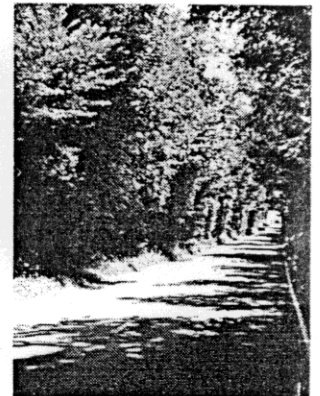
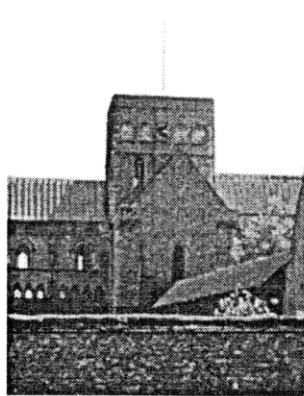


Hampshire County Council
Hampshire Gardens Trust
Hampshire Wildlife Trust
Winchester City Council
Winchester Preservation Trust
Countryside Commission

WINCHESTER CITY AND ITS SETTING



LANDSCAPE DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Hampshire County Council
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Countryside Commission

WINCHESTER CITY
AND ITS SETTING

STAGE 1 REPORT

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Executive Summary

1 Preface

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Winchester City and its Setting
- 2.2 The Brief
- 2.3 Approach to the Study
- 2.4 Structure of the report

3 Context of the City of Winchester

- 3.1 Archaeology
- 3.2 Historical assessment
- 3.3 Communication pattern
- 3.4 Geology
- 3.5 Topography and drainage
- 3.6 Soils
- 3.7 Climate
- 3.8 Nature Conservation
- 3.9 Land cover and vegetation

4 Landscape and Townscape Assessment of the city and its setting

- 4.1 Landscape Character Assessment of the Study Area
- 4.2 Delineation of Landscape Types
- 4.3 Distribution of Landscape Types
- 4.4 Delineation of Landscape Character Areas
- 4.5 Historic Landscape Assessment
- 4.6 Townscape Assessment
- 4.7 Interface of Landscape and Townscape Character Areas

5 The city and its setting

- 5.1 Defining the city and its setting
- 5.2 Areas of Influence
- 5.3 Historic cores
- 5.4 River Itchen Valley Floor
- 5.5 The Eastern Downs
- 5.6 The Western Downs
- 5.7 The Northern Downs
- 5.8 Trends and Pressures on the city and its setting

6 Conclusion



Technical Appendices

1. Archaeology
2. History
3. Nature Conservation
4. Landscape and Townscape assessment of the city and its setting
5. Townscape Character Areas
6. Bibliography
7. Methodology
8. Place Names Research
9. Project Brief

Drawings

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| 1059LP/2 | Landscape Planning Context |
| 1059LP/3 | Landform and Drainage |
| 1059LP/4 | Landcover and Vegetation |
| 1059LP/5 | Communications |
| 1059LP/6.1 | Visual Analysis 1 |
| 1059LP/6.2 | Visual Analysis 2 |
| 1059LP/7 | Landscape Types |
| 1059LP/8 | Historic Landscape Types (Draft) |
| 1059LP/9 | Landscape Character Areas |
| 1059LP/10 | Townscape Character Areas |
| 1059LP/11 | Areas of Influence - Study Area |
| 1059LP/12 | Areas of Influence - The City |
| 1059LP/15 | Ecology |



1 PREFACE

What makes a city and its setting distinctive? This report assesses Winchester's existing buildings, streets, gardens, watercourses, meadows, farmland, woodland and downland as well as the great history of the city, its landscape and its people. It sets out the combinations of features which interweave to produce the sense of place that defines Winchester and its landscape setting.

1.1 The report is inclusive, considering all the city and its setting, past and present. It does not select out the 'best' areas for sole consideration and ignore the less favoured areas. Instead it assesses the influence that each area contributes to the overall character. By definition the value of each area of influence will vary in the number, extent, quality and interrelationship of its component parts. It thus exerts a greater or lesser force upon the character of the whole. However, there is a value in the 'ordinary' street or field which forms a context, setting or contrast to the areas of merit such as major building, street of historic houses or outstanding landscape and could be improved over time. This report sets out an holistic vision of the city and its setting, considering the features and their roles, in combination and through the ages.

1.2 In addition, the report provides an independent input to the forthcoming overview and study on the future of Winchester as part of the City Council's Local Plan Process.



