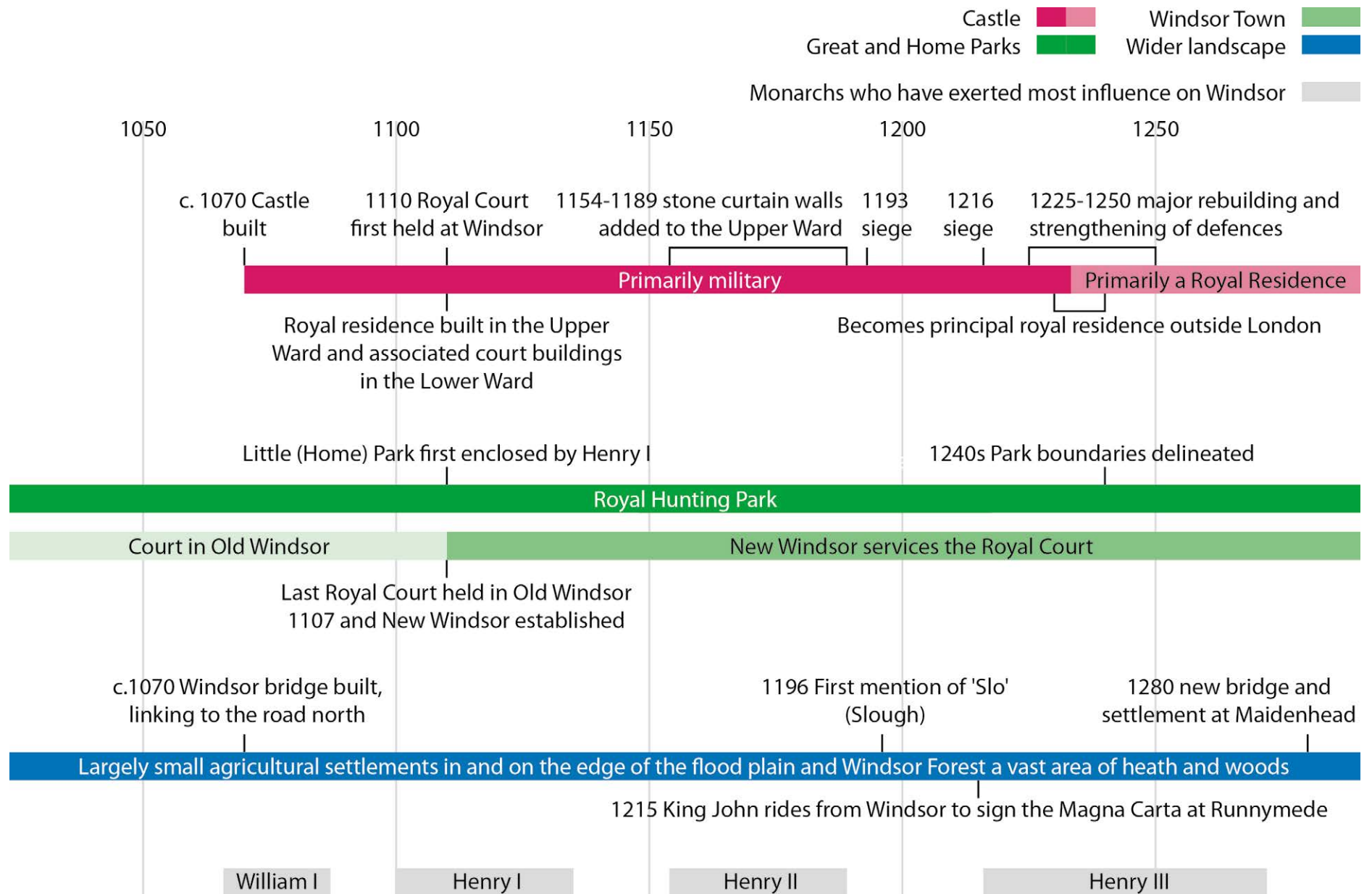
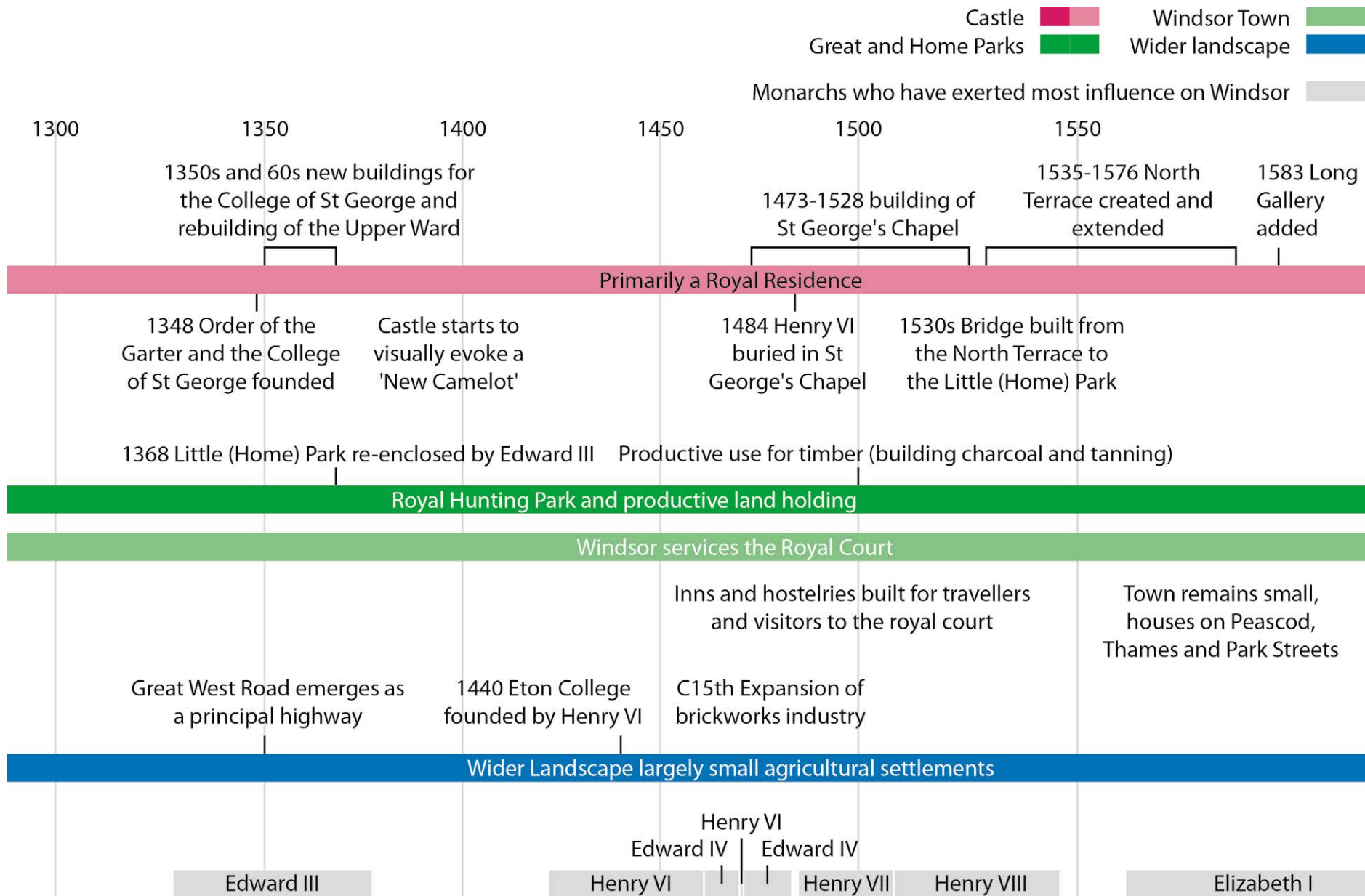
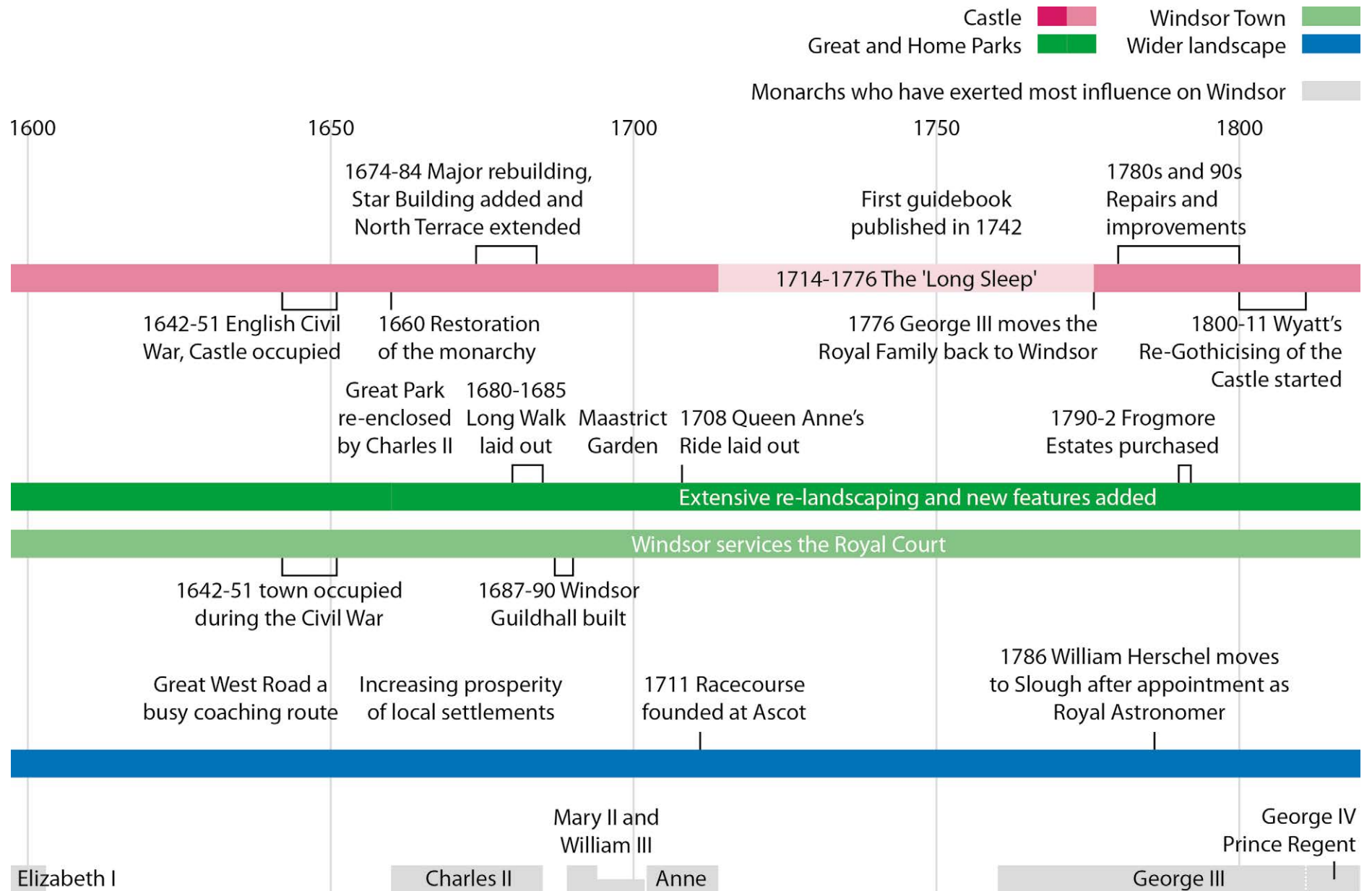
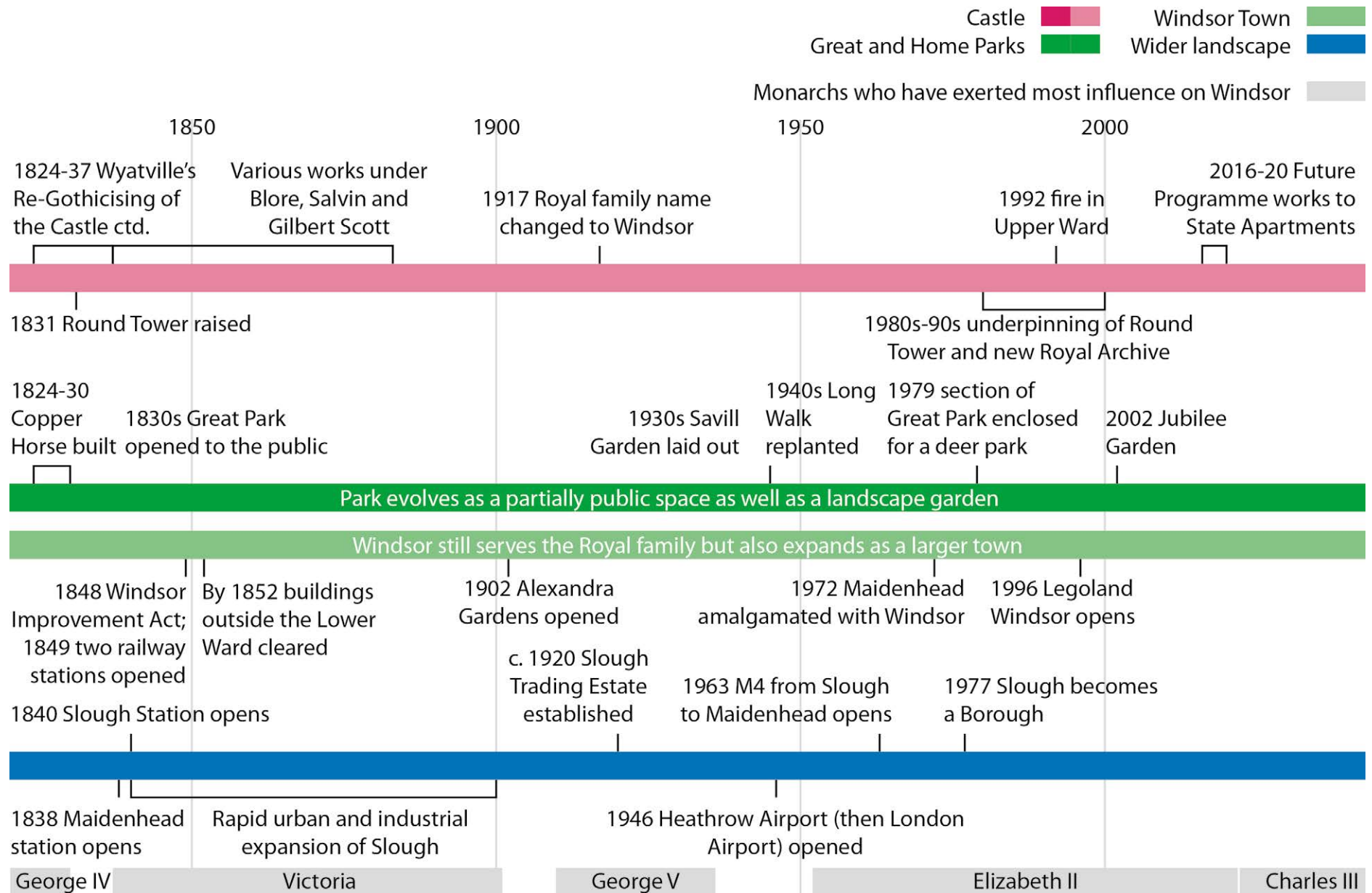


Fig. 10: Perspective view of Windsor Castle by John Norden, 1607 [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 1142252 / © HM King Charles III 2025]









The following summary is focused on developments that affected Windsor Castle's relationship to its setting and is heavily informed by the very comprehensive *Windsor Castle: a Thousand Years of a Royal Palace* edited by Steven Brindle (2018) and other sources (see [Appendix 5.5 on page 147](#)).

2.2.1 Pre-Norman Conquest

The River Thames dictated the earliest patterns of development in the Thames valley. The wide river valley was likely to have been well-occupied during the Iron Age and Roman period, with small settlements and villa farms. The alluvial flood plain formed excellent agricultural land, but was also subject to regular flooding, causing early riverside settlements to be located either on the edge of the floodplain (Upton) or on 'islands' of gravel deposits (Datchet, Eton). The meandering Thames also dictated movement and travel, being both a navigable river but also a significant obstacle to road travel. Key ancient crossing points usually made use of areas where the wide river braided into narrower channels, such as at Staines.

The area which was later to become Slough and Windsor was bypassed by the major network of Roman roads (see [Fig. 11 on page 31](#)). The principal Roman road west from Londinium (London) angled downwards towards Calleva (Silchester), crossing the river Thames at Pontes (Staines) and running west, through what is now Windsor Forest and the southern edge of Windsor Great Park. A more conjectural road known as the Camlet Way may have connected St Albans with Silchester via a bridge or ford at Sashes Island at Cookham north-west of Slough.

There is archaeological evidence that the chalk outcrop on which Windsor Castle sits was occupied during the bronze age and the Romano-British period, and it seems likely due to its strategic position. Before 1066, the closest settlement was the Saxon settlement of Clewer (the name meaning 'the dwellers by the cliff').

Old Windsor (known only as Windsor until the erection of Windsor Castle and the associated settlement) is situated to the southeast of Windsor, downstream on a slightly raised area of gravel close to the Thames. In an ideal location for river travel, farming and fishing, but also protected from flooding, it was inhabited from at least the Roman period, with some evidence of a Roman Villa in the village. By the late-sixth or early-seventh century, it was an established settlement and grew significantly in size and importance in the seventh to eighth century.

Excavations in the village revealed an extensive complex of highly appointed buildings, indicating that this was a wealthy and significant town, some argue the most significant Saxon town in the Berkshire area, and is likely to have been 'used intermittently by the royal court' [Dodd, 2014]. It was attractive for its good river connections for trade and transport, but also for the excellent hunting available in the adjacent parkland (now part of Windsor Great Park) which had been used for sport and hunting by the royal court from as early as the Saxon period. After a period of disuse in the ninth century, during which fire destroyed many of the buildings, the town became a significant royal venue once again in the mid-eleventh century, when Edward the Confessor held several royal councils in the town.

Many other settlements in the Thames valley had their origins in the Saxon period, although there are few surviving indicators of this apart from the place name suffixes which usually indicate a Saxon origin, such as 'ham' (e.g Burnham, Farnham, Cippenham), and 'ton' (e.g. Eton, Upton). The area which is now encompassed by the Borough of Slough began as a collection of small scattered agricultural settlements, including Upton and Chalvey (an 'ey' was an island), and Langley to the east (the village of Slough seems to have developed later). Most would have been small agricultural communities, and those close to the Thames would additionally have tended eel fisheries, the pattern remaining largely unchanged until the early-nineteenth century.

The modern road network of the area also has its origins in the Saxon period. The modern Wexham Road and Stoke Poges Lane are likely to be Saxon-era roads, which once connected Upton and Chalvey to the administrative capital at Stoke Poges. The A4, the modern Bath Road, is likely to have originated as a Saxon route from the Roman Road in Hounslow (the A315) to Henley, diverging from the modern route west of Slough to cross the Thames at Cookham (where the Romans had also built a crossing).

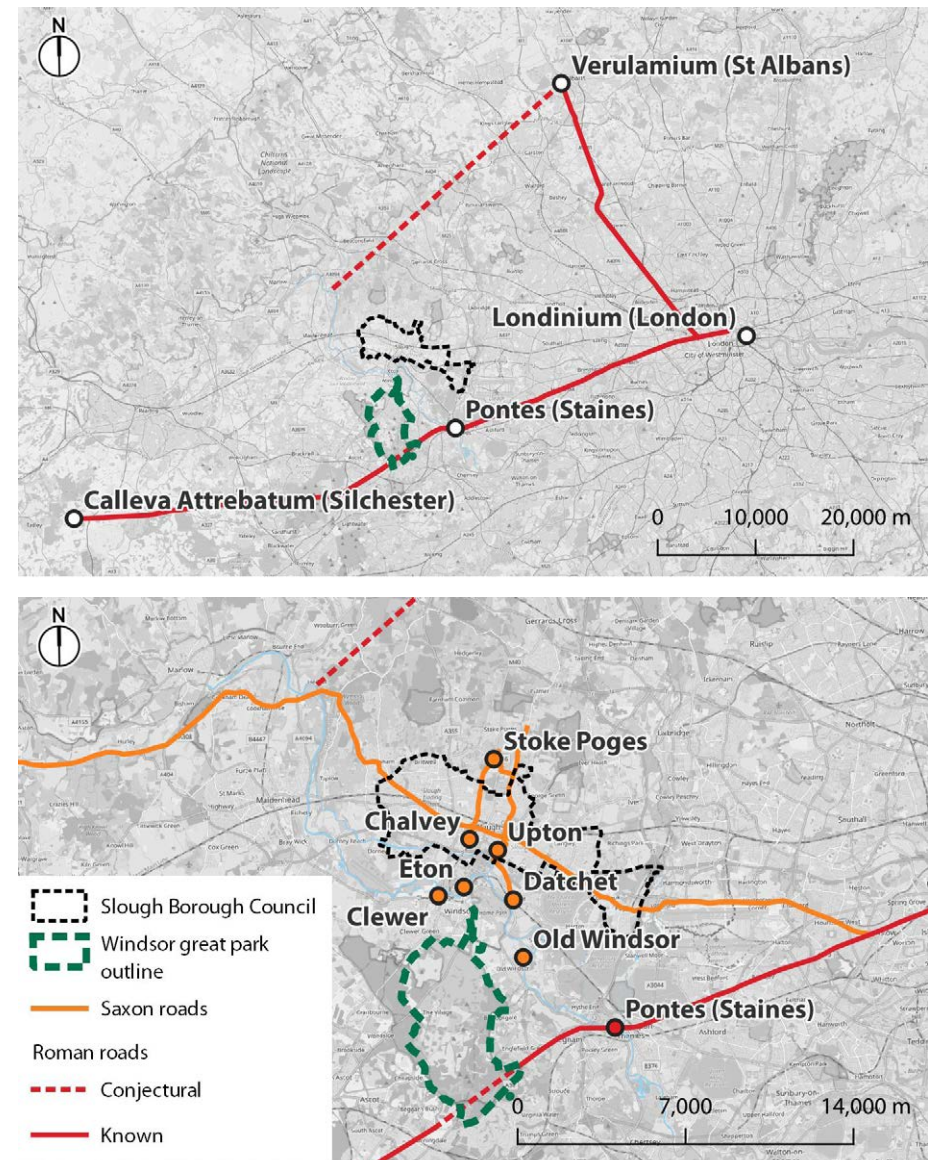


Fig. 11: The Roman road network (top) and the Saxon Road network (bottom) of the wider area

2.2.2 Late-eleventh century

After the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror (r. 1066-1087) commandeered the Saxon settlement of Old Windsor for his own private residence and began construction of Windsor Castle c.1070, one of many built as part of his campaign to suppress post-Conquest unrest in the Thames Valley. The Castle was perfectly and intentionally sited to dominate its surroundings, symbolically and militarily, as a visual reminder of the new power over land which had once belonged to the last Saxon Kings and the people who served them.

The Castle was originally built as a motte-and-bailey fortification with a wooden keep on a raised earthen mound or 'motte' (one of the largest ever built in the country) and a wooden palisaded enclosure or 'bailey' (broadly what is now the Middle Ward). Despite the site being far closer to the Saxon settlement of Clewer than the settlement of Windsor (from this point on called Old Windsor), the name was chosen for its historic royal associations.

William I ordered the construction of a new bridge and road north from Windsor, passing through Eton and connecting to the London and Henley Road at Slough. This became the principal roadway access to Windsor Castle from London, via Hounslow; all visitors to the Castle would have arrived via this road route or via barges on the Thames until the nineteenth-century arrival of the railway.

By the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 part of the area that now forms the Great Park had been enclosed, and Forest Law, brought in by William I, restricted hunting to the nobility and introduced harsh penalties for poachers and foragers. Windsor Forest was, in the Middle Ages, a vast area of heath and woods extending from Reading to the eastern country boundary and out into Surrey.

2.2.3 Twelfth and thirteenth centuries

Court was first held at Windsor in 1110 under Henry I (r. 1100-1135), by which point the Castle had been transformed into a permanent royal residence. Works included the construction of the Upper Ward (royal apartments), probably in stone, and the Lower Ward (buildings associated with the royal court including the King's Hall). The Castle thus began to serve dual purposes: a military stronghold and an official royal residence. Henry I also enclosed an area around the Castle outcrop for hunting called the 'Little Park' (later Home Park).

After the relocation of the royal court from Old Windsor, the last court taking place in 1107, Old Windsor declined rapidly from one of the largest settlements in Berkshire to a small subservient village with only a few surviving buildings in 1359; it remains a small and quiet village today.

A new settlement was designed around the Castle, with a marketplace aligned with the Castle gate. Peascod Street, on a direct alignment with the Castle, was a principal and affluent street in New Windsor. From its inception as a designed attendant town for the royal court, the history of the town of Windsor has been inextricably linked to the history of the royal occupants in the Castle.

The name Slough (or 'Slo') is first mentioned in 1196, at which point it was a small settlement which had grown up on the intersection between what is now the A4 and the road to Eton and Windsor. The name probably derives from a nearby boggy area or mire, sometimes called a 'slough'. To the west, on the west side of Chalvey Brook, lay the settlement of Salt Hill with origins in the medieval period as the site of a mill.

Under Henry II (r. 1154-1189) stone defensive curtain walls began to replace the wooden defences, including around the Upper Ward. Further building work was undertaken to the King's Houses in the Upper Ward and a replacement stone keep was erected on top of the motte (possibly begun under Henry I). By this time Windsor was important but not yet pre-eminent, rather part of a series of royal residences with good access to the Solent and the crossing to Normandy.

Under Richard I (r. 1189-1199) and King John (r. 1199-1216) Windsor Castle was besieged twice, first in 1193 and again in 1216. It held but sustained extensive damage, as did the town of Windsor. It was from Windsor that King John rode out to Runnymede (to the southeast beyond Old Windsor) to sign the Magna Carta in 1215.

Major building works to the Castle were carried out from 1224 under Henry III (r. 1216-1272). While, like his predecessors, the King spent much time at Westminster Palace, from the late-1230s onwards Windsor Castle became the principal royal residence outside of London. This was a rich period of royal building and court culture and the first time we know that the Monarch's intentions in commissioning building work were artistic as well as religious and political.

Works included the creation of the Great Tower on the motte in 1225, a new 'Great Chapel' dedicated to Edward the Confessor and the Virgin Mary (where the Albert Memorial Chapel now stands), the construction of the south curtain wall of the Middle Ward and towers, the extension and enclosure of the Lower Ward, three new towers on the North Curtain Wall, and the reconstruction of the main gate (the precursor to the Henry VIII Gate). These significant changes enhanced the Castle's defensive capabilities and its appearance from great distances.



Fig. 12: Painted head, wall painting from the c.1248 decoration of Henry III's chapel, which has been reset in the narthex to the Albert Memorial Chapel [© Historic England]

In 1240, Henry III delineated a new park (physically separate from the Little Park close to the Castle), significantly larger (c.1,500 acres) than today's Great Park, probably incorporating the earlier one, adding a moated manor house (near what is now Virginia Water) between 1244 and 1246. The land was valued for its timber (used as a building material, for making charcoal and bark for tanning) and grazing as much as it was for a royal hunting ground. Local inhabitants would have been able to roam the parkland, graze livestock and collect dead wood, practices that would continue until the eighteenth century.

In circa 1280 a new bridge was built across the Thames at Maidenhead, after which the town developed on the border of Cookham and Bray. This allowed a more direct route west avoiding the previous diversion to the crossing at Cookham. The Great West Road became one of the principal highways in Britain, connecting London with the west, and was the main road route to Windsor.

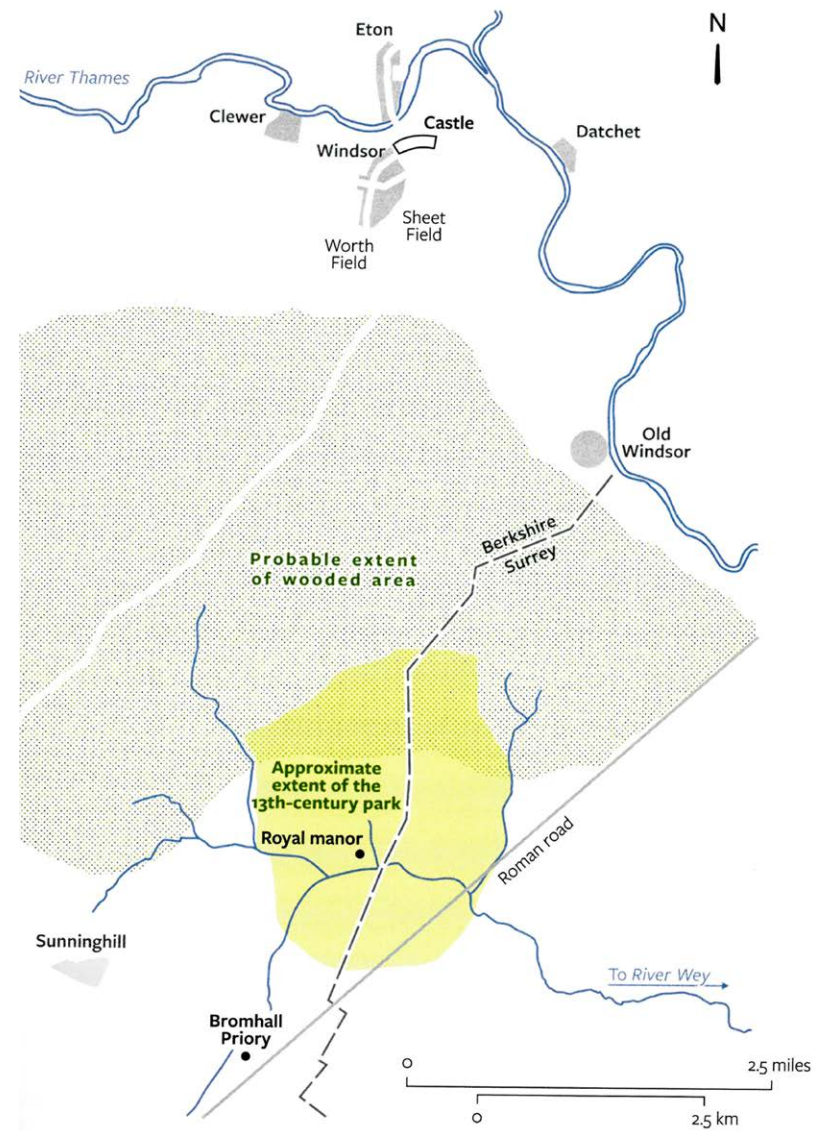


Fig. 13: The Castle and its historic setting in the late-thirteenth century [© Brindle ed., Windsor Castle (2018) p. 77]

2.2.4 Fourteenth century

Under the long reign of Edward III (r. 1327-1377) extensive changes were made to Windsor Castle, which had been found in a state of decay in 1327. This period saw the rise of chivalry, pageantry and tournaments and the Castle was proudly reimagined as the new Camelot, inspired by the legends of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table to serve as a prestigious symbol for the restored Monarchy.

Edward III established the Order of the Garter in 1348 and, religion being integral to chivalry, founded the College of St George to serve as a spiritual community with a priestly body to mirror the 24 Knight Companions who (with the King and Prince of Wales) made up the Order. Edward rededicated the Lower Ward chapel to St George as patron saint of the Order, holding an annual feast and tournament on St George's Day (which still occurs today as Garter Day). A range of new collegiate buildings were constructed in the Lower Ward in 1350-55, including the Dean's Cloister, the Aerary Porch, the Canon's lodgings and part of the Military Knights' Lodgings. Steps were added at the foot of the north slope between the Castle and the Canons' Cemetery, known as the Hundred Steps.

