

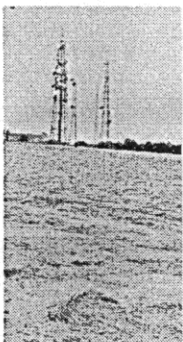
Supportive townscape and landscape

Principal Characteristics

Sleepers Hill

- Late nineteenth and twentieth century suburbs
- Key supportive townscape/landscape at Sleepers Hill
- Open rolling topography
- Major routes to west of Roman Way
- Views to eastern downlands from several key viewpoints
- Key civic amenities on Romsey Road
- Suburban character

Sleepers Hill
 Modern development set amongst mature trees manages to maintain the distinctive character



5.5.1 The spacious suburb of Sleepers Hill retains the characteristics of its recent rural past; tall, mature trees, hedgerows and soft verges. Large gardens with mature trees impart a wooded character, which is sufficiently dense to hide most buildings. The new development on Sparkford Road has been sensitively handled, and well integrated with its wooded setting. Sleepers Hill rises steeply up the spur and views over the city and to the downland beyond are impressive. Sleepers Hill is a vitally important green backdrop and skyline on the western valley side, in combination with other stands of mature trees such as those along Chilbolton Avenue and on West Hill.

Distinctive and supportive townscape

Mews Lane and West Hill Cemetery

5.5.2 Housing in the Mews Lane area is of a somewhat isolated character bounded by the railway, St. James Lane and the busy Romsey Road, but retains the mews atmosphere to the large houses fronting St. James Terrace and St. James Lane. It is of interest and relates in style to the housing surrounding Oram's Arbour though less well defined and rather congested.

5.5.3 West Hill Cemetery was established in 1840 by Act of Parliament. The stone piers, cast iron railings and dark evergreens that surround it, are typical of a Victorian cemetery. Today it forms a landmark when travelling along St. James Lane. It also offers spectacular views over the city and out to St Catherine's Hill and the Eastern Downs.

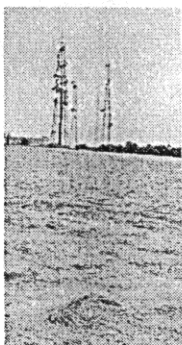
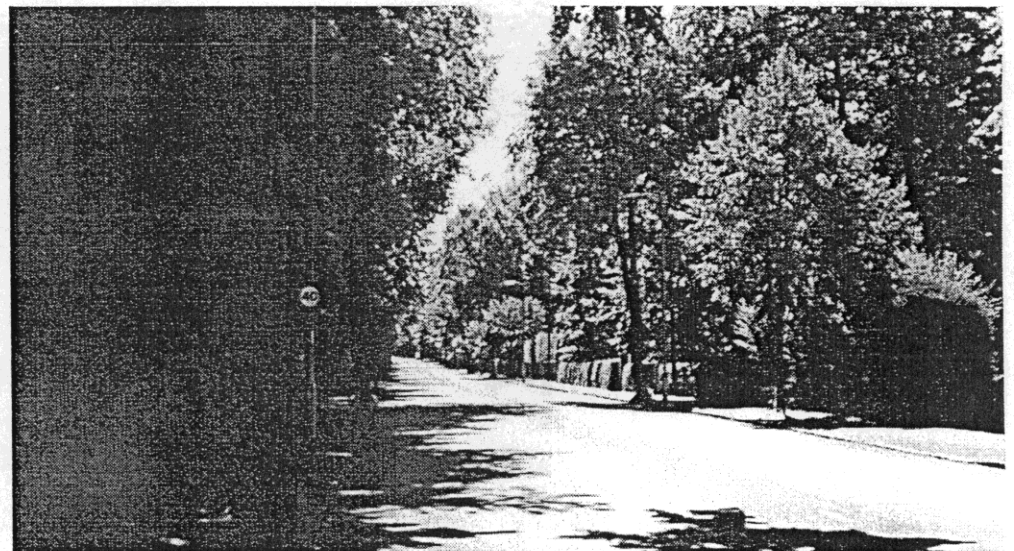
Connective townscape

Western Suburbs

5.5.4 Extensive areas of late 19th and 20th century residential estates lining and infilling the major routes north and west from the city. Harestock and Fulflood have names derived from Old English customs and features. The name Harestock is believed to apply to conspicuous parish boundary markings, which one authority considers is a reference to "posts on which criminals heads were exposed" outside the city walls (Coates). Fulflood has a less macabre derivation and is taken to mean a "foul or muddy ditch or watercourse".