- 1.3 A secondary purpose is to test the application of hypotheses set out in the provisional guide "What matters and why: Environmental Capital - A New Approach" (Countryside Commission, English Nature, English Heritage and Environment Agency, August 1997). This discussion paper proposed a new approach to environmental assessments by considering the function of environmental features and a method to determine their importance. The City Council study 'Future of Winchester' is a pilot and part of a series run throughout England during 1998, by the sponsoring agencies to assess the basic concept and methodology at a range of scales from regional to local level. The results of the pilots will be fed back to inform development of the emerging approach.
- 1.4 Thirdly, the methodology developed for this report will contribute to a wide ranging environmental debate upon the future of English cathedral cities and their landscape setting. The freestanding cathedral city is one of the most distinctive features of the English landscape. The interrelationship between the city, cathedral and surrounding landscape being one of the prime components.
- 1.5 Current debate on population growth is proposing major change and one of the results could be radical expansion of freestanding towns. Without careful consideration of the environmental impact of such policy changes the current quality of cathedral cities and their settings could be seriously impaired. Consequently, development and application of this methodology would be a positive contribution to the debate because it clearly sets out those areas of influence on the character of the city and its setting. The methodology will not, and should not, provide the answer to the profound questions of limits to growth and the balance between the city and the countryside. That is part of a much larger political, social and economic debate. However, discussions on future growth or development proposals can be better informed of the environmental implications.
- 1.6 In developing the wide scope of this study the authors are grateful for the guidance and advice provided by the Project Steering Group. Their insight, contributions, local knowledge and critical evaluation has been invaluable in shaping the report. The authors also acknowledge the assistance, comment and information provided by officers of Winchester City and Hampshire County Councils; members of the Hampshire Gardens Trust, Hampshire Wildlife Trust and Winchester Preservation Trust. Professor Martin Biddle, Oxford Archaeology Unit, Andrew Rutter and Maurice McGrave are also recognised for their valuable contributions on Winchester's history, townscape and place names. In addition, the study team wish to thank all those who contributed to the civic perception workshop which produced much useful information on the role of the city as a place to live. However, the assessments and the judgements are solely those of the study team, and we bear responsibility for our opinions or factual inaccuracies.



2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Winchester City and its Setting Study

Landscape Design Associates was appointed in March, 1998, by Hampshire County Council in partnership with the Hampshire Gardens Trust, the Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Winchester Preservation Trust, and Winchester City Council and the Countryside Commission, to undertake a seamless townscape and landscape assessment of the city of Winchester and its setting and approaches, and to develop an holistic characterisation methodology.

2.2 The Brief

The principal aims of the study which form the basis of a three stage approach are set out below. The full study brief is attached as Appendix 9.

2.2.1 Stage 1

identify the landscape townscape characteristics and attributes of the historic city and its setting, and the contribution they make to the special character and sense of place;

identify and delineate the boundary of the historic setting to Winchester;

examine the existing pressures on each defined character area and how the foreseeable pressures on the city, and its environment, interact with the special features of the city;

define those characteristics which are essential to the historic fabric of the city and its setting and approaches, and its relationship with the wider countryside.

2.2.2 Stage 2

Using the information from Stage 1 inform the 'Future of Winchester' environmental capacity study to examine the effect various scenarios for future development may have on the city.

2.2.3 Stage 3

Make recommendations for those areas requiring more detailed study, and prepare a concept of a 'Cathedral Cities and their Settings' as a theme for a grant programme to be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for consideration.

This report comprises the findings of Stage 1 of the Study and has incorporated the following approach.

2.3 Approach to the Study

An explanation of the methodology and approach in contribution to a holistic view of Winchester detailed is set out in Appendix 7 of this report. The following desk studies, consultations and field work have been undertaken.

2.3.1 Desk studies involved a comprehensive review of a wide range of statutory and non-statutory plans, documents and maps, and published and unpublished information advised and supplied by the Steering Group, and the Trusts working in partnership



with the Group. Additional research and anecdotal information was provided by local organisations and interest groups as well as private individuals. The range of documents reviewed are listed in Appendix 6.

2.3.2 Consultations were carried out in parallel with the desk studies to build on the information provided by the Steering Group including the Hampshire Gardens Trust, the Hampshire Wildlife Trust, and the Winchester Preservation Trust, to build on the information detailed in the desk study information. A Civic Perception Workshop was also held in the early stages of the Study in order to obtain the considered views of local citizens and interested bodies and to enable their views and information to be distilled into the study.

2.3.3 Field work took place in several stages. The initial stage consisted of a reconnaissance of the area to familiarise the consultant team with the city and its setting, and to understand the broad scope of the study. Subsequent field work involved the determination of a preliminary study area boundary in order to identify the limit of the area of research. This is discussed in more detail in Section 2.4. Although field assessments by each of the specialist consultants were generally carried out independently, a joint workshop provided an integrated approach to the characterisation mapping and the delineation of boundaries.

2.3.4 A particular aspect of the consultant's approach has been the adoption of a team approach that has enabled a broad perspective to be brought to the study and also encompassed a range of professional expertise appropriate to the requirements of the brief.

2.3.5 The Study Team comprised :

Landscape Design Associates: Lead Consultants, Landscape Architects and Environmental Planners; in addition to their expertise in landscape planning, the LDA team also included a qualified architect, with the responsibility of examining the townscape aspects of the study;

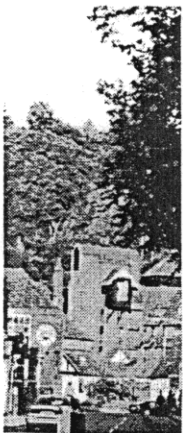
Wessex Archaeology: provided an overview of the development of the city and its setting as presented in the archaeological resource up until the Norman Conquest (AD1066);

David Jacques: responsible for the research and analysis of historical record of the city and its setting from the Norman Conquest to the present;

Sarah Lambert: undertook the research and presentation of the ecological aspects of the study.

2.3.6 As well as contributing their individual expertise, the Study Team members contributed towards the wider, holistic, view of the study in order to identify the synthesis of elements that defines Winchester city and its setting.

