



**PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR REPLACEMENT LEISURE
CENTRE. LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL.
PART TWO : APPENDICES.**

UNDERTAKEN FOR WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL.

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1. APPENDIX 1 AERIAL VIEW SHOWING THE SITUATION OF THE TWO SITES



Aerial photo showing the positions of the two sites.

Site 1 at North Walls adjoins the built up area and is well screened by trees

Site 2 has open views towards the higher ground of the South Downs national Park

2. APPENDIX 2: PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

2.1 Existing landscape character descriptions

Landscape character areas are designed to nest within each other such that broader scale descriptions for larger areas can be subdivided into smaller scale and more detailed character areas. In the case of this study of Winchester, a range of studies at different levels or tiers exist.

This is shown in table 1 below:

| Tier | Level | Name | Source |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|---|
| Tier 1 | National | Hampshire | Natural England National Character Area profiles |
| Tier 2 | Regional/ NP | Itchen valley | South Downs Integrated Character assessment |
| Tier 3 | County | Itchen Valley | Hampshire County Integrated townscape and landscape |
| Tier 4 | City | Upper Itchen | Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment |

Tier 1 National level description Hampshire Downs

Key characteristics

- The rolling, elevated, chalk arable downland has an open, exposed character that provides open skies and long-distance views.
- Elevated plateaux and upper valley slopes are characterised by extensive open tracts of large, low-hedged fields with thin chalky soils, shelterbelts, and ancient semi-natural woodland blocks on clay-with-flint caps on some of the steeper slopes.
- In contrast, within the sheltered valleys and to the east of the area, the network of hedgerows, interspersed by numerous areas of oak/ash or hazel woodland coppice and smaller meadow fields, gives a strong sense of enclosure.
- The rivers and streams of the Test and Itchen catchments are internationally significant, and distinctive chalk rivers, running in deep valleys, cut into the Chalk.
- A network of distinctive and ancient droving roads and trackways is a particular feature across the Downs.
- There is widespread evidence of prehistoric settlement on the open downlands, including burial mounds with visually prominent iron-age hill forts. In the valleys, there is evidence of Roman estates and nucleated medieval village settlement patterns, and fieldscapes and farmsteads across the downlands evidence the gradual and planned enclosure from the medieval period.
- The area's distinctive appearance derives from the use of chalk cob (in the west), weatherboarded timber frame and small, handmade local brick with flint in traditional rural buildings and walls surrounding farm courtyards, with thatch surviving in many places.
- The settlement pattern varies between the relatively dense strings of villages along the lower river valleys and the very low-density, nucleated settlements in the upper reaches of the rivers and on the Downs.
- The ancient city of Winchester is located at the heart of this landscape and at the centre of the Itchen Valley, and the more modern, rapidly expanding towns of Basingstoke and Andover are on downland sites at the head of the Loddon and Test valleys.

Tier 2: Regional level description (From South Downs Integrated LCA: E4 Itchen Valley)

E4: ITCHEN VALLEY

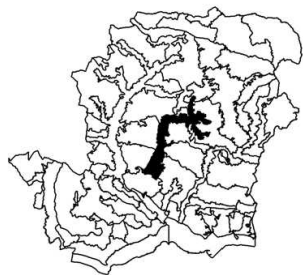
Integrated Key Characteristics:

- Broad, branching valley carved from the chalk downs and indented by dry valleys and coombes to produce smoothly rounded valley sides.
 - The character area flows through and provides a landscape setting for Winchester.
 - Shallow well drained, calcareous silty soils support intensive arable cultivation on shallow slopes of the valley sides. Pasture and paddocks occur on the valley floor.
 - Springs, including the main source of the Itchen, south of Cheriton, are located on the chalk.
 - The clear, chalk river flows in a relatively narrow floodplain in the upper reaches with a wider floodplain south of Winchester. Pasture and paddocks occur on the valley floor
 - The watercourse and banks of the Itchen are designated as a SAC incorporating a diversity of habitats including the clear alkaline river, fen/marsh/swamp, neutral grassland and pockets of woodland.
 - Historic features associated with the presence of the River and the Itchen Navigation are apparent today. Remnant features relating to water management and agricultural/industrial use of the river, including fragments of water meadows, weirs and mill ponds, fish farms, trout lakes, and watercress beds.
 - Extensive blocks of early enclosure survive throughout the valley. Down stream of Itchen Abbas the landscape is of recent enclosure, comprising regular field systems with very little woodland.
 - Crossed by the M3 and A roads which interrupt the otherwise tranquil landscape. A sequence of settlements occur along the lower valley sides.
 - Frequent minor river crossing points are marked by white bridges.
 - One of the most renowned fly fishing rivers in the world with populations of wild brown and rainbow trout.
-
- Presence of landscape parks including Hinton Ampner (owned by the National Trust) and Avington Park (listed on the English Heritage register).

Tier 3 County level description Itchen Valley

1.0 Location and Boundaries

1.1 This character area includes the river valley floor and its sides which make up the visual envelope of the valley. The valley tops are defined approximately where there is a break/slackening in slope angle. The southern boundary is formed at the County/Southampton unitary edge. The upper most reaches of the valley follow three spring fed



tributaries/headwaters, which join close to New Arlesford namely the Candover stream to the north, River Arle to the east and Cheriton stream to the south.

1.2 Component County Landscape Types

Open Downs, Downland Mosaic Large Scale, Downland Mosaic Small Scale, River Valley Floor, Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale, Lowland Mosaic Small Scale, Lowland Mosaic Heath Associated, Settlement.

1.3 Composition of Borough/District LCAs:

Winchester CC

Upper Itchen Valley
Lower Itchen Valley

Eastleigh BC

Broom Hill Farmland and Woodland
Upper Itchen Valley Floodplain
Lower Itchen Valley Floodplain
Eastleigh Airport
Itchen Valley Sports Pitches

The extent of the valley sides is comparable with the two Itchen valley character areas in the Winchester assessment. This LCA boundary is drawn on the approximate valley top of the adjoining dry valleys (hence the wavy boundary), on the rough break in slope indicated by the contour spacing and the approximate visual envelope of the valley. Variations occur between the LCA and local assessments as a result of the perceived extent of valley influence.

