

Landscape Appraisal: Winchester PITT Area 3

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

Linda Thomas, Senior Landscape Architect, Landscape team, Environment
23 December 2008

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 (80-140m OD)
- Predominance of arable fields, historic and recent.
- Panoramic rural views S and W from Sarum Rd (ht 140.0m) along N boundary

Landscape Strategies that apply to this site:

- 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 ie Pitt Manor and grounds

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 ie Pitt village settlement
- New development should respect the historic linear form of existing settlements.
- Conserve the well treed rural setting of villages.

Physical Landscape:

Ref: GIS constraint map

Landform:

- Ridgelines

Main ridgeline running N-S through the site and west of Pitt (80.0 – 140.0m OD)

Three main ridgelines are predominant features of this area;

1. the highest ridgeline contains the northern edge of the site at 140.0m OD and is defined by the long straight Roman road (Sarum Road). The land continues to rise N to 150.0m at Teg Down.
2. two other ridgelines run N-S across the site, acting as significant physical and visual buffers (c80.0-140.0m OD) between E and W of site; E side adjoins city at Olivers Battery and includes the village settlement of Pitt and its valley setting; W side distinctive open rural countryside character with panoramic views.

- Dry Valleys
Dry valleys are a feature of the area and landscape setting for the village of Pitt
- High Points
The two ridgelines described above.

Land cover:

- Existing hedges / trees provide containment and/or screening, mainly to tracks and roadside boundaries.
- Intermittent field and lane boundaries and copses, one of the most visually effective containments surrounds the historic grounds of Pitt Manor.

Experiential:

Ref: GIS constraint map

- Tranquillity
Most apparent in rural western half of the site beyond N-S ridgeline A3090 dissects site; visual and physical adverse impact on surrounds.
- Countryside Access
Minimal with Clarendon Way in NE corner of site and one Public right of way N-S through South Winchester golf course.

Historic Environment

Ref: GIS constraint map

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

Site appraisal

- Pitt Manor in enclosed C19 large park setting on edge of western fringes of Winchester (Hants Register of Historic Parks and Gardens)
- High archaeological potential for prehistoric monuments throughout site, less so within golf course. Further assessment required.
- Village of Pitt has high proportion of Listed Buildings that contribute to local distinctiveness of village and its setting.
- Landscape character setting for village of Pitt enhances local distinctiveness.

Biodiversity

Ref: GIS constraint map

- SINC within grounds of Pitt Manor
- SSSI c650.0m offsite in NW corner.
- Large field pattern, mainly arable with open, minimal tree cover throughout site.
- Wildlife corridors mainly confined to roadside hedgerows. Golf course acts as a green corridor connecting with built environment.
- Lakes on golf course.

Visibility

Site appraisal

- Specific views

Existing houses in Olivers Battery feature on skyline when viewed from high points along the Roman road (Sarum Road)

Teg Down masts to the north

- Panoramic views

South as viewed from high points along Sarum Road

Landscape Sensitivity Summary

Any new development to recognise constraints of site including mainly rural landscape character, topography and slopes; main ridgelines with far-reaching visibility; integrity of Pitt as a village settlement within its landscape setting and as a separate settlement to Winchester; Pitt Manor in its historic landscape setting; importance of existing ridgelines as integral to character of Winchester city and its valley setting.