2.3.7 The Study Team has worked in close collaboration with the Steering Group, and members of the Trusts represented on the Group, who have provided invaluable assistance and support throughout the Study. Information and guidance from a wide range of other voluntary groups, organisations and individuals has also been obtained.



2.4 Boundary of the Study Area

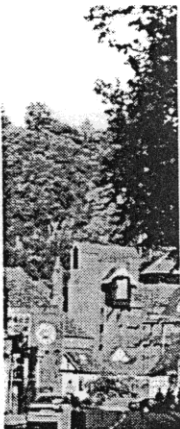
The delineation of a preliminary 'working' boundary for the study area was identified at an early stage to determine the scope, and extent of the area of search for information pertinent to the study. A visual appraisal was undertaken to determine the limit of view from which any part of the city could be seen, in order to define the 'area of visual influence' of the city. This could be limited to restricted views of a very confined perimeter of the built area and in other locations comprise a panoramic view of both the historic core and the broader setting of the built area.

- 2.4.1 Although shown as a line linking key perimeter viewpoints on the study plans it is inevitable that along some sections, views of the city are obscured by local variations in landform, and enclosure by vegetation and built development. Nevertheless, the visual boundary line provided a reasonable extent for the study area.
- 2.4.2 Beyond this immediate physical and visual setting, there are other 'anticipated' features that signify the proximity of Winchester. These comprise views of distant, familiar landmarks associated with the immediate setting of the city, and influence the perception of travellers on its approach. They also contribute to the wider landscape setting of the city.
- 2.4.3 A detailed study of long distance views from distinct, high vantage points has been excluded from the study because they represent a 'glimpsed' view of the city in its valley as a landscape element and do not reveal particular detail. However, these views are important because they influence the wider setting of the city and are thus worth investigating in a future study.
- 2.4.4 For the purposes of the first section of the study, the area of research and the identification of key features and critical environmental capital has therefore been confined to the limit of this 'working' boundary. Some areas of assessment, required consideration of factors beyond this boundary. For example, where there was a continuation of a category across the defined limit, such as in the identification of landscape types or the topographical structure.
- 2.4.5 Landscape and Townscape Character Areas were identified as an integral part of the assessment process. Within the framework of these Character Areas, and through the synthesis of the wide range of component elements and areas of interest, an holistic approach was developed which adjusted and refined the earlier work. This resolved into the subsequent identification of the 'Areas of Influence' within the city and its setting.

2.5 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is divided into the following sections :

- 3 **Context of the City of Winchester**
A description of the human and physical factors that have influenced the character of the setting of Winchester city;
- 4 **Landscape and Townscape assessment of the city and its setting**
An assessment of the study area to identify and define the essential elements that contribute towards local landscape and townscape character;



- 5 **The setting of the city**
Overview and refinement of the Integrated Landscape and Townscape Character Areas; to define and present the Areas of Influence upon the city and its setting, and a summary of the pressures, now and anticipated on the Areas of Influence;
- 6 **Conclusion**
Identification of what matters and why in the environmental capital of the city of Winchester and its setting.

2.5.1 A number of technical topic papers have been prepared during the course of the study and these are appended in separate volumes as follows :

Appendix 1 : Archaeology

A review of the sites and areas of archaeological and historical interest and importance up to the end of the 9th century; the identification of the key archaeological features, and their contribution to the character and essence of the city of Winchester and its setting.

Appendix 2 : History

An examination of the historical development of the city from the 9th century; the identification of the key historic features, and their contribution to the character and essence of the city of Winchester and its setting.

Appendix 3 : Nature Conservation

A review of the sites and areas of nature conservation interest and importance within the city and its setting.

Appendix 4 : Landscape and Townscape assessment of the city and its setting

A summary of the findings of the survey and analysis of the landscape and townscape components of the study area; assessments of the area; the refinement and delineation of the Landscape Types and the identification of Landscape and Townscape Character Areas. A review of the zones of visual influence of the both the city and its setting, and the historic core; significant views into and out of the city; important 'arrival' points; and key features and landmarks which form an essential part of the visual envelope. An examination of the character, impact, and visual envelope of the system of roads, railway and major and historical footpath routes that extend into the city.

Appendix 5 : Townscape Character Areas

An assessment checklist of the individual character areas within the city that contribute towards its identity.

Appendix 6 : Bibliography

A reference to the documents, maps and other information gathered during the study, sub-divided into topic areas.

Appendix 7 : Methodology

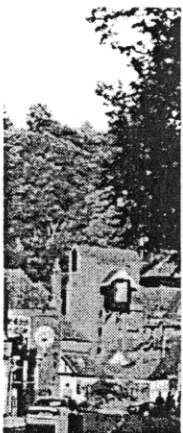
The method statement which sets out the organisation and assessment procedures which guided the Study.

Appendix 8 : Place names research

A schedule of local place and field names with analysis of their derivation.

Appendix 9 : Study Brief

A copy of the consultants brief setting out the study requirements.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1 Hampshire County Council, in partnership with the Hampshire Gardens Trust, the Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Winchester Preservation Trust, Winchester City Council and the Countryside Commission, appointed Landscape Design Associates to undertake a seamless townscape and landscape assessment of the city of Winchester, its setting and approaches.