1.4 Associations with NCAs and Natural Areas

NCA 125: South Downs, 128: South Hampshire Lowlands, 130: Hampshire Downs
NA 74: South Downs, 75: South Coast Plain and Hampshire Lowlands, 78: Hampshire Downs

1.5 Townscape Assessment Areas:

Winchester

2.0 Key Characteristics

- The Itchen is a classic chalk stream, running through an area of soft permeable rock, supplied by underground aquifers.
- A valley of contrasts from a small stream to a fast flowing river and then deep estuary but the largely undeveloped floodplain is a unifying feature.
- The stream and some of floodplain is internationally designated as a SAC because of its chalk stream habitat, rich in plants, invertebrates and fish.
- Important concentration of remnant water meadows.
- The valley floor is mainly neutral grassland, a complex mosaic of fen species rich meadow and improved meadows, considered to be the largest assemblage of species rich neutral grassland in England⁵¹.
- The small villages and scattered farms sit comfortably within the valley.
- An extremely rich built heritage and setting to Winchester and developed valley sides in lower reaches.
- Frequent minor crossing points marked by white parapets to bridges.
- The upper reaches support the most important watercress industry in the country⁵¹.
- There is fairly good access to the valley by rights of way, and the Itchen Valley path follows the former towpath from Cheriton to Southampton.
- Internationally renowned as a fly fishing river especially for wild brown and rainbow trout.

3.0 Physical Characteristics and Land Use

- 3.1 The Itchen Valley passes through chalk in its upper reaches and Tertiary clays south of Otterbourne and Colden Common. The downland section comprises mainly Seaford Chalk, while the valley tops often coincide with the presence of Newhaven Chalk which has greater clay content. North and east of Winchester the top of the valley sides are typically 60m AOD increasing to 90m in the three headwater valleys but vary considerably with underlying geology to as low as 20m AOD towards the coast. At Winchester the valley turns sharply south and cuts through the main South Downs ridge while in the Hampshire lowlands the valley passes through a narrow band of the Lambeth formation, then London Clay followed by narrow bands of Whitecliff and Wittering formations. These coincide with locally undulating and raised topography including where the valley breaks through a minor ridge between Colden Common and Bishopstoke. The valley floor broadens out still further where it meets a large outcrop of London Clay. The river valley floor calcareous alluvium overlies river terrace gravels and is stone free and fertile but seasonally waterlogged. The soil pattern echoes the changes in the geology - the valley sides in the downland section are steep, with shallow flinty soil while south of the spring line settlements of Colden Common and Otterbourne the soils are predominantly stoneless and silty, but of lower agricultural grade than the valley sides in the chalk.
- 3.2 The river valley floor is dominated by permanent pasture and semi or unimproved grassland – often with visible remain of watermeadow features such as field undulations and carriers. Watercress beds particularly around New Alresford and ornamental ponds such as Northington and Avington are a feature of the downland section. The downland section in particular, is world famous for fly fishing of brown trout. Further south and particularly south of Winchester there urban influences

increase although the valley floor is extensively pastoral. The M3 and airport take up substantial areas just above on the river terrace. Around Eastleigh and Southampton playing fields are common, often with windbreak planting which include poplars. The valley floor is particularly well wooded in places, typically small copses, scattered trees but few hedges. Moving up the valley slopes in the lowland section the fields are generally small to medium in size and irregular in pattern. In the downland section the fields become more regular in pattern and larger away from settlements and support an increasing arable land use. The fields in the lowland section are generally smaller and have more wooded hedgerows than in the downland section.

- 3.3 The River Itchen is 45km from its source at New Cheriton to Southampton Water, with a catchment area of 400sq km²⁹. For much of its length, the Itchen is divided or naturally 'braided' into two or more channels. This includes the Itchen Navigation between Winchester and Southampton which has many sluices and man made courses to ensure a permanently filled channel. The Itchen had three main historic uses giving rise to a multiplicity of channels; the harnessing of water power for milling, the use of water meadow systems to provide early growth of pasture and the development of navigation. There are smaller tributaries in the lowland mosaic section due to the comparatively impermeable geology. In extremely wet prolonged weather the chalk aquifers can reach capacity and flooding of low lying settlements (including those further downstream in the hydrological basin) can occur. Summer flows can be maintained in especially dry periods by two boreholes in the Alre and Candover catchments.

4.0 Experiential/Perceptual Characteristics

- 4.1 This is a landscape visually contained by the tops of the valley sides creating a sense of enclosure which is greatest where the valley sides are highest, such as where it cuts through the South Downs chalk ridge, or on the narrow twisting valley floor of the headwater valleys, where the sides are steep and close to the valley floor. South of Kings Worthy the valley floor broadens out and where it flows through the lowland mosaic, the low valley sides and broad adjoining tributaries give a sense of openness and larger scale. High up the valley sides there are contrasting views of settlements set within a well treed landscape and beyond the character area boundary, expansive arable and downland in the chalk and a more wooded scene linked with pasture and arable fields in the clay lowlands. The twisting valley of the headwater water tributaries limits views along the valley whereas the straighter course of the Itchen from North of Alresford to Kings Worthy and then Winchester to Eastleigh affords views along the valley – reducing the sense of enclosure.
- 4.2 There are numerous long distance paths, often associated with historical pilgrimage routes, which follow and/or cross the Itchen Valley providing excellent linear walks (The Itchen Way, St Swithun's Way, Kings Way, 3 Castles Path, Ox Drove, Wayfarers Walk, Pilgrims Trail and Clarendon Way). These routes indicate that the Itchen Valley has long been a significant transport route, with Winchester as its focus in the downs. Access land and open spaces tend to be located south of Winchester such as at Shawford Down, St Catherine's Hill, Itchen Valley Country Park and Winnal Moors. Together with accessible local woodland sites such as Stoke Park at Bishopstoke and Otterbourne Park Wood they form important doorstep countryside for local residents. Other access opportunities include

