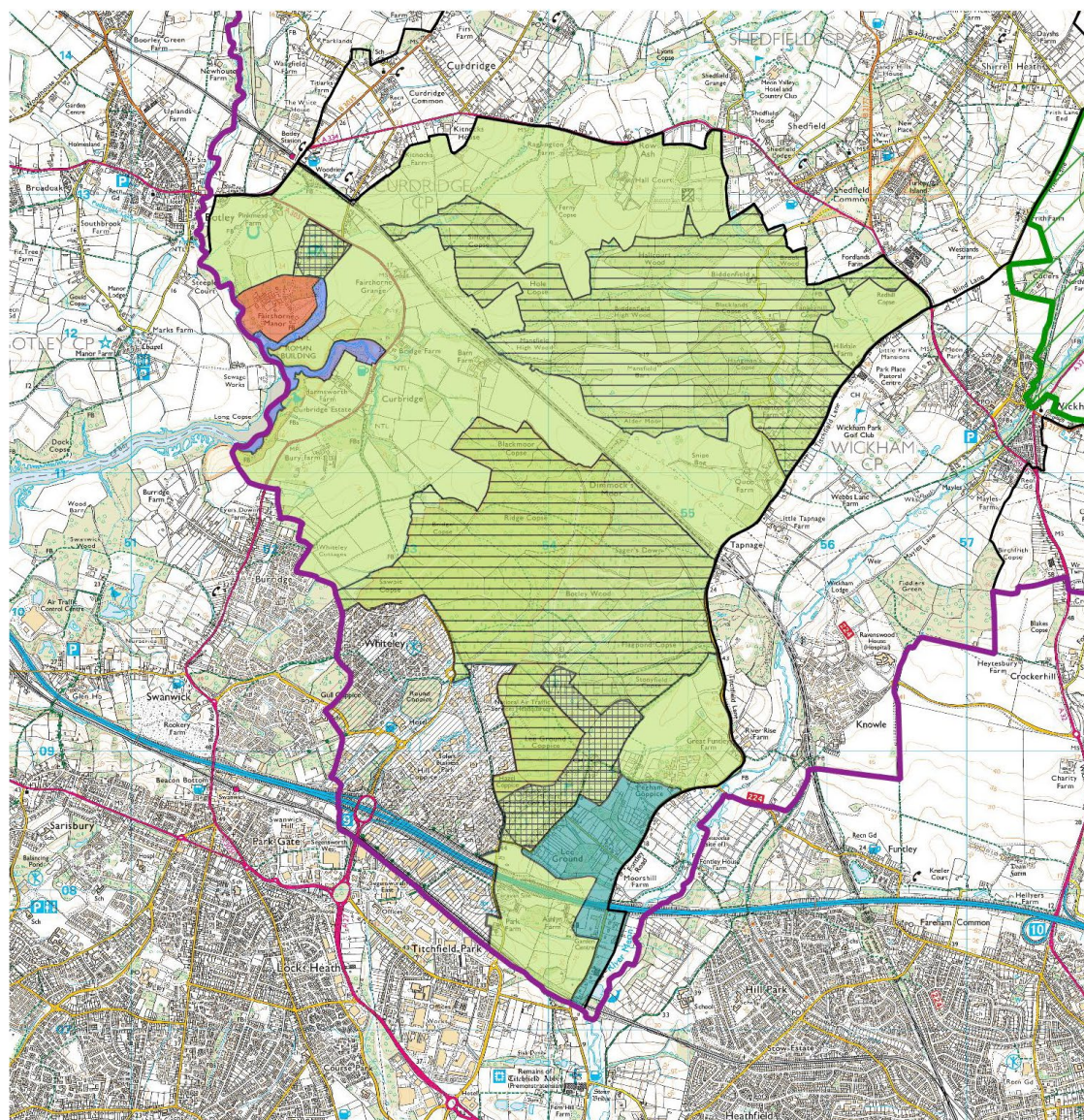


Figure 33 - LCA21 Whiteley Woodlands



Key

- Winchester District Boundary
- South Downs National Park
- LCT boundaries - LCA 21: Whiteley Woodlands
- Mixed Farmland and Woodland
- Mixed Farmland Woodland Enclosed
- Parkland
- River Valley Floor
- Horticulture and Small holdings
- Urban Areas (Local Plan Policy Boundary)
- Golf Courses