2 The aim of the study was to understand the interrelationship of Winchester and its surroundings. The study piloted a new approach to looking at both townscape and landscape character together, to consider Winchester as a whole, rather than subdivide the town from its countryside. The distinctive qualities and character of Winchester are identified and Areas of Influence are defined.

Context of the city of Winchester

3 A critical defining factor of Winchester is its position in the local topography. The riverside site is overlooked by surrounding high chalk downland. The downland contains evidence of many early burial grounds and settlements. Life on the higher ground, however, could only have been sustained by the utilisation of the food and fuel found in the nearby River Itchen and its floodplain.

4 The central role of Winchester in the surrounding area was established in the Middle Iron Age with the construction of Oram's Arbour. This large ditched enclosure, whose valley-side location commanded a major ford, is unique in the region and may have been a tribal and territorial centre for central Hampshire. For these reasons, the enclosure must have been a major determining factor in the subsequent location of the early Roman town in the first century AD. The contemporary hillfort of St. Catherine's Hill, survives as a prominent earthwork. Although its relevance to the development of Winchester is not as great as that of Oram's Arbour, it is one of the city's most distinctive landmarks, dominating views of the southern landscape.

5 The foundation of the Roman town of Venta Belgarum represents the first urban settlement at Winchester and was the most important Roman settlement in central southern Hampshire. Principal gateways into the Roman town to the north, south, east and west, determined by pre-Roman routes in several cases, have conditioned the location of the main city approaches to the present day. The alignment of these Roman routes is preserved in the wider landscape. Roads to the north, east and west are striking linear features in the hinterland of the city.

6 After a period of decline, an urban centre was re-established at Winchester. In the last decades of the 9th century, a planned street grid was laid out under the direction of King Alfred and possibly his older brothers, within the framework of the Roman defences. This Saxon street plan, rather than that of the Roman town, is preserved within the current plan of the city of Winchester. The survival of an almost entire planned street plan from the late 9th century to the present day is exceptional and hence is a critical characteristic.

7 As the capital of Saxon Wessex, and as one of the favourite cities of the early Plantagenet kings, Winchester was favoured by early Royal patronage. This was reflected in major buildings, now largely destroyed. The extent of standing city wall is just a fraction of the former structure. Westgate and Kingsgate are the only city gates to survive. William the Conqueror's palace disappeared in medieval times. The medieval Royal castle has gone except for its magnificent Great Hall.

8 The Cathedral and Hospital of St Cross are memorials to one of the greatest bishoprics in England. The cathedral, with its tower and huge nave, remains one of the most impressive ecclesiastical buildings in the country. The Hospital of St Cross, Hyde Abbey and the fragments

of the medieval Wolvesey Palace, convey the impression of medieval ecclesiastical splendour. The surviving great ecclesiastical buildings are collectively of international importance.

9 In the southern suburbs, the courts of Winchester College and its Tower, built just before 1400, are remarkable examples, and remain a fine testimony to the collegiate tradition of education in Winchester over the last 500 years. The complex of College buildings successfully defines strong characteristics. Kingsgate displays a tight, intimate urban feel of narrow streets and well mannered buildings. By contrast, the College opens out along the riverside where the inter-relationship of historic buildings, green spaces, river and mature trees has a more open, pastoral feel.

10 One of the most important features of the city is the way a variety of semi-natural habitats such as the river, chalk downland and ancient woodland penetrate the urban area. This is highly valued by local residents for social and recreational use, contributes to psychological well being and provides a model for a sustainable community. The movement of wildlife from one site to another and thus the maintenance of bio-diversity depends upon the continuity of these semi-natural habitats.

11 The Itchen Valley is the most extensive area of semi-natural vegetation within Winchester. The River Itchen is one of the larger Wessex chalk streams, a very fine example of an English chalk river, it is considered to be of European significance. The river is fed by chalk springs near Cheriton, the flow is relatively stable, with water of high quality and great clarity, rich in nutrients and constant in temperature. Remarkably the river meadows remain and are a critical component of the city. This is partly due to substantial long term land ownership and management by Winchester College as well as unsuitability for development because they form part of the floodplain. Species-rich water meadows and grassland provide an important landscape setting for many of the city's historic buildings, including Winchester College, Wolvesey Palace and the Hospital of St. Cross.

12 Species-rich chalk grassland is particularly concentrated on the scarp slopes with important sites at St. Catherine's Hill and Bushfield. Both abut the south-east edge of the city and provide extensive views across Winchester and the Itchen valley. Cheesefoot Head is more isolated from the city, being located about four kilometres to the east, but is an important landscape feature on the approach along the A272 road. The site comprises an extensive area of species-rich chalk grassland around a characterful horse-shoe shaped dry valley.

13 Ancient woodlands are also present in the outer perimeter of the city. The most important is Crab Wood, about four kilometres west of the city centre. Dominated by oak over a hazel shrub layer with a ground flora of bluebell or dog's mercury, it is a fine example of a coppice. There are five additional ancient woodlands, three, north-west of the city, are Northwood Park Farm Woods, Little Grove and Worthy Grove. To the north-east are Burnt Wood and Shroner Wood.

14 The landscape and townscape assessment of the city and its setting has followed a systematic approach with a survey of the principal elements within the study area, analysis of the key characteristics, identification and delineation of Landscape Types, Townscape and Landscape Character Areas.