- Wolversley Palace, Avington Park, Grange at Northington and Hinton House which have partial public access. The Itchen Navigation project which aims to protect and enhance the biodiversity, archaeology and access of the canal was set up in 2004.
- 4.3 The Itchen is nationally renowned for brown and rainbow trout fishing. There are numerous riverside pubs which attract locals and tourists and add to the area's popularity.
- 4.4 The Itchen Valley retains a strong sense of being rural with a long history of old settlement with relatively little modern expansion apart from the far south of the character area – associated with Eastleigh, Bishopstoke, Allbrook and Colden Common. The locally distinctive land management practices of watermeadows and watercress beds and the Itchen Navigation sit harmoniously in the landscape. More modern infrastructure development such as the M3 cutting, increasing commuter traffic and rapid expansion of settlements in the south are significant detractors which threaten to subsume increasingly isolated and small areas of a rural landscape. Air traffic noise from light commercial aircraft associated with Southampton airport has a localised negative effect on tranquillity. The high tranquillity of the river valley floor landscape with its fast flowing braided chalk stream and rough pasture with woodland and scrub has a high sense of naturalness.
- 5.0 Biodiversity Character**
- 5.1 Much of the River Itchen is internationally and nationally designated as a SAC as well as a SSSI because it is a classic example of a chalk river with associated habitats including fen meadow, flood pasture and swamp. The river is dominated throughout by water-crowfoot (pond water-crowfoot as well as stream water-crowfoot, and river water-crowfoot). Strong populations of southern damselfly occur here, estimated to be in the hundreds which is unusual in this managed chalk-river flood plain context rather than heathland. The river supports high densities of bullhead throughout much of its length with extensive beds of submerged plants that act as a refuge for the species, and coarse sediments that are vital for spawning and juvenile development. Also valuable are Riparian vegetation communities (including wet woodlands) and side channels, runnels and ditches associated with the former water meadows supporting otter, water vole, freshwater fishes including bullhead, brook lamprey and Atlantic salmon, and an assemblage of breeding birds including tufted duck, and shoveler, the waders lapwing, redshank and snipe, and wetland passerines including sedge warbler, reed warbler and Cetti's warbler.
- 5.2 Alresford Pond is another SSSI comprising a relatively large, shallow calcareous lake in the north of the area, formed in the headwaters of the River Arle in the late 12th century as a balancing lake for the River Itchen Navigation. The lake is bordered by extensive fen vegetation, including large reed beds which have gradually encroached into the former open water, whilst the main water body is now shallow and extensively dominated by dense Mare's-tail. The lake as a whole supports a rich aquatic plant community and supports large breeding populations of Reed Warblers and Sedge Warblers and other wetland birds; and relatively large autumn and winter numbers of surface feeding and diving duck. Similar eutrophic lakes are rare in chalk stream valleys and Alresford Pond is considered to be the best example within the county.

- 5.3 Beyond specific designations this landscape character area comprises a variety of habitat types. At the outer peripheries of the area, in the north, arable land with patches of improved grassland and amenity grassland dominates. Adjacent to the river course, habitats become more diverse with a strong riverine influence including marshy grassland/water meadows and base rich fen often with significant floristic diversity and species rich communities. Unimproved and semi-improved grassland becomes common, with neutral grassland dominating in the north and calcareous grasslands more common in the south. There are small patches of woodland associated with the watercourse, this is mainly broadleaved but there is also some patches of parkland and mixed plantations. In the south there is a considerable patch of broadleaved woodland in a mosaic with dry heath/ acid grassland, surrounded by semi-improved neutral grassland, improved grassland and grass sports fields. Nevertheless ancient and semi-natural woodland is limited.
- 5.4 This landscape is covered by the Itchen Valley BOA. The BOA describes the Itchen as a classic chalk stream that is botanically very important with extensive areas of unimproved vegetation along its length. There are also over 70 SINCs, designated mainly for the ancient woodland and unimproved grassland resources which they support. There are also a few wetland SINCs.
- 6.0 Historic Character**
- 6.1 Archaeology**
- 6.1.1 There are Mesolithic artefacts from the valley, particularly from Winchester southwards and through the lowland belt to the coast. This implies that the valleys were exploited in this period. Whilst no Mesolithic sites are currently identified in the Itchen valley there may be undiscovered sites under the later alluvial deposits, as has proved to be the case in other river valleys.
- 6.1.2 There are Neolithic long barrows on the chalk to the northwest and southeast and it seems likely that the proportion of the valley that runs through the chalk forms part of a wider settled and farmed landscape. Settlement and Neolithic pottery (which may be indicative of settled activity) have been found in the valley where it is flanked by chalk. This pattern does not extend into the lowland belt to the south, and the long barrow at the head of the Itchen valley seems to be the very eastern extent of the pattern.
- 6.1.3 In the Bronze Age there was settlement in the Itchen valley, again where it is flanked by chalk between Winchester and the lowland belt. It is also interesting to note that there are two Bronze Age hoards at the point where the valley chalk and valley lowland meet, as though this is genuinely part of the Bronze Age landscape. Whilst there are few Bronze Age burial mounds in the valley itself there are considerable numbers on the chalk flanks of the valley and it is certain that the valley fell within a wider farmed and settled landscape.
- 6.1.4 There were Iron Age settlements in the Itchen Valley reflecting the pattern of the wider chalk hinterland. Winchester is the link between the downs to the northwest and the South Downs and is overlooked by two Hillforts. At a later stage an important Oppida developed in the valley here.

- 6.1.5 In the Roman period the Iron Age settlement at Winchester developed into a Roman civitas Capital and as such became the hub of the local Roman road system. The density of settlement in the valley still reflected the wider chalk hinterland, but Roman settlement is also very apparent down the Itchen valley from Winchester into the lowland zone and on to Southampton, possibly as a result of the Roman road. However, the evidence of settlement in the valley and its hinterland was less pronounced in the east-west stretch of the Itchen towards Alresford.
- 6.1.6 Saxon burials and churches in the river valley, and mediaeval churches and settlement indicate that in the post Roman period the valley became the focus of nucleated settlement that utilised the land beyond the valley itself.
- 6.2 **Historic Landscape**
- 6.2.1 There are three main periods of formal and parliamentary enclosure - the head water valleys to the East of New Alresford, the New Alresford to Winchester section and the southern section to the Southampton unitary boundary.
- 6.2.2 Watermeadows are a consistent historic landscape feature along the length of the Itchen and likely to have originated in the early 17th to 19th centuries around the headwaters below natural springs. They were introduced to encourage early growth of grass, in the Spring and enabled early grazing and an increased number of hay crops. In particular, sheep were grazed on the river valley floor and taken to higher land to be folded and manure the arable, often corn crop. The years between 1640 and 1750 saw a great boom in the construction of meadows¹⁷. The pattern of watermeadow types is mixed but there are trends and differences which can be discussed in the three areas referred to above. With the decline of the watermeadows in the 19th century, the river valley floor has become more wooded. The condition of the surviving water meadows is very varied – about 80% are in condition 3 or worse i.e. extent of survival is only partial¹⁷.
- 6.2.3 East of New Alresford the narrow valley floor shares similarities with the upper parts of the Meon Valley in that the watermeadow types are predominantly 'simple' and associated with a significant amount of early formal field enclosure in the 17th century. This area seems to have been favoured for watercress growing, particularly New Alresford, the 'Watercress line' providing the transport to the local and London markets.
- 6.2.4 The New Alresford to Winchester section shows a similar pattern on the valley sides of predominantly small formal and some informal enclosures, but generally the enclosure seems to have been a little later than east of New Alresford resulting in small straight sided fields. Like the area to the west the area is associated with historic parks and gardens. The valley floor broadens in this section and the more complex water meadow systems are evident.
- 6.2.5 The section south of Winchester is set within a landscape dominated by early and informal enclosures to the west and south of Colden Common and late parliamentary enclosure to the east in the downland section and in a few isolated parts of the Lowland Mosaic hinterland. The formal enclosure that does exist is typically mid 19th century, predominantly on isolated downland and areas of common. The valley floor is broadest here and the watermeadow systems most

