

## **Landscape Appraisal: Winchester: Bushfield Camp Area 4**

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

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### **Landscape Character Area: Hursley Scarplands**

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

Landscape Type: Open Arable; Scarps; Chalk and Clay (Farmland)

Key Characteristics specific to this site:

- Distinctive complex topographical variation with ridges, scarps and valleys (40-110OD)
- Panoramic rural views and visual links with Winchester Cathedral from Compton Down and elevated ground W of Bushfield Camp
- Wooded beech and yew scarps and beech shelterbelts
- Strong landscape structure provided by numerous small areas of woodland, plantation, tree belts, hangars, hedgerows.
- Numerous historic features: 'Archaeologically rich' area.

Landscape Strategies that apply to this site:

- Conserve important long views to Winchester Cathedral and other long views from high points
- Restore and enhance woodlands, biodiversity of arable farmland
- Restore and replant fragmented hedgerows
- Manage semi-natural roadside verges to maximise biodiversity
- Conserve and enhance historic sites and setting

Built Form Strategies that apply to this site:

- Resist visually intrusive development on elevated ridges.
- New development should respect traditional location of settlements within valleys and along base of scarps eg Compton
- New development should respect the historic linear form of existing settlements.

Key Issues that apply to this site:

- Noise from motorway, impact on tranquillity of area
- Derelict army base at Bushfield Camp
- Loss of chalk grassland generally to arable

### **Physical Landscape**

Landform:

Ref: GIS Constraints map

- Ridgelines

Two main ridgelines are a predominant feature of this area;

1. the first runs along the northern edge of the site, providing a visual and physical buffer to edge of development, c65.0 – 110.0m OD. It includes Whiteshute Ridge which overlooks Winchester city and Cathedral.
2. the second N-S ridgeline feature acts as a significant physical and visual buffer between Compton Down and northern half of site adjoining city, c65.0 – 110.0m.

- High Points

Both main ridgelines are connected at the highest point within the site located centrally on N boundary, c110.0m.

Public rights of way converge at highest point, one of several routes following main ridgeline and Whiteshute Ridge along N boundary.

- Dry valleys

Three dry valleys within site characteristic of landscape type with complex topographical variation, c50.0 – 60.0m OD. Sheltered, more contained ground profile. Valley to N of Bushfield Camp has least visual impact.

- Steep gradients

South of A3090: adjacent Yew Hill in SW corner of site.

- Significant changes of level on site boundaries

Railway line embankment E of site.

A3090: northern section.

Land cover:

- Large field pattern of mainly arable on S facing slopes in open landscape setting.
- Enclosed paddocks and playing fields S of Olivers Battery.
- Existing hedgerows and trees within site are confined mainly to field boundaries and ridgelines, providing valuable containment / shelter and skyline features.

Double avenue of trees adjacent Bushfield Camp (TPO)

Trees on Whiteshute Ridge (TPO)

Significant areas of vegetation within or close to the site include:

1. Skyline features:

Line of beech running N-S alongside footpath to Compton Down and, in addition, trees on Whiteshute Ridge when viewed from city, from S and St Catherines Hill.

Avenue of beech along Roman road to Compton when viewed from site.

Double avenue of trees adjacent Bushfield Camp when viewed from city.

2. Vegetation along railway line on E boundary.

3. Existing hedgerows / trees either side of hollow ways and tracks within site.

NOTE: Existing shelter belts and hedges are significant features in an open exposed landscape and take many years to establish before providing amenity / biodiversity benefits. Because of this, they should be considered a valuable asset and retained and enhanced wherever possible.

**Experiential:**

Ref: GIS constraint map

Ref: Tranquility map (CPRE website)

- Tranquillity  
Whiteshute Ridge and footpath routes throughout site in open downland setting.
- Countryside Access  
Clarendon Way in NE corner of site  
Interlinking public footpaths throughout site
- CROW access along northern ridgeline (refer constraint map)
- Large area of Common Land to south of A3090 (refer constraint map).
- Proposed SDNP boundary overlooks site and adjoins E site boundary.
- Noise from motorway S half of site.

### **Historic Environment**

Ref: GIS Constraint map

Ref: WCC Archaeology Officer Initial Site Appraisal (separate document)

Site appraisal

- Historic landscape features that may be regarded as a site constraint:  
Holloways adjacent A3090 following public rights of way
- Scheduled Monument and tumuli
- Yew Hill Butterfly reserve holloways
- Boundary stones to be preserved in-situ
- The setting of nearby Scheduled Monuments eg St Catherines Hill, Twyford Down.

### **Biodiversity**

Ref: GIS Constraint map

- Existing trees and hedgerows within and surrounding the site are significant in terms of biodiversity due to landscape character as mainly arable. Existing large field pattern bordered by long sections of hedgerow provide valuable green wildlife corridors, especially when linked to copses and shelterbelts.
- Northern ridgeline which includes Whiteshute Ridge is an important green corridor linking rural countryside from south with Winchester city.
- SSSI: R Itchen and surrounds to E of site.
- SINCC: Two areas within site.
  1. area to N of A3090 which includes Bushfield Camp and area to N and Whiteshute Ridge.
  2. Area around Yew Hill to SW of site.

### **Visibility**

Site appraisal

- Important /specific views  
St Catherines Hill to the east  
Winchester Cathedral to the N from northern ridgeline
- Panoramic views  
180 degree panoramic countryside views N, S and E of Winchester
- Landmarks/visual links with significant landscape/heritage features  
St Catherines Hill; Winchester Cathedral; Yew Hill

## **Landscape Sensitivity Summary**

Any new development to recognise constraints of site including topography and slopes; main ridgelines with associated far-reaching visibility and skyline features; value of existing interconnecting footpaths and tracks throughout the site; importance of existing green corridors within and bordering the site in landscape and ecology terms, Whiteshute Ridge in particular; limitations of access into site; sensitive eastern boundary to River Itchen in terms of biodiversity, landscape character and heritage; importance of existing ridgelines as integral to character of Winchester city and its valley setting.