15 There is a notable contrast between predominantly open elevated chalk downs to the north and east, and a more varied succession of landscape types to the west. The River Itchen forms the boundary of the broad transition between eastern and western downland.

16 A wide arc of predominantly open arable and pasture downs extend from the north to the south-east of Winchester. The area is characterised by large, rectangular, mainly arable fields with some areas of pasture; low, trimmed or absent hedgerows; and intermittent shelterbelts and angular blocks of woodland.

**Landscape and
townscape assessment
of the city and
its setting**

17 East and south-east of the city a series of prominent escarpments extend across the open arable and pasture downs, comprising Magdalen Hill Down, Deacon Hill, Telegraph Hill and Fawley Down, and the steep escarpments surrounding St Catherine's Hill. The landform of this open chalkland upland with downland and escarpments landscape type is dramatic, spectacular dry valleys sweep down from the high chalk upland at Cheesefoot Head to the Itchen Valley. Further south there is a subtle change, a transition to a smaller or more intricate field pattern and more tree cover forms an open chalk and clay downs landscape type. At Longwood Down, significant increase in woodland cover produces enclosed chalk and clay downs.

18 The pattern of landscape types is more complex west of the city. A broad 'wedge' of open arable and pasture downs penetrates the edge of the city at Lanham and Weeke Down, extending south to Port Lane. North of this area, the pattern of landscape types is much more varied with a sequence of enclosed small scale fields surrounding Littleton, Dean and Sparsholt; intermittent areas of more open arable fields; significant area of designed parkland landscape at Northwood Park and Lainston House; and the extensive Crab and West Woods. This is enclosed chalk and clay downs.

19 South west of Winchester a significant 'wedge' of chalk downland at Olivers Battery, Badger Farm and Bushfield extends into the heart of the city. This forms an important backdrop to views of St Cross from St Catherine's Hill as well as providing a strong, ecologically rich area of open spaces linking city to country. A prominent escarpment at Compton Down crosses this undulating area to the south-west and terminates at Shawford Down. This is a significant vantage point for a panoramic view of the city which features the Cathedral, St. Cross and Twyford. Although a number of significant woods permeate the farmland, the general character is open chalk and clay downs.

20 Although other landscape types extend to the perimeter of the River Itchen valley and across the valley sides, the river valley is a distinct and separate type.

21 The identification of landscape types is the essential lead into the identification of Landscape Character Areas which are based on a synthesis of abrupt or transitional changes in the landscape types, the influence of distinctive changes in landform, and the degree of openness or enclosure. Local features were also considered, notably the influence of historic landscape patterns (from the parallel historic landscapes assessment) and heritage features, areas of nature conservation interest, settlement and communication patterns. These all contribute to the unique 'sense of place' that is particular to each of the Character Areas.

22 The characterisation approach adopted for the rural areas has also been extended into the Townscape Assessment of the city. The progressive development of the city in response to the landform setting, has resulted in a distinct pattern of Townscape Character Areas. These areas range from the historic core of the city with its complex stratification of historic layers, to the peripheral areas of residential development whose coherence is principally derived from the unity of housing style and period of development.

23 Rural and urban areas are clearly distinct along much of the perimeter of Winchester, which is an important component defining the city's quality. Transitional land uses such as the golf courses, army barracks, allotments, nature reserves and playing fields successfully bridge between the urban and rural character. The quality of the urban area is further distinguished by strong features which infiltrate the heart of the built area. Notably, the Itchen Valley corridor is a transitional interface between landscape and townscape with adjacent areas 'borrowing' characteristics from each other. In other areas the special identity of some of the Townscape Character Areas results from significant areas of mature forest trees enhancing the essentially urban character, notably within St Giles's and Sleepers Hills as well as Chilbolton Avenue and Bereweke Road. Species rich chalk grassland at Whiteshute Ridge and Bushfield penetrate the city edge adding to local distinctiveness. This interplay and variety creates a strength of character that strongly influences the overall quality and character of the city.

24 The intimate relationship between the strong landform enclosing a rich, fertile river valley has been a major determinant in the siting and development of Winchester. The influences of royal, clerical, civic and military patronage has created a rich mosaic of buildings and spaces which, in turn, have been influenced by periods of prosperity and genteel decline. Many of the qualities of the town and its setting are the result of great periods of stability, even poverty in some eras, that has retained historic buildings and their settings.

25 The holistic vision of Winchester and its setting required a new way of looking and development of a categorisation method which sought to classify the contribution of each landscape and townscape character area and their relative significance to the city and its wider landscape setting. From this appraisal, types of "areas of influence" were defined as follows:

- Visually cohesive historic cores

Areas defined as coherent pre-1810 settlement cores where historic street pattern, building type, scale, architectural style, detailing and materials combine to generate a sense of place that is unmistakably 'Winchester'.

- Visually fragmented historic cores

Areas of pre-1810 settlement disrupted by subsequent recent development. In most cases the street pattern remains, but nineteenth and twentieth century building type, scale and style or dilute the unity of character and sense of place.

- Distinctive townscape/landscape

Areas specifically recognisable and distinctive to Winchester. These include townscape and landscape components such as quintessential views, the interaction of buildings forming spaces or the setting to local events, landform, backdrops of the city, areas of rich bio-diversity, historic approach routes and landmarks of positive character.