extensive. Within the lowland setting the field pattern is irregular and smaller scale than in the Downland section.

- 6.2.6 There are numerous parkland landscapes throughout the Itchen Valley. Some originated as Deer Parks such as Avington Park (EH Grade II), Tichborne Park, Worthy Park and North Stoneham Park. Other significant pre 1810 parks include The Grange at Northington (EH Grade II), Old Alresford Park (EH Grade II), Shawford Park, Hinton Ampner, Ovington, Arlebury Park, Twyford Lodge, and Brambridge Park. Some houses may have developed in the late seventeenth century because of Winchester being chosen by Charles II as the site for a new palace and possibly some of the significant avenue plantings at Avington, The Grange, North Stoneham and Brambridge park may date from this period or the beginning of the eighteenth century. A number of parks were enhanced by the creation of lakes in the eighteenth century as at The Grange, Avington Park and North Stoneham. Twyford has some large houses with gardens and grounds and there were clusters of nineteenth century villa landscapes in Kingsworthy and in the suburbs around Winchester. However some have been lost to subsequent development but the surviving features and planting contribute to the character of these areas. Dean Garnier made a particular contribution to this area with his planting in his own garden at the Rectory Bishopstoke and around the Cathedral precincts in Winchester and influenced the planting of other properties in Bishopstoke in particular the Mount. As with the River Test the enjoyment of country sports, hunting, fishing and shooting has been an influential factor in the development of the parks in this area. In Winchester there are some notable public parks.
- 6.3 **Built Environment**
- Lanes in the headwater valleys are typically narrow and twisting and follow the valley floor, with frequent crossing points. Routes up to the surrounding downland are often partially sunken. Roads become progressively wider, straighter and busier further south from the B3047 to the A333 and A335. The M3 south of the Worthys and the railway reduce the rural feel to the Valley but the densely wooded character helps to minimise the extent of noise and visual intrusion into the adjoining landscape.
- 6.3.1 The Itchen Valley is extremely rich in building and settlement history, indicated by the number of conservation areas and listed buildings. The nucleated settlement pattern is typical of river valley settlement patterns. The historic integrity of the settlement layout, strong and intact historic rural edges and limited modern 19th century growth in most instances adds to this character area's importance. Where the Itchen passes through the chalk settlements they are linear in form and at least 11th century origin lying on either side of the river. Some of the smaller villages appear to be the remnants of shrunken villages³⁷.
- 6.3.2 The settlement plan form of most of the villages is regular row. There appear to be more irregular row settlements than regular row suggesting the influence of different periods and stages of historic development in the settlement morphology. There are several settlements classified as agglomerations reflecting different historic periods of growth, such as Itchen Abbas, Martyr Worthy and Headbourne Worthy. The 'Worthys' by definition of their place names were thought to be part of an estate landscape the Micheldever Hundred and it seems as though the area

must have been a royal estate of high importance³³. Typically, in the downland section north east of Winchester, the parish shapes are elongated, at right angles to the Itchen and of similar size and link the valley floor with the downs above, often with the church in the settlement close to the valley floor.

- 6.3.3 There are two market towns in the valley, Winchester and New Alresford. New Alresford is located at the junction of the River Alre, Candover Stream and the stream from Bishops Sutton to New Alresford. The town's economy was based on sheep and corn husbandry. The town was densely developed originally and suffered several fires, culminating in a Royal brief from George III to rebuild the town centre. Hence today, the Georgian style architecture, with vibrant coloured rendering and deliberately wide streets of the town centre reflect the need to minimise the further risk of fire. The sheep-corn economic slump of the 19th century was tempered by the success of the local watercress industry and the arrival of the railway.³⁴
- 6.3.4 The villages tend to be bounded by the floodplain for some of their edge and this has ensured an intact historic settlement rural edge boundary. Some settlements such as New Alresford, Bishopstoke and Eastleigh, where the valley side is terraced or less steep, have been subject to substantial and often massive 20th century expansion.
- 6.3.5 The Itchen Valley has a significant concentration of 17th century farmsteads in its upper head water valleys and upper reaches, and their occurrence is fairly frequent, particularly the section from Cheriton to New Alresford. There is a similar density and clustering in the lowland mosaic section. Medieval origin farmsteads occur occasionally. The oldest farmsteads are generally located within settlements, most lying close to the roads. Enclosure by agreement from the 17th century onwards resulted in some farmsteads being located out of villages³⁷. The size of some of the barns is an indication of the success of the adjoining downland. Often two barns were provided on a farmstead and sometimes the second barn was a straddle barn. Barns are typically three or four bays and aisled at least to one side.
- 6.3.6 The Itchen Navigation runs from Woodmill in Southampton to Winchester and was constructed following an Act of Parliament in 1665. Shallow draught barges plied their way through 15 locks. There are numerous historic built features including turf locks, mills such as Wharf Mill, Winchester, Shawford and Allbrook. There were four wharves along the Navigation and bridges such as Blackbridge as well as several canal side houses. The Navigation also seems to have had an important role in maintaining the irrigation of the adjoining watermeadows.
- 6.3.7 Watermills are particularly characteristic. There are about ten surviving mills of late 18th early 19th century origin, most having been listed. The Itchen valley represents the eastern most river valley with cob buildings and although less abundant than the Test they are significant features. There are frequent brick and flint buildings and surviving timber frame buildings. Straw thatch has been the traditional roofing material. There are several longstraw examples in the upper part of the Itchen. High chalk cob walls with thatch or tile cappings can be found occasionally.