Major expansion of the Upper Ward was carried out in the 1360s to create luxurious royal apartments, which form the shell of the current State Apartments. These apartments included tall rectangular towers and octagonal stair turrets deliberately designed to project above the surrounding castle walls. Taken together they create the appearance of a royal citadel on the hilltop, the essence of which remains today, Caernarfon Castle being one of the most likely sources of inspiration for the dramatic silhouette. The 'Spicerie' Gate (now Norman Gate), linking

the Upper and Lower Wards, was also built as part of this extensive remodelling.

By the late-fourteenth century, the Great Park had taken on dimensions closer to its current size (see Fig. 15 on page 36). At that time, Windsor Forest housed five royal lodges (all of which are now lost) and six parks, with the Great Park being the largest. Edward III re-enclosed the 'Little Park' (now Home Park) in 1368.

The manor house of Upton Court was built in the mid-fourteenth century, close to the twelfth-century Church of St Laurence and the Great West Road (now the A4). The timber framed house had wings added in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, was extensively altered in the nineteenth century, and survives today.



Fig. 14: Map of Windsor Great Park from John Norden's 'Description of the Honor of Windsor', 1607 [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 1142252 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

2.2.5 Fifteenth century

Throughout the medieval period until the Reformation, visitors to Windsor would probably have used the Great West Road as their principal route accessed by the road through Eton. Henry VI (r.1422-1461 and 1461-71) founded Eton College in 1440, as a collegiate school for boys linked to King's College Cambridge, consciously endowing it with relics to make it a place of pilgrimage. The parish of Eton had been founded by the tenth century, buildings growing up around the thirteenth-century market place and along the spine of the Windsor Road, surrounded by open fields (most of which have survived to this day, Eton being one of the few English parishes that was never enclosed). Within Windsor Town, inns and hostelries were built to accommodate travellers and visitors to the royal court, number increasing from 1484 with pilgrims of the cult of Henry VI visiting his tomb in St George's Chapel.

Under Edward IV (r.1461-1483) work on St. George's Chapel began in 1473 as a new home for the Order of the Garter and mausoleum, its roof and nave complete by 1496. The delicate gothic silhouette of the chapel, unique in its magnificence among chapels and collegiate churches (see Fig. 17), became as it is now a distinctive component of the Castle's skyline. Other collegiate buildings including Horseshoe Cloister and Marbeck were added to the Lower Ward. A depiction of the Castle's form in circa 1450 can be seen in the earliest known image of the Castle in a manuscript of Ranulf Higden's Polychronicon (Fig. 16)

Throughout this period Slough would have been a predominantly agricultural village, but a nearby source of brickearth supplied brickmaking kilns in the area from an early date. Henry VI ordered a brickmaking kiln to be erected in Slough in 1442 for the bricks to build Eton College. Brick manufacturing continued in the area well into the twentieth century.

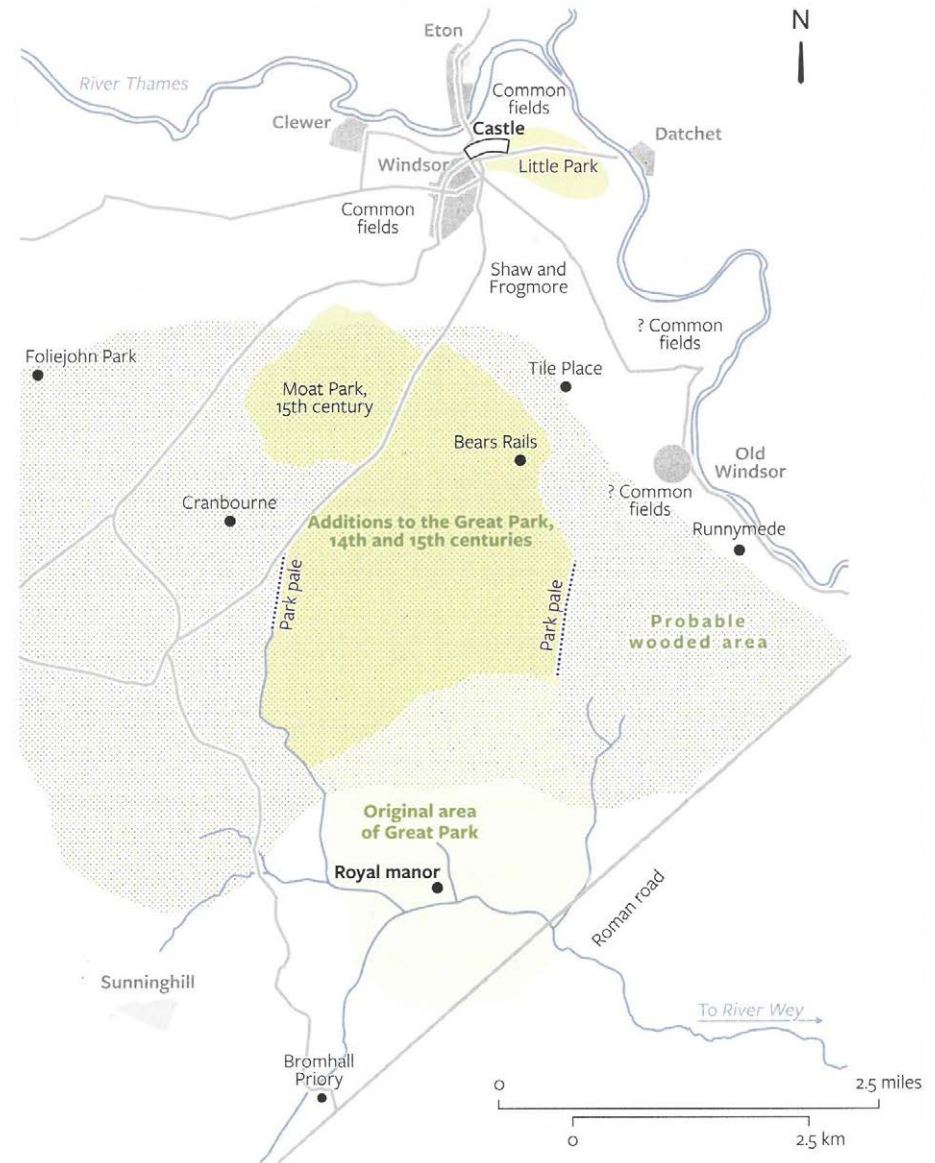


Fig. 15: The Castle and its historic setting in the fifteenth century [© Brindle ed., Windsor Castle (2018) p. 129]

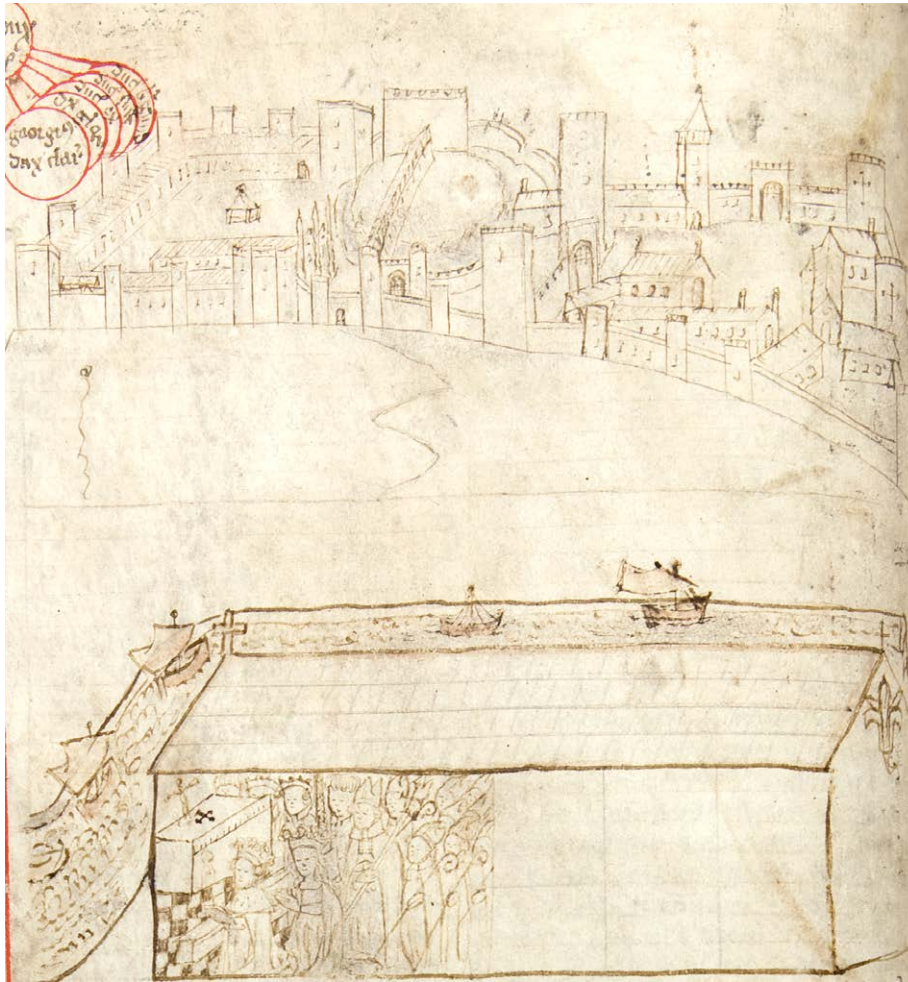


Fig. 16: c. 1450 view from Eton College in a manuscript of Ranulf Higden's Polychronicon - earliest known image of the Castle [Source: Eton College MS 213. Reproduced by permission of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College.]



Fig. 17: St George's Chapel, Windsor, 2025 [© Historic England]

2.2.6 Sixteenth century

Henry VII (r.-1485-1509) found the Upper Ward of Windsor Castle largely unchanged since the time of Edward III, his only significant addition being a three-storey, partly defensive, tower (now Henry VII Tower, elements of which survive today as part of the Royal Library).

Henry VIII (r.1509-1547) was a frequent visitor to Windsor, conceiving an unexecuted plan for an elaborate funerary monument in St George's Chapel, the stone vaulting of which was completed by 1528. Henry VIII's Gate (the main entrance to the Lower Ward) was built in 1513-16 on the site of an existing gate. In 1532-5 a section of terrace to the north of the Castle was built in timber over brick footings and vaults, described at the time as the king's 'New Walk' [Brindle, p.156], reinforcing the Castle's domestic character over defensibility, since it was created as a promenade adjacent to the royal lodgings. Towards the east end a bridge was built over the ditch giving access to the 'Little Park' (now Home Park).

The small but significant architectural legacy of Elizabeth I's reign (r.1558-1603) includes a Long Gallery (now part of the Royal Library) added in 1583 to the Upper Ward linking the Norman Gate to the Henry VII tower. Acting as a private study, its large windows afforded wide panoramic views over the Thames Valley to the north. This work, along with the new terrace below, features strongly in contemporary depictions of the North Terrace (see Fig. 19).



Fig. 18: Hoefnagel view of c. 1568, used as the basis for two published illustrations in the 1570s [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 912936 / © HM King Charles III 2025]



Fig. 19: Hollar drawing of 1638, showing the Castle's medieval form pre-rebuilding by Hugh May. Windsor Town is clearly visible below [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 913263 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

The North Terrace was rebuilt in stone from 1572 with a new retaining revetment, later extended in 1575–6 to cover the entire 436 ft (133m) length of the terrace; it still stands today despite later refacing and alterations. Its parapet rose 314t (10m) from the hillside, incorporating balusters, huge masonry buttresses and integral stone seats. The timber bridge to the Little Park was rebuilt in stone (see Fig. 20) and a new viewing mound constructed beyond it.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the town of Windsor remained small as can be seen in Norden's 1607 plan (Fig. 20); by this point a Market House had been added in 1592 (rebuilt in the late-seventeenth century as the Guildhall). The town's growth was partly restricted by surrounding enclosed parkland, although houses did reach down Thames Street to the Eton bridge, down Peascod Street and a little to the south towards Park Street.

Within the wider area, Maidenhead was incorporated as a borough by royal charter in 1582. Royal processions are recorded as passing through Slough, including a large procession for the festival of St George in 1519 and the funeral procession of Queen Jane Seymour in 1537.



Fig. 20: Detail of plan of Windsor and Little Park by John Norden, 1607 [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 1142252 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

2.2.7 Seventeenth century

Windsor Castle and town were occupied by Parliamentarians during the Civil War, John Evelyn recording in 1660 that the Castle was 'exceedingly ragged and ruinous' [Brindle, p.216]. After the Monarchy was restored, Charles II (r.1660-85) reoccupied Windsor, in contrast with other castles which were largely deserted, and between 1674-84 undertook major rebuilding work assisted by the architect Hugh May (1621-1684), albeit retaining much medieval fabric. The changes made to the Castle by Charles II were intended to assert his majesty through architecture to serve as a fitting and theatrical backdrop to the rituals that, to him and his royal court, defined kingship. The style was modern for the time yet reflecting the ancient past of the Castle and the antiquity of Monarchy.

Many of the medieval royal lodgings in the Upper Ward were rebuilt, including the Chapel, St George's Hall and the outer walls of the north and east ranges. The Star Building, taking its name from the 12ft wide great gilded Garter star (Charles II's personal emblem) fixed to the

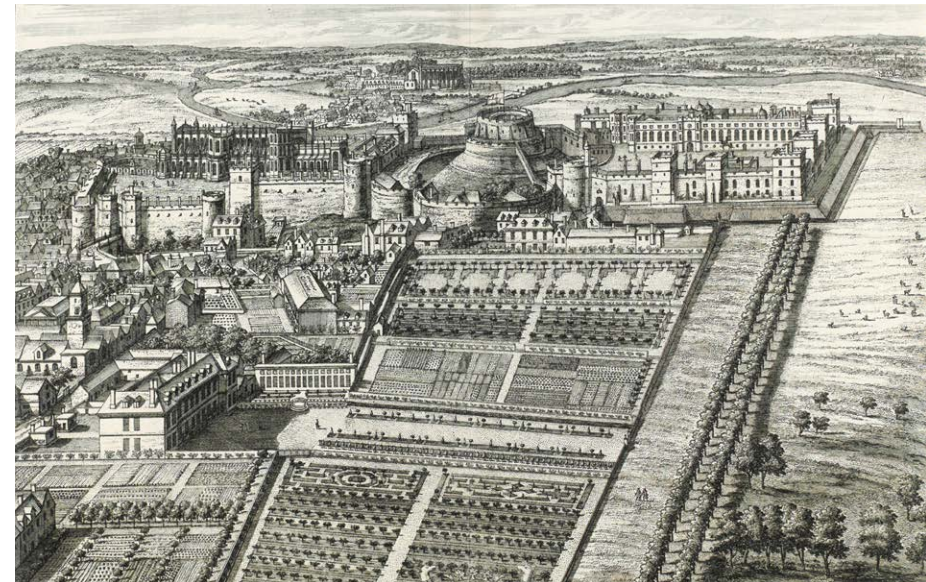


Fig. 21: A Prospect of the House at Windsor by Johannes Kip after Leonard Knyff published in *Britannia Illustrata* in 1708, showing the Upper Ward as rebuilt between 1674-85. [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 700335 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

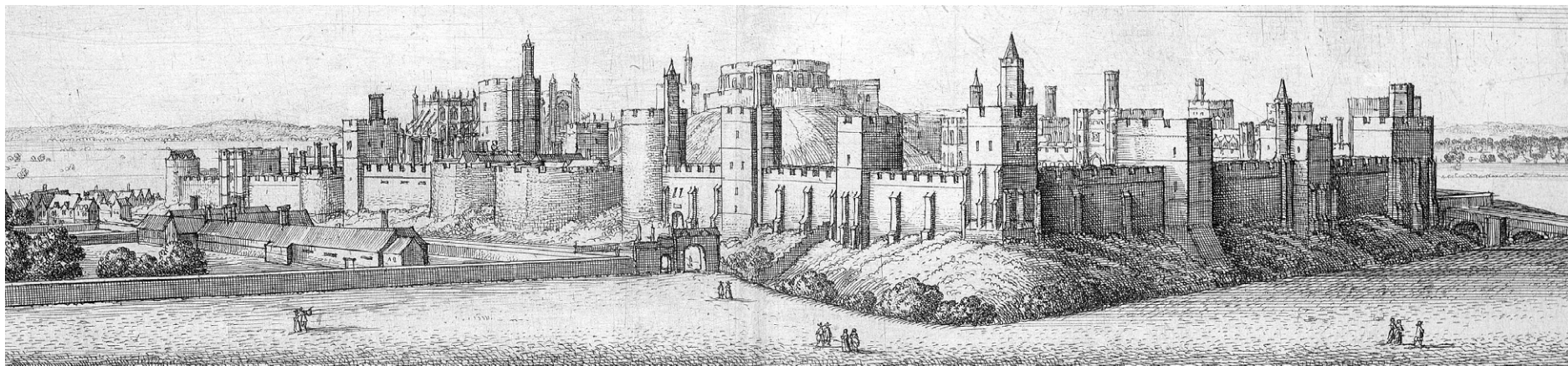


Fig. 22: A 1672 view by Wenceslas Hollar, showing the Castle from the parkland to the south east [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 805330 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

outside wall, was built to house a spectacularly decorated suite of King's and Queen's Apartments; of which many rooms and decorative elements survive in today's State Apartments. Royal access was restricted to only the most privileged, filtered through a sequence of increasingly lavish rooms. May's design, which included striking round-headed windows and quoins, added depth to the façade and significantly altered its appearance, even in long distance views (see [Fig. 24 on page 43](#)).

May also remodelled the North Terrace, adding a projecting section in 1675-8 aligned with the Star Building. This effectively provided the building with a plinth to give visual emphasis, enhanced by his reforming of the slopes below. He also extended the terrace around the east and part of the south fronts.

During Charles II's reign an extra 500 acres were incorporated into the Home Park and landscaping work executed, including tree-lined avenues and bowling greens. The Great Park was re-enclosed after 1660, and efforts began to develop the landscape. However, unlike the grand formality of parks like Versailles or Potsdam, Windsor Great Park was conceived with a more natural setting. Charles II bought a strip of land in 1680 connecting the Little Park and Great Park on which he laid out the Long Walk; a straight avenue extending two miles from the Upper Ward of Windsor Castle to Snow Hill, the Great Park's highest point. Likely designed by May and largely planted by George London between 1680 and 1685, the Long Walk originally featured double rows of elm trees, some of which survived until the Second World War (now replaced with a mixture of planes and horse chestnuts).

Despite a brief resurgence in prosperity due to activity at the Castle (including the construction of the impressive Guildhall in 1687-90), from the late-seventeenth century Windsor town fell into a general state of neglect and unpopularity, with the royal court of William III (r.1689-1702) and Mary II (r.1689-94) focused instead at Hampton Court and Kensington.

The Great West Road was a busy coaching road from the mid-seventeenth century, with settlements along its route enjoying increasing prosperity as a stopping point on the main route from London to the west.

2.2.8 Eighteenth century

Queen Anne (r.1702-14) was born at Windsor and visited regularly, often attending the nearby races at Datchet. In 1698 she bought a house immediately to the south of the Castle's Upper Ward, known as the Garden House, where she spent much time before and during her reign, particularly enjoying riding and hunting in the Great Park. Queen Anne oversaw the creation of the 'Maastricht Garden', a formal garden with central canal conceived by William III and designed by Andre Le Notre and Claude Desgots, stretching from the north of the Castle to the river (see Fig. 23); after her death it was left to deteriorate. She was also responsible for the laying out of what was to become Queen Anne's Ride (see below), creating an axial view of the Castle focussed on the Round Tower.

In the early-eighteenth century, the Great Park's practical value for hunting diminished, and its focus shifted toward landscaping and monument-building. In 1708, another avenue - originally called Queen's Walk and later renamed Queen Anne's Ride - was created, stretching southwest toward Ascot (where Anne founded a racecourse at East Cote in 1711), possibly under the guidance of Henry Wise (1653-1738). In 1746, Prince William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, became Ranger and initiated an extensive landscaping project in the southern portion. His scheme included plantations, rides, and the creation of lakes, such as the Great Meadow Pond and Virginia Water. At 120 acres, Virginia Water became the largest artificial body of water in Britain for a time. Its pond-head, cascades, bridges, and drives were completed by the mid-1790s.

George I (r.1714-1727) and George II (r.1727-1760) spent little time at Windsor, preferring Hampton Court and Kensington. Few alterations were made to the Castle before the 1770s. This period in the Castle's

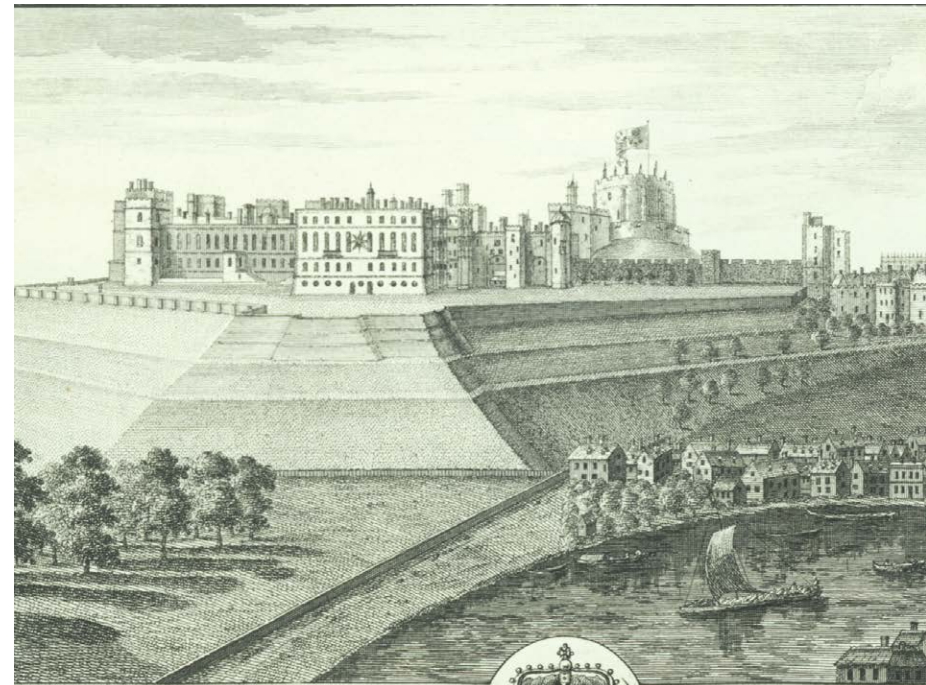


Fig. 24: 1733 engraving by Buck [Source: Historic England Archive]



Fig. 25: A View from Windsor Castle c.1745, looking south. [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 404030 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

history is commonly referred to as the ‘Long Sleep’, when it suffered significant neglect but also became for the first time a ‘tourist destination’ in the modern sense of the word.

George III (r.1760-1820) had great respect for tradition and ceremony, making numerous selections to the Order of the Garter. He was responsible for the revival of royal stately and (significantly) domestic interest in Windsor, moving his family to Windsor in 1776. The previous year he had purchased Queen Anne’s Garden House (later renamed Queen’s Lodge) and the Lower Lodge (now part of Royal Mews). The former was significantly extended in the 1780s and 1790s as a favoured residence.

The Frogmore estates were purchased in 1790-2 for Queen Charlotte, linking the Home and Great Parks, and Frogmore House was remodelled in a Classical style. Public access was possible throughout this period to both the Little and Great Parks; in the 1790s barriers were erected to parts of the Long Walk to keep the inner ride for the sole use of the King. George III, who took great interest in farming, botany and agriculture, also became involved in the management of the Great Park, expanding its boundaries to include parts of Cranbourne Chase and repurposing sections for farming. Extensive planting continued, contributing to the Park’s present-day wooded landscape. During this period the town of Windsor also boomed with a flurry of inns and hostelries.

Repairs and improvements were undertaken to the dilapidated Castle, firstly under the architect Sir William Chambers (1723-1796) and, from 1796, James Wyatt (1746-1813), although interrupted by the King’s bouts of illness from 1788. The Middle Ward curtain wall was demolished in 1781, some changes were made to the State Apartments



Fig. 26: North Terrace, looking west, attributed to Paul Sandby c. 1774 [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 402416 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

in the 1780s and repairs and alterations were made to St George's Chapel from 1792.

From the mid-eighteenth century the public were able to visit the State Apartments and the North Terrace (see [Fig. 26](#)), although there were regulations about dress and behaviour. Several guidebooks were published at this time (the first in 1742) and many artists painted the Castle in a picturesque manner, most notably Canaletto in 1747 and the Sandbys (see [Section 2.3](#)). From the late-1770s royal gatherings on the South, East and North Terraces, particularly the latter with its magnificent views, were an important aspect of castle life during summer months and added to the visitor experience. At this time views towards Windsor Castle from surrounding settlements, including Slough, would have been uninterrupted.

Travel on the Great West Road had been boosted significantly by the great popularity of the City of Bath following Queen Anne's visits there in 1702 and 1703. For decades, the well-to do of London would travel to Bath and back every year to enjoy 'the season', and the vast majority of these travellers would have travelled by coach on the Great West Road (as many people still do today). An account by Pastor Moritz from 1782 describes 'carriages without number' on the Great West Road as he walked along it, also noting that from Slough 'the road goes to Windsor, whose high white castle I could already see in the distance' [Moritz, 1782, republished 2009].

The steady traffic supported a large collection of coaching inns in Slough and Salt Hill. The Castle at Salt Hill was particularly well thought of, affording magnificent views of Windsor Castle across the valley. The coaching trade also supported businesses such as breweries (the Eagle Brewery being particularly successful) and coach repair workshops.

The astronomer Sir William Herschel moved to Slough in 1786 to be close to Windsor following his appointment as astronomer to the king. From 1789 to 1839 the 40-foot telescope he built in his garden at Observatory House (on the Windsor Road close to the Bath Road intersection) became a local landmark, visible to passers-by on the Great West Road and marked on the early Ordnance Survey maps (see [Fig. 27](#)).

In the late-eighteenth century, the house at Stoke Park, to the north of Slough on the edge of the Chilterns, was remodelled by the architect James Wyatt (1746-1813), and the associated landscape re-designed by Humphry Repton (1752-1818) including framed views of Windsor Castle (See [Fig. 40 on page 60](#)).



Fig. 27: 1822 one-inch Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1804-12 with the Paddington to Maidenhead railway line passing through Slough to the north of the Great West Road marked on the map later in 1844). The Little (later Home) Park and Great Park, with the Long Walk and Queen Anne's Ride (Queen's Walk), be seen, as can the old bridge to Datchet and to the north the separate settlements of Upton, Slough and Chalvey. [Source: National Library of Scotland]

2.2.9 Nineteenth century

From 1800-11 James Wyatt started the process of re-Gothicising the Castle for George III, replacing many of May's windows in the Upper Ward with perpendicular tracery in white Portland stone (distinguished from Wyattville's later use of yellow Bath stone). The entrance to the State Apartments (the Great Gate) was remodelled along with the area inside for the Grand Stair and other rooms in the State Apartments (Fig. 28). The College of St George also underwent significant restoration during this period, with a new royal burial vault created under what is now the Albert Memorial Chapel, accessed from inside St George's Chapel.

George IV (Prince Regent from 1811, r.1820-30) was a great patron and collector of art, architecture and the decorative arts, responsible for most of Buckingham Palace and for the transformation of the Upper and Middle Wards of Windsor Castle to a reimagined Gothic appearance beyond its actual Medieval form (its fifth major transformation since the twelfth century). The brief was worked up by George IV and Sir Charles Long, also consulting Sir John Soane, although the job was awarded to the architect Jeffry Wyattville (1766-1840), Wyatt's nephew. Wyattville effectively produced the Castle that we see today, heavily influenced by George IV's lavish taste.

Over three main phases of work from 1824-1837, the last finished under William IV (r.1830-37), Wyattville's changes were to fundamentally alter the layout and use of the Castle. Extensive accommodation was added to form a private and grand royal residence in the south and east ranges (linked by a Grand Corridor) and further remodelling of the State Apartments in the north range, along with upgrades to other accommodation for the Royal Household.



Fig. 28: Interior view of the King's Closet in 1816 from Pyne's Royal Residences, significant as it shows an historic view out of the State Apartments. [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 922104 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

The austere exterior style of the buildings in the Upper Ward (as left by May) were recast in a Georgian-Gothic style with rebuilt towers, castellations and other details. Large bay windows were inserted into the exterior elevations of the south and east ranges, affording long views of the surrounding landscape, and the interiors were sumptuously decorated and furnished in a variety of styles. Wyattville's work was not particularly concerned with authenticity, rather the focus externally was on the overall picturesque composition.

By 1831, the Round Tower had been extended upwards by 30 feet and refaced to create a yet more imposing Castle silhouette. Wyattville also extended the North Terrace further east along the northern side of the East Terrace Garden, extending the panoramic experience and creating a grand setting for the reworked elevations, and added the George IV gate to the southern range of the Castle in 1824, creating a defined architectural feature at the northern end of the Long Walk.

The Castle was developed into a family home by Queen Victoria (r. 1837-1901) and into a setting for State visits and ceremony, with renewed public access (see [Fig. 29](#)). During her reign the architects Edward Blore (1787-79) and later Anthony Salvin (1799-1881) oversaw the programme of work intended by Wyattville and some new schemes initiated by Victoria and Prince Albert and by the College of St George.

Following a State visit by Napoleon III in 1855, Salvin was commissioned to remodel the Curfew Tower in the style of Viollet-le-Duc; Salvin also oversaw the reconstruction of the medieval Hundred Steps (see 'fourteenth century' [Section 2.2.4 on page 35](#)) in 1856. From 1868 Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) took over works to the College, redesigning the West Steps to St George's Chapel (complete by 1872), remodelling Horseshoe Cloister and Vicars' Hall, and supervising the

transformation of the old Chapel into the Albert Memorial Chapel from 1862. The Duchess of Kent and Victoria and Albert Mausolea were also added during this period at Frogmore, designed by Albert Humbert (1821–1877).

During the reign of George IV, the Little (later Home) and Great Parks had been set aside for private use with public access much reduced (although licences for artists were granted); prior to this the people of Windsor could roam over large areas of parkland.



Fig. 29: Joseph Nash's 1848 coloured lithograph of the Eastern View of the Castle and Gardens, showing visitors in the East Terrace Garden [Source: Royal Collection Trust 817132.w / © HM King Charles III 2025]

Royal Lodge was built in the Great Park in 1820, designed by Wyattville who also added various landscape features including the Five Arch Bridge at Virginia Water in 1829. Between 1824-30 the Equestrian statue of King George III (known as the Copper Horse) was added on Snow Hill at the southern end of the Long Walk.

William IV reopened the East Terrace to visitors and restored some public access to the Great Park. In the 1840s the Frogmore and Shaw Estate leases (the latter bought by Queen Charlotte in 1806) were formally incorporated into the Crown Estate. Prince Albert, as Ranger of the Great Park, introduced new farming methods to increase productivity, establishing a new kitchen garden in the Home Park (by 1849 it covered nearly 60 acres). By 1856 the area around Virginia Water had become a popular tourist attraction at weekends and holidays; however, many other areas were fenced off for private use.

Encroaching houses and other buildings around the Lower Ward were compulsorily purchased and demolished by 1852. In 1848 the Windsor Improvement Act was passed formalising land transfer to the railway companies (see below) and facilitating changes to the Home Park. These included: the granting of public access from 1851 to the northern section (now known as Home Park Public); the enclosing of the rest of newly named Home Park (formerly Little Park) into Home Park Private; a new road to Datchet (now the B470) marking the southern border of the new public area and a new road to the south of Home Park Private (Albert Road, now the A308) and the associated new Victoria and Albert bridges over the Thames.