- Supportive townscape/landscape

Areas which support the character of the historic cores and areas distinctive to Winchester. They provide the backdrop, ambience and bolster the sense of place of the city and its approaches by supporting and buffering its special character.

- Connective townscape/landscape

Townscape/landscape which is an integral part of the city of Winchester and its environs, but lacks individual distinction, or does not make a significant contribution to the setting of the city. Notwithstanding that some areas are divorced from or weakly attached to their landscape setting, they often include significant landscape or townscape features or provide views to such features.

26 Although the visually cohesive and fragmented historical cores within the city are pivotal to the essential character of Winchester, these two categories are not necessarily of greater importance than the remaining areas of influence. The areas of distinctive and supportive landscape and townscape play a crucial role in the setting and perception of the city and contribute to the 'essence of Winchester'. These areas of influence are defined in five distinct parcels as follows:

- Historic cores
- River Itchen Valley Floor
- The Eastern Downs
- The Western Downs
- The Northern Downs

Conclusion

27 Each area of influence and its relative importance within the scope of the study is described and evaluated, along with trends and pressures on the city and its setting.

28 The historic, aesthetic, visual and nature conservation elements of Winchester and its setting are of exceptional quality. Individual features re-occur, almost as constants, during consideration of factors influential upon local character. These features convey the rich lineage of the city, where layers of history multiply the value of a single landmark or building. The breadth and depth of heritage features, their interrelationships with built and natural forms and impact upon views presents a complex mosaic working both through history and across existing streetscenes and landscapes. Consequently, the essence of Winchester and its setting is the interrelationship of these features and the way they influence the modern city.

29 The report has identified the continuity of human settlement, farming, trade, commerce, culture and patronage and its intimate relationship with the landscape stretching from the Iron Age to the present day. These influences are best summed up in the following interlinked themes.

THE THREADS OF HISTORY

30 Winchester and its setting displays clear evidence of uninterrupted settlement over the last two thousand years through examination of the visible landscape and archaeological records. The High Street, for example, reflects the continuity of human activity in the city over many centuries. Transport and communication also reflects one of the city's most important influences. This ranges from the enduring Roman roads and ancient trackways, to the river, railway and latterly the motor car.

- The unbroken thread of settlement at Winchester runs clearly through its landscape and townscape.

31 Visible and heritage influences are recorded back to Middle Iron Age enclosures such as Oram's Arbour, and St Catherine's Hill. The relationship of early dwellers and their patterns of farming the downland and nearby river valley remained little changed for centuries. Although modern farming practices have altered the balance between arable and pasture, the downland retains historic field patterns that date back to the Middle Ages.

32 Winchester's development has been influenced variously by the Crown, College, Church, Military, Local Government and Commerce. The city has been the setting for some of this nation's most prestigious institutions including Royal households and Treasury, an important bishopric and a medieval college of learning. The buildings which housed these uses testify to their former greatness, and now act as a close-knit centrepiece around which the rest of the city continues to gather.

- The Cathedral, Great Hall, Winchester College and remnant fragments of the city's walls and gates are a constant reminder of former grandeur and importance, and are a valuable prompt to the city's memory of its heritage.

33 The city centre remains largely the same size as it was in King Alfred's day. Residents can live, shop, work, worship, study and pass their leisure time within the compact city centre without having to travel great distances.

- The retained Saxon Street pattern is exceptionally important.
- Intermingled houses, open spaces, river, shops, places of work and worship stemming from the historic city form the basis for good quality, urban life.

34 Beyond the city walls lie nuclei of historic suburbs. St Cross, with the Norman chapel, hospital and associated lodgings remains the most outstanding example. Other important remnants include Hyde, Oram's Arbour, St John's, St Giles's' Hill, West Hill, Peninsula Barracks, Weeke, and the buildings of Winchester College. The value of these sites is increased by their proximity to the city centre and water meadows and is of critical importance. The combination of historic suburbs and nature rich, verdant river corridors is a powerful symbol of the stability and continuity of the city. Development of the eastern and western suburbs during this century has blurred the city's linkages to the past. However the strength of the underlying landform gives some compensation by allowing views from these areas across the city to the river valley and surrounding landscape and thus reinforces a strong context and a sense of place.

- The stunning St. Cross chapel, hospital and lodgings preside over the southern water meadows and remarkably convey a tranquil, rural, historic character close to the modern city.
- Views from St Catherine's Hill over the river valley to St Cross, with a backdrop of the downland on Bushfield and Whiteshute Ridge are dramatic and display a sense of stability and continuity.
- The synergy between the city, its spiritual and secular influences and the natural landforms has produced a setting where the threads of history influence the present and reinforce local character and identity.

APPRECIATION OF THE BUILT AND NATURAL LANDSCAPE

35 Winchester sits on a platform raised above the river valley floodplain and contained within a broad undulating chalk downland. This gives a city setting of dramatic views.

- The clarity of the landforms gives a powerful setting for the city.

36 The city is quite intimate and human in scale. By contrast, the Cathedral is a monumental building whose scale is emphasised by neighbouring buildings in the Close and the High Street which are much smaller scale. This dynamic tension in the composition of the city and its setting is critical. The essential character of Winchester could easily be disrupted by introduction of large scale elements. These would not be easily absorbed. Equally sensitive are the settings of the College Tower, St. Cross, the Victorian spires and tower of the Guildhall.