Tier 4 Local level description Upper Itchen valley

4.09. Upper Itchen Valley Landscape Character Area



River Itchen near Cheriton Mill



Key Characteristics

- Distinctive river valley topography with sloping valley sides and relatively narrow valley floor, located in a chalk downland setting.
 - Alluvium and valley sand and gravel along valley bottoms with loamy soil and upper chalk on valley sides and beyond.
 - Clear alkaline spring water in meandering narrow channels, which are often braided, together with associated lakes, ponds, mill chases, springs and ephemeral headwaters and supporting a thriving watercress industry.
 - Valley floor generally consists of small pasture fields, with occasional remnants of historic water meadows. Valley sides generally consist of medium fields used for arable production following informal parliamentary type enclosure.
 - A significant number of ornamental historic parks and associated houses, mostly dating from the 18th Century. These feature ornamental species including lime, horse chestnut and cedar.
 - High biodiversity value, with habitats including the chalk river, fen/carr/swamp/reedbed, unimproved neutral grassland, calcareous grassland, standing open water, ephemeral headwaters and ancient semi-natural woodlands
 - A number of long views across the river valley gained from the open valley sides, including the open flood plains in the upper reaches and more enclosed/settled valley floor nearer Winchester.
- Riverside routes such as the B3047 the B3046 and footpaths such as the Itchen Way. Also railway lines such as the disused railway line and the Watercress line. Also, regular connections between the river and adjacent downland via drove roads and lanes. Long distance footpaths follow the river and cut across the area.
 - Numerous river crossings, via lanes, fords and footbridges.
 - A long history of occupation, with numerous archaeological remains, including iron age lynchets, ancient tracks and the sites of an iron age settlement (Itchen Stoka) and three deserted medieval villages (Abbotstone, Northington and Swarraton)
 - Remote feel away from the main roads.
 - A high concentration of small villages often Anglo-Saxon in origin. These have developed at river crossing points and generally developed in a linear form along the valley side. Where topography has allowed, a few settlements such as New Alresford have also become more nucleated. Estate villages and Parkland, such as Tichborne and Avington, are also characteristic.
 - Traditional building features & methods, including timber frames, brick, flint, wheat-reed thatch, slate and clay tiles.
 - River-associated structures, including mills, dams and weirs.

Landscape Types within the Area

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| River Valley Floor | River Valley Side |
| Open Arable | Open Arable (Exposed) |
| Chalk and Clay (Farmland) | Historic Parkland |

Settlement Types within the Area

Chalk River Valley

Location and Boundaries

The Itchen Valley Landscape Character Area follows the headwaters of the Itchen in a south-north direction from New Cheriton to New Alresford via Tichborne, before turning in an east-west direction to the edge of Winchester. The character area also includes tributaries of the Itchen; the Candover Stream, which runs north-south from Swarraton to New Alresford, and the River Arle and its tributaries;

one running from Old Alresford to New Alresford and one from Bishop's Sutton to New Alresford.

As well as including the valley floor, the Landscape Character Area also includes the areas of the valley sides generally making up the visual envelope of the river. The character area is bounded on all sides by open arable downland, with particularly strong boundaries distinguished by the disused railway line and watercress line to the north of the main channel of the Itchen, and the B3046 between New Alresford and Cheriton.

Formative Influences

The predominant influence on the area is the River Itchen and its tributaries, which have formed a relatively narrow river valley through the surrounding chalk downland. The permeability of the chalk has also resulted in the formation of numerous meanders, braided channels, springs, ponds and lakes. As well as influencing the topography of the area, the river flood plain also provides a diversity of flora and fauna, with numerous habitats associated with the river channel, valley floor and valley sides.

Due to its sheltered position and clear, shallow source of water, the valley has a long history of settlement, dating back to the Iron Age. The majority of the numerous villages and hamlets developed in Anglo Saxon times, at suitable river crossing points. The continued occupancy of the valley had been promoted by its agricultural importance, providing energy for corn mills and fulling mills as well as a suitable location for water meadows, watercress beds and trout fishing. By the 18th Century, the river valley location was also becoming a favoured place of residence for the landed gentry and therefore has a significant number of large country houses and associated parkland.

Landscape & Settlement Description

The area is characterised by a number of relatively narrow, meandering chalk river valleys, including the headwater of the River Itchen. The river channels themselves are also relatively narrow and shallow, generally little more than a stream in parts. There is much evidence of historic change to these channels. In places they have been widened and dammed, forming Old Alresford Pond (c1190) and ornamental lakes at Northington and Avington for example, as well as numerous watercress beds, located mainly around the town of New Alresford. There is also evidence within the landscape of the formation of mill chases, weirs and water meadows, although these are no longer traditionally managed.

The Itchen has been identified as a candidate Special Area for Conservation (cSAC) under the 1992 European Habitats Directive, as it is considered to be one of the best examples of a chalk river habitat in Europe. As such, it is protected by the 1994 Habitats Regulations, administered by Winchester City Council in respect of most planning applications. Three areas of the Itchen Valley also form part of the Itchen Valley

SSSI, representing former floated water meadows consisting of a mosaic of fen, carr and meadow on peat.

The river valleys are generally typified by agricultural uses, with pasture and scattered areas of wet woodland on the valley bottom and arable fields on the valley sides, leading up to the arable downland of the surrounding area. On the valley sides, oak, beech and ash are common, together with typical hedgerow species such as hawthorn. In places, hedgerows have been neglected and have become overgrown or fragmented. Ancient woodland is uncommon, and only found in association with historic parkland, with tree species along the river being predominantly alder, willow and poplar.

Large areas of the valley landscape are dominated by historic houses and parkland, including Hinton Ampner, Avington House, Tichborne House, Ovington House, Worthy Park House, Stoke Manor, Old Alresford House, Upton House, Northington Grange, Arlebury House, Lower Chilland House, Upper Chilland House and Martyr Worthy Manor House. These are generally associated with ornamental, mature tree species and some still have traditional pastures. Others however, have been converted to other uses, such as arable farmland or golf courses. In many instances, parkland trees are poorly managed and over-mature.