The arrival of the Great Western Railway in the 1830s and 40s (see [Fig. 56](#) and [Fig. 57 on page 78](#)) transformed the arrival experience to the Castle. Queen Victoria, reluctant at first to use the trains, became an enthusiastic passenger. The first section was completed from



Fig. 30: The undeveloped Clewer Meadows in the late-nineteenth century [Source: Historic England Archive]

Paddington to Maidenhead in 1838, passing directly through Slough alongside the Great West Road to the north. The full stretch of line to Bristol was completed in 1841. Slough Station was opened in 1840 and the Windsor branch line in 1849. As with many early railways, the branch line was engineered to provide superb views to the Castle on the approach. The Staines to Windsor line also reached Windsor in 1849, terminating at Windsor and Eton Riverside station.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, formal public gardens were created within Windsor town. By 1902 Alexandra Gardens, named after Queen Alexandra (the wife of Edward VII), had been laid out as a public park, the formerly open fields having been purchased by 1895. Following this, the area to the east of the park now known as the Goswells (now in the care of the National Trust) was cleared of slum housing and was purchased by public subscription in order to preserve the view of the Castle from Alexandra Gardens.

Whilst Slough was modest in size and presence until the mid-nineteenth century, its influence was heightened by the residence of the Herschels, including not only Sir William Herschel but also his son Sir John Herschel who carried out important work on reflecting telescopes. The town expanded rapidly from the completion of the first Slough Station in 1840.

The population of the combined Upton-cum-Chalvey parish increased in the years between 1835 and 1861 from 1,502 to over 4600, rising again to over 9000 by 1894 when Slough became a civil parish. By the late-1860s, the small settlements of Slough and Upton had effectively merged into a town (see [Fig. 32](#)). In the late-nineteenth century heavy industries began to develop, making use of the connections afforded by the railway. The area north of the Great Western Railway was gradually occupied by industry, and workers cottages swelled the size of the town.



Fig. 31: The Long Walk thronged with visitors in the late-nineteenth century [Source: Historic England Archive]



Fig. 32: 1881 Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1868 to 1875). The Little Park has now officially become the Home Park with new landscape and architectural features at Frogmore clearly visible and its northern section marked as 'Public Recreation Ground'. Much of the surrounding area remains undeveloped, however new roads, bridges and the Windsor branch lines from Slough and Staines can be seen. The increasing growth of development around Slough and the former village of Upton can clearly be seen to the north. [Source: National Library of Scotland]

2.2.10 Twentieth century

By 1900, Slough had further expanded to encompass Chalvey, Salt Hill and part of Langley and from this point on its industrial activities considerably increased. The brickworks industry was still going strong and Gotha Ironworks (north-east of Slough station) manufactured the metal fittings for train carriages. In 1906-1908 the Horlicks Factory was built, and by the 1920s other industries included a paint and varnish works, a gasworks, and an engineering works.

The origins of Slough Trading Estate date to 1918, when the government purchased 668 hectares of agricultural land to the west of Slough for a military vehicle repair depot. In 1920 the site was sold to private investors, and it was developed into the largest business park in Europe under single company ownership. Many large industries moved in, including Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). It was the first such trading estate in the country and set the pattern for those that followed.

Among its strengths, the estate had good transport links, with a branch line and new railway station constructed in 1919, enabling easier commuting and the transportation of goods. Also, it had a local source of power: the power station, which includes the tallest and most visible elements of the trading estate from a long distance, had been built in 1919 to supply energy to the estate (originally burning coal and subsequently oil, gas and most recently biomass and wood waste). By the late-1930s it had two cooling towers, which expanded to four in the 1950s and 60s, before being reduced to two in the late-1980s/early-1990s. The 275ft chimney was added in the 1980s.

The estate's growth fostered innovation. The Mars bar, Maltesers and Twix were invented on the trading estate, which was home also to the iconic Ford GT40 racing car and the invention of the wheelie bin. Gerry Anderson's Thunderbirds was produced and filmed at the trading estate between 1964 and 1966.

In contrast to its more orderly growth in the early-twentieth century, Slough's expansion after the Second World War became less centred on the High Street. Instead new growth was fed by employment at the trading estate, as well as the introduction of new housing estates providing homes for London residents. Most of the land which is now Upton Court Park would have historically been open farmland. It was initially acquired by the Corporation of Slough in the 1930s but was added to in the 1960s to form a municipal park.

A further surge of development stemmed from the construction of the M4 in stages from 1961 to 1971, the section from Slough to Maidenhead (now junctions 5 to 7) opening in 1963. In 1971 Slough's population had swelled to just over 87,000, making it at this point the largest town in Buckinghamshire. By 1993 the population had grown to 100,000, making it one of the largest towns in its new county of Berkshire.

To the east, Heathrow Airport was formally opened in 1946 (first known as London Airport). The first passenger terminal was opened by Elizabeth II in 1955, named the 'Queens Building'. It officially assumed the name Heathrow in 1966, with Terminal 1 opening three years later in 1969.

The administrative district of Windsor was amalgamated with Maidenhead in 1972. Then, as part of the Local Government Act of 1974, a section of the county of Buckinghamshire east of the Thames, comprising Eton, Slough, Datchet and Wraysbury, was transferred to Berkshire. A further reorganisation in 1998 led to the creation of six unitary authorities in Berkshire, including Windsor and Maidenhead and Slough.

Development in Windsor in the first half of the century remained gradual; however, in the 1950s and 60s high density council housing was built, including the Windsor Royal Estate in 1967-9; the Crown Estate also built new housing around the edge of the Great Park. In 1974-80 Windsor's shopping centre was redeveloped, but in an open-air form that allowed integration with the historic street pattern. In 1996 Legoland Windsor opened on the south-west edge of Windsor.

The year before the outbreak of the First World War, the decision was taken to change the Royal Family dynasty name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor.

Few physical changes were made to the Castle in the first half of the twentieth century, apart from modern services and some changes to the display of the Royal Collection. George V (r.1910-36) established a new Royal Archive in the 1910s, records being stored in the Round Tower. Major conservation work was also carried out to St George's Chapel in the 1920s overseen by the architect Sir Harold Brakspear (1870-1934).

For the duration of the Second World War, most of the Royal Household was evacuated to Windsor, and it was where the Princesses (later Queen) Elizabeth and Margaret spent their time during this period. Various defences against aerial attack were installed, but the

Castle never seemed to be a target, and the nearby Slough Trading Estate also escaped unscathed. In the post-war period, Queen Elizabeth II (r.1952-2022) oversaw various improvements to the Castle, which saw steady increase in visitor numbers.

Early twentieth-century additions to the Home Park include the cricket ground and golf course. In 1928 land around Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore was consecrated for use as the Royal Burial Ground. George VI decided to make the Home Park Public (the area to the north of King Edward VII Avenue which had been open to the public since 1851) available for recreational use in 1938; to the south of the road below the north slopes of the Castle the Windsor Horse Show was first held in 1943, running annually ever since.

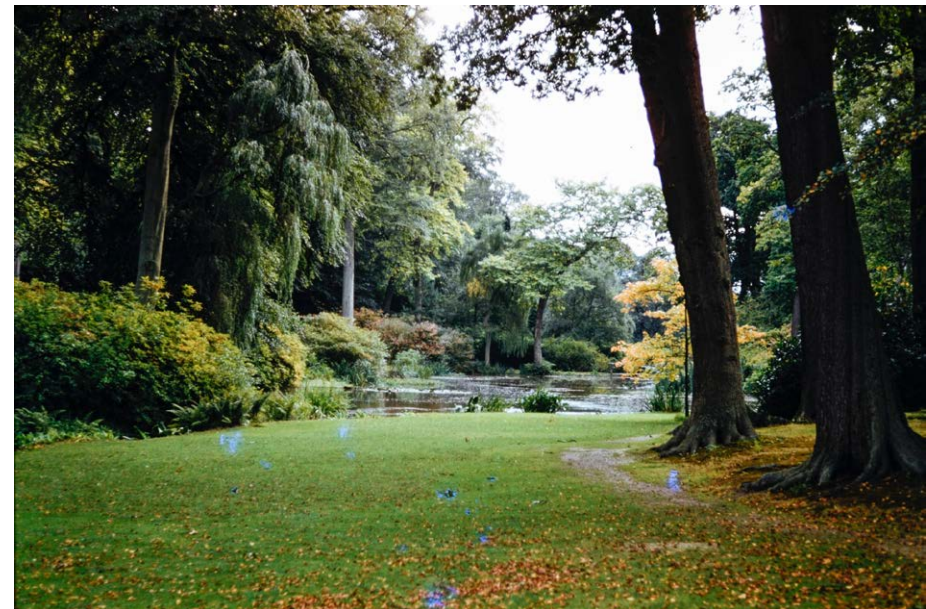


Fig. 33: Savill Garden looking south across a pond to the south-east of the Summer Gardens in the Savill Garden, towards trees in the Azalea Walks and the Middle Bridge [© Historic England Archive]

Throughout the twentieth century, large areas of the Great Park have been freely accessible to pedestrians, with part of it used during the First World War as an army camp. In 1932 Sir Eric Savill, Deputy Ranger of the Great Park, designed the Savill Garden, a picturesque landscape along the stream feeding Obelisk Pond. In the 1940s the last of the original elm trees of the Long Walk died and were replaced with chestnut and plane trees.

Prince Philip was the longest serving Ranger of the Great Park from 1952-2021 and enacted a number of key changes. After the Second World War the Royal Gardens ceased production and in 1979 a large section of the park was enclosed to form a deer park. Towards the end of the century, former stables in the southern section were converted into conservation studios for the Royal Collection Trust. By the end of the century, many of the Park's elm and lime trees were replaced with oaks, though some original limes survive.

At the Castle, structural problems to the Round Tower were discovered in the 1980s (having been exacerbated by its increase in height in the 1830s), and major underpinning was carried out in the 1990s, when the new Royal Archive was also installed. In 1992 a devastating fire consumed the north-east corner of the Upper Ward. Prince Philip, duke of Edinburgh, and King Charles III (as Prince of Wales) made significant contributions to the subsequent restoration (completed in 1997). The works, overseen by Donald Insall Associates, involved a combination of faithful reconstruction of architecture and interiors with striking modern additions (in a sympathetic Gothic style) by Giles Downes of

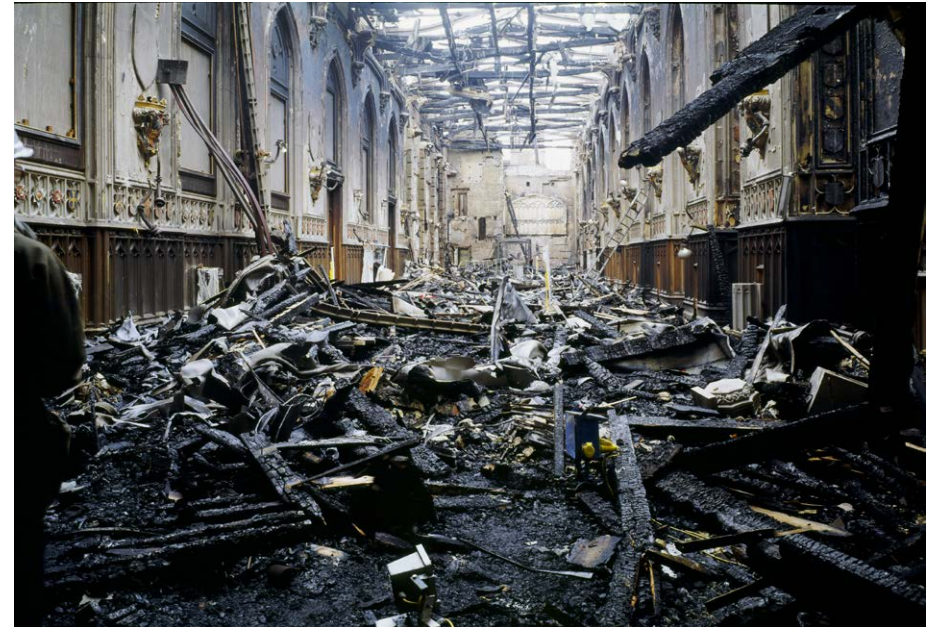


Fig. 34: The fire-damaged St George's Hall in 1992 [© Historic England Archive]

the Sidell Gibson partnership. Downes' work includes the green oak roof of St George's Hall, a new chapel and the double height tribune known as Lantern Lobby (on the site of the former Private Chapel where the fire originated). The new lantern for the latter was the first addition to the Castle's skyline for 160 years. New fire and other safety measures were also installed as part of the project, alongside extensive archaeological investigations which greatly increased understanding of the Castle's history.

2.2.11 Twenty-first century

Heathrow Terminal 5 was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in a ceremony on 14 March 2008. More than 33 million passengers used Terminal 5 in 2023. Overall, Heathrow is one of the busiest two-runway airports in the world, with about 1300 combined take-offs and landings a day.

The economy of Windsor remains intrinsically linked with the Castle and Royal Family. In 2024, more than 5.6 million people visited Windsor Great Park, making it the UK's most popular outdoor tourist attraction in the UK (source: Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, 2024). Legoland is another major draw to the area; in 2023 visitor numbers to Legoland exceeded 2.43 million.

Windsor Castle remains a working royal palace, used both as a home and for State functions as it has done throughout its history. Many royal weddings and funerals still take place at the Castle; the funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II received global media attention. For most of the year the Castle is open to the public attracting around 9,000 visitors per day (nearly 1.5m per year). The entrance to the Castle grounds is via the Jubilee Garden, the Castle's most recent addition (2002) designed by Tom Stuart-Smith to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. As well as the continued maintenance and care, the Royal Household has focused more recently on long-term sustainability and improving accessibility. As part of the 'Future Programme' project (2016-20) new visitor and education facilities were added to the Castle, with improvements made to the visitor route and displays for items from the Royal Collection. The North Terrace, with its spectacular panoramic views to the north across the Thames Valley, remains a prominent part of the visitor route.



Fig. 35: View from the Inner Hall across the Quad and out of George IV Gate towards the Copper Horse at the south end of the Long Walk. This view, part of the public visitor route, had been blocked since 1866 and was opened up as part of the Future Programme project, enabling it to be experienced alongside long views to the north across Eton to Buckinghamshire [© Royal Collection Trust]

Members of the public can access Home Park Public, including the Windsor Rugby Football Club playing fields. The rest forms Home Park Private, which includes the Royal Windsor Horse Show Ground opened to the public annually in May and, since the 1940s, the St George's School playing fields. In daylight hours, free public access is possible to about half of the Great Park, including the Deer Park, Long Walk (south of Cambridge Gate), Queen Anne's Ride and Meadow, Virginia Water, Chapel Wood, Obelisk Lawn and Pond, the Valley Gardens, and Smith's Lawn; the Savill Garden is open for an entry fee.

His Majesty King Charles III became The Ranger of Windsor Great Park in 2022, seventy years after his father was appointed to the post.

St George's Chapel remains a Royal Peculiar (standing outside the episcopal hierarchy of the Church of England) and is a royal chapel and the spiritual home of the Order of the Garter; there are also multiple daily public services. The College of St George also remains highly active, as a community of people who offer worship to God, prayers for the Sovereign and the Order of the Garter, service to society and hospitality to visitors. St George's School (the choral school founded in 1893) and St George's House (founded in 1966 with a mission to bring together people from many walks of life, faiths and countries for 'consultations' on pressing contemporary themes) are now registered as separate charitable organisations but remain closely linked with the College.

The Borough of Slough continues to seek opportunities for growth, responding to significant employment and residential development pressures; and it continues to innovate through technological development, particularly as a location for data centres, supported by fibre optic cables running directly between Slough and New York.



Fig. 36: A view of the Coronation Concert on May 7, 2023 in Windsor [© Alamy]

2.3 Historic representations of Windsor and its environs

Due to its status as a royal residence and the handsome appearance of the building and its setting, Windsor Castle has been depicted in an extraordinary number of drawings, paintings, etchings and photographs over the years. This body of work serves as an important historical record but also tells us much about the different ways in which the Castle was perceived over time. This was often by people who, particularly before the arrival of the railways, would not have been able to travel to Windsor to see it in person. Celebrated artists including Canaletto, Turner and Piper depicted the Castle firmly within its setting. Many of these depictions were royal commissions, projecting a particular image of the Monarchy, while others reflect a broader public perception of the Castle.

These representations can tell the story of the evolution of the Castle itself, but also the changing story of its setting and of key views to and from the building. To better understand common locations from which the Castle was experienced through history, a representative sample of views to and from Windsor Castle from historic sources were mapped (see [Fig. 44 on page 63](#)), giving an overview of viewpoints which were significant at different points in history. A list of the images consulted as part of this mapping exercise, many of (though not all) of which are reproduced throughout this report (particularly in [Section 2.2](#)), is in [Appendix 5.6 on page 149](#). The list is representative of how the Castle was experienced and is not exhaustive.

The earliest depictions show the Castle exalted above its surroundings, important for the projection of power in the Middle Ages, and therefore from the north; these are namely the c.1450 illustration

of the view from Eton College in a manuscript of Ranulf Higden's Polychronicon (see [Fig. 16 on page 37](#)) and a view by Hoefnagel of c.1568 ([Fig. 18 on page 38](#)) that was used as the basis for two published illustrations in the 1570s. This sense is also strong on the earliest view by the celebrated topographical artist and etcher Wenceslaus Hollar of 1638 (see [Fig. 19 on page 38](#)), showing the north-east side of the Castle in a pioneering topographical watercolour; this may be the first true perspective view of Windsor Castle.

Some of the most celebrated early viewpoints of the Castle include Hollar's engravings from the mid-seventeenth century. These are important early topographical close views of the Castle (less than half a kilometre away) taken from the Home Park (at that time still called the Little Park) to the southeast of the Castle (see [Fig. 22 on page 40](#)) and from a range of locations within the basin of the Thames Valley to the north-east (see [Fig. 37 on page 58](#)), all showing the Castle prior to its alteration under the architect Hugh May (see [Section 2.2.7 on page 40](#)).

These depictions conveyed the powerful presence of the Castle in its immediate setting, and were then followed towards the end of the seventeenth century (as the genre of landscape paintings became more popular) by a number of by a number of views painted from the north, including the meadows south of Eton and the riverbanks close to Romney Island. These views encompass wider landscape features, the river and the meadows, showing not just the Castle but its topographical setting.

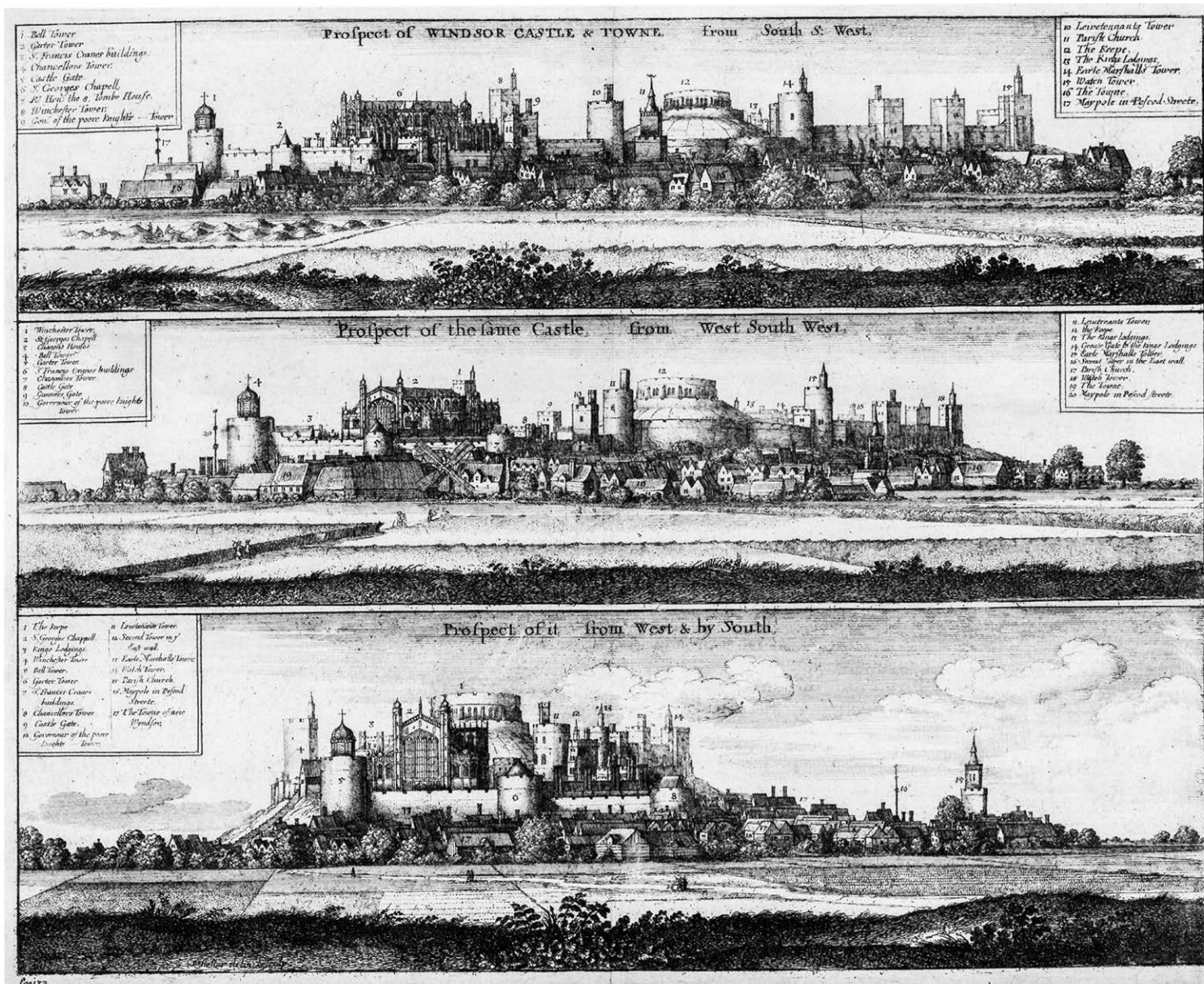


Fig. 37: Views of Windsor Castle by Wenceslaus Hollar [Source: Royal Collection Trust 700353 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

In the eighteenth century most of the viewpoints for artistic depictions remain quite close to the Castle itself (less than a kilometre), with the meadows of Eton and the banks of the river close to Romney Island remaining popular places for artists to set up their easels. Views from the north continued to be captured, including the famous 1747 view by Canaletto now in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland.

The road between Slough and Windsor was an attractive undeveloped country route at this point, and those arriving by road would have appreciated views of Windsor Castle for most of its length. This may explain the many eighteenth-century views from this position, including this 1730s/1740s painting by an unknown artist ([Fig. 38](#)) which appears



Fig. 38: A c. 1730s view from the meadows south of Eton College, with Windsor Castle in the background [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 402409 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

to show groups of people at leisure on the meadows with the Castle looming behind.

From the 1750s to the early-1800s the Sandby brothers painted a great collection of striking watercolours of Windsor; Thomas (who was Deputy Ranger of the Great Park from the 1760s until his death in 1798) tended to paint the Great Park whereas Paul favoured the Castle. The picturesque paintings capture the relaxed atmosphere, particularly during the 1750s and 1760s, during the Castle's 'Long Sleep' (see [Section 2.2.8](#)). They emphasise the peaceful, even mundane nature of the life of the Castle at this period, a 'peace dividend' after the high politics which ended with the departure of the Stuarts; the Castle now almost a benign reminder of a more dramatic past.



Fig. 39: Windsor Castle from Datchet Lane on a rejoicing night, by Paul Sandby, 1768 [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 914584 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

During the eighteenth century, the small and at that point separate settlements of Slough, Salt Hill and Upton would have had largely uninterrupted views south towards Windsor Castle. The fine prospect from the Castle Inn in Salt Hill (named for its views of Windsor Castle) was probably not unique. In 1795 when Humphry Repton was laying out the grounds of Stoke Park, which lies north of Slough on the edge of the Chilterns, he included a vista towards Windsor (Fig. 40), no longer visible at ground level due to later tree growth, although the Castle can still be clearly seen from the dome (Fig. 78 on page 91).

Many nineteenth-century views were taken from further afield. After Windsor Great Park was opened to the public in the 1830s, a large number of views of the Castle were captured from the woodlands and high points of the Park (see Fig. 48 on page 68).

As the nineteenth century progressed and the settlements expanded, many of the previously popular viewpoints were developed; new infrastructure such as the railways also obscured previously unspoiled views. Slough lost many of its views south as the land south of the Great West Road filled with new development.

Some development occurred in the water meadows around Eton, which were later bisected by the new railway branch line. As a surviving area of open space, the Brocas became (and remains) an extremely popular viewpoint (remaining unimpeded by the later railway line), with fifteen of the mapped images for this study taken from that area (e.g. Fig. 41). Turner had painted 'The Thames at Windsor' in 1805 (now in the Tate Gallery Collection), viewed from the northern banks of the river close to the southern end of Romney Island. The Clewer meadows to the west of the Castle, later landscaped into Alexandra Gardens, were also an extremely popular viewpoint (Fig. 69 on page 86). To



Fig. 40: Humphry Repton's 1795 design for Stoke Park [Source: Stoke Park History]



Fig. 41: A nineteenth-century postcard view from the Brocas [Source: Historic England Archive]

the north of the Castle, many views from the public paths and lanes close to Windsor and Eton Riverside Station captured the steep sides of the Castle rising above the open space of Home Park (Fig. 42).

The Castle's re-Gothicising and raising of the Round Tower during the reign of George IV (see Section 2.2.9) ensured the Castle became a superbly picturesque eyecatcher, and it dominated artistic renderings from this period onwards, both towards Windsor and also, memorably, as the vantage-point for many of John Piper's famous views of Windsor for the Royal Family between 1941 and 1944. Although these were commissioned as a series of watercolours 'in the manner of Sandby', they were in fact far removed from their topographical style and tradition, being far more brooding and romantic, with a paradoxical sense of jeopardy in a new age of warfare. His often-elevated viewpoints showed both Castle and landscape.

New viewpoints 'looking in' were also created during the nineteenth century. The curved branch line of the GWR to Windsor, completed in 1849, exploited (consciously or not) the possibility of creating a dramatic approach to the Castle and afforded new, dynamic views of both the Castle and the Thames. Many of the nineteenth-century images in the mapping exercise were taken from the new Thames railway bridge (Fig. 43).

Many early-twentieth century views follow a similar pattern, with further views from the Brocas and from Alexandra Gardens (see Fig. 69 on page 86). As with other more historic views, the vast majority are from within a kilometre of the Castle itself. The view from late-twentieth-century Upton Court Park in Slough is a rare designed long-distance view of the Castle, being close to the location of an important early manor house (see Section 2.2) and also a rare example of a long view from Slough, many of which have now disappeared.



Fig. 42: A nineteenth-century view of the Castle from Home Park [Source: Historic England Archive]



Fig. 43: A nineteenth-century view of the Castle from the railway bridge [Source: Historic England Archive]

Today, the image of Windsor Castle is still projected to a wide audience through a variety of mediums and remains a popular subject for local artists. It is also projected to an international audience that experience

the Castle when significant events are broadcast around the world by modern press and media (e.g. Fig. 35 on p.53).

Depictions of the Castle – a summary

The earliest depictions of the Castle were generally taken from the north, looking south, showing the Castle dramatically perched on a rocky escarpment, high above its surroundings. This is likely the result of long-range views being possible from stopping points along the Great West Road, which would have provided a wide vista across the Thames Valley.

These evolved into closer studies of the Castle (often less than a mile away), which by the seventeenth century included the Little (Home) Park to the southeast. From the eighteenth century, riverbank views became more common, particularly from the water meadows around Eton, the Brocas and the northern bank close to Romney Island, showing an increasingly picturesque atmosphere.

From the nineteenth century onwards, although views from the town (especially Alexandra Gardens) and the riverbank remained popular, the Castle was once again often depicted from much further afield, with the view looking north from Windsor Great Park and the dramatic setting of the Copper Horse statue on Snow Hill being a common view.

Modern development and mature tree growth has resulted in the loss of many long-range views once depicted, but in turn new viewpoints and ways to experience the Castle have been created by nineteenth and twentieth-century transport infrastructure.

Fig. 44 on the following page is a summary map that distils a representative sample of historic depictions by showing the frequency of historic views taken from different viewpoints. The darker colours indicate a greater number of views from those areas. It is clear that the most popular viewpoints include close views from the Brocas and the railway bridge to the west, and Home Park and the meadows of Eton to the north. The list of views which formed the basis of this representative sample is included in [Appendix 5.6 on page 149](#).



Fig. 44: Summary map showing historic views taken from a range of viewpoints.

2.4 Significance

2.4.1 Introduction

Windsor Castle and its connected heritage assets represent an ensemble that deserves considerable analysis and description. This section summarises its exceptional significance.

Significance is ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest’ (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, Glossary). Such interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic and it may derive, in addition to an asset’s physical presence, also from its setting. The purpose of assessing significance is not merely academic, it is essential to effective conservation and management because the identification of elements of higher and lower significance, based on a thorough understanding of a site, enables owners and designers to develop proposals that safeguard, respect and where possible enhance the character and cultural values of the site. Significance is what conservation sustains, and where appropriate enhances, in managing change to heritage assets.

Further information on the designations applicable to Windsor Castle is included in [Appendix 5.1 on page 138](#).

For further information on how heritage significance is established in relation to the NPPF, please refer to [Appendix 5.2.3 on page 142](#).

Finally, for further reading, the reader is directed to the ‘Sources’ section of this report (see [Appendix 5.5 on page 147](#)).



Fig. 45: 1921 aerial image of Windsor Castle [Source: Historic England Archive]

2.4.2 Summary Statement of Significance

Windsor Castle is much more than a heritage asset; it is a living community encompassing the two great historic institutions of the Royal Household and the College of St George. As the 'Home of the Constitutional Monarchy' (as it is often described) it is as relevant to the nation, State and Monarchy today as it has ever been. As the longest occupied royal residence in Britain (the only one that is also a castle), it creates a deep sense of continuity, longevity and permanence, epitomised by the choice of Windsor for the new name of the Royal Family in 1917. A striking feature of the Castle's significance is the way in which the military imperatives of its original siting and form have proved so enduringly adaptable to shifting uses and the evolving symbolism of the British Monarchy.

Although the Conqueror's castle may have derived some legitimacy from the pre-existing Saxon royal use of the manor of Old Windsor, this Norman Castle was conceived as a military stronghold, a largely new instrument of warfare and propaganda that both secured and demonstrated in brutal fashion the power of the new foreign Norman rulers over their Saxon subjects.

By the mid-thirteenth century it had largely lost its military role but remained as a striking symbol of royal power and influence, with improved and extended accommodation, defences and associated hunting parks. In the fourteenth century, particularly under the influence of Edward III, the development of the Castle reflected a new ideal of the King as leader of a selected band of chivalrous knights, focused on the Order of the Garter which met within its walls and worshiped in the new Chapel of St George. Externally, architectural alterations such as taller towers reflect a conscious attempt to

romanticise the Castle as a shimmering Camelot on a distant hill. All these works were paid for by Edward's successful military campaigns – a conscious architectural expression of the power and strength of his reign.

Under the Tudors, though the Castle's military role had effectively ceased, it remained a centre of royal influence. The North Terrace – first built in wood and then in stone – reflected a new, non-military interest in its wider Thames Valley landscape context. Following the break of the Civil War, and at a time when most castles become mere ruins in the landscape, Windsor Castle was reconceived to demonstrate the Restoration of the Stuarts to their ancient rights, as a symbol of the legitimacy of the Crown.

It was at this time that the Castle became a designed focus in views from the Great Park with the addition of the Long Walk and, shortly after, Queen Anne's Ride. This was followed by the work to the Castle undertaken in the reign of George IV (completed under William IV and Queen Victoria), which reflected the new 'Medievalised' image adopted by the Monarchy, emphasising its deep historical roots. By the mid- to late-twentieth century, with increased public access and the greater emphasis on domestic comfort combined with important events of State, the Castle came to symbolise the new constitutional Monarchy. No longer remote and inaccessible, it now symbolises not just the Monarch, but the realm.

