

Landscape Appraisal: Whiteley Area 1

(follow on from LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper consultation response February 2008)

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Landscape Character Area: Whiteley Woodlands

Ref: *Landscape Character Assessment for Winchester District* (March 2004)

Landscape Type: Mixed Farmland and Woodland

Key Characteristics specific to this site:

- Irregular small to medium sized meadows closely integrated with a strong assorted woodland structure.
- Occasional long views but generally enclosed by woodland.
- Gently undulating lowlands underlain by a mix of sands, loams, gravels and clays.
- Few roads or footpaths in the landscape character area although the main South Coast railway line lies to the north, reducing tranquillity of the area.

Key Issues:

- Suburbanisation and urban fringe encroachment at Whiteley.

Landscape Strategies that apply to this site:

- Conserve and restore structure of woodlands through appropriate management and by planting new woodland to link ancient woodland remnants.
- Conserve and enhance species rich grassland and hedgerows through appropriate management.

Built Form Strategies that apply to this site:

- Respect the small scale nature of existing dwellings in the countryside.
- Integrate new buildings into the well treed rural setting through careful siting and appropriate use of locally indigenous tree and hedge planting.

Physical Landscape:

Ref: GIS constraint map

Landform:

- Ridgelines
Low central ridge (15.0m -20.m) located east to west within area from Whiteley Cottages to Ridge Farm.
- Dry valleys / watercourses
Land generally very low lying with numerous watercourses to site boundaries especially N boundary adjoining Whiteley Area 2 as site lies within water catchment of River Hamble.
- High Points – North of Whiteley Cottages (20.0m).
- Agricultural land classification: a diverse mix of grades 2, 3 and 4.
- Geology: existence of London Clay formation.

Land cover:

- Pattern of irregular small to medium sized meadows closely integrated with a strong assorted woodland structure. Existing hedges / trees provide containment, landscape structural framework and/or screening.
- High proportion of woodland and tree cover to site boundaries.

Experiential:

Ref: GIS constraint map

Ref: Tranquillity map (CPRE website)

- **Tranquillity**
Noise from Bury Farm Industrial estate and scrap yard. New house building visible north of Whiteley from within site.
- **Countryside Access**
Two main interconnecting public rights of way provide a good network linking site with adjoining dedicated woodland, including CRoW access, and built development at Whiteley to the S. Poor footpath links to the River Hamble National Trust land to the west.

Historic Environment:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- **Historic landscape character:** Assarted fields and woodland landscape, rare within Winchester District (ancient field system cleared from primary woodland), previously designated Area of Special Landscape Quality.
- Ancient woodlands within and to SE of site.

Visibility:

Important views that contribute to landscape character and local distinctiveness:

- Significant views to and from low ridgeline looking north across Hamble valley and Curdrige, views of woodland and Whiteley housing development to the south.
- Skyline features to and from site eg tree belt along ridgeline.
- Land marks: the telecommunications mast in the shape of a pine tree at Curdrige.

Biodiversity:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- SINC's including Hangmans Copse, Bedlams Copse and Suttons Copse within area to north abutting A3051 and Sawpit Copse to southern boundary
- SSSI: mature woodland within site and along SE boundary including Bridge Copse.
- River Hamble is a highly sensitive, protected site close to NW site boundary: a designated RAMSAR site (wetland site of international importance); a SAC (Special Area of Conservation); SPA (Special Protection Area) SSSI.

Landscape sensitivity

Any new development needs to recognise the importance of existing green corridors and infrastructure within and beyond the site; highly sensitive location due to proximity of NW boundary to protected River Hamble and setting with its special landscape character and highly diverse range of habitats and species; protected ancient woodland within and to the SE of site.