The Upper Itchen Valley Landscape Character Area is characterised by a long history of settlement, with evidence of Iron Age strip lynchets and a park enclosure possibly dating from Roman times. There is now a large concentration of small, linear settlements in the area. These tend to consist of a narrow lane leading from a river crossing point, up the valley side, with later linear extensions to the village along the valley sides. Examples include Abbotsstone, Abbots Worthy, Bishop's Sutton, Chilland, Easton, Itchen Abbas, Itchen Stoke, Martyr Worthy, Northington, Old Alresford, Ovington, and Swarraton. Two other villages, Tichborne and Avington, also linear in form, have developed in close conjunction with adjacent historic estates, with buildings tending to be more uniform in age and character.

All villages have retained their historic, traditional character, although many experienced some expansion in the 20th Century, most notably, Itchen Abbas and New Alresford. Many buildings are constructed using vernacular materials and construction methods, including red brick, colour-washed brick, flint, wattle and daub, slate, clay tiles and longstraw thatch. The only settlement to differ in this aspect is the historic core of New Alresford, which has a far higher proportion of colour-washed brick and render buildings and a far lower proportion of thatch.

Key Issues

- Maintenance of the favourable conservation status of the Itchen cSAC
- Pollution of river water from agricultural chemicals
- Silt deposition in the river as a result of the ploughing of permanent pasture;
- Potential impacts of development on the cSAC
- Fragmentation and neglect of hedgerows and wet woodlands
- Agricultural improvement of pasture and water meadows
- Management of parkland features, including pasture, trees and lakes
- Pollution of river water from agricultural chemicals (including watercress farms)
- Artificial changes to river course
- Reduction in biodiversity through intensive agricultural practices
- Protection of historic character of settlements
- Protection of open views
- Development of large agricultural buildings on open valley sides
- Management of unimproved/semi-improved neutral and calcareous grassland
- Damage to trees and grassland by heavy vehicles

Landscape Strategies

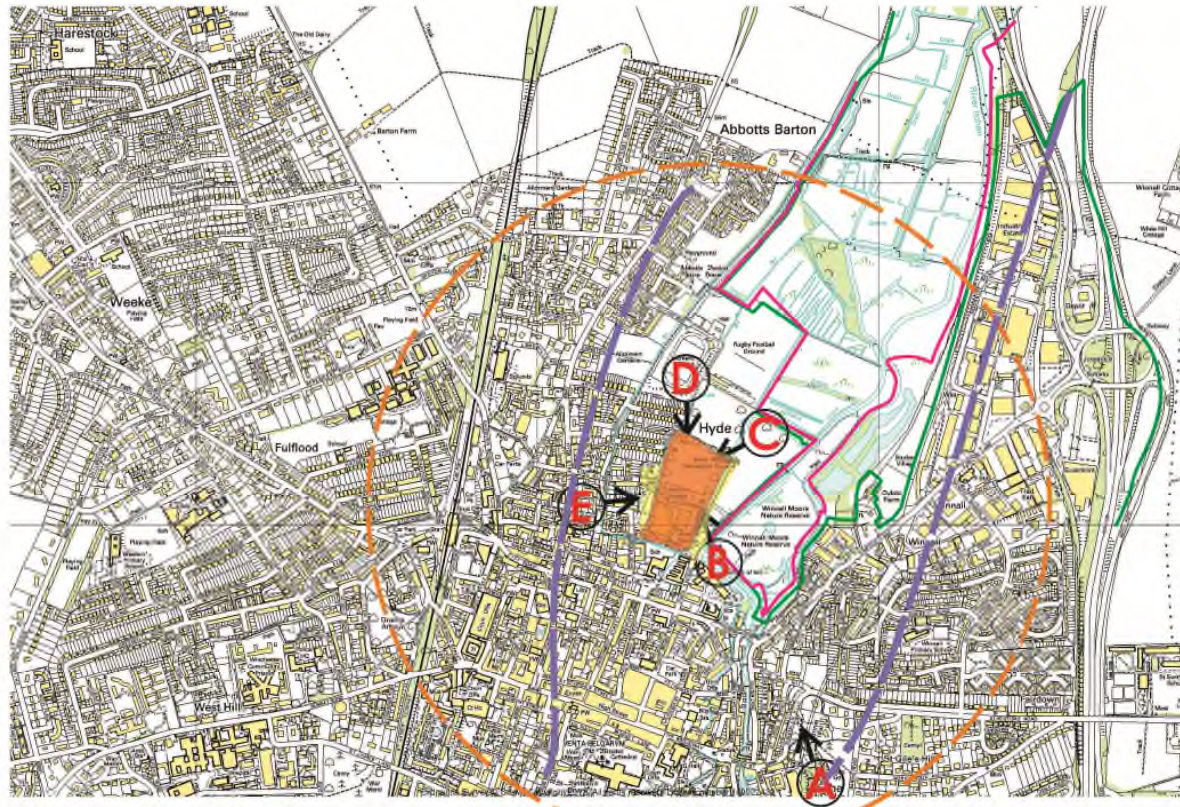
- Conserve the integrity of the cSAC by seeking advice from English Nature on all planning applications in this character area.
- Conserve and restore hedgerows and wet woodlands, through appropriate management such as coppicing, thinning, replanting and the removal of alien species, to retain the existing landscape pattern. Replanting should use locally indigenous species, such as ash, willow and poplar on the valley floor, and oak and beech on the valley side. This would also be an area suitable for the reintroduction of native black poplar, *Populus nigra*.
- Restore and enhance the biodiversity of arable farmland, by encouraging the retention of conservation headlands, wildlife strips and grass strips around fields, and the increased use of spring sown arable crops and retention of winter fallow fields.
- Conserve archaeological sites such as the deserted villages and ancient field systems, and their settings.
- Conserve and enhance the water meadows and areas of unimproved pasture.

- Encourage the retention and traditional management of watercress beds.
- Conserve the predominantly visually remote and quiet rural character of the area.
- Conserve the variety and rural nature of views throughout the area, including short, enclosed views of the river valley floor as well as long views to and from the surrounding downs.
- Conserve and restore the landscape and built features of historic parks through continued replacement tree planting, woodland management and the restoration of pasture and lakes.
- Conserve the rich bio-diversity associated with the clear spring water.
- Encourage environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural practices to minimise fertiliser and soil run-off, which could lead to the pollution of the River Itchen and the chalk aquifer.