5.5.5 The tight grained Edwardian suburb of Fulflood (character area 14A) is situated in the lower end of the valley which rises westwards towards Sarum Road. The later suburbs on Greenhill Road (character area 14B) and Chilbolton Avenue (character area 13A) with its important belt of trees provide a green backdrop and enclose the head of the valley. The well maintained, 1950s suburban estate at Kilham Lane, with its characteristic house types and wooded backdrop is notable within this area.

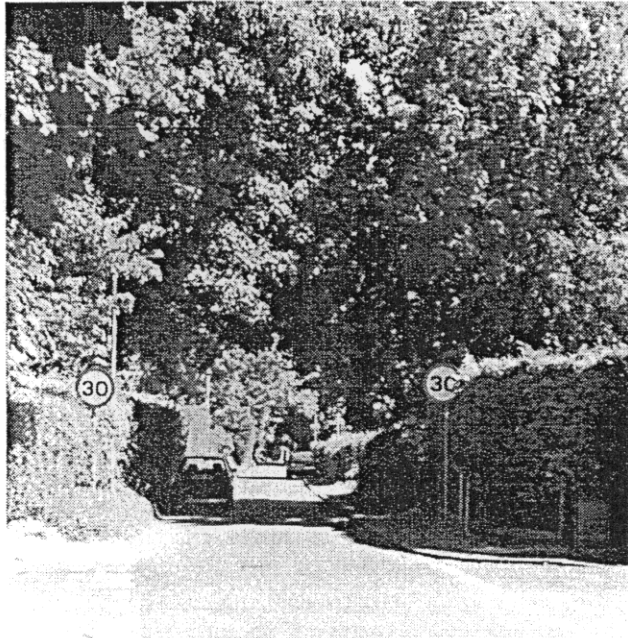
Notable mature tree cover encloses Chilbolton Avenue.



5.5.6 The Edwardian suburb of Berewecke (character area 15) is also spacious and leafy, and contrasts with the more exposed, high density early 20th century estates of Weeke and Harestock (character area 16). Associated with two spine roads, Stoney Lane and Berewecke Avenue, the latter follows the rolls of former downland,

affording good views over the area, and glimpses to rural downland beyond. Harestock is greener, containing more trees, but essentially the two areas are of similar character.

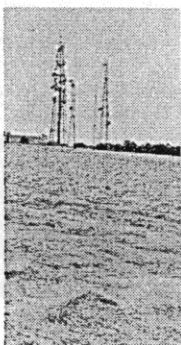
A leafy rural approach into the city at Weeke with Salters Lane and Lanham Lane forming a distinct 'green edge'.



5.5.7 The 20th century housing to the west of Stockbridge Road (character areas 13B and C) retains a leafy character, especially along Dean Lane and Salter Lane, reflecting perhaps a former woodland setting. The edges of these areas are well defined and generally well screened by trees.

5.5.8 To the west of Romsey Road, three further 20th century suburbs cover the east facing slopes and valleys, and the downland ridge known as Oliver's Battery (character area 10). The elevated position of which, with its characteristic stands of pine trees, and exposed edges permitting views to the surrounding rolling downland, contrast with the Stanmore and Badger Farm estates (character areas 9A and B). These are less exposed, but afford stunning downland views eastwards from Stanmore Lane and Battery Hill and the Valley open space. To the east of Badger Farm, Whiteshute

*Battery Hill, Stanmore
A memorable vista over the city and the Itchen Valley towards Deacon Hill*



Ridge and Bushfield provide a stunning panorama featuring the Cathedral, city and St Cross set against the framework of the Itchen Valley and Eastern Downs.

5.5.9 Oliver's Battery originated, probably, as a Roman earthworks on the site of an Iron Age settlement. Its current title is thought to stem from the English Civil War siege of the city in 1645. Military historians consider that the cathedral and castle were beyond the range of contemporary artillery. Consequently the elevated site and its historic earthworks is thought to have been a defensive strong point within which cannon and supply wagons could be kept after sunset and at a safe distance from Winchester Castle.

5.5.10 There is archaeological evidence that the ancient ditch was filled and a causeway constructed which would have given access for heavy guns and wagons. The causeway was obliterated when the area became a World War I camp. The reuse of this site for military purposes down the ages strongly links Winchester to its past.

