

### **Landscape Appraisal: Whiteley Area 3**

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

Linda Thomas, Senior Landscape Architect, Landscape team, Environment  
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### **Landscape Character Area: Whiteley Woodlands**

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

Landscape Type: Mixed Farmland and Woodland  
Horticulture and Smallholdings

Key Characteristics specific to this site:

- Irregular small to medium sized meadows closely integrated with a strong assorted woodland structure.
- Minor streams drain into the R Meon to the east.
- Gently undulating lowlands underlain by a mix of sands, loams, gravels and clays.

Key Issues:

- Suburbanisation and urban fringe encroachment at Whiteley.

Landscape Strategies that apply to this site:

- Conserve and restore structure and condition 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.
- Conserve the varied open and enclosed views throughout the area.

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:

- Variable landscape types as identified in Landscape Character Assessment within and surrounding site. Main features include irregular small to medium sized meadows; minor streams feeding into R Meon to the E. Site is within river catchment area.
- Main ridgeline running SW to NE through site and golf course, max 40.00m height, with Meon valley slopes to E.
- High points: the golf course and the Club House occupy the highest land within the western half of the site.

Landcover:

- Existing hedges / trees as containment and/or screening
- Golf course provides an open landscape setting along W boundary and green buffer for adjacent ancient woodland. Relatively young tree cover within golf course area.
- Woodland around Springles Lane contains the linear housing development at Lee Ground.
- Three groups of protected trees within site (TPO). One large area of protected trees (TPO) adjoining SW corner of site.

- Proximity of large tracts of mature woodland (Forestry Commission) provides opportunities for renewable energy resource (dry biomass).
- Agricultural Land Classification: the site includes grade 1 agricultural land along E site boundary (Meon valley) and is therefore of 'the best and most versatile quality'. Mainly Grade 3 throughout remainder of site (to confirm 3A or 3B).
- Geology: existence of London Clay formation which may impact on proximity of existing/new trees to proposed development.

#### **Experiential:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Countryside Access: footpaths cross the golf course linking with club house and nearby woodland.
- Good existing network of interconnecting rights of way. Accessible links with green spaces / wildlife corridors linking adjacent woodland and Meon valley, providing amenity and enjoyment of natural environment both within and beyond the site.

#### **Historic Environment:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Historic landscape character: small parliamentary fields and assarted woodland (pre-1810 wood pasture).
- Ancient woodlands within and to NW of site.
- Listed buildings within the site at Lee Ground Farm and Great Funtley Farm.
- No known archaeological remains.

#### **Visibility:**

- Views mainly confined to local prominence in E half of site due to small/medium enclosed field pattern, woodland and hedgerow boundaries.
- High point at Club house and Ground Farm with distant views of treed skyline to N.

#### **Biodiversity:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Extensive woodlands that abut site to NW, including designated ancient woodland, majority protected by SSSI's, which include Lee Ground Coppice and Stonyfield Copse on W and N boundaries.
- Designated SINC's (local designation) within site covering both woodland and grassland areas (refer constraint maps). Part of River Meon to E of site is a designated SINC. Within the site, SINC's include Berry Coppice, Berry Coppice meadow, Pegham Coppice.
- Minor streams in E half of site flowing into R Meon.
- Golf course along W boundary provides green buffer for adjacent ancient woodland.
- Good existing network of interconnecting rights of way. Accessible links with green spaces / wildlife corridors linking adjacent woodland and Meon valley, providing enjoyment of natural environment both within and beyond the site.
- Proximity of large tracts of mature woodland (Forestry Commission) provides opportunities for renewable energy resource (dry biomass).

#### **Landscape Sensitivity:**

There are sensitive areas both within and adjoining the site, including the Meon valley to the east, which limits opportunities for new development. Any new development along the ridgeline would be visually prominent within the landscape, and potentially visible from the Meon Valley.