37 This sensitivity is also relevant to considering the management of the city's trees. For example, trees planted in the College are a vital part of its character. However, in some cases, the scale of mature trees is beginning to hide principal landscape features, like the Cathedral from views in the valley. Consideration of future planting and management requires a sophisticated vision of the city.

- The landscape dominates the city.

38 This valley landscape setting distinguishes Winchester from many other English cathedral cities. Winchester and its cathedral are subservient to the landscape. Although the cathedral is a very big building it is best appreciated in two contrasting ways. As a significant focus for long distance views, particularly from the south when sunlight picks out the nave roof against a dark backdrop. Conversely the bulk of the building emphasises the small scale of its urban surroundings, particularly the High Street. Interestingly, the cathedral features in very few views from within the city. This is due to tight narrow streets and landform restricting mid range views.

39 Winchester's attractions are rather secluded and require discovery because of the intimate relationship with its landscape setting. The downland, ridgelines or spurs, often capped by mature stands of forest trees, feature in the majority of notable views into, out of, across or within the city. The compact urban form can be surveyed from many surrounding, elevated

viewpoints. This is the reverse of the English tradition found at Salisbury, Ely or Lincoln for example, where buildings dominate the landscape and rise above the landform with the cathedral spire or tower attracting views from the surrounding countryside.

40 The River Itchen, a high quality chalk river with its ditches, species rich meadows, trees and scrub penetrates the heart of the city and contributes a rich and diverse series of landscapes high in ecological value. A fine example of the essence of the city lies in the close juxtaposition of the Itchen Valley with the imposing landform of St Catherine's Hill, both of outstanding nature conservation and recreation value, and the historic settlement based around the Hospital of St Cross.

- The juxtaposition of fine ecology, high scenic quality and neighbouring historic buildings set off against a verdant backdrop is exceptional.
- Well defined wedges and corridors of countryside penetrate up to and into the heart of the city.
- Intimate contact with historic landscapes resonate clearly and amplify the importance of the setting to the city.

41 Remarkably, the small scale Itchen Valley contains the river, Roman Road, canal, railway and a modern road within the same gap, which is very narrow, between Bushfield and St. Catherine's Hill. However these elements are absorbed into the landscape by mature vegetation and landform.

42 Construction of the M3 is of a much greater scale and could not be absorbed into the Itchen Valley. The route, behind St. Catherine's Hill, together with screen mounds and planting will mature and become absorbed into the city setting. However the damage of the cutting through Twyford Down and the embankment across the watermeadows will be long lasting.

- The close relationship of the Itchen Valley with the imposing St Catherine's Hill, itself of outstanding nature conservation and recreation value, and the historic settlement based around the Hospital of St Cross, are fine examples of the essence of the city.

43 The landscape enclosing Winchester is a strong counterpoint to the rich diversity of the River Itchen, its valley and flood meadows. To the east the open, rolling downland is a simple muscular landscape of broad open spaces and sweeping views occasionally interrupted by distinctive dry valleys and steep escarpments.

- The Eastern Downs provide a clear sense of scale and orientation for the city and its setting.

44 Complex landforms of the Western Downs define the immediate horizon in views from the city and surrounding landscape. An intricate series of minor ridges, now often heavily wooded, spread down and have been incorporated into the city.

- Built elements present distinctive silhouettes in the Western Downs that are clearly visible from the surrounding landscape. They announce the proximity of Winchester.

45 The Northern and Southern Downs are more subdued in character and landform although they have a significant relationship to the city boundary at Barton Farm, in the north, and Bushfield and Whiteshute Ridge in the south. Views from Bushfield uniquely feature the city's three major medieval building groups seemingly isolated amongst mature trees.

- Strong wedges of open countryside penetrate close to the edges of the city centre to reinforce the interdependence of the city and its setting.

46 Trees influence the city's character and its quality as a settlement. However, trees are subject to the natural cycles of growth and decline and many of the city's trees are approaching over-maturity. This is a major issue facing the city's future character.

- Strategies for the city's trees should be implemented before the existing trees decline and have to be removed, leaving a void in the city's character.

47 Winchester's landscapes are as rich and varied as its many buildings. Natural and built forms co-exist in close harmony so that their value and importance is greatly strengthened to the benefit of all those who live, work and enjoy the city and its surrounding countryside.

ARRIVING AT A SENSE OF PLACE

48 Approaches to Winchester are based upon trading routes that clearly date back to prehistoric and Roman times. Only with the arrival of the railway, followed more recently by the M3 motorway, has the strength of this pattern been disrupted.

- Clear stages in the approaches to Winchester are informed by characteristic landscape patterns, views, silhouettes or entrances.

49 In the wider landscape, glimpsed views from the motorway and railway, as well as the historic routes, focus upon natural Cheesefoot Head or man-made features such as the masts on Teg Down, or the prison watchtower. These are the first clear indications of the city's presence. Moving closer, the landform or mature woodlands often screens or interrupts views, keeping the city largely hidden from view.

50 Mature tree cover alongside roads and within housing areas reinforces the sense of arrival in the city, particularly along Andover, Stockbridge, Worthy and Sarum/Romsey Roads to the north and west. From the east the city approach at high level along Alresford Road which then rapidly descends St Giles's Hill is very distinctive. The approach from St Giles's Hill to the river crossing and into the old city is a reminder of the original reason for the city's location.