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LCA21 - Whiteley Woodlands Landscape Character Area



Biddenfield Lane



A3051 east of Botley

Location and Boundaries:

Whiteley Woods Character Area lies in the south of the district, with the district boundary forming its southern and western edges. To the north, the settlement edge of the villages of Shedfield and Curbridge provides the boundary, having a far less wooded and more settled character. To the east, the valley of the lower River Meon marks a change to a more open, chalk landscape. The boundary of the SDNP lies approximately 0.5km to the north-east.

Note:

At Curbridge, the Whiteley Woodlands Character Area contains a small area that is strongly influenced by the presence of the River Hamble, which is tidal at this point. Consequently the ecology, drainage and topography here is significantly different from the rest of the Whiteley Woodlands Area. The area is too small however, to warrant designating as a separate landscape character area. In reality however, this part of the Winchester District has more in common with the 'Upper Hamble Valley Landscape Character Area' described in the Fareham Borough Landscape Assessment.

Key Characteristics:

- Gently undulating lowlands underlain by sands, loams, gravels and clays. This poor quality agricultural land has proved

unsuitable for cultivation across much of the character area.

- Minor streams drain the area into the River Hamble to the west and River Meon to the east. The River Hamble at Curbridge constitutes the District's only very small stretch of tidal river. Rich woodland surrounds the Upper Hamble, which is designated an SSSI. This grades into neutral grassland, reed beds, salt marsh and tidal mudflats.
- Irregular small to medium sized meadows are closely integrated with a strong assorted woodland structure.
- Predominance of woodland, including a relatively high proportion of ancient woodland, much of which has been replanted with conifers. The many small semi-natural ancient woodlands include Blackmoor Copse and Ridge Copse. Much of this woodland, including the replanted areas, is protected by national and local wildlife designations providing important habitats for flora and fauna.
- Hedgerow boundaries in the area are strong and often sit on banks. The woody species mix is varied, containing mainly hazel, together with hawthorn, goat willow, gorse and dog rose, and ancient woodland indicator species on the banks.
- Occasional long views, including towards the South Downs through gaps

in hedgerows from Titchfield Lane, but generally enclosed by woodland, with settlement edges generally well-wooded, less so in the small area south of the M27.

- A long history of occupation since the Stone Age, focused on Fairthorne Manor, Curbridge, the site of a Roman building and kiln. A moat is also present in Maid's Garden Copse, and a Roman kiln in Hall Court Wood. In places the mature hedgerows and oaks, pasture and woodland give a strong sense of history.
- Settlement is sparse, occurring at the edges of the character area with a predominance of woodland in the centre. Farms are sparsely scattered and occasional dwellings and small holdings have been developed in the latter 20th century along Titchfield Lane and at Lee Ground.
- Although development has occurred predominantly in the 20th century, some older farms can be found, constructed mainly of red brick with clay tiles.
- Roads such as Biddenfield Lane in the north and parts of Lee Ground, Winchester Road and Titchfield Lane have a leafy character, often well enclosed by high hedges, woodland or mature tree lines. Biddenfield Lane is a single track road with a remote, rural character.

Landscape Types within the Area:

- Mixed Farmland and Woodland (Open)
- Mixed Farmland and Woodland (Enclosed)
- Horticulture and Smallholdings
- River Valley Floor
- Historic Parkland

Settlement Types within the Area:

- 20th and 21st Century
- Scattered Clay Lowland

Formative Influences:

The geology of this area ranges from Plateau Gravel in the south through Reading Beds (mottled clay and sand) and London Clay to Bracklesham Beds (sand and loam) and Lower Bagshot Sand. This varied topography has historically supported a variety of woodlands and lush meadows and is also associated with its gently undulating topography. The predominance of clay is also responsible for the occasional springs and the network of streams in the area, mostly forming tributaries of the River Hamble.