Windsor Castle bears witness to the development of castle architecture from the eleventh century onwards. It is unique as a castle still home to the Monarch and it contains elements from every phase of its history that are of the highest architectural and archaeological interest.

The intensity of royal use has ebbed and flowed since the eleventh century; Windsor is most closely associated with William the Conqueror, Edward III, Charles II and George IV. It is the resting place of other hugely iconic monarchs, including Edward IV, Henry VI, Henry VIII, Charles I, Queen Victoria (at Frogmore) and, most recently, the late Queen Elizabeth II (who wrote of her love of Windsor in the preface to the 2018 Windsor Castle volume edited by Steven Brindle). The way in which individual monarchs have placed their stamp on the Castle is of the highest historic and architectural interest, given added weight by the fact that these interventions were designed and built by the leading architects and craftsmen of the day.

A regulated hereditary possession (now managed by the Crown Estate), the associated parkland and its continuing use, design and management as a royal chase, pleasure grounds, gardens, royal residences and farming estate has resulted in a carefully controlled ensemble with the Castle, intricately bound together. Time is marked by the trees and successive park interventions and incorporations, reflecting the changing needs and interests of the Royal Family and as the living context for an unfolding series of events of national memory.

The Great Park and Home Park differ in character and function: the former includes more of the imparked Windsor Forest, including the largest collection of ancient and veteran oaks in northern Europe; the latter is more intimately related to England's pre-eminent castle, and the most significant of England's rivers. In areas where parkland character predominates, there is still a sense of the involvement and productivity of the Monarchy, exemplified by successive members of the Royal Family fulfilling the role of Ranger of the Great Park. By so doing, the institution of the Monarchy has become increasingly embedded within the sustained landscape and identity-making of the park.



Fig. 46: The Long Walk [© Alamy]

Unsurprisingly, Windsor Castle has also been extensively drawn, painted and photographed by many internationally renowned artists (see [Section 2.3](#)). Many of these depictions were royal commissions, projecting a particular image of the Monarchy, while others reflect a broader public perception of the Castle, particularly in the more modern and democratic age of photography. This body of work contributes to significance and understanding of significance in four ways: they are of intrinsic artistic importance, they are an irreplaceable historic record of the Castle and its setting, they illustrate the changes to both, and they demonstrate what artists and previous generations valued about the Castle, its setting and the views of them.

The dominant physical presence of Windsor has always resulted in its image being projected to a wide audience, directly to the occupants of the Thames Valley but also to the many travellers passing through the landscape on critical routes to and from London, both historically on the Great West Road and more recently from the M4 and flight paths of Heathrow airport. For many people however, particularly before the dawn of the railways, illustrations were the only medium through which they could experience the Castle. There are modern parallels with this in the international audience that experience the Castle when significant national events are broadcast around the world by the media.

There are of course other areas of significance relating, for example, to the often highly decorated internal spaces and their collections, or to the hidden archaeology, but these are not in themselves experienced in the wider setting of the Castle, as set out below and thus fall outside of the focus of this study.

In summary, Windsor Castle holds exceptional historic, architectural, artistic and archaeological significance and remains a focal point for significant national and State events. The interrelationship of the Castle and its environs is at the heart of its significance, both having heavily influenced each other's development (see [Section 2.2](#)). The ways in which the Castle's setting either contributes directly or indirectly to these interests and enables them to be appreciated is explored in the next section.



Fig. 47: U.S President Joe Biden reviews the Welsh Guards escorted by Britain's King Charles III, left, at the Quadrangle of Windsor Castle, July 10, 2023 [© Alamy]

2.5 The contribution of setting to the Castle's significance

2.5.1 Introduction

Windsor Castle is a highly visible and familiar symbol of the British Monarchy and of exceptional heritage significance (see [Section 2.4](#)). The Thames Valley, which the Castle has dominated for nearly 1000 years, is a living landscape on which humans have made their mark in different ways over millennia. The Castle was always intended to be experienced across the whole of this section of the valley, all of which originally lay within its setting.

The Thames Valley remains an incredible natural historic environment, particularly evident in the flood plains and areas of ancient woodland. However, some parts have seen more rapid change over recent centuries, primarily through urban expansion to the historic settlements of Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead; new major road and railway networks; and the addition and expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Despite these changes, the interaction of the Castle with the surrounding topography and landscape, the pattern of development and transport routes, the natural environment, and all of their interwoven relationships, still play a crucial role in how the Castle and its evolution has been understood and experienced throughout its remarkable history (for further information on the historical development of the Castle and its environs see [Section 2.2](#)).



Fig. 48: Windsor Castle from Windsor Great Park in 1895, by Charles Edward Johnson [Source: Perth and Kinross Council]

"It [Windsor Castle] gazes down over the prospect of a wide and far reaching vale, patterned with ploughland, green with its meadows, clad here and there with woodlands, and watered by the softly flowing Thames. Behind it the hills rise all around, neither rough nor very high, but crowned with woods as though Nature herself had dedicated them to the chase." (William Camden, *Britannia* 1586)

In short, the setting of Windsor Castle makes a fundamental and inherent contribution to our ability to understand and experience its exceptional heritage significance. This ability is often expressed primarily in visual terms, for example through a set of views; however, it is not just what you see of or from the asset that is important but equally how the asset and its setting are experienced. Beyond the visual, the experience of an asset in its setting can also be affected by other environmental and non-visual factors, such as noise, dust and vibration (most notably at Windsor Castle from aircraft and road traffic noise), and by our understanding of historical relationships and cultural associations with other assets and places. For further discussion of the distinction between setting and views see [Appendix 5.3 on page 143](#) and Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 3 on 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

The following sub-section ([Section 2.5.2](#)) sets out those attributes of significance to which the setting of Windsor Castle most strongly contributes. The report then discusses, firstly, the elements of setting within both the historic core and wider landscape areas (see [Fig. 52 on page 73](#)) which are inherent to the Castle's significance ([Section 2.5.3](#)), and, secondly, how setting contributes to how this significance is experienced and understood ([Section 2.5.4](#)), before drawing some conclusions on the contribution made by setting to significance ([Section 2.5.5](#)).

Many natural and built heritage assets referred to in this section have varying (in some instances very high) degrees of significance in their own right. This is not set out in detail here; other assets are considered primarily in terms of their relationship and the role they play in relation to the setting of Windsor Castle.

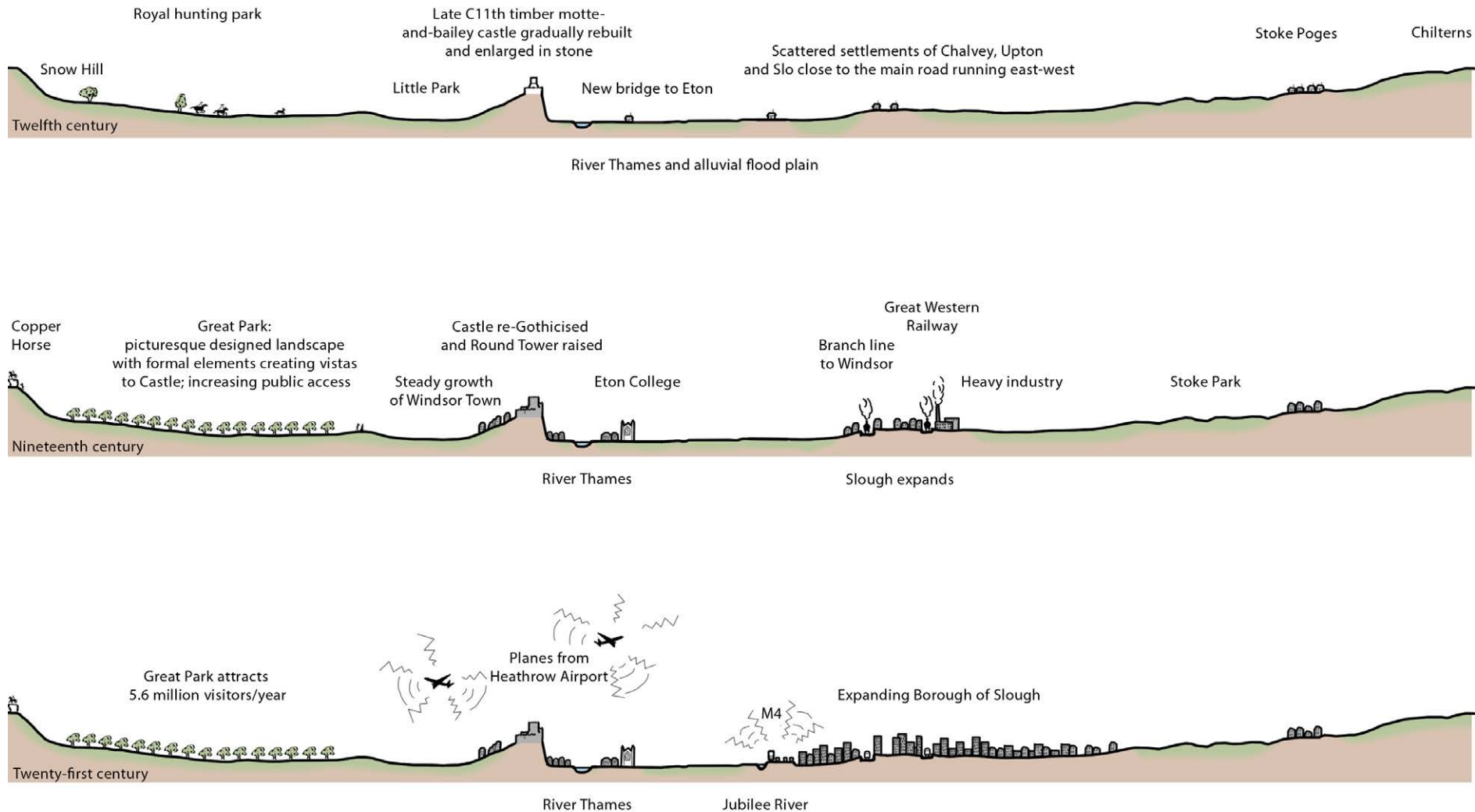


Fig. 49: Illustrative diagrams (not to scale) showing some of the key historic and more recent changes to the setting of Windsor Castle.

2.5.2 Key attributes of the Castle's setting that contribute to significance

Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (GPA3) gives general advice on understanding and appreciating how setting may contribute to significance. It recommends assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself. Listed below are some of the key attributes of the Castle's significance where setting is either intrinsic to significance or necessary to understand and appreciate it:

- A** The Castle's strategic landmark siting gives it a monumental presence and visual dominance in the Thames Valley landscape, illustrating the original design intention as a Norman military fortress and subsequently projecting an evolving image of the British Monarchy over nearly 1000 years.
- B** The symbiosis of the Castle and its associated historic estate of the Home and Great Parks deliver an epic designed and managed landscape with the Castle as its focal point in formal vistas and wider views, providing a large area of parkland for leisure and recreation originally for the royal court and later the wider public.
- C** The Castle's functional and historic relationship with the River Thames reflects the river's role as a strategic route, with the Castle dictating the crossing point for trade and transport; the meandering route shapes the surrounding valley in which the Castle is experienced.
- D** Long approaches to the Castle play a key role in State events as ceremonial processional routes, particularly the Long Walk, principal roads through Windsor, Eton and Datchet, and more historically the river, achieving a sense of dignity and gravitas.
- E** Windsor town has supported the royal court at Windsor as the principal royal residence outside of London since the thirteenth

century, with pageantry and royal activity spilling over into the town.

- F** The royally founded establishments of Eton College and the College of St George both retain strong links to the Monarchy, forming an historic ensemble with the Castle; this is visually communicated by their two highly prominent Gothic chapels, which have a strong visual relationship.
- G** The landscape provides a dramatic stage set for the Castle's familiar composition, as a romanticised and Gothicised castle, perched on a hilltop within a picturesque setting; the many historic visual, artistic, and literary representations help to embed its iconic form and symbolism in public consciousness.
- H** The Castle in its landscape setting is an internationally potent cultural symbol, embedded in the public consciousness through increased access, major events and media coverage, attracting large numbers of visitors and connecting with an instinctive sense of castles, Royalty and national identity.
- I** For nearly 1000 years the Castle has been an anchor point in the Thames Valley, evoking a deep sense of continuity, longevity and permanence in a wider living landscape of constantly evolving settlements, communities and the natural environment.

[Section 2.5.4](#) has a signposting system at the end of each sub-section using a small diagram to identify which of the key attributes listed above are demonstrated by the accompanying text.

2.5.3 The inherent contribution to the Castle's significance made by its setting

The relationship between Windsor Castle, its associated parkland, the River Thames, and the town of Windsor creates an historic core of the Castle's setting. This needs to be understood as a distinct element and considered separately to the Castle's wider landscape setting.

GPA3 highlights the importance of setting in what it contributes to the significance of the asset or the ability to appreciate that significance. Both the historic core and wider landscape areas (the broad spatial extent of which as defined here can be seen in [Fig. 52 on page 73](#)) make an inherent contribution to our ability to understand and appreciate the Castle's significance. The different ways and extents to which both areas do this are discussed below.

The historic core includes areas that have been under the long-term control or direct influence of the Monarchy, or, in the case of the River Thames (between Baths Island/Railway Bridge and Datchet) and Windsor Town, have a deep-rooted and direct connection with the Castle in its very close setting. The wider landscape area comprises the sweeping section of the Thames Valley over which Windsor still dominates, albeit in a less direct way than in the historic core, containing urban areas that have expanded largely independently from the Castle and its influence.



Fig. 50: From the south within the historic core: Windsor Castle from the King George III statue in Windsor Great Park, 2024 [© Slough Borough Council]



Fig. 51: From the north within the wider landscape area: Windsor Castle from Wood Lane Bridge (over the M4), 2025

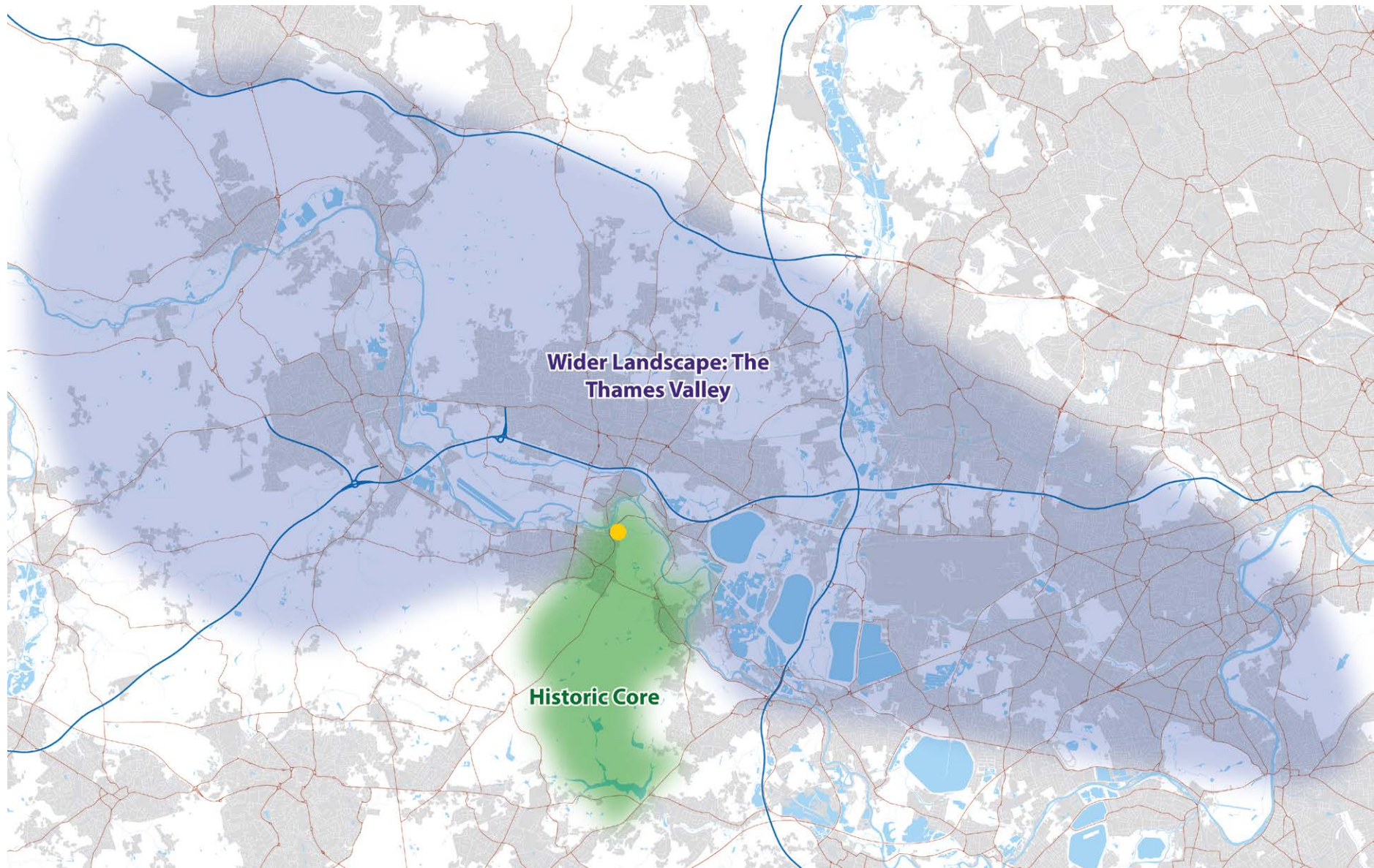


Fig. 52: Diagram illustrating the 'historic core' and 'wider landscape' areas as explained in sections 2.5.3 and 2.5.4 of this document

2.5.3.1 Historic core

The River Thames (between Baths Island/Railway Bridge and Datchet)

The Castle has a deep-rooted historic relationship with the River Thames, which is crucial to its very existence. There are three main aspects to this, the first being the strategic position of the Castle adjacent to the river to control both the crossing and the historical route for transport and trade to London.

The second is the dramatic contrast of land levels created by the outcrop's steep escarpment to the north up to the chalk outcrop on which it sits (which only exists because of the river and surrounding geology); this has been capitalised on by architects to emphasise the sheerness of the Castle's walls, enhancing its prowess as a landmark sitting high above its surroundings. Lastly is the sylvan and picturesque character the river creates, helped by the tight bend in the river around the Home Park, which also frames and in part defines its spatial extent and approaches to Windsor via the various bridges. This special character has been exploited in many artistic representations from the eighteenth century onwards.

The water frontage is also an important environmental and recreational amenity for residents and visitors to the Castle, and an important asset to the character of Windsor town and particularly the open spaces of Alexandra Gardens and The Brocas, playing a crucial role in how the Castle is experienced from these areas (see [Section 2.5.4](#) below).

The Great Park

The historic and functional relationship of the Castle with its parkland is fundamental to understanding the setting and evolution of the Castle. In combination, they form an ensemble, the significance of which is even greater than the sum of its highly significant parts. The enormous



Fig. 53: Members of the Laing Sports Club and their families taking a trip on the River Thames heading east, 1971 [Source: Historic England Archive]

private historic landholding has ancient royal associations that pre-date the Castle's origins at New Windsor in the eleventh century. The exclusive character of the Great Park has changed over time as managed public access has been increased, but the essence of it as a royal park intrinsically linked with its Castle remains strong.

From the late-seventeenth century onwards, the Great Park was transformed through two designed, formal features: the Long Walk and Queen Annes Ride. The ridge of the Chiltern Hills acts as the distant component within a beautiful and picturesque landscape, capitalised on through exceptional building designs set in carefully managed parkland. These avenues increased the grandeur of the approach to the Castle and shaped how many people experienced it (see [Section 2.5.4](#)). From the eighteenth century, with increased public access, these more formal elements feature heavily in artistic representations (see [Section 2.3](#)), and from the nineteenth century the presence of the Copper Horse statue creates a clearly defined landmark and lookout point at the top of Snow Hill. In modern times, the Long Walk plays a key role as a processional ceremonial route to the Castle, used for events of State and most notably in 2022 as the route for the funeral cortege taking the late Queen Elizabeth II to her final resting place in St George's Chapel.

The Home Park

The Home (originally Little) Park has an entirely different character, function and relationship to the Castle to the Great Park, from which it has always been separate. The Home Park has always provided private amenity space for the Castle since its first enclosure in the twelfth century. Its ancient relationship with the Castle is intimate, with many areas of Home Park Private retaining a strong sense of enclosure, dense planting and sense of privacy, particularly at Frogmore.

Home Park Public, following its re-purposing for public use in the mid-nineteenth century, now has a markedly different character to Home Park Private, separated by King Edward VII Avenue and the row of densely planted tall hedges. Closer to the Castle on the other side of the road lie the playing fields of St George's School, the land again taking on a different function and character. Home Park Public nonetheless retains close historic and visual links to the Castle (see [Section 2.5.4](#) below) and forms part of its immediate setting to the north.



Fig. 54: A 1900 view of the North Terrace of Windsor Castle from the Home Park [Source: Historic England Archive]

Old Windsor

Old Windsor's relationship with the royal court and the Great Park date to at least the Saxon period when the royal court was located in there. When [New] Windsor was founded, the name Windsor moved with it, due to the royal associations.

Windsor town

The town of Windsor has always had a strong and close relationship with the Castle, a major landmark and a dramatic and dominant presence within the town that requires little interpretation or promotion.

Windsor's origins, growth and activities are intrinsically linked to the Castle and presence of the Royal Family, founded initially to serve the royal court, providing accommodation and amenities to those working at and visiting the Castle as it still does today. Successive phases of urban growth were generally linked to programs of enhancement to the Castle and estate between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Royal ceremonial activity and pageantry has always spilled over into the town, including processions and State events.

The uniquely long association between the Castle, town and the Royal Family is unparalleled. As both Home of the Constitutional Monarchy and (increasingly from the eighteenth century and greatly accelerated by nineteenth-century railway links) a destination for tourists, the Castle has immense cultural significance, which is reflected in its impact on the local economy.



Fig. 55: A view by Louise Rayner of Windsor Castle from Peascod Street, 1860s [Source: Alamy]

2.5.3.2 Wider landscape

The Castle's Dominance in the Landscape

The Castle's dominance over the wide river valley landscape reflects the intentions of the new King, William the Conqueror, to suppress post-Conquest unrest and acted as a visual reminder of the new power. This message was projected across the Thames Valley landscape by virtue of the Castle's elevated position and the much lower and level valley floor within which many smaller settlements existed.

The natural propensity for the valley to periodically flood has played a role in preserving its openness, as have private landholdings most notably of Eton College (e.g. playing fields and The Brocas) and preserved areas of common land (e.g. Dorney Common and Eton Great Common). Through enduring visual prominence, from a great many locations up and down the Thames Valley, the intended message of dominance remains strongly linked to the landscape it sits within.

The Castle's Influence on the Development of Transport Networks and Settlements

The road and route network that exists today reflects the draw of Windsor Castle and the royal court as a highly important destination. Whilst river transport endured as an important route to and from Windsor, new roads and railways routes were created to connect with existing historical routes, to allow people to travel to and from Windsor.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, when connections to the Castle continued to be an important social and political draw, new railway routes were created. This opened up Windsor town as an important leisure and tourist destination to a far broader audience.

Settlements such as Slough expanded and absorbed smaller nearby settlements to accommodate the travelling visitor with inns and

hostelries, many of which benefitted from the experience of clear views of the Castle across the valley (see [Section 2.5.4](#) below). Later urban expansion of these settlements contributes little to the Castle's significance and has occurred largely independently.

An Immense Medieval Hunting Forest

The very large extent of the medieval hunting forest, associated with the royal court at Old Windsor then transferred to [New] Windsor (beyond what is contained within the Great Park today, see above), can still be partially understood from the amount of surviving ancient woodland within the Thames Valley areas of southern Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Surrey.

These areas of ancient woodland reflect lengthy periods of royal ownership, connection and management, and then fortuitously (and with the foresight of landowners and support from designations) remain in existence to be understood as remains of those medieval landholdings. Whilst the exact extent of the royal hunting forest is not known, areas of ancient woodland that may have once been part of it are important remnants of this historic landscape.

Eton and Eton College

Across the river from Windsor, Eton has always had close royal links. Present as a hamlet from as early as the tenth century, it developed along the linear route north from Windsor Bridge, forming an important part of the main approach to the Castle from the north. The intimacy of the royal connection was significantly enhanced following the founding of Eton College by Henry VI in 1440. The endowment of the College with large land holdings has influenced surrounding development (or lack of) to the north of the Castle; this has also been constrained by its location within the flood plain (see below under wider landscape). Also in the ownership of Eton College is 'The Brocas',

a large water meadow over which Lammas (common access) rights still extend.

The historic connection between the Castle and Eton College is most prominently illustrated by the strong visual relationship between the two Gothic chapels of St George and Eton College, both in views from the Castle to the north and in the wider experience of the landscape when both can be considered together (see [Section 2.5.4](#)).

Natural Beauty, Castle Design and Artistic Representations

Natural landscape features including the ancient woodlands, flood plains and the raised topography of the Chiltern Hills, provide great natural beauty. These striking features greatly contributed to the way in which the Castle was designed and enhanced over centuries. Taken together they have a powerful effect that has been utilised and

embellished within many significant artistic representations. These representations have in turn influenced and contributed to the image of the Castle in public consciousness. For example, The Brocas is an important historical and publicly accessible open meadow from which the Castle has always been experienced (see [Section 2.5.4](#) below) and from which many artistic depictions have been made (see [Section 2.3](#)).

Across the valley, Windsor Castle has acted as a key feature in views from historic and modern residential development and designed landscapes. For example, Stoke Park was originally designed by Humphry Repton with a south terrace looking over a naturalistic landscape with Windsor Castle in the distance, and Upton Court Park in Slough has an avenue of trees trained precisely on the Round Tower.



Fig. 56: View from the river, adjacent to the Windsor and Eton Riverside Station, 1885 [Source: Historic England Archive]



Fig. 57: One of the railway bridges carrying the Great Western Railway over the river Thames, with the buildings of the Castle in the distance, 1870 [Source: Historic England Archive]

2.5.4 How Windsor Castle is experienced in its setting

Having established in Sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 that the Castle's setting makes an inherent contribution to its significance, this section sets out how the Castle is experienced within that setting (including in key views), and how that contributes to our understanding of its significance today. This is explored firstly from within the historic core area, followed by the wider landscape area (Section 2.5.4.2), before considering how both areas are experienced from the Castle itself (Section 2.5.4.3).

Each sub-section below explains how each element of experience demonstrates key attributes of the Castle's setting that contribute towards its significance (as listed in Section 2.5.2).

2.5.4.1 Experience and views of the Castle from the historic core

As set out in GPA3, 'visual dominance, prominence or role as a focal point' can be a key component of how an asset is experienced. There can be no doubt that the prominence of the Castle, in some places to the virtual exclusion of other buildings or structures, is a key component of how it is experienced in the historic core. Due to the nature of the topography, from the historic core area the Castle's silhouette is read against a clear sky or the distant Chilterns, both providing a continuous, neutral backdrop that contributes positively to the visual experience.

The River Thames (between Baths Island/Railway Bridge and Datchet)

The River Thames is as an important way for people to engage with the Castle. Due to its nature as a thoroughfare, this is often a kinetic experience, from river traffic (e.g. kayaks or pleasure boats), bridge

crossings or from paths along the riverbanks, the river itself providing a natural visual contrast and sense of historic continuity.

When approached from the river, the Castle either appears gradually, initially glimpsed through mature trees (such as when approaching heading west through Romney Lock or crossing the river by rail from Datchet – see Fig. 58) or clearly present from a distance (such as when approaching from the east). It is omnipresent along the east-west stretch of river either side of Windsor Bridge, where the relatively low-scale development on the southern bank of the river, paired with the elevated outcrop of land upon which the Castle sits, enables magnificent views of the Castle.



Fig. 58: View from railway line crossing the river between Datchet and Windsor, 2025

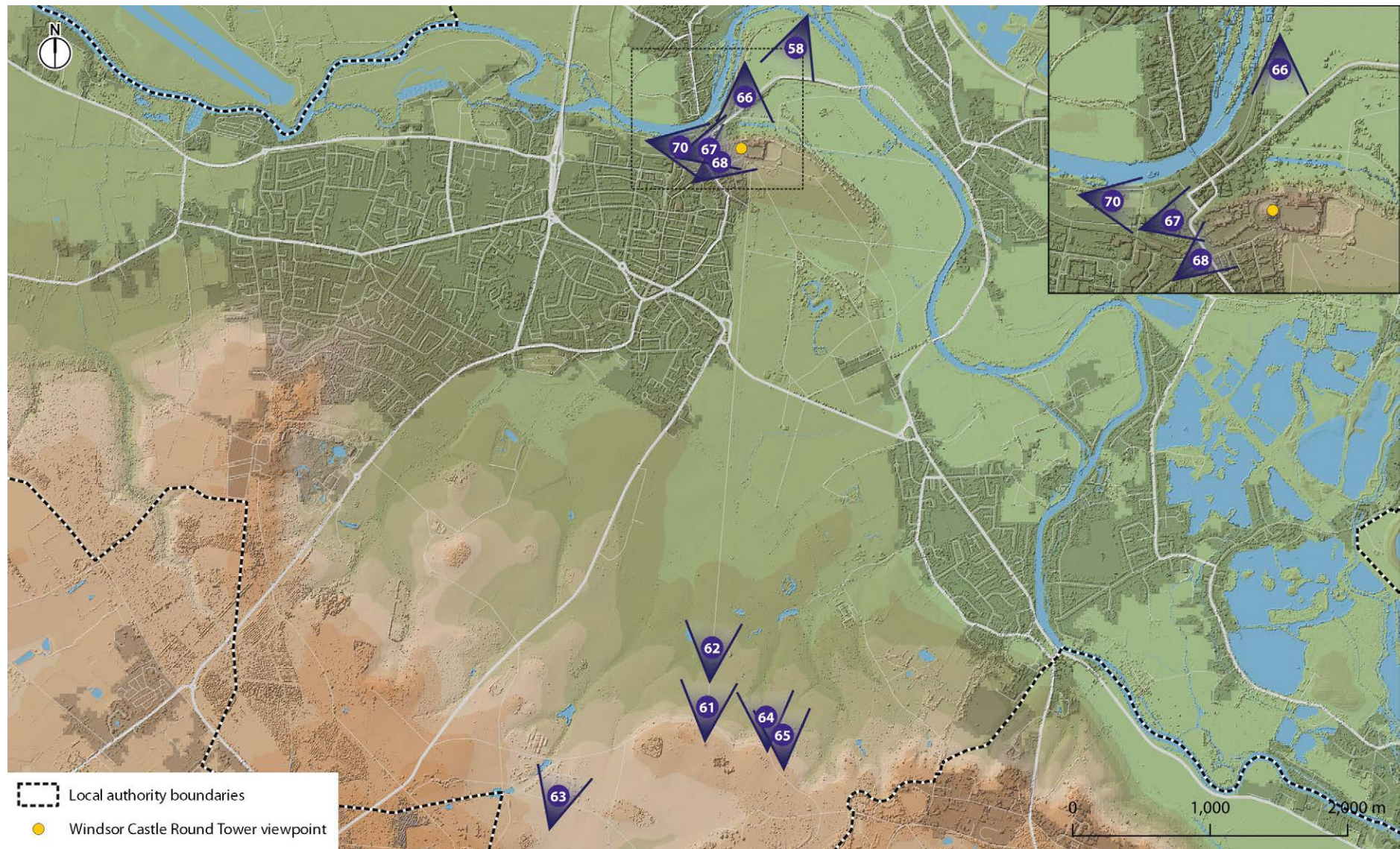


Fig. 59: Views of Windsor Castle from within the historic core area, as discussed in [Section 2.5.4.1](#). The numbers represent figure numbers in this document.

The Great Park

The Great Park contains a carefully designed and controlled set of experiences of Windsor Castle. These are of exceptional importance and contribute strongly to our understanding and appreciation of its significance.