- A sense of arrival at Winchester's urban area is remarkably distinct with clear cut divisions between city and country on most approaches reinforced by mature tree cover alongside roads and within housing areas.
- The sense of arrival at the historic city centre is clear and unambiguous.







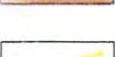
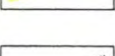
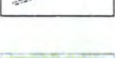


51 The warp and weft of the themes outlined above contains a variety of natural and man made elements. The Cathedral, St Catherine's Hill or the River Itchen exemplify the flow of rich cultural heritage, high scenic value, important nature conservation interest and significant recreational value.

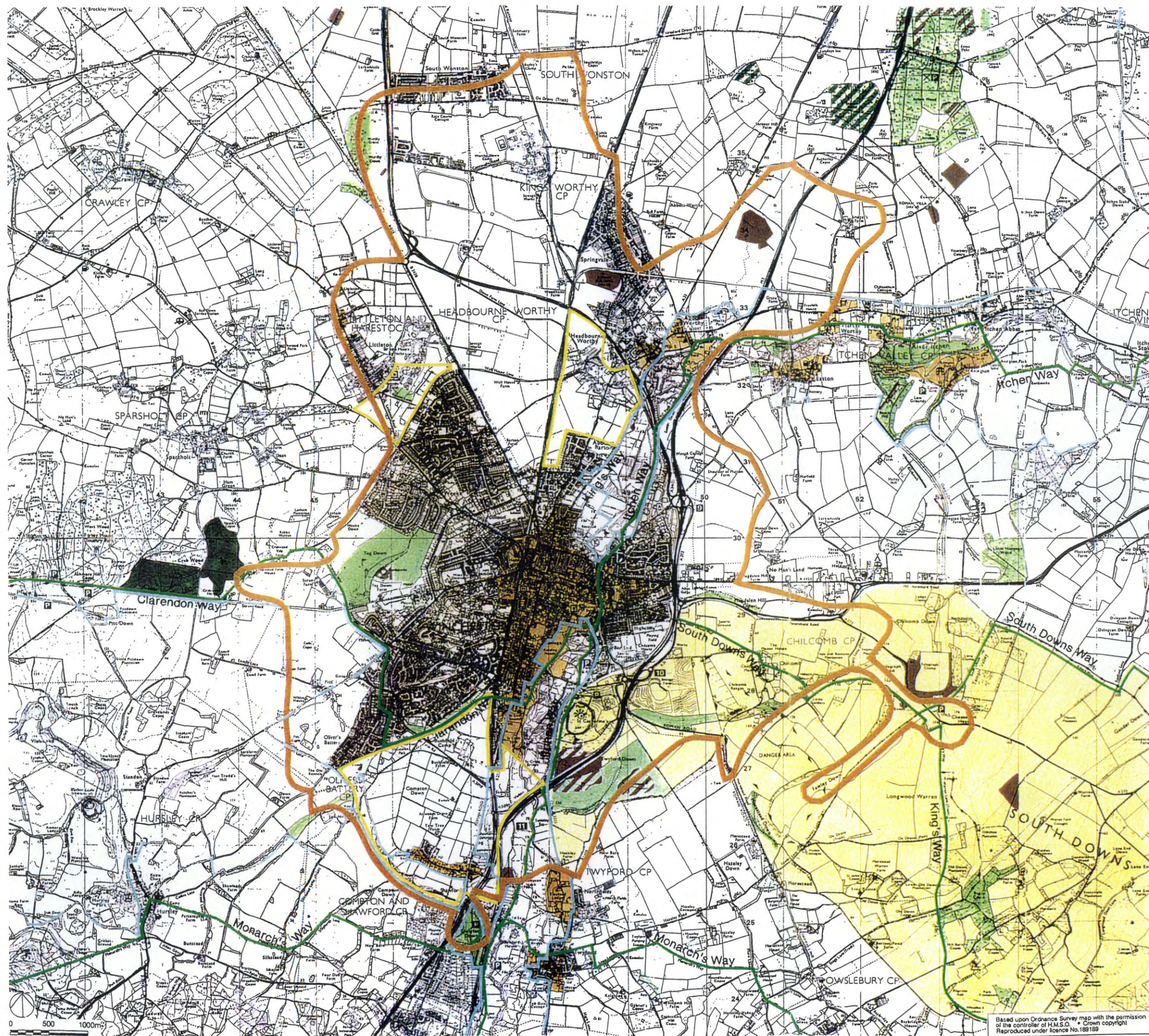
- Maintaining a liveable city whilst respecting the rich and varied heritage is crucial to ensuring the future quality of Winchester and its setting remains high.
- The quality of the city and its setting would be fine if it had one or two of these individual features. Winchester has a multiplicity of such features which fulfil valuable functions for different sections of society. Their combined might provides an exceptional landscape and townscape.

52 The future of Winchester lies in the balance. By clarifying its current environmental values it is anticipated that the debate on the future of Winchester will be better informed and enlightened decisions taken that recognise and respect what matters and why.

Winchester City and its Setting

Planning Designations

-  Boundary of study area
-  Boundary of built area of city
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Conservation Areas
-  Strategic gap
-  Area of Special Landscape Quality
-  Site Important for Nature Conservation
-  Ancient semi natural woodland
-  Long distance footpaths



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