The area has escaped large-scale woodland loss, instead undergoing piecemeal assarting since the 19th century resulting in relatively regular fields, interspersed with large areas of wood. However, much of the remaining woodland has been converted to conifer plantation in the last century, which has reduced the floristic value, although this is not necessarily a permanent change and the plantation is managed to maintain the valuable open areas between tree stands and over time to allow the natural regeneration of native woodland as conifers are harvested.

There is very little species rich grassland remaining in this area, most having been subject to agricultural improvement. The remaining species rich grassland is vulnerable to neglect, as market forces continue to lead to a declining demand for small livestock and mixed production.

The proximity of the area to the Portsmouth-Gosport-Fareham urban area had most influence in the 20th century, resulting in the construction of the M27 motorway and development of Whiteley village. Additional piecemeal development of smallholdings and housing has taken place along Titchfield Lane and at Lee Ground.

In places the introduction of vineyards has taken place in recent years, such as west of Titchfield

Lane, a trend which is likely to increase in coming years given the change in climate.

Landscape and Settlement Description:

The Whiteley Woodlands Landscape Character Area consists of a significant area of woodland, much of it based around Botley Wood and Everetts Mashes Copses, the largest SSSI in the district, including Ridge Copse, Blackmoor Copse, Dimmocks Moor, Sager's Down, Bridget Copse, Flagpond Copse, Stonyfield Copse, Lee Ground Coppice and Sawpit Copse. Much of this is ancient woodland.

The varied soils in the area mean that a mixture of species are present, including oak, ash, cherry, yew, birch and conifers. Despite the size of Botley Wood, it has few public footpaths running through it and remains remote, forming a backdrop to Whiteley. Other areas of woodland, Gull Coppice and Round Coppice contribute to the landscape structure of the new settlement, and are managed by Hampshire County Council as Nature Reserves with public access. The Botley Woods complex is designated an SSSI, chiefly because the woodland rides support a very diverse invertebrate fauna, particularly butterflies and insects.

To the north of the character area, the woodland has been more heavily assarted and is more fragmented. Woods such as Silford Copse, Hole Copse, Biddenfield High Wood, Hallcourt Wood, Mansfield High Wood, Blacklands Copse, Hangman's Copse, Alder Moor, Brook Wood and Tankerhill Copse are all interconnected but interspersed with medium sized fields, generally managed as meadows. Some of these woods have escaped coniferisation and retain a very diverse flora and invertebrate fauna.

The topography of the area is gently undulating, forming minor localised ridges and hills, shown in local place names such as Ridge Copse and Treetops Farm. From some parts of Biddenfield Lane and Titchfield Lane there are long open views, towards Southampton and the Meon Valley respectively. Generally however,

this is an enclosed landscape with only short views, as woodland or intact hedgerows bound fields.

Until the 1980s when development at Whiteley started, this was a relatively remote inaccessible area, with the hamlet of Burrige forming the only named settlement and dominated by woodland. The centre of the character area was only traversed by the South Coast railway line and had no road access. However, there has been an increasing amount of development in the south of the character area during the second half of the twentieth century.

Whiteley is now an established residential and commercial centre, forming an expansion of Segensworth to the south of the M27. Built by volume housebuilders, dwellings are constructed using standardised materials and designs. The former limited accessibility throughout the area, with the distributor from the M27 and the A27 forming the only major routes into Whiteley, will change with the major development and recent opening of Whiteley Way which connects Whiteley to the A3051 Botley Road.

Further major housing development of up to 3,500 new homes is currently being constructed north of Whiteley, east of the A3051 which will largely retain the existing landscape structure of this area, formerly designated as an ASLQ under the previous local plan, but will significantly change this part of the character area and further erode tranquillity of the adjacent areas.