GPA3 sets out that 'Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset' can contribute to how an asset's significance is experienced. Designed views from within the Great Park, most notably down the Long Walk and Queen Anne's Ride, allow the Castle to be appreciated as a ceremonial 'object' in a greater landscape, and enable the viewer to appreciate the deep, symbiotic connection between the Castle and its associated parkland, made possible by their long-term shared ownership. These views spectacularly combine harnessed natural beauty in a designed landscape with magnificent architectural design to form an enhanced experience of the Castle's setting.

The viewer's gaze is drawn along the Long Walk by renewed historic tree planting on both sides, focussed on the Castle and specifically the nineteenth-century addition of George IV Gate. A common vantage point is the statue of King George III (the Copper Horse) on the high point of Snow Hill. Historic illustrations demonstrate that this view remains broadly unchanged today (see for example [Fig. 60](#)). From this point the ridge of the Chilterns provides a visual anchor point helping to illustrate the large scale and picturesque qualities of the landscape over which the Castle had dominion, only broken at present by the power station chimneys. The town of Windsor is visually subservient, being mostly low-rise and often hidden behind mature woodland or the Castle itself. While the Castle always remains the intended focus of this designed view, climatic conditions have a notable impact on which other buildings catch the eye: in particular large pale-coloured buildings in central Slough and the Trading Estate can draw attention



Fig. 60: The Long Walk, depicted in 1862 [Source Royal Collection Trust RCIN 700742 / © HM King Charles III 2025]



Fig. 61: View north from the statue of King George III (the copper horse) [© Slough Borough Council]

away from the Castle when highlighted in bright sunshine and interrupt its prominence, resulting in a degree of harm to how the Castle is experienced in its setting.

As one drops down from Snow Hill along the Long Walk, so the way the Castle is experienced in its setting changes. Whereas at the higher level there is the sense of a wide, dramatic vista, at the lower level, the focus is drawn more tightly on the Castle viewed between the avenues of mature trees. These trees screen Slough Trading Estate and the continuous backdrop of the Chilterns ridge is broken only by the Castle itself, enabling it to be experienced as intended.

The impressive grandeur of the dynamic experience of moving along the Long Walk highlights the ceremonial importance of this approach, which still leads to the formal state entrance to the Upper Ward through Cambridge Gate and up to George IV Gate. Exemplifying this tradition, the Long Walk was the location of the culmination of the late Queen Elizabeth's funeral, where a final procession involving 1,000 military personnel took place. Another example of the approach being used to impressive effect was for the Coronation Concert in 2023, when the south elevation of the Castle served as a canvas upon which images were projected. Such events embed the Castle within the public consciousness and reflect GPA3's emphasis on the 'Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public'.

Looking north along Queen Anne's Ride, the focus of this designed view is also on the Castle framed by the avenue of mature trees. However, here it is the Round Tower that falls centrally, forming a distinctive feature and focal point set against the continuous unbroken backdrop of the Chilterns. The built form of the Castle sits slightly to the east of the gap in the trees, leaving an open space to the west (left) of the



Fig. 62: View north along the Long Walk from the lower level



Fig. 63: View north along Queen Anne's Ride

Round Tower. Here some recent buildings within Slough visibly intrude and challenge the Castle's dominance in this designed view, resulting in a degree of harm to how the Castle is experienced in its setting.

The broader experience from the network of narrower paths within the Great Park beyond these designed set pieces still offers occasional glimpsed Castle views, reinforcing their historic relationship (see [Section 2.5.3.1](#)). The present-day landscape is a mixture of managed open parkland and wooded parkland, evoking a long tradition of permanent grazed clearings and chases weaving through moderately-wooded, un-compartmented medieval wood-pasture. The rhythm and character of this historic landscape holds the experience of the modern world at arm's length. GPA3 acknowledges 'tranquillity' and 'wilderness' as components of how an asset can be experienced in its setting. The tranquillity of the Great Park has always been a component of the Castle's setting, and this endures to a remarkable degree, positively contributing towards how the Castle is experienced in its setting.

GPA3 also identifies noise and vibration as factors that can impact the experience of an asset within its setting. The experience of tranquillity within the Great Park is interrupted by planes from Heathrow, which can both be seen and heard to varying degrees depending on the direction of the wind, the noise from aircraft arguably being more impactful on the overall experience.

KEY ATTRIBUTES



Fig. 64: View north from the Great Park



Fig. 65: Areas of open parkland accessed through a network of smaller pathways, occasionally with long views of the Castle

The Home Park

Home Park Private affords a close-range view of the Castle atop the outcrop that rises above the river floodplain, set within a highly-controlled, intimate and largely secluded landscape. Alongside tranquillity (see above), GPA3 draws attention to the potential for a sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy to contribute to appreciation of significance. Within Home Park, the role of the Castle as the private residence of the Monarch can be appreciated. Exemplifying this, it was to Frogmore Gardens that Queen Victoria used to retire to write letters. The sense of intimacy and privacy between the Park and Castle contributes positively to how the Castle is experienced today.

Home Park Public has a lower level of landscape management, focused on enabling the sustained use of the fields for recreation rather than picturesque enjoyment or patterns of movement. From this area looking south-west, the Castle is clearly silhouetted above the trees and retains a dominant presence throughout.

GPA3 identifies noise, vibration and other nuisances as factors that can affect the experience of an asset within its setting. Noise from planes from Heathrow and more locally/to a lesser extent noise and vehicle fumes from road traffic from King Edward VII Avenue interrupts the sense of seclusion and tranquillity that is part of how the Castle is experienced in its setting from the Home Park.

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Fig. 66: View from Windsor Rugby club buildings and car park within Home Park, looking south

Old Windsor

Windsor Castle can be experienced in distant glimpses of its silhouette from Old Windsor, serving as an eloquent testimony of the deep-rooted historic relationship between the two places (see [Section 2.5.3.1](#)). This experience enhances our understanding and appreciation of the royal court's origins at Old Windsor and how this contributed to how the Castle and [New] Windsor subsequently evolved.

KEY ATTRIBUTES



Windsor town

The Castle is the focal point and primary landmark within Windsor town. The low-rise nature of the town and its historic street pattern draws the eye towards the Castle, where the distinctive silhouette of the Round Tower is clearly visible, often enhanced by sunlight on its southern face. A particularly prominent location from which to view the Castle within the historic old town is from the raised area of Windsor & Eton Central Station train platform (see Fig. 67).

The Castle's raised position compared to the surrounding streets becomes increasingly evident as one moves north and then east along Thames Street (particularly dominated by the looming Curfew Tower). The Castle is also experienced at this distance through major national events that command media coverage, with footage depicting the Castle at close-range, allowing the finer architectural details of the Castle, particularly of St George's Chapel and the Round Tower, to be appreciated.



Fig. 67: View looking east from Windsor & Eton Central railway station (platform 2)



Fig. 68: View up Peascod Street

The Castle is experienced prominently from the riverside open spaces of Alexandra Gardens and The Goswells, the latter having been taken into the care of the National Trust as a conscious act to “reserve the view of the Castle from Alexandra Gardens”. Looking east from Alexandra Gardens, the silhouette of the Castle remains clearly visible today. In the foreground, some trees within Alexandra Gardens have grown to partially obscure this view, but it remains clearly discernible, especially in winter.

KEY ATTRIBUTES



Fig. 69: A 1905 postcard depicting the view of Windsor Castle from Alexandra Gardens [Source Windsor History Website]



Fig. 70: Current view from Alexandra Gardens

2.5.4.2 Experience and views looking towards the Castle from the wider landscape

The immensely broad extent to which Windsor Castle is experienced within the wider landscape of the Thames Valley, sometimes from great distances, is clearly illustrated in the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map (see [Fig. 9 on page 24](#)). GPA3 sets out that 'visual dominance, prominence or role as a focal point' and 'intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features' can be key elements in the experience of an asset's setting that can contribute to its significance, both of which are applicable to how Windsor Castle is experienced within its wider landscape.

Today, how the Castle is experienced within this context is increasingly impacted by modern transport infrastructure, twentieth- and twenty-first century urban growth, and land use changes. Nevertheless, there remain a great many locations from which the qualities and significance of the Castle can be understood and appreciated. When clearly visible, there also remains a great sense of how the Castle would have historically appeared at a distance and when approached by land or river.

Topography, landscape character

As this study has set out (see [Section 2.2](#)), the siting of Windsor Castle, and therefore how it was intended to be experienced, is neither fortuitous nor accidental. Its location on the highest point in this part of the Thames Valley was chosen for its defensive role and to maximise its prominence in the landscape. This situation enhances the Castle's

architectural effect, because when viewed from most of the wider landscape its silhouette is read against a clear sky.

GPA3 identifies 'surrounding landscape or townscape character' as an element of an asset's setting that can contribute to significance. Windsor Castle is experienced within a profoundly historic wider living landscape containing many inter-related natural and man-made elements some of which have developed independently from the Castle (see [Section 2.5.3.2](#)).

The transformation from a largely rural landscape to one in which urban and industrial growth and transport infrastructure plays a more prominent role has not implicitly harmed the Castle's significance, because at present the Castle remains overall the dominant feature within the landscape. However, there are areas where opportunities to appreciate the significance of the Castle have been lost; for example, due to intervening development (e.g. in Slough) that wholly or partially interrupts a view of the Castle. This has the effect of eroding the prominence of the Castle and experience of it as the dominant landmark within this section of the Thames Valley.



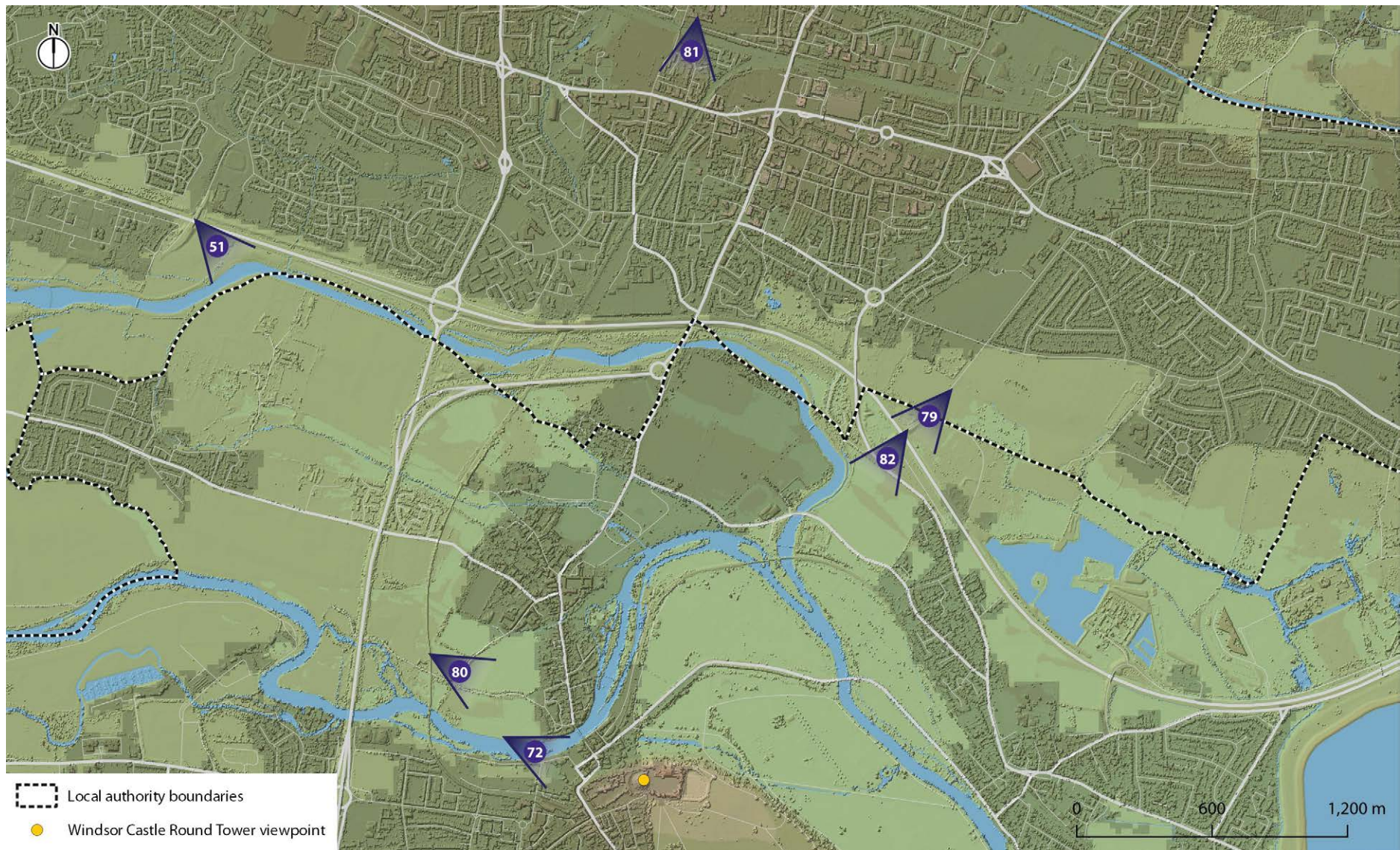


Fig. 71: Views of Windsor Castle from within the wider landscape area, as discussed in [Section 2.5.4.2](#). The numbers represent figure numbers in this document.

Approaches from Eton, the River Thames and its banks

As one heads south along Eton's historic high street, the Castle looms into view, contrasting with the existing scale of development on the approach to Windsor Bridge. One is left in little doubt about the close ties between the local community, the Castle and the British Monarchy, as well as the historic importance of this approach as the key route by road to Windsor from London.

From the River Thames, the powerful presence of the Castle appears when journeying south or west on the approach to Windsor, echoing the key historic role played by the river as an important processional route for monarchs travelling by barge from London. While the Castle is still experienced from the river itself, many experience it from the banks of the river, along formal paths and areas immediately adjacent, for example The Brocas.

GPA3 recognises 'celebrated artistic representations' as an important part of an asset's experience (see [Section 2.3](#)). Views from the river looking south are some of the most common locations from which the Castle has been artistically represented in its history, particularly prevalent in seventeenth and eighteenth-century paintings and in early photography (e.g. [Fig. 74-Fig. 77 on page 90](#)).

KEY ATTRIBUTES



Fig. 72: View from The Brocas



Fig. 73: c. 1707 engraving by Johannes Kip [Source Royal Collection Trust RCIN 700170 / © HM King Charles III 2025]



Fig. 74: 1827 Windsor Castle from the banks of the Thames by the Brocas, by William Daniell [Source Wikimedia]



Fig. 75: John Joseph Hughes, 1855 [Source: Historic England Archive]



Fig. 76: Alfred William Hunt, 1889 [Source Wikimedia]



Fig. 77: Photochrom of Windsor and Windsor Castle looking across the Thames, 1895 [Source Wikimedia]

Long range views across the flood plain

The ability to appreciate the Castle across the wider flood plain remains central to many people's experiences of the Castle. An important common component of long range views across this area is the expanse of low-lying ground between the viewing point and the Castle, enabling the Castle to appear clearly on the horizon. Alongside the broad and extensive views of the Castle across open fields and from the various surrounding villages, it can be viewed from Richmond Hill, from Heathrow Terminal 5, and when travelling along the M4 or the railway. The historic experience of dramatic long-range views south towards the Castle from the Great West Road (now the A4) has been effectively blocked by twentieth-century suburban development of Slough, although glimpses of the Castle are possible from areas of central Slough.

Looking across the flood plain, two long-range designed views of the Castle are noteworthy:

- The first is from Humphry Repton's Stoke Park looking south, where the Castle is still discernible today but only from the house's dome (the historic view from ground level has been lost due to later tree growth and presence of modern development in the foreground including tall buildings in central Slough). In the view from the dome, the Castle is read against woodland in the Great Park and surviving sections of Windsor Forest, enhancing the Castle's important historic relationship with this natural historic environment.



Fig. 78: View looking south from Stoke Park, with the silhouette of the Castle shown to the right of tall buildings within the centre of Slough

- The second is from Upton Court Park in Slough, looking southwest, where the Round Tower falls centrally within a long avenue of trees. This is a relatively modern, albeit carefully curated view, effectively mirroring that looking north along Queen Anne's Ride; however, due to the topography, in this view the Castle is read against the sky. The same axial view can also be experienced further north from the residential streets of Lascelles Road (which continues on the same alignment as the route through Upton Court Park), where the Castle is the focal point, a rare occurrence in central Slough.

KEY ATTRIBUTES

**Relatively new ways to experience the Castle**

The evolution of the wider Thames Valley (see [Section 2.2](#) and [Fig. 49 on page 70](#)) with major new transport infrastructure has enabled a new and expanded range of often kinetic experiences of the Castle within its setting, albeit at some cost to the sense of peace and tranquillity. Examples of this include views from the railway lines on the approach into Windsor (see [Fig. 80](#)) and from the M4 motorway (see [Fig. 82 on page 93](#)), which hints at the historic experience of long-range kinetic views from the Great West Road (now the A4). Additionally, although only fleetingly glimpsed, airborne passengers arriving and departing Heathrow Airport can experience the Castle from above, with dramatic aerial views of the Castle possible on clear days enabling a completely different perspective that takes in the whole form of the Castle. Through these, a wide range of travellers can appreciate



Fig. 79: View from Upton Court Park



Fig. 80: View from the railway line on the approach to Windsor and Eton Central Station

the Castle in a new light and one that is firmly embedded in its wider setting, helping to embed the Castle's image and symbolism in public consciousness.

There are also some new views of the Castle looking south from relatively recent developments within central Slough, for example from the residents' terrace of the Horlicks Building (see Fig. 81). These views are often fortuitous rather than designed, but nonetheless give an idea of the historic relationship between Slough and the Castle that is often hard to read today from Slough itself. There is the potential for this to be augmented further through the creation of new vantage points.

Collectively, these long-range views play a valued role in how the Castle can be experienced today because they reflect historic views, whilst demonstrating the potential for the creation of new views enabling novel ways to experience the Castle's architectural form and its communal significance as a highly prominent and purposefully designed symbol of the UK Monarchy.

KEY ATTRIBUTES



Fig. 81: View from the residents' terrace of the Horlicks Building



Fig. 82: View from the Myrke footbridge over the M4

2.5.4.3 Experience and views looking out from the Castle
 Due to its elevated position, a large area of Thames Valley can be experienced from the Castle and its grounds. Views out from the Castle are typically expansive and panoramic. GPA3 states that 'views from, towards, through, across and including the asset' can be a key component of the experience of an asset contributing towards significance. Windsor Castle was built not only to be seen from the surrounding landscape but to look out over it, originally for military and observational purposes to command views over this stretch of the Thames Valley, then later capitalised on for the leisure and amenity of its residents. The sheer range of views from the Castle also emphasises its dominance as a structure within the landscape, connecting with GPA3's reference to 'visual dominance, prominence or role as a focal point' (see other discussion on this point above in sections [2.5.3.2](#), [2.5.4.1](#) and [2.5.4.2](#)).

The northern panorama takes in Slough and its suburbs, which is largely read as a clear band of modern development within a much wider wooded

and green expanse. Settlements and other modern developments are seen as part of a dynamic living landscape that has evolved over millennia and will more than likely continue to do so.

This section examines the experience through analysing views firstly from the Round Tower in all directions, and secondly from the North and East Terraces and the Castle's State and Semi-State Apartments to the north-west, north and east. These locations have been chosen largely because of their historic role as consciously designed places from which one would look out over the landscape. There are, of course, many other locations within the Castle's accommodation and grounds from which its setting can be experienced and therefore the analysis below is not exhaustive.

Some views looking south-east and east from the Castle look out over private gardens and accommodation and therefore for security reasons have not been included in this report; however, the implications of these views to the setting and significance of the Castle are still discussed below.

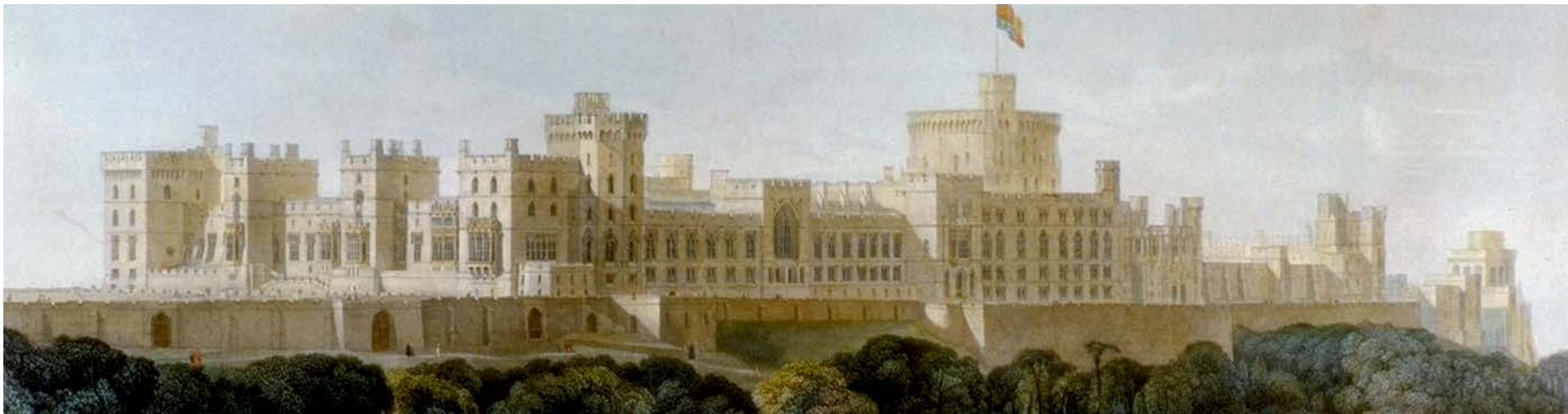


Fig. 83: East and north sides of Windsor Castle, 1842 [Source: Government Art Collection]

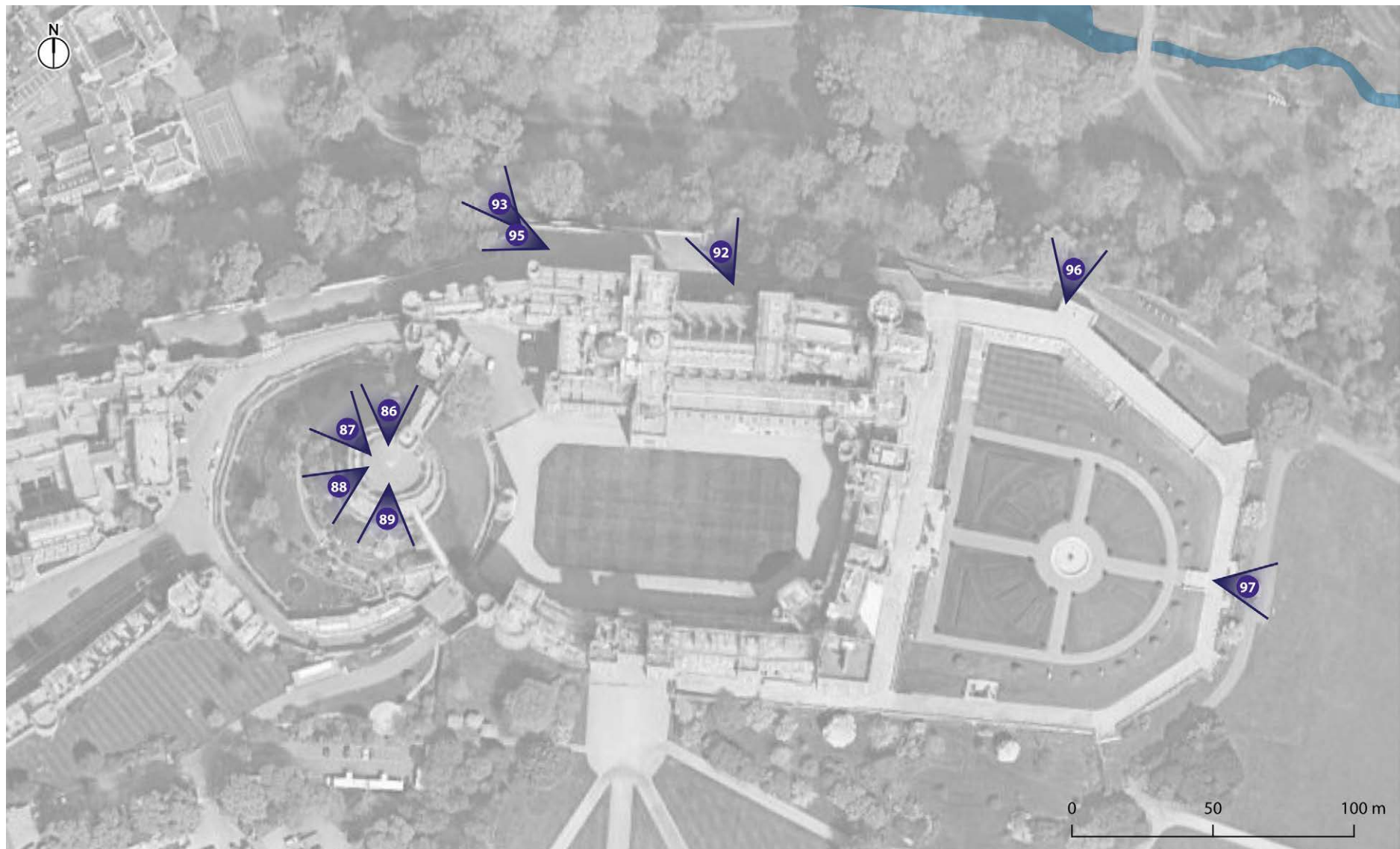


Fig. 84: Views from Windsor Castle as discussed in [Section 2.5.4.3](#); other views looking south-east and east have not been included due to security reasons. The numbers represent figure numbers in this document.

Views from the Round Tower

The top of the Round Tower offers an elevated position and birds-eye perspective from which long-distance views sweeping in all directions can be experienced, over the surrounding landscape with which the Castle has had a profound relationship for nearly 1000 years. Today's experience is enhanced by the Round Tower's nineteenth-century raising by 30 feet to enhance its silhouette and dramatic effect (see [Section 2.2](#)), however this is simply an elevated version of the historic experience that would have been present throughout the Castle's history.

The northern panorama takes in a band of modern development (primarily Slough and adjacent suburbs e.g. Burnham and Cippenham) set within a largely wooded, green expanse in the foreground to the Chiltern Hills in the distance. As seen in [Fig. 86](#), areas of undeveloped woodland, together with retained mature trees, provide a clear link to the once widely wooded landscape of the historical Castle and soften the impact of the urban environment from this vantage point. Factors affecting the relative prominence of buildings looking out from the Castle include the scale, height, mass, colour and tone of the buildings. The mansion at Stoke Park can be seen on the far side of Slough.

Looking northwest (see [Fig. 87](#)) to the north of the river, generally low-rise urban development in Eton dominates the middle distance of the view, illustrative of the expansion of development along this key historic north-south route influenced by the Castle's presence. Surrounding Eton, with its prominent College Chapel, lies the largely open land of the alluvial flood plain to the north of the river's meandering route to Maidenhead, just visible in the distance. Behind all of this lie the neutral background of the Chilterns, the ridge line only broken by Slough Power Station, with the adjacent industrial units in



Fig. 85: Round Tower, 2019 [Source: Wikimedia]



Fig. 86: View north towards Slough from the Round Tower [© Slough Borough Council]

the Trading Estate also visually prominent due to their size, form and pale colour.

GPA3 identifies 'intentional intervisibility with other historic or natural features' as a potential element of the experience of an asset within its setting that can contribute to its significance. In this instance the intervisibility between the Castle and Eton College visually reflects their close historical relationship (see [Section 2.5.3.2](#)). While the Power Station and the Trading Estate sit above the Chapel's roofline and are also prominent, the visual separation provided by the green landscape around Eton plays an important role in allowing one to read the silhouette of the chapel against open natural surroundings and appreciate the historic relationship.

In the view looking west (see Fig. 88), the historic core of Windsor town wraps around the Castle's Lower Ward in the foreground. The town is generally visually subservient due to its relatively low-rise development, the dense historic street pattern and palette of traditional building materials, and the topography. However, some larger late-twentieth century developments disrupt the historical townscape and are therefore more prominent visually. The lower density of development and green space in outer Windsor visually blends with surviving areas of the natural historic landscape of Windsor Forest, experienced in an uninterrupted way behind the town.

Moving to the view south (see [Fig. 89](#)), parts of Windsor town are still visible beyond the Royal Mews, though it remains low-rise and subservient. This view encompasses a clear view of the Great Park, where the distinctive avenue of the Long Walk is visible to the left of the view. In the distance, Queen Anne's Ride is also visible. Both make important contributions to the significance of the Castle through their



Fig. 87: View looking north-west from the Round Tower over Eton and the wider Thames Valley from Maidenhead to Slough



Fig. 88: View looking west over Windsor from the Round Tower

historic associations and the aesthetic qualities of the historic designed landscape (see [Section 2.5.3.1](#)).

Views to the east look out across the Home Park and the Queen Mother and other reservoirs around Wraysbury in the foreground, taking in the M25 and Heathrow Airport behind, large industrial units at Colnbrook slightly to the north, and Staines to the south. Electricity pylons catch the eye. In the far distance buildings in the London Borough of Hounslow can be made out behind and on a clear day tall buildings in central London can be seen.



Fig. 89: View looking south from Round Tower over Windsor and the Great Park



Fig. 90: A View from Windsor Castle c.1745, looking south. [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 404030 / © HM King Charles III 2025]

Views from the North and East Terraces and the State and Semi-State Apartments

The addition of the Castle's North and East Terraces, and the consideration given to views out over the landscape from the State and Semi-State Apartments (see [Fig. 28 on page 47](#)), reflect the gradual development of the Castle from a military fortification to a more domestic function as a royal residence. This enhances the ability to appreciate the surrounding landscape from the Castle and therefore augments its relationship and intervisibility with other historic and natural features across the Thames Valley. Views out over the landscape to the north and east from the outward-facing rooms within the State and Semi-State Apartments are similar to the overall experience from the terraces below. However, the view from inside is slightly more elevated and therefore less impeded by trees, but is also framed, which provides clear focus but imposes a degree of restriction on what can be seen.

Today the North Terrace forms part of the main visitor route around the Castle and remains a key vantage point from which the general public and occupants of the Castle can experience the Thames Valley to the north-west, north and east. The East Terrace is at present not on the public route (although some public access has been possible in recent years and historically, see [Fig. 29 on page 48](#)) and includes a terrace from which views north and east can be experienced. This experience of the wider landscape, initially designed for exclusive use by the royal court, has been appreciated by an increasing number of guests and visitors over the past two centuries, embedding it as a public rather than an exclusively private view.

The experience of the panoramic view from the North Terrace and the northern section of the East Terrace has been limited in places by the growth of and increased protection for mature trees. This is beneficial



Fig. 91: The North Terrace at sunset, watercolour by Paul Sandby, c. 1790 [Source: Royal Collection Trust RCIN 451579 / © HM King Charles III 2025]



Fig. 92: A 1947 aerial view showing the East Terrace [Source: Britain from Above]

to the experience due to the resultant screening offered to most of the M4, although the constant hum of traffic is a reminder of its presence. The experience of the river is also surprisingly limited from this level, screened both by trees and development in Windsor Town; glimpses of it are only possible in the view down Bridge Street and the view to the north-east to the wider bend by The Brocas. Beyond, much of the Thames Valley landscape remains visible through gaps in the trees, including Eton College Chapel (see [Section 2.5.4.2](#) on its intervisibility with the Castle), areas of historic woodland and the Chiltern Hills. Central Slough appears as a prominent band of development in an otherwise largely rural or wooded landscape (in the fore and backgrounds), with the height, scale, form, colours and materials of buildings all being important factors affecting the settlement's overall appearance and the prominence of individual buildings. A lack of coherence within the current range of visible buildings results in the town appearing uncoordinated and lacking in character, and exacerbates any negative impacts it has at present as a key feature within views from the Castle.