Built Form Strategies

- Conserve the small and linear pattern of settlements and respect the traditional form and scale of existing buildings.
- Conserve and promote the use of local building materials such as red brick, white colour-washed brick, flint, clay tiles and thatch in any new development.
- Conserve and promote the use of traditional garden and parkland boundaries such as brick and flint walls, palisade fencing, railings and non-coniferous hedging.
- Encourage the use of indigenous planting as appropriate, in order to integrate new development with surrounding landscape, particularly within the countryside.
- Retain the historic character of the narrow valley-side and cross-valley rural lanes, fords and footbridges by resisting any road improvements which would threaten these.
- Minimise the impact of intrusive structures such as telecommunications masts through sensitive siting.

3. APPENDIX 3 VISUAL ANALYSIS NORTH WALLS



| KEY TO SYMBOLS | |
|----------------|---|
| | High ground |
| | Potential site |
| | Potential viewpoint refer to appendices |
| | Approximate area from which site is likely to be visible. |
| | 1Km radius from site |
| | SSSI/ SAC Boundary |
| | National Park |

0 200 400 600M

Scale: 1:20000 at A4



WINCHESTER
LEISURE CENTRE
NORTH WALLS SITE

VISUAL SURVEY AND
ANALYSIS



Photo viewpoint A : St Giles Hill: leisure centre site in extreme right of view; arrowed.
Position: Latitude: N 51d 3m 36.84s Longitude:W 1d 18m 17.48s Altitude: 76.00m
Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture; site visit, 2-8-14



Photo viewpoint B: View from south west edge of Winnall Moors nature reserve looking through trees towards bowls centre which is barely visible in the summer. Position of existing leisure centre arrowed.

Position: Latitude: N 51d 4m 0.32s Longitude: W 1d 18m 32.59s Altitude: 44.00m

Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture; site visit, 2-8-14

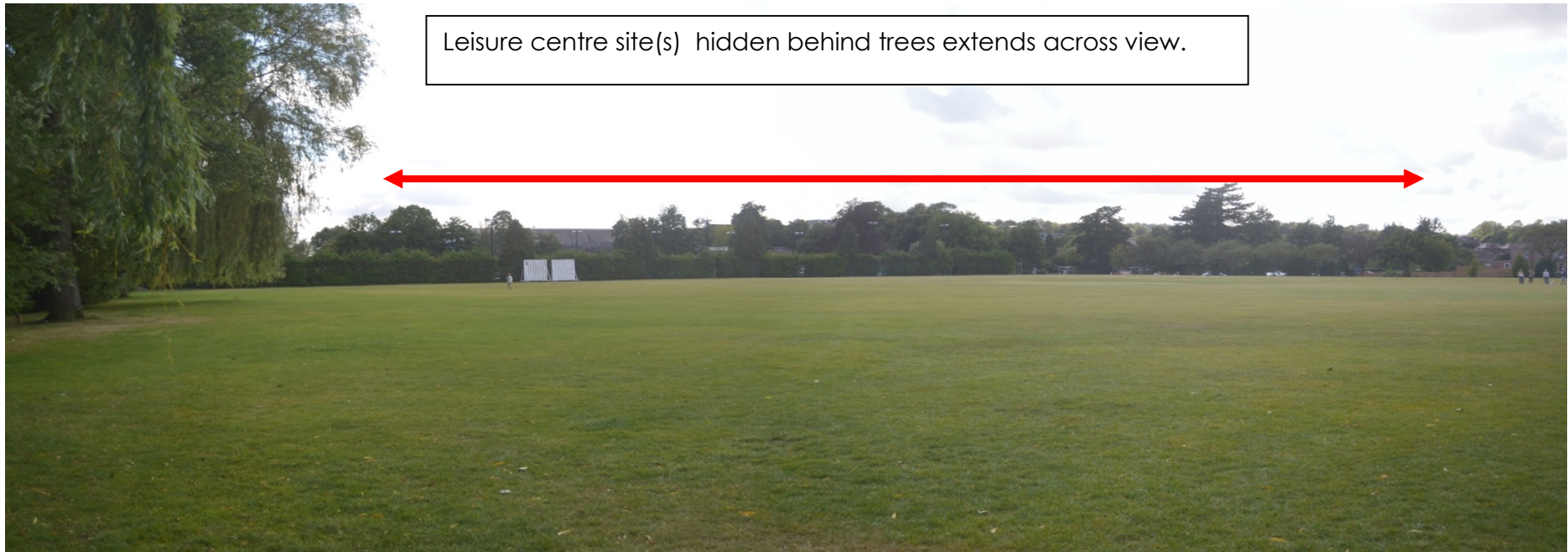


Photo viewpoint C: from north east corner of cricket pitch: showing how the existing building is well screened by existing trees.
Position: Latitude: N 51d 4m 8.21s Longitude: W 1d 18m 24.05s Altitude: 36.00m
Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture; site visit, 2-8-14



Photo viewpoint D ; north west corner of cricket pitch : showing how the existing building is well screened by existing trees from the cricket pitch to the north. . Position of existing leisure centre arrowed red. Width of sites shown.

Position: Latitude: N 51d 4m 10.24s Longitude: W 1d 18m 36.34s Altitude: 32.00m

Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture; site visit, 2-8-14



Photo viewpoint E towards leisure centre from King Alfred terrace showing how mature trees help merge the current building with the adjoining housing. . Position of existing leisure centre arrowed.