Titchfield Lane and Funtley Lane have also seen additional development during the 20th century, particularly nurseries and smallholdings.

Some solar farms have been introduced in the north of the character area. In this enclosed landscape these are not widely visible at the current time but this is a trend which is likely to increase in coming years given the change in climate and move towards renewable energies.

Key Characteristics of Value and Sensitivities:

- Rich woodland surrounds the Upper Hamble, which is designated an SSSI.
- Irregular small to medium sized meadows and strong assorted woodland structure, including around Biddenfield Lane.
- Predominance of woodland, including a relatively high proportion of ancient woodland and many small semi-natural ancient woodlands include Blackmoor Copse and Ridge Copse.
- National and local wildlife designations providing important habitats for flora and fauna.
- Strong pattern of hedgerow often on banks.
- Occasional long views, including towards the South Downs through gaps in hedgerows, but generally enclosed by woodland.
- Settlement edges generally well-wooded.
- In places a strong sense of history is created by the mature hedgerows and oaks, pasture and woodland.
- Sparsely settled centre to the character area.
- Occasional older farms constructed mainly of red brick with clay tiles.
- The leafy character of some roads which are well enclosed by high hedges, woodland or mature tree lines. Biddenfield Lane is a single track road with a remote, rural character with a strong sense of history.

Key Issues:

- Loss of species rich grassland through applications of fertiliser and herbicide and also through lack of grazing.
- Potential for improved woodland management using Forestry Authority grants.
- Lack of footpath access to large areas of countryside.
- The character area is crossed by the main South Coast railway line and a section of the M27, which crosses through the southern area adjacent to Whiteley. Traffic and train noise, lighting, security fencing, bridges, and unnatural landform all combine to reduce the tranquillity of the area.
- The major development of Whiteley, which provides employment, housing and community/service facilities has a suburban character although set within a mature wooded context. Development in the area continues to expand, and this will significantly change this part of the character area and further erode tranquillity of the adjacent areas.
- Some areas of paddocks, nurseries, equestrian centres and smallholdings are situated along roads, mostly in the east of the area. Sometimes there are associated detracting features such as conifer hedges, signage, security fencing and gates, and polytunnels.
- In places businesses fronting the roads with colourful signage, dominant fences and gateways, and car parks create a suburban and visually discordant character. Further pressure for urban fringe use related activities.

- There are instances of ornate entrances which give detract from the rural character, some with highly secure gateways, others with open views of large properties with extensive hard paving, and incongruous ornamentation.
- Increased artificial light on tranquil rural quality.
- Ash dieback and the loss of mature trees within the landscape
- Some private gardens have significant lengths of tall conifer hedge or close board fencing boundaries fronting onto roads which detract from the rural character, particularly when located away from main settled areas.
- Some leisure pursuits noted in the area, such as paintball and clay shooting, are likely to impact tranquillity, particularly when located away from main settled areas.
- Pylons cross the area, but run through Botley Wood to a substation set within the woodland. Therefore they do not dominate the landscape except when viewed along the substation access road from Funtley Lane. The gateway area further detracts from the character with signage, fencing and concrete grasscrete within the bellmouth entrance.
- Cumulative effects of sustainable energy and infrastructure developments
- Potential for agricultural run-off (including top soil erosion) to cause biological changes in the Upper Hamble.
- Possible fertiliser/pesticide run-off from golf course into the Upper Hamble SINC.
- Solar farms which threaten to change the character if extensively introduced.
- Change to alternative crops such as vines which threaten to change the character if extensively introduced.