Fig. 93: Looking north west from the North Terrace



Fig. 94: Stitched view showing the panoramic nature of views from the North Terrace

Slough Trading Estate and power station are currently clearly seen above Eton College Chapel when looking north from areas along the North Terrace, with the relationship between the chapel and Trading Estate varying visually along the terrace walk. The current pale colouring, form and solidity of the buildings and structures of the power station and Trading Estate means they contrast with the surrounding scene of woodland and are fairly prominent. Eton College Chapel is by contrast a highly detailed structure with a finely decorated exterior, and a cream stone colouring, which contrasts with the surrounding woodland and green open space helping it to visually stand out in the landscape.

Views to the east from the East Terrace reflect the Castle's domestic function, as they overlook private leisure areas within the Castle's grounds and the wider formal and picturesque landscapes in Home Park Private. Key elements include the artistic and architectural interest of the East Terrace Garden (see [Fig. 92 on page 99](#)) and the historical leisure spaces and residences within Home Park.

Movement and its associated noise have always been a factor in the busyness and bustle of life around the Castle, however the noise and visual impact of movement has increased exponentially from the mid-twentieth century. Though Windsor's two railway lines are both visible from the Castle they are low-lying, visually discreet and generally quiet in their activity. The arrival of Heathrow Airport, by contrast, has made a significant impact. In longer distance views from the Castle above the Queen Mother Reservoir (see [Fig. 97](#)), the airport features prominently, easily identified by its control tower and associated terminal buildings (not to be confused with the tower of Lakeside Energy from Waste facility, also visible as one scans further north). These bold visual statements of the modern world, located to be within easy access of



Fig. 95: View west from the North Terrace



Fig. 96: View north from the East Terrace

the M25, have a detrimental impact on how the Castle is experienced in its setting both visually and, particularly in terms of Heathrow, non-visually through noise and vibration (acknowledged by GPA3 as factors that can affect significance). The same can also be said about the noise and visual presence of the M4 to the north of the Castle.



2.5.5 Conclusions

Windsor Castle's setting makes an inherent contribution to its significance and enables its many visitors to appreciate and experience that significance. These key attributes, as set out in section 2.5.2 above, exist by design.

Castles intentionally dominate the landscape; it is part of their reason for being. And at Windsor Castle, this essence is many times magnified, in part by its unique siting and elevation, overlooking the River Thames and wider Thames valley, but also because it is has always been, and remains a royal castle: the pinnacle of what one looks for in a castle. From its military origins, the Castle has endured as a striking symbol of royal power and influence. The ability to experience this symbolism is dependent on setting.



Fig. 97: View east from East Terrace [Source: © Royal Household]

The Castle is more than just a place of military dominance. With its associated parkland, it is also historically a place of leisure and recreational pursuits for the Monarchy and the noblest in the land; over time, by opening significant sections of the parkland for wider access, formerly private royal recreation grounds have been re-interpreted for a more public-facing Monarchy.

Without the snaking river and fertile floodplain, the juxtaposition of a fortress with its historic natural environment would be lost, and the romantic appeal that has inspired great art works and poetry would be diminished.

Without development responding as it has done to the Castle's continuous presence for nearly 1000 years, life within the Thames Valley would undoubtedly be different. The local transport network owes much to the draw of the Castle, and from that cascaded other developments, exemplified by the expansion of Eton along the linear route north from Windsor Bridge.

Of course, it would be wrong to suggest that all urban expansion in the Castle's setting arises from its mere presence. The modern growth in the nearby settlements of Slough and Maidenhead has occurred independently of the Castle, with the Castle as a constant background presence. The views of the Castle created by design are outstanding. Standing, facing north along the Long Walk, as millions do each year, where the intricate silhouette becomes suddenly spotlighted by a break in the clouds and the Castle's pale stone shines, as if through some wizardry, against the continuous backdrop of the Chilterns beyond. But also, the Castle possesses a seemingly unique ability to excite when it takes you by surprise, suddenly visible as you drive along the

motorway, round a corner in Windsor, or from further afield, even from Richmond Hill.

How the complex form of the Castle is experienced in its setting changes from different vantage points, and different aspects of its architecture become highlighted. When viewed from Peascod Street, Alexandra Gardens or Upton Court in Slough, the Round Tower dominates; when viewed from the public area of Home Park or the Great Park, the silhouette is entirely different. These are compositions arising from a succession of architectural interventions. Throughout, the Castle remains immediately recognisable. This distinctive quality is fundamentally connected with the setting of the Castle, underpinned by its dominance.

While it is important to acknowledge the living nature of the surrounding landscape, it is nonetheless also important to consider the ways in which the contribution it makes towards the significance of Windsor Castle can be protected and enhanced (the focus of Part 3 of this study). Closely linked communities such as the College of St. George and Eton College continue to extend the Castle's reach beyond its walls. West of London and near to one of the busiest airports in the world, vast numbers of people pass within the Castle's influence. For some it is the key destination; for many, the interaction is fleeting. For all, the Castle is an enduring landmark within the landscape that orientates people both geographically and historically.

**Part 3:
Protecting and enhancing Windsor
Castle's setting: considerations for
Local Planning Authorities**



3.1 Vulnerability and sensitivity to changes

3.1.1 Introduction

Part 2 of this study summarises the significance of Windsor Castle and assesses the contribution made to this by its setting, following the approach set out in Historic England’s Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) on The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3), undertaking Step 1 (identification of affected assets and their settings) and Step 2 (assessment of how setting and views contribute to significance). Two fundamental points have been demonstrated:

- Windsor Castle is a heritage asset of exceptional significance (see Section 2.4).
- Its setting – the way in which it is experienced in its surroundings both from the outside and from inside the Castle (looking out) – is an essential component of its overall significance (see Sections 2.5.2 -2.5.5).

This section is intended to support the next three steps in GPA3, which entail Step 3 (assessment of the effects of proposals on significance), Step 4 (avoid or minimise harm and maximise enhancement) and Step 5 (make and document the decision and monitor outcomes). It sets out how, in general terms, those proposing and assessing development proposals within the setting of Windsor Castle, should carefully consider its significance, vulnerabilities and the potential effect of

development upon it. This is regardless of whether those potential impacts would be positive, negative or neutral overall.

For such proposals to be considered appropriately, the Castle’s significance (including the contribution made by setting) must be recognised, and sufficiently detailed commentary should be made within any heritage statement and visual impact assessment (the conclusions of which may be different). This commentary should include a clear understanding of the magnitude of impact, enabling decision-makers to apply the correct weight in the planning balance in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This report should also be considered by Local Planning Authorities as part of the local plan-making process, contributing to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (as per the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance), and informing decision-making regarding the setting of a listed building in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Consequently, this report should be treated as a material consideration (and contribute to the available evidence) when developing local plans and other strategic planning documents for land use in areas within the setting of the Castle; see Fig. 118 on page 130.

Fig. 98: Previous page: view from the East Terrace looking north [© Slough Borough Council]

As shown in [Section 2.5](#), the Castle's setting can be subdivided into two main areas:

- The historic core (comprised of the Castle, its associated parkland, a section of the River Thames, Old Windsor and the town of Windsor), and;
- The wider Thames Valley.

Both areas make an important contribution to the significance of Windsor Castle in different ways (see [Section 2.5.3](#)) and provide a different experience (see [Section 2.5.4](#)). The historic core developed as a result of the long-standing common ownership of Castle and associated parkland and the growth of the town around the Castle; this is in complete contrast to the setting of the wider Thames Valley landscape (including in Slough), where development has taken place largely independent of what is happening at the Castle. As a result, just as the nature of the contribution differs so does the degree of sensitivity regarding change and its potential to cause harm to the historic environment.

The following sections consider vulnerabilities within each component of the Castle's setting individually. They have been illustrated by a number of Representative Views (RV) selected from the views collated in Part 2. These include kinetic views from roads and railways, elevated perspectives from hills and ridgelines, and framed or designed views within open spaces.

3.1.2 The historic core

Although united by a common history of ownership or interdependence, the elements which make up the historic core of the Castle have in themselves different characters and vulnerabilities. The sub sections below discuss some of the vulnerabilities and sensitivities arising from the pressures for change within the Castle's setting.

3.1.2.1 Views out from the Castle

Views out from the Castle connect with both the historic core and the wider landscape. They fall into two sub-groups, reflecting the way in which initial military priorities changed to a wider picturesque interest in the wider Thames Valley landscape of the Castle.

The views from the Round Tower give a remarkable 360° view over the surrounding countryside, from Maidenhead in the west, over Windsor, Eton and Slough (see [RV1](#)), to Heathrow and Richmond in the east. They demonstrate forcefully just how well the Castle is situated to dominate visually and militarily this section of the Thames Valley (exemplified by [RV2](#)). They also show the close relationship between Windsor town and its castle ([RV3](#)). Despite nearly a thousand years of subsequent development, Windsor generally remains a low-rise town with a fine urban grain at the foot of the Castle.

The views from the North Terrace, East Terrace and State Apartments ([RV5](#), [RV6](#)) demonstrate the emerging interest in the picturesque potential of views out from the Castle across the Thames Valley to the north, which starts with Queen Elizabeth I's construction of a wooden terrace and continues with Wyatt and Wyatville's extensive works to the north range and current improvements to the visitor route (see [Section 2.2](#)). The popularity of these views is shown by the number of historic paintings of views from the North Terrace (see [Section 2.3](#)).

Recent tree growth on the slopes of the terrace has significantly compromised these views so that, at present, many are obscured (see [RV7](#) and the comparative historic view in [Fig. 91 on page 99](#)), affecting the panoramic experience as originally intended. The situation could be improved by a more active programme of tree management on the slopes below the North Terrace.

Additionally, views north beyond the extent of Windsor and Eton have been subject to evolution and considerable change over the last couple of centuries and that pressure for change continues into the modern day. This is demonstrated in the revolution of industry within Slough Trading Estate and the potential of wholesale regeneration in central Slough, as well as the potential introduction of a new runway at Heathrow Airport. The impact of large-scale development in this panorama has the potential (individually and cumulatively) to cause harm, though this could be mitigated to an extent through sensitive location, design, colour and use of materials.

Key features of these views from the Castle are:

- The wide, far reaching views of the flood plain from Maidenhead to Richmond, bounded to the north by the ridge of the Chilterns. It is notable that Heathrow Terminal 5 as well as new, higher rise developments at Maidenhead can be seen on a clear day (with other tall buildings in the City of London, Canary Wharf, the Shard and North Acton also visible in the greater distance).
- Eton College, most particularly the Chapel, which forms a highly important group with the Castle ([RV2](#) and [RV6](#)).

Within Slough

- Slough town centre, which is clearly visible as a sprawl of generally pale clad buildings, most of which are fairly low rise but with a number that (from the North and East Terrace) break through the Chiltern skyline (see [RV1](#), [RV5](#) and [RV8](#)).
- Slough Trading Estate, which is highly visible both for its prominent power station but also due to the predominantly pale cladding of its buildings (see [RV1](#), [RV2](#) and [RV8](#)).
- Large (and often long) pale-clad buildings, especially those that run along the A4 (Bath Road), are prominent as a result of their east west positioning and scale. These form part of a linear form of development along the former main road from London westwards now relieved by the M4 (also visible).

In terms of the overall effect of Slough town centre on the experience of the Castle:

- There is nothing intrinsically wrong about seeing the settlement in views out from the Castle. The history of the development of Slough, and its expansion to take in a number of historically discrete settlements (such as Upton), is part of the later history of the wider setting of the Castle.
- The uncoordinated later twentieth-century expansion of Slough has prevented the settlement having a holistic and planned appearance in modern views ([RV5](#)). Whilst organic evolution of a place can create its own positive character, the scale and architecture of the current Slough town centre and Slough Trading Estate has not resulted in this outcome.

- Some breaching of the Chiltern skyline in views from the North Terrace has already occurred with the modern settlement of Slough clearly seen along the promenade. The extent of the landscape beyond the North Terrace that remains visible, of which the Chiltern Hills are a constituent part, contributes to the significance of the Castle. However, the contemporary scene reflects the presence of a significant modern settlement and its future evolution will continue that visual presence.
- The building materials evident in these North Terrace views are not necessarily harmful to the appreciation of the Castle's significance, as they too denote the presence of a modern and growing settlement. There is considerable opportunity to improve this situation in future through building forms, materials and colours that may help developments to harmonise with their setting.
- The historically more tranquil experience of the Castle from within its walls has been eroded by noise from the M4 and by aircraft from Heathrow.

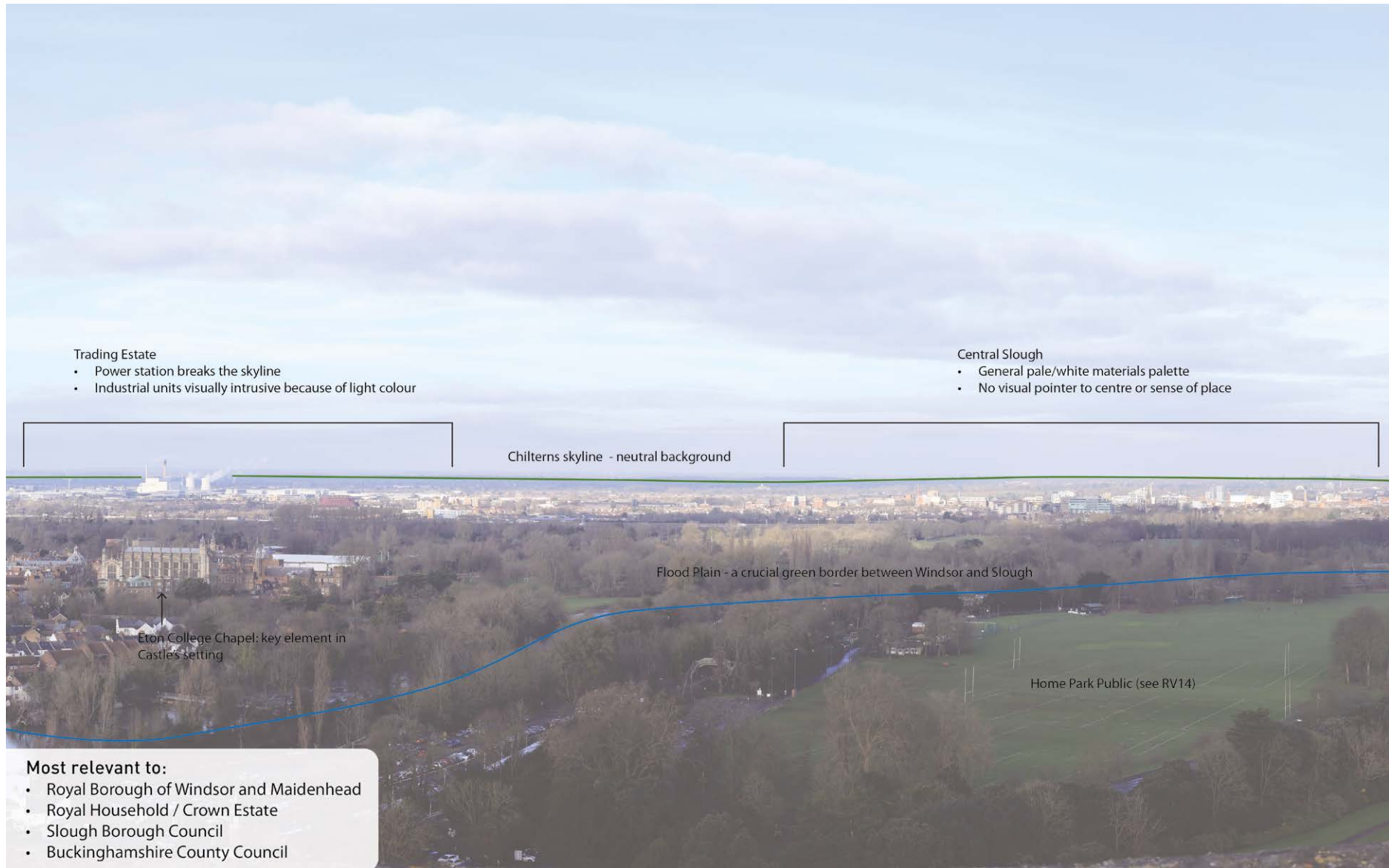


Fig. 99: Representative View 1: Looking north from the Round Tower

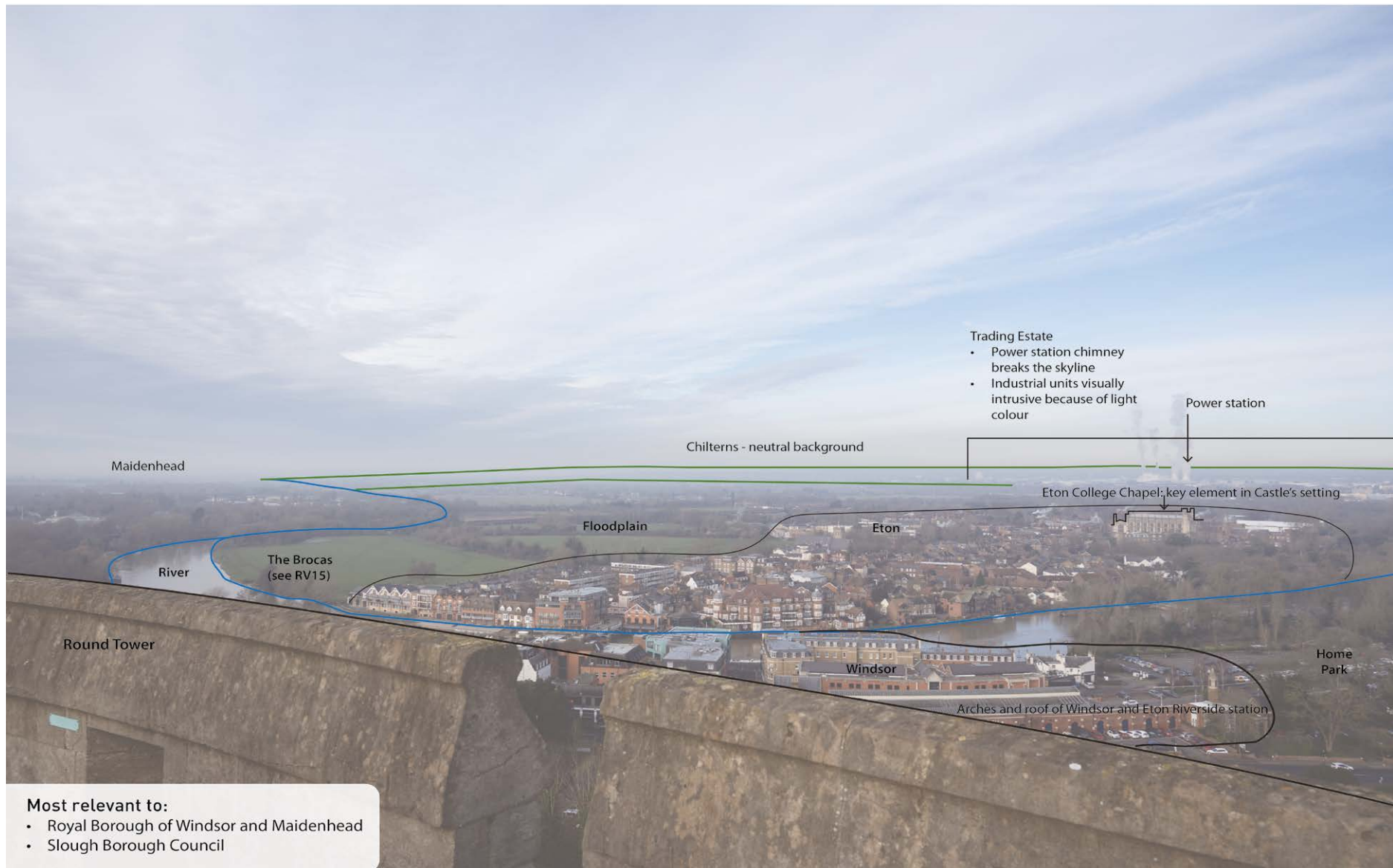


Fig. 100: Representative View 2: Looking north-west from the Round Tower over Eton and the wider Thames Valley from Maidenhead to Slough

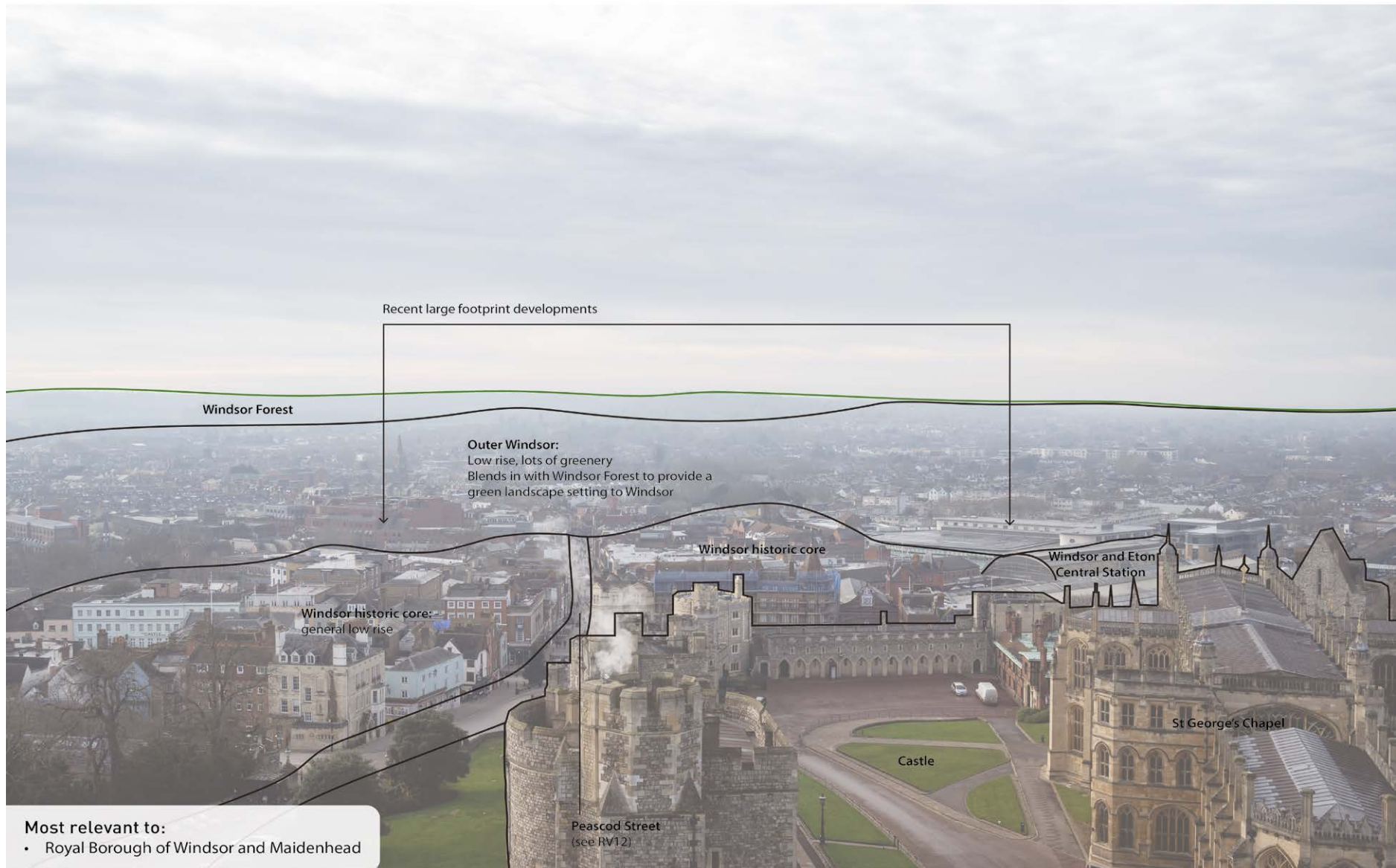


Fig. 101: Representative View 3: Looking west over Windsor from the Round Tower

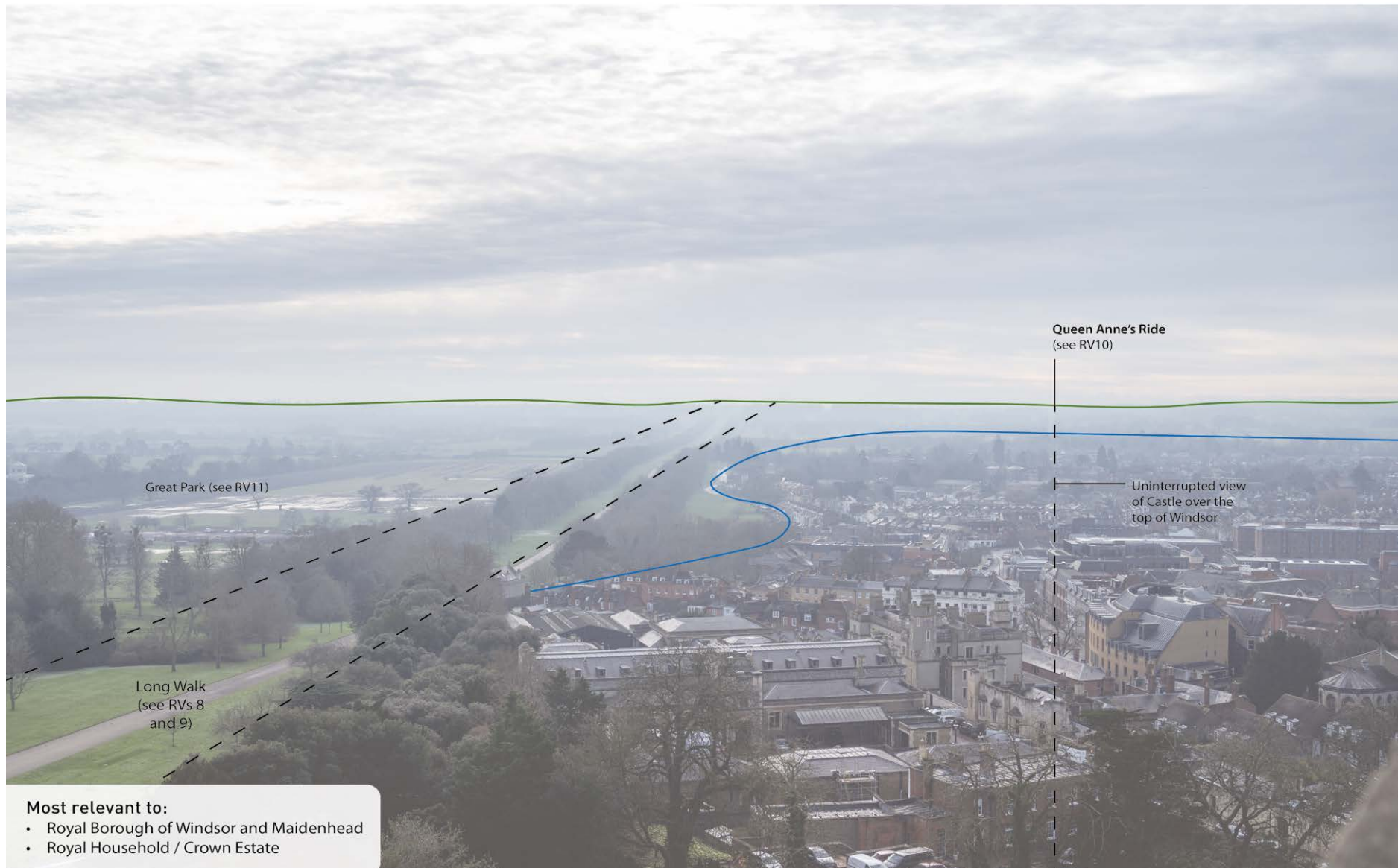


Fig. 102: Representative View 4: Looking south from the Round Tower over Windsor and the Great Park

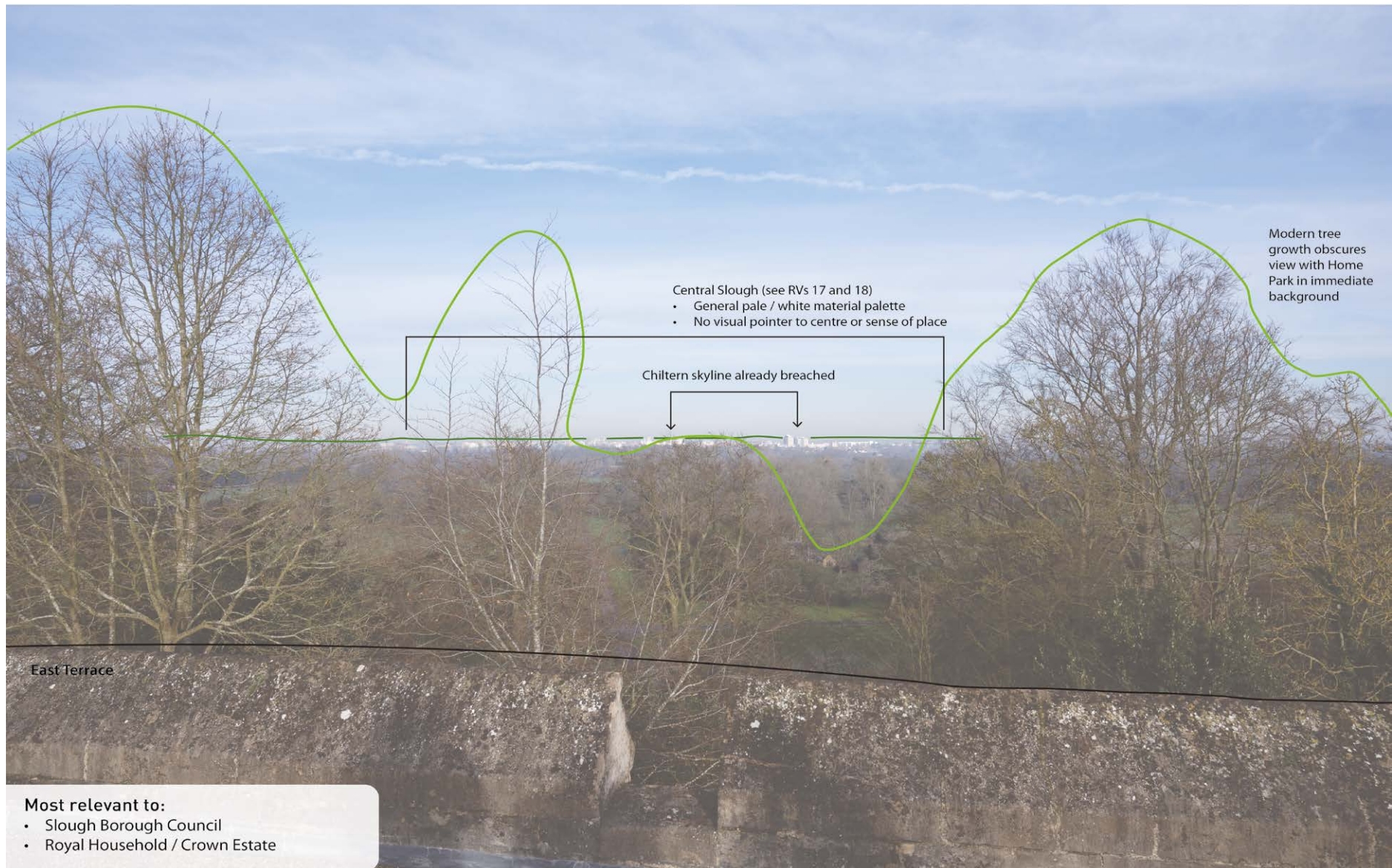


Fig. 103: Representative View 5: Looking north from the East Terrace

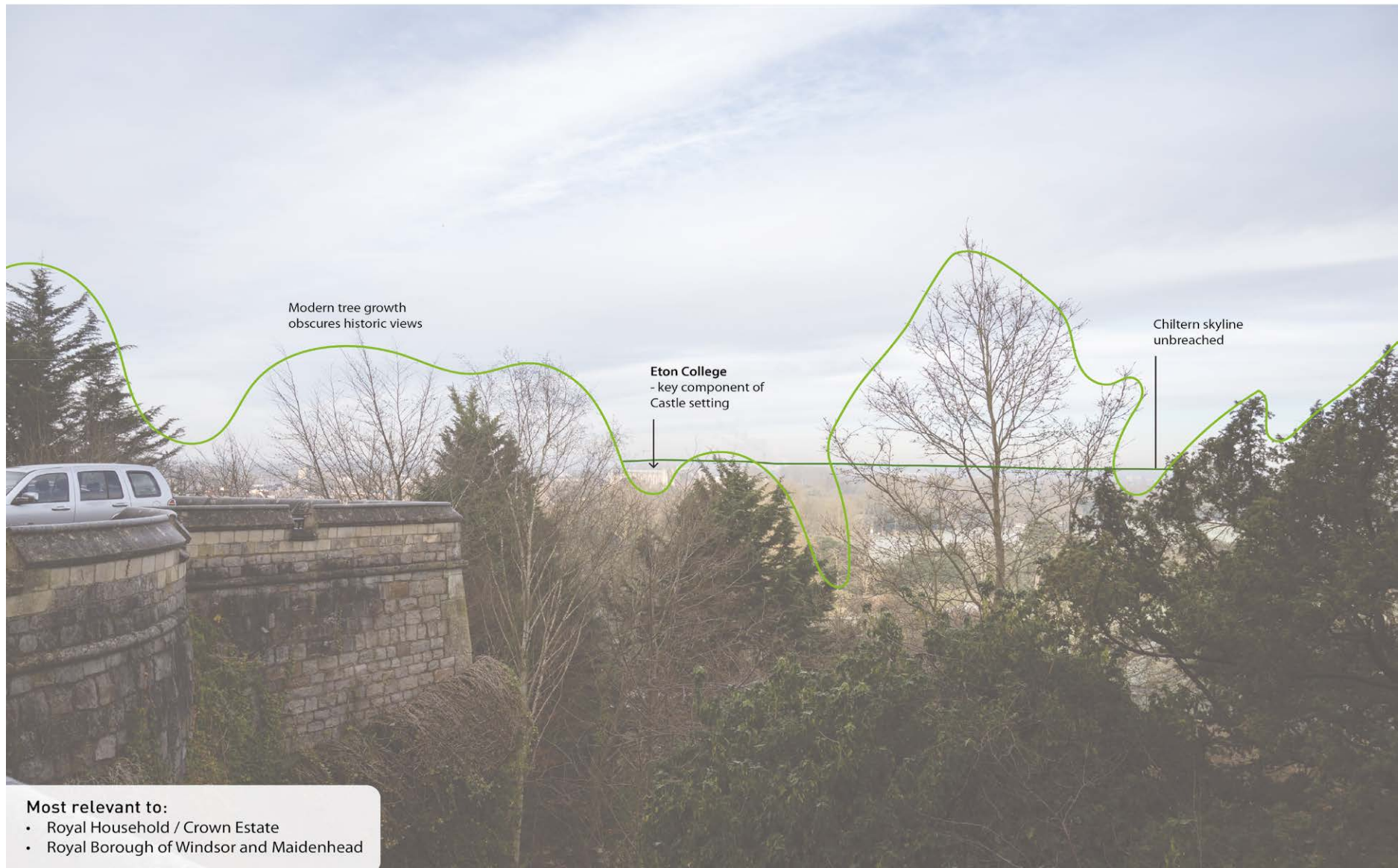


Fig. 104: Representative View 6: Looking north-west from the North Terrace



Fig. 105: Representative View 7: Looking west from the North Terrace (a comparison to the historic Sandby view shown in [Fig. 4 on page 16](#)).