Position: Latitude: N 51d 4m 3.35s Longitude: W 1d 18m 44.70s Altitude: 31.00m

Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture; site visit, 2-8-14

4. APPENDIX 4 VISUAL ANALYSIS BAR END

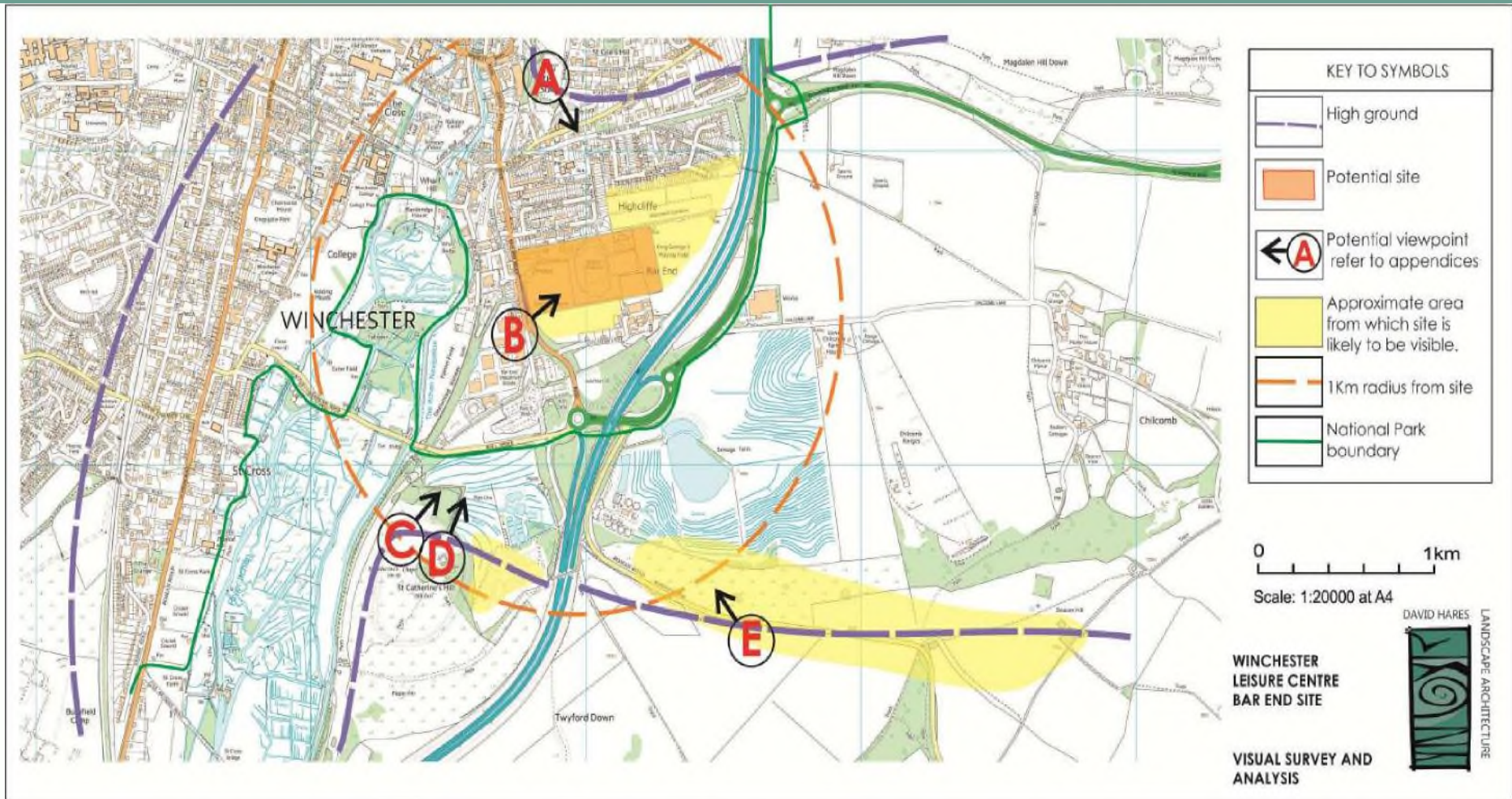




Photo Viewpoint A: St Giles Hill. There are some potential views of the option 4 building on the Bar End site from the park, particularly in the winter. Position arrowed.

Position: Latitude: N 51d 3m 35.17s Longitude: W 1d 18m 14.34s Altitude: 95.00m. Direction 170 degrees

Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture site visit 2-8-14



Photo viewpoint B: Bar End Road looking through gaps in hedging from south west corner of site. Positions of proposed building Option 5 marked with arrows. Option 4 would be to the left of this view and partially hidden from this position by existing trees
Position: Latitude: N 51d 3m 35.17s Longitude: W 1d 18m 14.34s Altitude: 95.00m. Direction 170 degrees
Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture site visit 2-8-14



Photo viewpoint C from the national park on St Catherine's Hill winter views will be clearer.
Positions of proposed building options marked with arrows. Option 4 to the left, Option 5 to the right.
Position: Latitude: N 51d 3m 35.17s Longitude: W 1d 18m 14.34s Altitude: 95.00m. Direction 170 degrees
Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture site visit 2-8-14



Photo viewpoint D on the north side of St Catherine's Hill within the national park.
Positions of proposed 2 building options marked with arrows. Option 4 to the left, Option 5 to the right.
Position: Latitude: N 51d 3m 35.17s Longitude: W 1d 18m 14.34s Altitude: 95.00m. Direction 170 degrees
Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture site visit 2-8-14



Photo viewpoint E : Morestead road in the national park which will have clear views of the new building. Positions of proposed building marked with arrows. Option 4 to the left, Option 5 to the right
Position: Latitude: N 51d 2m 41.24s Longitude: W 1d 17m 24.01s Altitude: 59.00m
Source: David Hares Landscape Architecture site visit 2-8-14

5. APPENDIX 5 TERMINOLOGY

Terminology

AoLC: Area of Landscape Character: The smallest coherent landscape unit.. A unique finer grained classification used for this study to assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate change at a detailed level.

LCA: Landscape Character Assessment: The process of assessing the character of the landscape

LDU: Landscape Description Unit. Individual units of the landscape which form a coherent block at the county wide scale.

Landscape character: A combination of topography, natural and man made patterns which together contribute to the appearance of the landscape.

Character: A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Elements: Individual components which make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

Features: Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

Characteristics: Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

Characterisation: The process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Land Description Units: Distinct and relatively homogenous units of land, each defined by their Physiography, Ground Type, Land Cover and Cultural Pattern that set the extent of each spatial unit.

Landscape Character Types: Combinations of Land Description Units that share the same key characteristics. Character Types often occur in more than one discrete geographical area.

Landscape Character Areas: Geographically discrete areas strongly associated with a place, and often comprised of more than one character type.

Sensitivity: The degree to which a landscape with a character is inherently sensitive or sensitive to a particular pressure. A landscape of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore.

Capacity: The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type