Landscape Strategies:

- Consider the potential for adverse impacts (arising from increased silt loads and agricultural chemicals) on the Upper Hamble SSSI in the environmental assessments which accompany applications to plough permanent grassland or build golf courses in the vicinity.
- Conserve and restore the structure and condition of the woodlands through appropriate management such as thinning, coppicing, replanting, ride and edge management and the removal of invasive alien species. Manage woodland rides and edges to encourage invertebrates. Encourage biomass provision, linked wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities
- Conserve and restore the structure of woodlands by planting new woodland to link ancient woodland remnants, using locally native stock to create the woodland community/ies appropriate to the geography and geology. Native woodland stands in this character area vary from dry Hazel - Oak to Ash – Wych Elm, the latter containing rare Small-leaved Lime coppice. New woods in this area should include wide rides. Management of woodland in line with the Forestry Commission's Forest Plan for Whiteley Pastures.
- Conserve and enhance hedgerows through appropriate management. Where hedgerows have been lost or have gaps, they should be replanted to restore the landscape pattern, using locally native shrubs and trees. Additional hedgerow trees should be planted where trees have been lost or are over mature.
- Conserve the varied open and enclosed

views throughout the area and occasional long views, including to the South Downs.

- Encourage environmentally and economically sustainable agricultural practices, to minimise fertiliser and soil run-off for example, which could lead to the pollution of the River Hamble
 - 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 and enhance species-rich grassland through traditional management techniques.
 - Create grasslands of nature conservation, managed by extensive stock grazing and hay making without the application of herbicide or fertiliser.
 - Seek to secure increased public access and create footpath links, particularly opportunities for local people.
 - Ensure the valued landscape structure of hedges, tree lines, woodland, streams ditches and banks in the former Curdrige ASLQ are protected and enhanced in the major development expansion planned north of Whiteley.
- dwellings in the countryside.
 - Integrate new buildings and infrastructure into the well-treed rural setting through careful siting and the appropriate use of locally indigenous tree and hedge planting.
 - Conserve and promote the use of local building materials such as red brick, painted brick, vitrified brick, clay tiles and slate in any new development.
 - Conserve and promote the use of traditional rural boundaries including palisade fencing, brick walls and hedgerows in any new development. Resist visually detracting signage, lighting, fences, gates and parking.
 - Resist uses which will erode tranquillity in the quieter areas. Reduce and avoid increasing artificial lighting within new and existing development (farms, businesses and residential) and associated curtilage, yards, gardens and driveways etc
 - Plan for the creation of a strong landscape framework within and around settlements and growth areas while managing and enhancing existing green space.

Built Form Strategies:

- Enhance the local urban edge, by planting locally indigenous hedgerows.
- Resist development which further suburbanises local settlements, such as that associated with 'horsiculture'.
- Conserve the low density, scattered pattern of development away from existing settlements.
- Conserve the narrow, winding, leafy rural character of roads.
- Respect the small-scale nature of existing

Key Designations:**Conservation Areas:**

- None

Scheduled Monuments:

- Roman site 370m S of Fairthorn (490 HA)

SSSIs:

- Botley Woods and Everetts and Mushes Copse
- Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods

SINCs:

- Truemill and Pinkmead Copse (part); Blackmoor Copse Meadow; Ridge Farm Meadows; Coldlands Copse; Suttons Copse; Hangman's Copse; Sawpit Copse; Glassfield Copse Meadow; Landing Place Copse; Truemill and Pinkmead Copses; Brick Kiln Copse; Silford Copse; Ferny Copse; Hole Copse and East Croft Row; Fox Copse; Gully Copse; Mansfield High Wood; Wallers Close; Biddenfield High Wood; Cockshoot Row; Honeycut Row; Hallcourt Wood; Horse Wood; Triangle Row; Crooked Row (part); Botley Row; Seven Acre and Maid's Garden Copses; Pond Close and New Meadows; Alder Moor; Abandoned field next to Birch Row; Field between Alder Moor and Jacob's Croft; Birch
- Row and Hangmans Copse;

Blacklands Copse; Quob Copse; New Copse (not on HCC list); Brook Wood; Tankerhill Copse; Redhill Copse; Pegham Coppice; [Whiteley Meadows 1 - 3; Gull Coppice; Round Coppice.

Parks listed within the Hampshire Register of Historic Parks and Gardens:

- Fairthorne Manor (site No.1515) Post 1810 Park

Local Nature Reserves:

- Upper Hamble, Curbridge