3.1.2.2 The Great Park

At the highest part of the Great Park, on Snow Hill at the statue of King George III at the head of the Long Walk, the Castle is experienced in a wide view (RV8). The Castle remains visually dominant in an immensely broad and all-encompassing view of the Thames Valley and Chiltern Hills. Signs of the modern world are apparent, exemplified by Slough Trading Estate and central Slough, however, these are seen to either side of the Castle, with space between. The appreciation of the Castle's silhouette would be compromised by unsympathetic development, either behind the Castle or immediately adjacent in this view.

As one moves north towards the Castle along the framed avenues of the Long Walk and Queen Anne's Ride (RV9 and RV10) the Castle's silhouette remains prominent with its architectural detailing becoming increasingly clear. The Castle is the only feature to break the skyline of the Chilterns and is the focal point in these designed views. Its heightened impact within closer proximity along the Long Walk hinges on the scale of the building and the lack of modern intrusions. On Queen Anne's Ride, while the Castle remains the focus and is, once again, the only feature to break the Chilterns skyline, the experience is vulnerable to new development in central Slough intruding into the neutral backdrop.

Small and modest-scale development from the nineteenth through to the twenty-first century has not unduly challenged the Castle's key attributes as appreciated from the Great Park. Future development of similar scale is similarly unlikely to result in harm to the Castle's significance. Careful testing of new proposals for large-scale development can demonstrate the extent to which the Castle's legibility in these designed views would be maintained.

Elsewhere in the Great Park, the topography and tree cover generally restrict views, though there are some exceptions (for example, see RV11), where the same considerations of prominence, dominance and scale apply albeit in a more informal viewing experience, and there is a need to maintain breathing space immediately adjacent to the Castle to appreciate its form.

A notable contribution to the experience of the Castle from the Great Park is its rural tranquillity, with herds of deer as present today as they were in the eighteenth century. Any increase in traffic (including aircraft from Heathrow) has the potential to cause harm to this particular aspect of how setting contributes to our understanding and appreciation of the Castle's significance.

3.1.2.3 Windsor

Historically and topographically subservient to the Castle, to which it owes its origins, Windsor has remained generally low-rise and has not challenged the dominance of the Castle. The view up the historic approach of Peascod Street (RV12) illustrates well how the eye is led up the Round Tower by both street layout and building heights along the route; this should not change, provided that the building line is maintained.

The scale of the town is also evident in the way in which the long views down Queen Anne's Ride 'jump over' part of Windsor which – though visible – does not harm appreciation of the Castle from this part of the Great Park (RV10). Should proposals of significantly greater scale be proposed, that relationship could change.

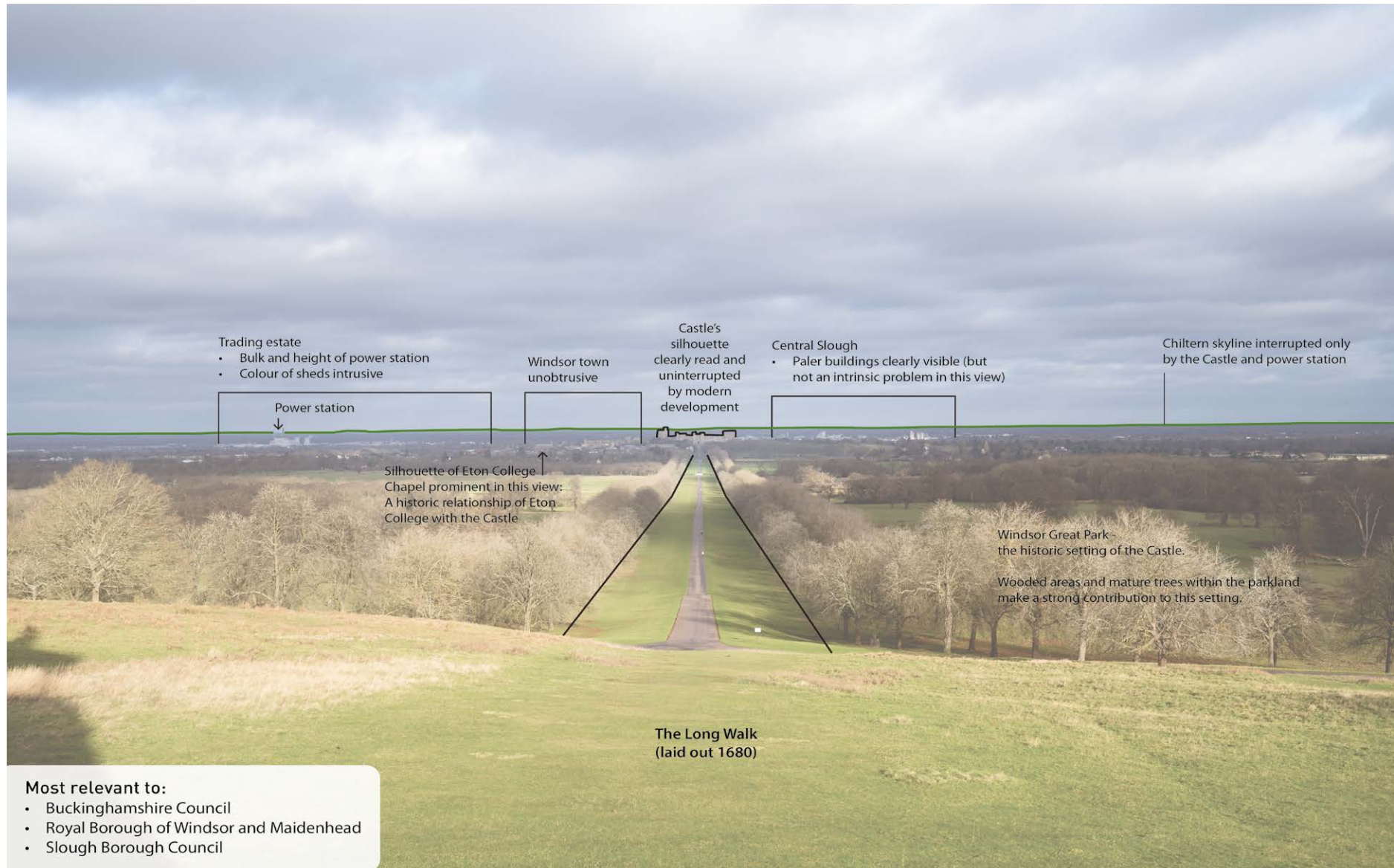


Fig. 106: Representative View 8: Looking north from the statue of King George III

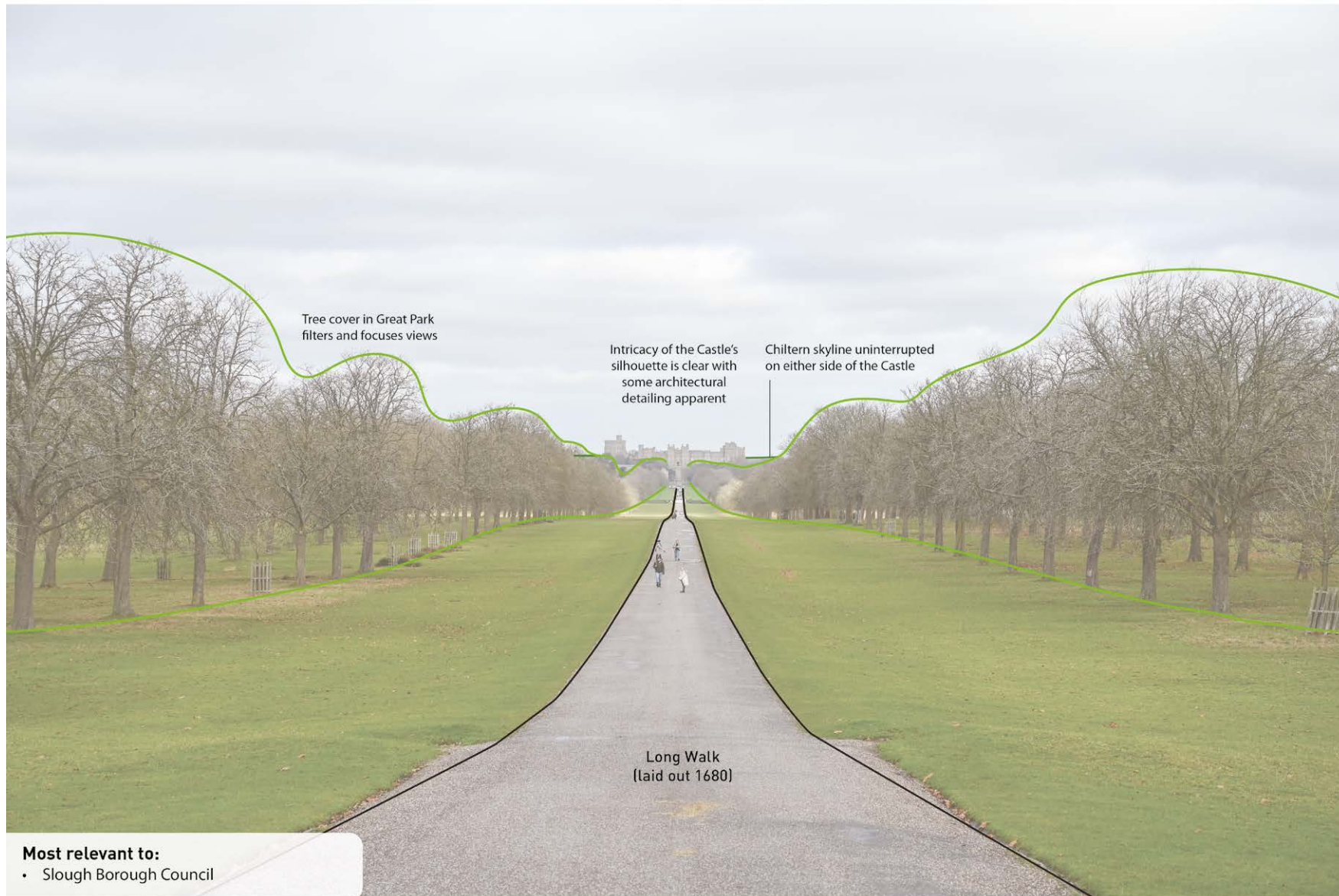


Fig. 107: Representative View 9: Looking north along the Long Walk

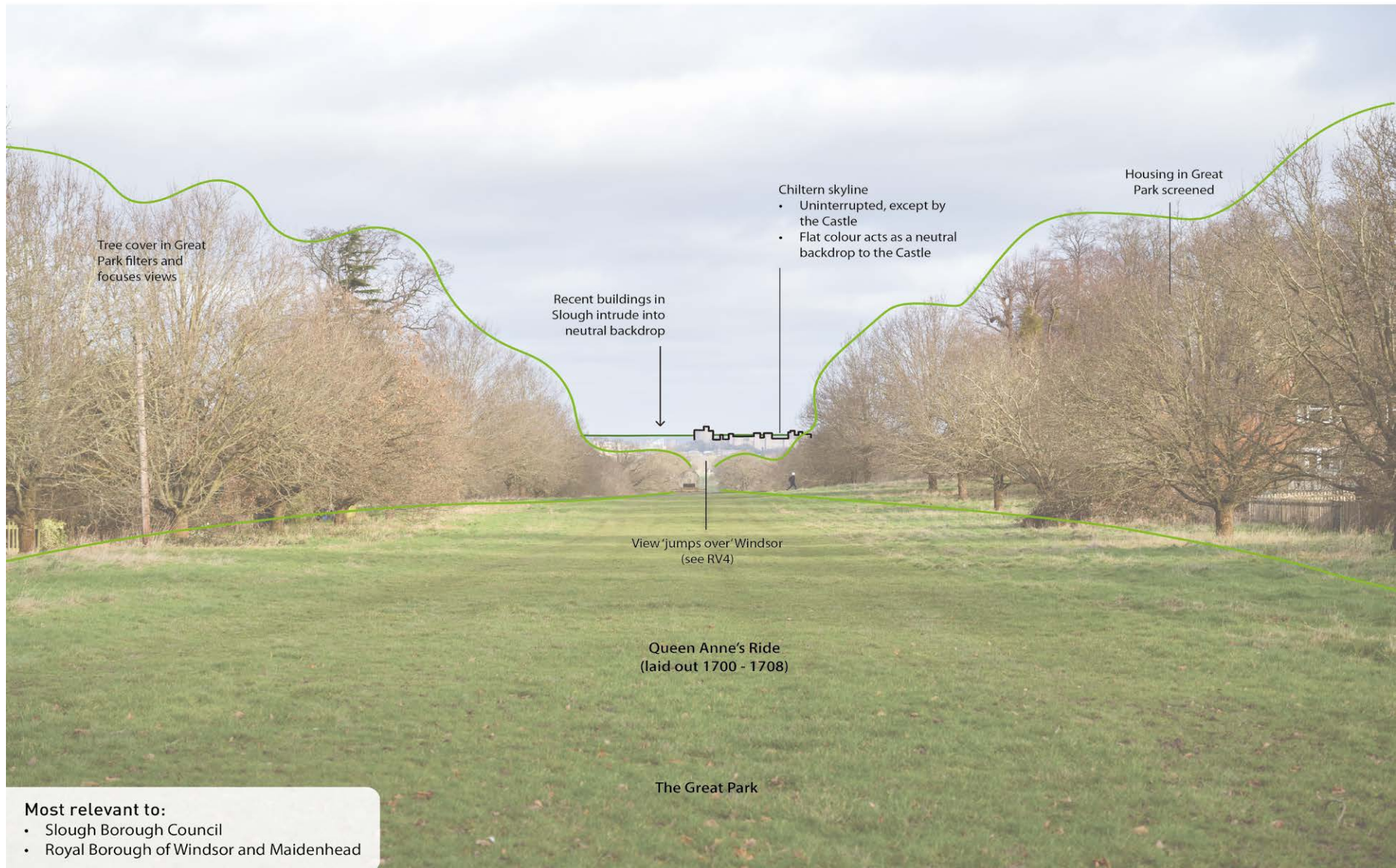


Fig. 108: Representative View 10: Looking north along Queen Anne's Ride



Fig. 109: Representative View 11: Looking north from the Great Park



Fig. 110: Representative View 12: Looking east up Peascod Street



Fig. 111: Representative View 13: Looking east from Alexandra Gardens



Fig. 112: Representative View 14: Looking south-west from Home Park

3.1.3 The wider setting

Windsor Castle's wider setting enables an appreciation of the way in which it has been shaped to project the ever-changing role of the Monarchy in British society. It can be experienced from both near and far, from fixed points to kinetic views such as looking southeast from the Railway embankment (RV16).

Any development over this wide area of visibility could affect the setting of the Castle, though the sheer distance over which it is visible means that the degree of vulnerability to change is generally limited. The critical consideration is whether it might challenge the historical and visual dominance of the Castle or interrupt important long-distance views. This is particularly important when the view is a designed view, such as from Upton Court Park in Slough (RV17).

Over more recent years, the suburban expansion of Slough and its amalgamation with other settlements, has gradually but significantly reduced the ability to view the Castle across the flood plain from the north. In addition, the private view from the south terrace of Repton's Stoke Park is largely blocked by later planting that has matured and been retained, though the Castle's dominating silhouette can still be viewed from the house's dome (see Fig. 78 on page 91). As a result, the preservation of remaining views, such as that from Upton Court Park (RV17) could be viewed as particularly precious. Furthermore, as the recent Horlick's development in Slough has demonstrated (RV18), there are opportunities to create new views to allow the Castle's prominence and striking architectural qualities to be better appreciated.

Finally, other contemporary vantage points from which to see the Castle include within an aeroplane landing or taking-off from Heathrow as well as non-static views from the M4 by road users. While these locations clearly enable the Castle to be seen, they do come at a cost to the tranquillity of the Great Park and from areas within Home Park and the Castle, which remains vulnerable to the effects of future expansion of major transport infrastructure.



Fig. 114: Representative View 15: Looking southeast from The Brocas

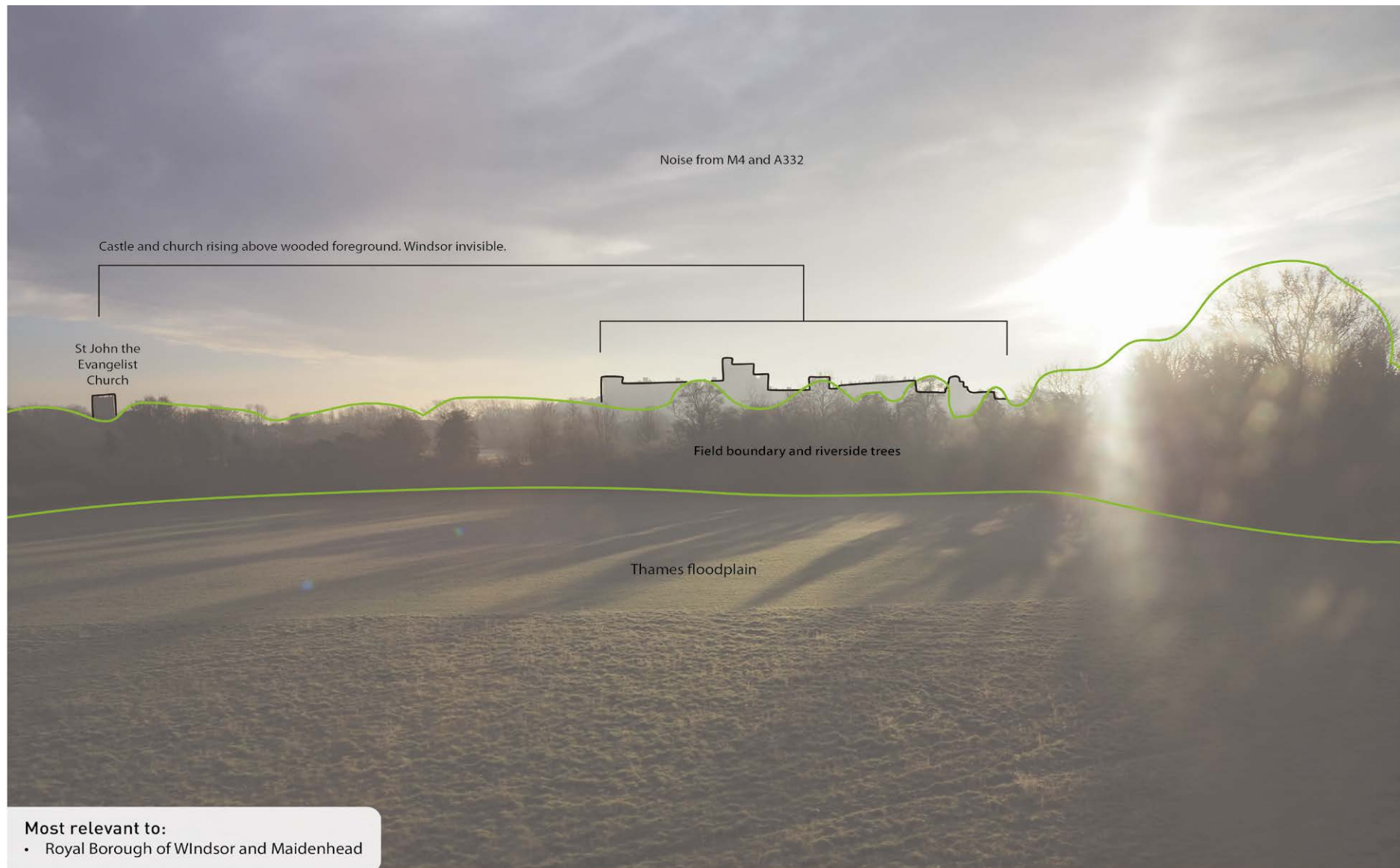


Fig. 115: Representative View 16: Looking south-east from the Railway embankment



Fig. 116: Representative View 17: Looking south from Upton Court Park



Fig. 117: Representative View 18: Looking south from the residents' terrace on the Horlick's Building

3.2 Considerations for development within the setting of Windsor Castle

3.2.1 Considerations for Local Planning Authorities

Planning legislation, policy and guidance require Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to conserve designated heritage assets, the significance of which can derive not only from their physical presence but also from their setting. Furthermore, under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, LPAs must have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings in their consideration of applications for planning permission.

As set out above, the setting of Windsor Castle is exceptionally wide, as a direct result of its strategic location to control Anglo-Saxon unrest in the Thames Valley. It stretches from Maidenhead in the west to Richmond in the east and so the duty to have regard to preserving the setting of the Castle falls on an unusually wide range of local planning authorities, including:

- Slough Borough Council
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Buckinghamshire Council
- The London Borough of Richmond on Thames
- The London Borough of Hounslow
- The London Borough of Hillingdon
- The Greater London Authority
- Spelthorne Borough Council

The vulnerability of the Castle to impacts from development within its setting in these authorities varies widely, from the highly vulnerable (particularly in relation to views from the Great Park) to the minimally vulnerable (the very long views from Richmond Hill or Maidenhead). All, however, have the potential to impact on the contribution made by setting to the significance of the Castle, so require careful consideration as part of the planning process, whether through preparation of Local Plans and other development plan documents, or through determining proposals for development.

This study supports the implementation of a best practice approach to understanding, protecting and enhancing the setting of heritage assets as advocated by Historic England in GPA3. Steps 1 and 2 of GPA3 have been completed by this report, which leaves Steps 3-5 for others to complete. During each Step, the emphasis is as much on potential benefits to setting and maximising the potential for enhancement, as well as the consideration of harm. In such instances potential benefits, could take the form of creating new views and additional wayfinding.

Also, it should be noted that change can be considered neutral in terms of the setting of a heritage asset and it is incumbent on the developer to consider the magnitude, scale and appreciation of change in this regard. Any application proposing change to the setting of Windsor Castle, to be considered under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and associated legislation, must be accompanied by suitable details for the decision maker to make an informed judgement on the merits and demerits of the proposals.

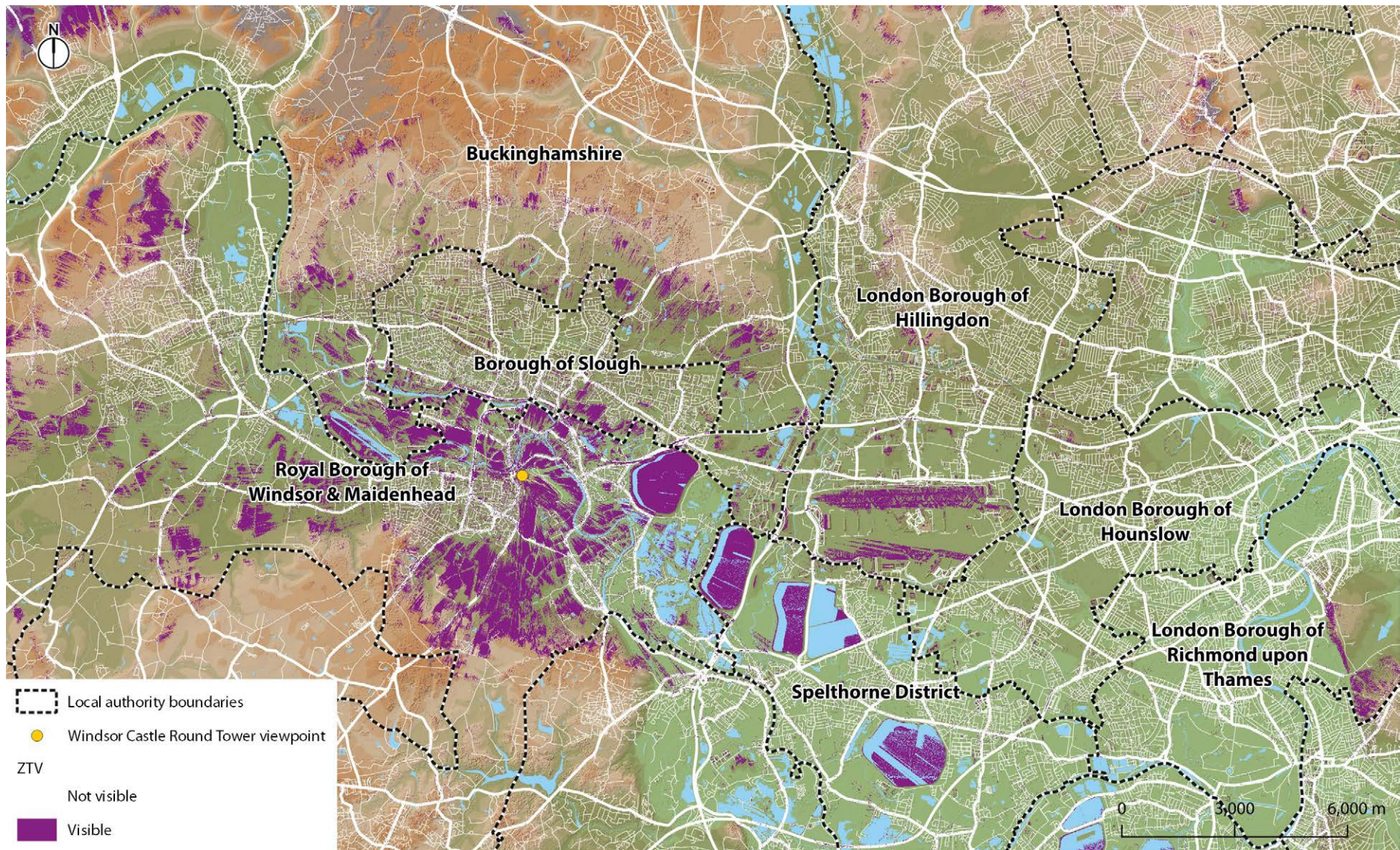


Fig. 118: A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) diagram, showing the general level of visibility of Windsor Castle from nearby local authorities

3.2.2 Specific application within Slough

3.2.2.1 Introduction

Lying immediately across the Thames Valley from the Castle, Slough forms (along with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) a critical element of the wider landscape which forms part of the setting of Windsor Castle. For these reasons, Slough Borough Council (as joint client for this report with Historic England) has asked for more specific commentary on how the significance of the Castle's setting could be both preserved and enhanced as new development comes forward in the Borough.

The following sections provide considerations on the Castle's setting which are specific to Slough, and which are not simply concerned with avoiding harm but also offer significant potential for providing enhanced or new views, both from and to the Castle, as well as the potential for a more holistic and planned views to aid wayfinding and the legibility of Slough as a place.

From a strategic perspective, Slough Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan to help manage its development over the next 15 to 20 years. As part of evidence base and capacity testing to support the development of the local plan, issues around cumulative impact of the quantum, massing and heights of development will be considered, alongside potential mitigation to manage any harmful impacts.

For landowners and developers early engagement with Slough Borough Council via their pre-application service (and pre-application engagement with Historic England) is highly recommended to ensure that new developments respond positively to the setting of Windsor Castle. Sections 1 and 2 of this study are important considerations not only for decision makers, but also for developers and those seeking to

introduce change and how this needs to be considered in the context of the setting of the Castle.

The Council may need to consider possible impacts that would result from changes in permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 as amended or replacement, or similar allowances in other areas of development legislation, and seek to manage this appropriately so that undue harmful impacts on the significance of Windsor Castle are avoided.

3.2.2.2 The historic core

For views from the Castle towards Central Slough (such as [RV5](#)):

- Development and redevelopment of sites across Slough have the potential to improve the setting of the Castle through holistic and well thought out proposals that contribute positively to the townscape and how Slough is seen from the Castle.
- The Local Planning Authority should consider a strategic approach to development quantum and massing in the town that would contribute to creating a sense of place, wayfinding and visual interest for those looking from the Castle (particularly the North Terrace) with the aim of promoting and celebrating Slough, rather than detracting from its presence.
- Proposals and new policies should support external building forms, materials and colours that may help developments harmonise with their context (which includes the setting of Windsor Castle) and may include (depending on the scale of development) forms, materials and colours that reference the surrounding natural landscape including the Chiltern Hills. A variety of different design solutions have the potential to contribute positively to the character of Slough

and the setting of the Castle. Exceptions may be appropriate, for example important civic buildings, which traditionally stand out and assist in wayfinding.

- Developers are encouraged to provide designs that achieve a lively, varied and well-articulated roofscape across Slough, with the impact of rooftop plant part of the design considerations from the beginning of projects, with impacts on Windsor Castle's significance taken into account at all stages, particularly with regard to its prominence, dominance and majestic silhouette.

From the Great Park, specifically from the King George III statue and along the Long Walk:

- From the statue of King George III (RV8) careful consideration is needed of the effect of breaches of the Chiltern skyline on the Castle's prominence, dominance and architectural beauty. From this distance, the appreciation of that beauty largely depends on the ability to discern the Castle's silhouette against the neutral backdrop of the Chiltern Hills with breathing space either side.
 - As one descends north along the Long Walk (RV9), the silhouette of the Castle becomes clearly visible against the sky, with the Chiltern skyline uninterrupted on either side, the view framed by the double avenue of trees. As one moves north more of the Castle's architectural modelling and detailing becomes apparent, in particular the designed focal point of the George IV Gate. The experience of the Castle here as originally designed is exceptionally precious, free from visual interruption and distraction by modern development, although planes from Heathrow can be heard and sometimes seen.
- Proposals should adhere to the Design Code for the Simplified Planning Zone of the Trading Estate; by so doing, the visual intrusion of the pale cladding of the large-scale sheds should incrementally be reduced. Any development within the Trading Estate should consider the principles for design, height and materiality applied to development within the Simplified Planning Zone.
 - Consideration should be given to where individual development blocks, including tall buildings, could be introduced in central Slough (noting that greater densities can be achieved through a combination of factors, not solely height). Such opportunities should be explored with regard to the wider skyline and potential clustering of buildings so that they be designed to contribute to a sense of place and to give visual interest to the built form and skyline of Slough.
 - Proposals and new policies should support external building forms, materials and colours in central Slough that may help developments harmonise with their context (which includes the setting of Windsor Castle) and may include (depending on the scale of development) forms, materials and colours that reference the surrounding natural landscape including the Chiltern Hills.
 - As above, designs that achieve a lively, varied and well-articulated roofscape across Slough are encouraged, with the potential to enhance the Castle's setting. The impact of rooftop plant should form part of the design considerations from the beginning of projects, with impacts on Windsor Castle's significance taken into account at all stages, particularly with regard to its prominence, dominance and majestic silhouette.

In the less-elevated views within the Great Park, particularly down the Long Walk (RV9) and Queen Anne's Ride (RV10), which are specifically focussed on the silhouette of the Castle:

- One of the areas of greatest potential harm to the Castle's significance through development within its setting comes from proposals that challenge its prominence, dominance and majestic silhouette as seen in long-range designed views. This is likely to be as a result of new development rising up alongside or behind the Castle, breaking through the Chiltern skyline and disrupting our appreciation of the Castle's key attributes. The scale of proposed buildings should be carefully considered in response to these attributes.
- Proposals for new buildings in Slough should respond sympathetically to the exceptional significance not only of the Castle but also associated designated heritage assets (including Windsor Great Park) individually and as an ensemble.
- Colour and materiality set against the neutral backdrop of the Chiltern Hills are important design considerations.

3.2.2.3 The wider setting

For views towards the Castle:

- Important designed views of Windsor Castle within the wider landscape, for example from Upton Court Park (RV17), should be identified and protected through plan-making and considered as part of the assessment of impacts in the development management process.

The opportunity to create new views (or reinstate lost views) should be explored in all new developments. This might be achieved by:

- The layout of future development, whether this be the location or orientation of blocks and use of landscaping to create and frame viewing corridors from the public realm.
- The incorporation of communal gardens at ground or upper levels, or balconies to provide additional views of the silhouetted Castle, as has been achieved at the Horlicks Factory (RV18).

Part 4: Conclusions



Planning positively for new development within the setting of heritage assets can be a complicated process, particularly where that setting makes an important contribution to significance (as is the case at Windsor Castle). At the heart of the exercise is the need for a clear understanding of what it is we are trying to protect in the first place and why it is important.

This report has first and foremost aimed to address this question. It has followed the methodology set out in Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition: The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3), which advocates a staged approach to proportionate decision making through 5 key steps. Step 1 (identification of affected assets and their settings) and step 2 (assessment of how setting and views contribute to significance) are formally undertaken here, leaving step 3 (assessment of the effects of proposals on significance), step 4 (avoid or minimise harm and maximise enhancement) and 5 (make and document the decision and monitor outcomes) to be undertaken by others, albeit informed by this report.

It must be acknowledged that this report is only one step in a much wider process. It provides an evidence base for those responsible for planning and managing future change within the setting of Windsor Castle and a crucial starting point to inform future assessment of the potential for development to affect its significance, to help avoid or minimise harm and seek opportunities to maximise enhancement.

Windsor Castle is a heritage asset of exceptional significance in both a national and international context (transcending its formal heritage designations as a scheduled monument and Grade I Listed building) and one that cannot be understood in isolation. It is a majestic landmark building, designed and depicted by some of the foremost architects and artists of their day. As the oldest and largest continuously occupied castle in the world, its historical, cultural, political, and religious importance spans nearly a millennium, created an enduring and highly visible symbol of the British Monarchy and nation, illustrative of the evolving purpose, appearance and function of royal castle architecture over an immense time depth.

Setting makes an inherent contribution to the Castle's significance and enhances the ways in which it is experienced by so many across an extraordinarily wide area. Its associated historic parkland shapes the way the way the Castle is experienced along the Long Walk. Also notable are its relationship with the river Thames and the town of Windsor, which combine with the parkland to form an historic core of the Castle's setting. Its dominance over this wide section of the Thames Valley, including its relationship with landscape features, transport routes and settlements, further demonstrates the fundamental contribution made by setting to the Castle's significance.

In parallel to the evolution of the Castle itself, the landscape around it has evolved over time, conspicuously with the growth of towns like Slough and Maidenhead alongside modern infrastructure and industry, all of which to some degree has impacted on the Castle's significance and how this is experienced.

Fig. 119: Previous page: 2022 aerial image of Windsor Castle from the south east [Source: Getty images]

As demonstrated by the potential Zone of Theoretical Visibility (see [Fig. 118 on page 130](#)), the Castle's setting covers several local planning authority areas including:

- Slough Borough Council
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Buckinghamshire Council
- The London Borough of Richmond on Thames
- The London Borough of Hounslow
- The London Borough of Hillingdon
- The Greater London Authority
- Spelthorne Borough Council

Windsor Castle is vulnerable to future development within its setting, with varying levels of sensitivity ranging from the highly vulnerable (particularly in relation to designed views from the Great Park and the dynamic experience along the Long Walk) to the minimally vulnerable (the much longer distance views from Richmond Hill or Maidenhead). However, change in all these areas has the potential to impact on the contribution made by setting to the overall significance of Windsor Castle. The relative weight to be given to these potential impacts in the decision-making process will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

It is important that future change is positively managed. It is therefore important that all Local Planning Authorities in the wide area of the Castle's setting have policies in place to enable potential impacts to be assessed. The Castle's exceptional significance and the potential for impacts upon it need to be considered in both plan making and decision making, as well as any masterplanning exercises undertaken for major new development. Relevant policies should encourage opportunities not just to conserve but also to enhance significance through positive change within the setting of Windsor Castle, and to contribute positively to the understanding and protection of its extraordinary significance.

Part 5: Appendices (Supporting information)



5.1 Heritage designations applicable to Windsor Castle

The Castle is a Grade I listed building, and the buildings, earthworks and below-ground archaeological remains and deposits are designated as a scheduled monument. In cases where both designations apply, the scheduling takes precedence over the listing in management terms.

The scheduling is an old county number scheduling record (some of the oldest designation records) and does not yet have a full description available. This is in preparation (see [Windsor Castle, Non Civil Parish - 1006996 | Historic England](#)), alongside a review of the boundary of the scheduled monument.

The official List entry for the Castle (see [Windsor Castle including all the buildings within the walls, Non Civil Parish - 1117776 | Historic England](#)) reads:

England's largest castle and a royal palace, covering some 13 acres. The Castle dates back to William the Conqueror but the first stone buildings were erected by Henry II between 1165 and 1179. The round keep

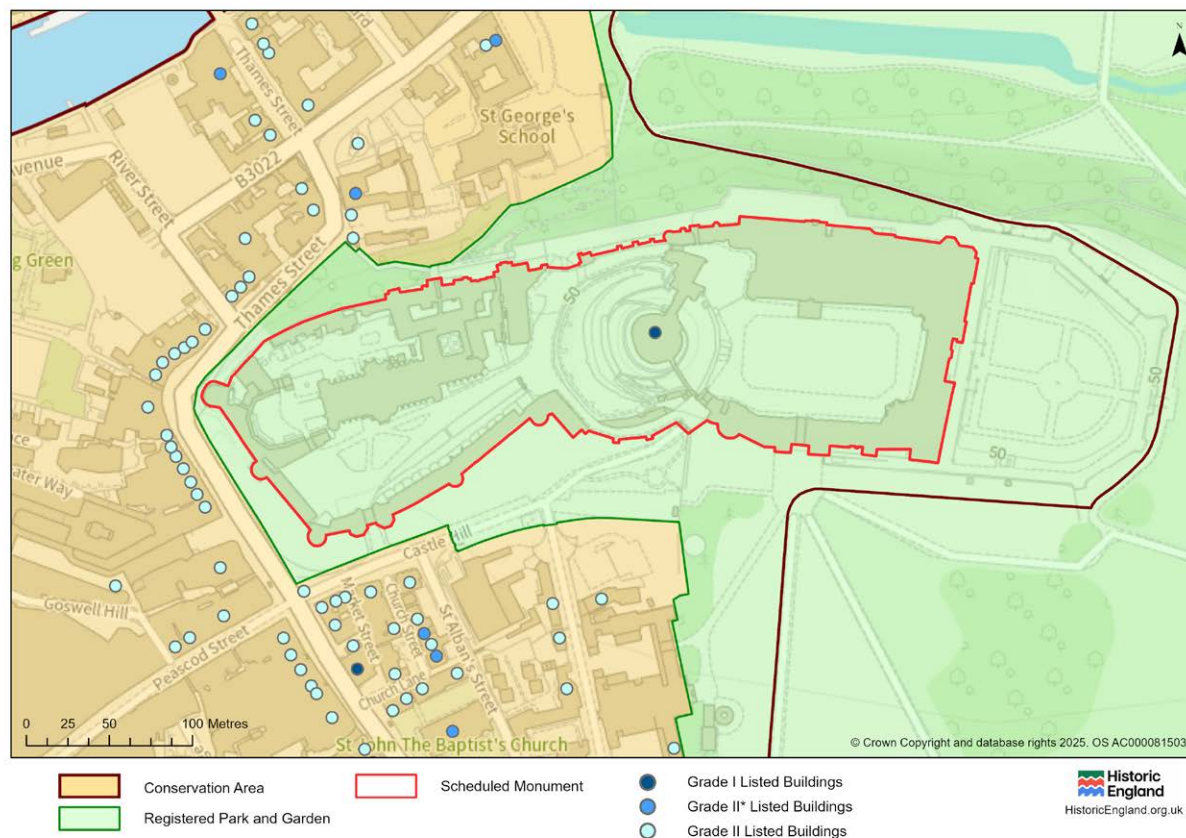


Fig. 121: Formal designations of heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of Windsor Castle

Fig. 120: Previous page: The Round Tower in 2019 [Source: Wikimedia]

stands on an artificial motte and there are baileys known as the Lower, Middle and Upper Wards. Continuous additions since this time with particular activity following the foundation of the Order of the Garter by Edward III in 1348, the ensuing St George's Chapel of 1475-1511; and extensive rebuilding for Charles II by Hugh May. The present aspect of the Castle largely results from the alterations, additions and restorations carried out by James Wyatt and Sir Jeffry Wyattville circa 1800 to 1830, with further work carried out by Blore and Salvin in Queen Victoria's reign. Dominant cliff-top setting. Terrace garden with stone revetments and statuary to east of ridge.

The Castle is situated within the Grade I Windsor Home Park Registered Park and Garden (see [THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR CASTLE AND HOME PARK, Non Civil Parish - 1001434 | Historic England](#)). Home Park contains the Scheduled Monument of Windsor Castle, the Grade I Registered Park and Garden of Frogmore Gardens, four Grade I-listed Buildings (including the Castle), three Grade II*-listed Buildings, 21 Grade II-listed Buildings, and part of Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area. Each of these listed buildings have a setting which contributes to their heritage significance.

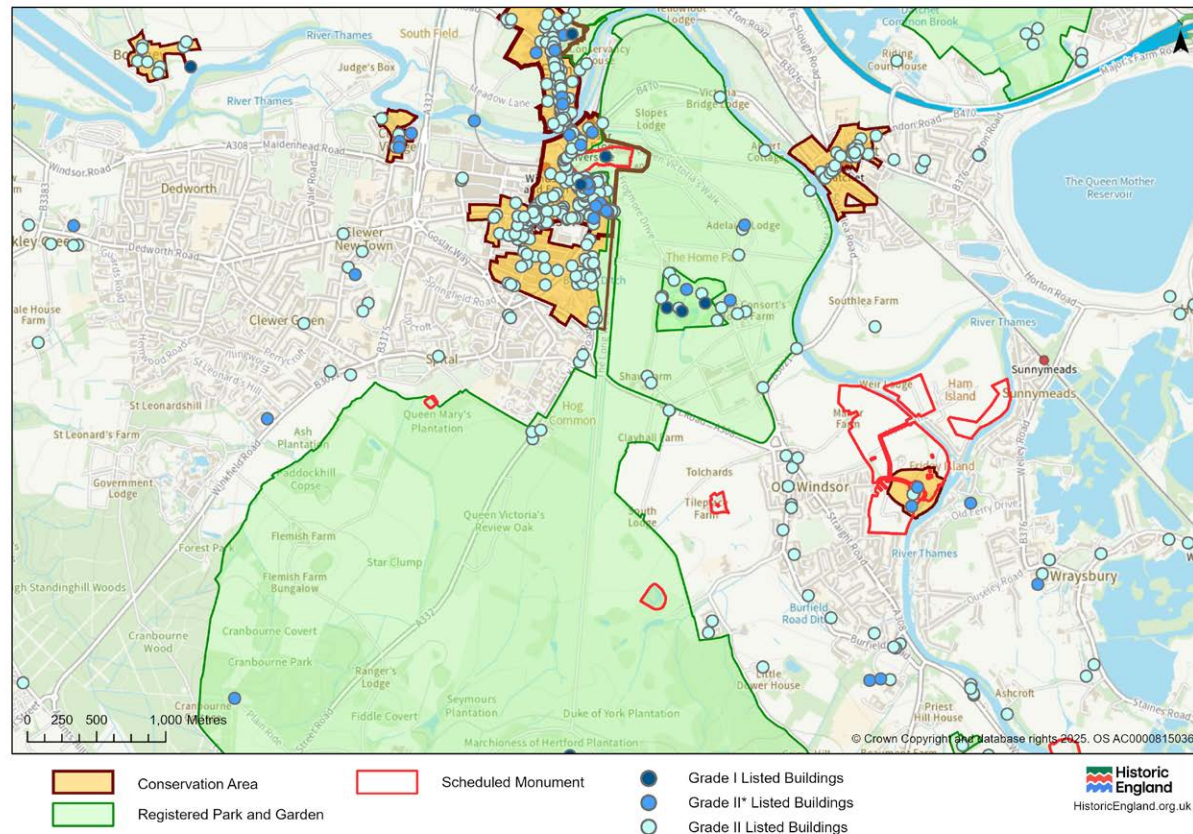


Fig. 122: Formal designations of heritage assets in the wider area around Windsor Castle

To the south of the Castle lies the Windsor Great Park Registered Park and Garden (see [THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR GREAT PARK, Non Civil Parish - 1000592 | Historic England](#)). The boundary of the Registered Park has a long spur toward the Castle to the north, which includes the majority of the Long Walk. The Registered Park includes three scheduled monuments, one Grade I-listed building (the statue of George III), three Grade II*-listed buildings, and 16 Grade II-listed buildings. It also includes, to the south, the Registered Parks of Royal Lodge, Cumberland Lodge, Savill Garden and Virginia Water.

The Castle is included within the Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area, designated in 1969 by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted in 2009, highlights seven key factors that define the area's unique character:

- The commanding presence and prominence of Windsor Castle.
- The area's development, shaped by the topographical constraints of the Royal Parks to the east and the River Thames to the north.
- The River Thames as a natural landmark and its recreational connections.
- The variety of architectural styles present in the town.
- The open spaces to the east, offering views where the Castle serves as the most notable feature against the backdrop of the town centre.
- Windsor's status as a leading tourist destination.
- The town's role as a commercial and retail hub for the local area.

The conservation area's boundary is closely drawn along the eastern side of the Castle. The inclusion of the Castle within this boundary, along with its prominence in numerous key views, underscores its role in defining the character and special interest of the town centre.

5.2 Summary of relevant legislation and policy

5.2.1 Legislation

Scheduled monuments are protected in legislation under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

The legal context for the management of listed buildings and conservation areas is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended):

Section 66(1) provides that in ‘considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Secretary of State (or decision taker) shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.’

Section 72(1) provides that in ‘the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area . . ., special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.’

Case law concerning the duties in the Act is conveniently summarised in Appendix 1 to the Judgment of Holgate J in the Save Stonehenge case at paragraphs 4 to 9. The Barnwell judgement makes clear that “preserving” means “doing no harm” and that decision makers should give “considerable importance and weight” to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and the setting of listed buildings, and the character and appearance of conservation areas. A finding of harm to the setting of a listed building, or to the character or appearance of a

conservation area gives rise to a strong statutory presumption against planning permission being granted.

5.2.2 Policy

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) [Scheduled Monuments Policy Statement](#) (2013) sets out policies for the: *...identification, protection, conservation and investigation of England’s premier archaeological sites, through: - the designation of scheduled monuments; and - the determination of applications for scheduled monument consent.*

Annex 1 of the Policy Statement states that

The significance of ancient monuments derives not only from their physical presence, but also from their setting.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024). There are three dimensions to sustainable development and the planning system has an economic role supporting growth; a social role supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by creating high-quality built environment; and an environmental role by contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

A decision-maker should identify and assess the particular significance of the heritage assets that are affected by a proposal. They should take

account of this assessment to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage assets' conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

5.2.3 Establishing heritage significance in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) places the concept of significance at the heart of the planning process. Annex 2 of the NPPF defines Significance (for heritage policy) as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The types of heritage interest that make up significance are set out in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and are as follows:

Historic Interest: As defined in the Planning Practice Guide, *this is an interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity [sometimes called 'communal value']*.

Architectural and Artistic Interest: As defined in the Planning Practice Guide, *these are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a*

place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

Archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the NPPF, *there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

Setting is defined in the NPPF (2024, Annex 2: Glossary) as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

This means that all heritage assets have a setting, separate from the concept of curtilage, character and context. However, the contribution made by the setting to the significance of heritage assets varies considerably and is subject to change over time. Defining the extent, nature and contribution of a heritage asset's setting can be challenging. Historic England offers guidance on this in its [Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 \(Second Edition\): The Setting of Heritage Assets](#) (GPA3). This advises that one common way of understanding setting's contribution to the significance of a heritage asset is through views. However, the setting of a heritage asset encompasses more than just this purely visual impression. It is also influenced by other environmental factors and the historic relationships between places.

5.3 Distinction between setting and views

The distinction between setting and views is explained in two Historic England advice notes: Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3) and Tall Buildings; Historic England Advice Note 4 (HEAN4).

5.3.1 Setting

Setting is more comprehensive and can include contextual elements which deal with the relationship of an asset to its surroundings both in the present and in the past. This includes the way a heritage asset or place is experienced and perceived today. The contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset.

5.3.2 Evolution of setting

GPA3 states:

Where the significance of a heritage asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development affecting its setting, to accord with NPPF policies, consideration still needs to be given to whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset. Negative change could include severing the last link between an asset and its original setting; positive change could include the restoration of a building's original designed landscape or the removal of structures impairing key views of it.

5.3.3 Views

Views are a more defined element of setting, and not every heritage asset will have significant views associated with it. Nonetheless, views can make a vital contribution to appreciating the setting of heritage assets and constitute part of an asset's significance.

Views may be identified and protected by local planning policies and guidance for the part they play in shaping our appreciation and understanding of England's historic environment, whether designed to be seen as a unity or as the cumulative result of a long process of development. This does not mean that additional views or other elements or attributes of setting do not merit consideration or do not make a significant contribution. The methodology in this report (see [Section 5.4](#)) therefore includes reference to such designed views, but they are only used to illustrate a particular contribution made by an aspect of the setting. The identification of a positive contribution made by an aspect of setting does not rely on it being part of a designated view, either strategic or local.

Not all of the current views of Windsor Castle have been identified as part of the assessment of the contribution of setting both past and present and it is acknowledged that not all views make the same contribution to the significance of the asset, or indeed the ability to appreciate that significance. The views that are referenced in the report are generally those where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the Castle; those with historical associations, including their viewing points; those with

cultural associations and those where relationships between the Castle and other heritage assets were intended to be seen from one another for aesthetic, functional or ceremonial reasons.

5.4 Methodology

It might appear a deceptively simple task to establish what matters about the setting of a historic building and why it matters, but in reality it is a major challenge for somewhere as complex as Windsor Castle. What is valued about the Castle is different for different individuals and diverse communities across the capital and beyond.

5.4.1 Guidance

The approach therefore taken here is based upon the established best practice methodology set out by Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3).

The study addressed steps 1 and 2 of the GPA3 approach. In addition, by providing in an analysis of the changes to setting over time it also assists in addressing step 4, which is the exploration of ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm when proposing changes within the setting of a heritage asset.

This study cannot address step 3 of GPA3, which is the impact assessment of a proposed development, but it does provide the foundation upon which the necessary further detailed assessment for step 3 can be carried out for each individual project in the future.

5.4.2 Terminology

The terms "close", "intermediate setting" and "wider setting" are used in the study to help articulate the different characteristics of the setting of the Castle. The concepts are not based on defined boundaries that

can be drawn on a map and they have no formal meaning other than being descriptive. Neither are they hierarchical: the strength of the positive contribution made by an element or feature of setting does not correlate with proximity to the Castle, though their nature may be experienced differently depending on distance.

The study also recognises the clear distinction between setting and views, as set out in the relevant Historic England advice (GPA3 on Setting and HEAN4 on Tall Buildings).

5.4.3 Research

The study is based upon professional knowledge of the site and setting gained over several decades, augmented by site visits during its preparation that have focussed upon assessing the current setting. These visits have predominantly been to the closer setting of the Castle, although parts of the wider setting have also been visited.

Site visits were supplemented by examination of a range of secondary sources including academic research and publications and policy, guidance and other material published by Historic England and Slough Borough Council. A bibliography and list of sources can be found in [Appendix 5.5 on page 147](#).

5.4.4 Consultation

The legitimacy and strength of the assessment presented in this study was in large part derived from the extent of consultation on its preparation. This includes a workshop which was held in March 2025

to present and discuss the research. It was attended by representatives of Historic England; Slough Borough Council; the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead; Buckinghamshire Council; The College of St George; The Crown Estate; The Gardens Trust; and The Berkshire Gardens Trust. This group was consulted on two drafts (March and July 2025) and their comments and observations informed the development of the document.

Slough Borough Council and Historic England have provided comments and observations throughout the project, which have informed the final version of the report.

5.4.5 Illustration

The study contains a range of illustrations, some commissioned specially for the publication, others reproduced from other sources. Other photographs were taken by the author. Unless otherwise stated, the photographs are the copyright of Alan Baxter Ltd.

None of the photographs or images are “verified” or Accurate Visual Representations (AVR’s) as defined by the Landscape Institute. They are simply illustrative and intended to assist the user of this document to comprehend the points being made.

5.4.6 Limitations

The study does not, indeed cannot, provide a definitive statement of significance and how setting contributes to it, not least because of the geographical scale and complexity but also because both are continually evolving and seen through different lens by different communities. In light of the complexity of the asset and the nature of the assessment, direct public consultation was not possible.

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5.6 Source images for historic views analysis

5.6.1 Views towards the Castle

Filename	Period	Location
1644_View of Windsor Castle.jpg	Seventeenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1672_Panoramic view by Wenceslas Hollar.jpg	Seventeenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1672_Panoramic view from southeast by Wenceslaus Hollar.tif	Seventeenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1690_Windsor Castle from the North.jpg	Seventeenth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge
View from Datchet Common.jpg	Seventeenth century	Other areas
1700_A View of Windsor Castle.jpg	Eighteenth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge
1707_Original copper engraving by Pieter van der Aa (1659-1733).jpg	Eighteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1710_View of the Castle from the northwest, unknown artist.tif	Eighteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1720 circa_Windsor Castle from the North, Bernard Lens.jpg	Eighteenth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge
1730_Unknown artist.jpg	Eighteenth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge
1735_View of Windsor Castle from the north by Jan Griffier II.jpeg	Eighteenth century	Other areas

Filename	Period	Location
1740_View of Windsor Castle from the River, Johann van der Hagen.jpeg	Eighteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1747_Windsor Castle by Canaletto (2).jpeg	Eighteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
<i>no image</i> - famous views from the Castle Inn	Eighteenth century	Other areas
Windsor Castle From the Long Walk, F. Norice.jpg	19th C	Views from Windsor Great Park
1800 circa_Windsor Castle from the North-West, by William Daniell.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1807_Windsor Castle from the River, JMW Turner.jpg	Nineteenth century	Other areas
1824_View of the Castle from the southeast.tif	Nineteenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1827_Windsor Castle from the banks of the Thames by the Brocas, by William Daniell.tif	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1831_Henshaw Frederick Henry - Windsor Castle from the Great Park.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1847_From Deadwater Ait.jpg	Nineteenth century	Other areas
1850_A Nineteenth century view across Windsor Park, and up the Long walk to Windsor Castle.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park

Filename	Period	Location
1850_An engraving of a View from Coopers Hill.jpg	Nineteenth century	Other areas
1855_by John Joseph Hughes.jpg	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1860_View of Windsor Castle from Windsor Great Park, Berkshire.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1862_The Long Walk.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1870_A view of the Castle from Home Park.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1870_One of the railway bridges carrying the South Western railway over the river Thames, with the buildings of the Castle in the distance. png	Nineteenth century	Other areas
1870_The prominent round tower, built by King Henry II (1154-89), and surrounding castle buildings, taken from the fields of Eton College with the river Thames in the foreground.png	Nineteenth century	Other areas
1870_The round tower and north face of the Castle, taken from the towpath alongside the river Thames.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1870_View along the Thames from the railway bridge looking towards the town with the Castle visible on the horizon.png	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area
1871_Marriage Of Princess Louise The Long Walk.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1880 Windsor Castle from Upton Court Rose Herschel.jpg	Nineteenth century	Other areas

Filename	Period	Location
1880_A view of the Castle from alongside the Thames.png	Nineteenth century	Other areas
1880_From north	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area
1880_From the Brocas.jpg	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1880_The south east prospect of the Castle, taken from the Great Western Railway Bridge, with the river Thames in the foreground.png	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area
1880_Windsor Castle from the Thames.jpg	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1885_From river and railway.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1885_Looking over the Thames during the 4th June rowing Regatta, with Windsor Castle visible in the distance. png	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area
1888_A view of the Castle from above Romney Lock.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1888_A view of the Castle from Clewer Meadows.png	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1888_A view of the Castle from Home Park.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1888_A view of Windsor Castle from Clewer Meadows, showing Henry II's prominent Round Tower flying a large flag.png	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1888_Exterior general view from the railway bridge.png	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area

Filename	Period	Location
1888_North Terrace of the Castle taken from Home Park.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1888_The annual Eton boating regatta on the river Thames at Windsor, with the Castle buildings on the hillside in the background.png	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1889_Alfred William Hunt.jpg	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1890.jpg	Nineteenth century	Other areas
1890_A general view from the north looking across the River Thames towards Windsor Castle, with a small boat in the foreground.png	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1890_A general view looking across Home Park towards Windsor Castle.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1890_A general view of the River Thames looking South East with Windsor Castle in the background.png	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area
1890_A view from Eton looking across a park towards Windsor Castle.png	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1890_A view looking South East from the bank of the River Thames and towards Windsor Castle with houseboats in the foreground.png	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area
1890_Exterior view of the north front of Windsor Castle.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1890_Exterior view of Windsor Castle from Home Park. It is the largest castle in Britain.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north

Filename	Period	Location
1890_From north (2).jpg	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1890_From river.jpg	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1890_General view of Windsor Castle from Eton showing the Thames.png	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1890_General view of Windsor Castle from the north. It is the largest castle in England.png	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1892_Exterior view looking up at Windsor Castle from Home Park.png	Nineteenth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1892_From Brocas and from northwest.jpg	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1892_From Brocas and from northwest.jpg	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1895_A stereo view from the bank of the River Thames looking towards Windsor Castle with a passenger boat in the foreground. The lower half of the Round Tower is the oldest part of the Castle and dates fro.png	Nineteenth century	Railway bridge area
1895_Photochrom of Windsor and Windsor Castle looking across the Thames.jpg	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area
1895_Windsor Castle from Windsor Great Park, Charles Edward Johnson.jpg	Nineteenth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
Castle from Clever side.jpg	Nineteenth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
Windsor Castle, Berkshire, England.jpg	Nineteenth century	Brocas/north bank area

Filename	Period	Location
1900 circa_View of Windsor Castle from the North East, Louis Tanzin.jpg	Twentieth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1900_A general view showing men and schoolboys in Eton College uniform on Windsor Bridge, with a view of Windsor Castle beyond.png	Twentieth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge
1900_A small rowing boat on a picturesque stretch of the River Thames.png	Twentieth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge
1900_A stereo view from Eton looking across the Windsor Bridge towards Windsor Castle in the distance. A rowing boat is in the foreground.png	Twentieth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge
1900_A view of the North Terrace of Windsor Castle from the Home Park.png	Twentieth century	Views from the immediate context to the north
1900_From north in snow.jpg	Twentieth century	Brocas/north bank area
1900_From north in snow.jpg	Twentieth century	Views from Windsor Great Park
1905_Windsor from Alexandra Gardens.png	Twentieth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1910_General view from the north-west looking across the River Thames towards Windsor Castle, with rows of rowing boats tethered to the riverbank in the foreground.png	Twentieth century	Brocas/north bank area
1920_General View With Castle Visible In The Distance.png	Twentieth century	South bank/Alexandra Gardens
1947_From Long Walk.jpg	Twentieth century	Views from Windsor Great Park

Filename	Period	Location
1951_From Country Life calendar.jpg	Twentieth century	Brocas/north bank area
1968_From river.jpg	Twentieth century	Brocas/north bank area
1971_Members of the Laing Sports Club and their families taking a trip on the River Thames near Windsor.png	Twentieth century	Brocas/north bank area
1980 Windsor Castle seen from Upton Court Park, Slough.jpg	Twentieth century	Other areas
From northeast.jpg	Twentieth century	Views from Eton and Windsor Bridge

5.6.2 Views from the Castle

Filename	Period	Location
1770_North Terrace, looking west, by Paul Sandby.tif	Eighteenth century	
1780_The North Terrace of Windsor Castle with Eton College beyond, William Marlow.jpg	Eighteenth century	
1790_North Terrace, looking west.jpg	Eighteenth century	
1790_The North Terrace at sunset, watercolour by Paul Sandby, c. 1790.jpg	Eighteenth century	
1790_The North Terrace, Windsor Castle, Looking East, Paul Sandby.jpg	Eighteenth century	
1839_The North Terrace.jpg	Nineteenth century	
1941_View to the west over the Curfew tower by John Piper.tif	Twentieth century	
1941_Watercolours by John Piper.tif	Twentieth century	

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