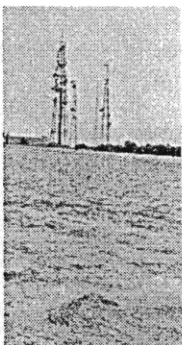
Routes of distinctive character

Romsey/Sarum Road

5.5.11 Romsey/Sarum Road is one of five major Romano British routes that have been identified linking the city with other Roman towns. Interestingly Romsey Road is aligned on the western entrance of Oram's Arbour indicating the route's ancient origins. Economic expansion in the mid 1800's caused the city to expand significantly beyond its historic walls. For example, the original Hillier's nursery was sited here. Subsequent development, such as Nursery Gardens, incorporates an interesting collection of mature trees. Several civic amenities were built on the higher, and healthier ground west of the railway at West Hill. These are West Hill Cemetery, the prison, West Downs College and the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, designed by William Butterfield in 1864-68. The Police Headquarters building was constructed in the 1970's.

5.5.12 Despite the presence of these major institutions, Romsey Road retains an 'out of town' character, being visually divorced from the historic city, and by the fragmented nature of its streetscape - large self-sufficient civic architecture interspersed with small scale housing and mixed used development reinforces this feeling. The

Treelined approach into the western side of the city along Sarum Road.



character is reinforced by tall mature trees along its length, which help to unify the built frontages. These frame surprisingly green and rural views which terminate vistas to the west and east. Those to the west feature trees and Teg Down; with dramatic views to rolling downs to the east. Both contrast to the more enclosed, low lying urban character of the historic city streets in the valley below.

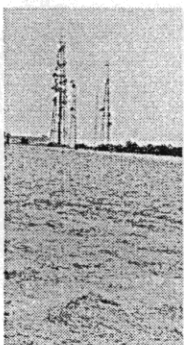
Stockbridge, Harestock and Andover Roads

5.5.13A series of roads leading north west out of the city of similar character, linked by Harestock Road which defines the north western edge of the city. Andover Road is of Roman origin and is the most major route with views to the adjoining rolling downland. All three routes share a leafy tree lined character, which in season screens adjoining suburban development and creates the impression of green approaches into the city, maintaining a semi-rural atmosphere. All three routes are important in maintaining the rich interplay between Winchester and its landscape setting.

The treelined Andover Road forms a notable 'green' approach into the city adjacent to the districts of Harestock and Weeke.



Distinctive, supportive and connective landscape
Principal Characteristics



The Western Downs

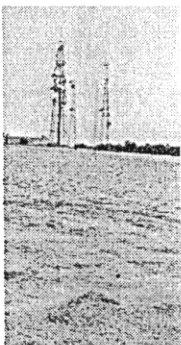
- Undulating landform characteristic of plateau and dip slope area with intermittent prominent escarpments
- Principal north-east/south-west aligned ridgeline at Teg Down, and Compton / Yew Hill escarpment defines visual enclosure of city to west
- Locally prominent steep slopes and escarpments at Shawford Down, Teg Down, Compton Ridge, Yew Hill, Bushfield and Whiteshute Ridge support areas of species rich unimproved chalk downland
- Predominance of arable farming with some pasture
- Variable enclosure ranging from open arable downs to the south west and a more enclosed pattern to the west and north-west where extensive woodlands and parkland areas are interspersed with a sequence of both small and larger scale fields

The woodland at Yew Hill is a prominent skyline feature on the south-western edge of the study area.



- Mix of settlement types ranging from the larger villages of Compton and Littleton, interspersed with a pattern of smaller villages such as Pitt, and isolated farms
- Significant large scale woodlands comprising Crab and West Woods to the west and parkland woods of Lainston House and Northwood Park to the north-west
- Emerging woodland planted to screen the Sir John Moore Barracks to the east of Littleton
- Network of principal and secondary roads converging on the city, including the B3409 Stockbridge Road, A3090 Romsey Road, the Roman roads of Sarum Road and Compton Road, and the M3 on the eastern boundary of the area, together with a complex pattern of narrow lanes, tracks and rights of way

A line of Beech trees form a prominent skyline feature on the western side of Compton Down.



- Mature tree lined approaches to the city along the Roman roads of Sarum and Compton Roads, the Stockbridge Road, and the green approach along the Andover road shared with the adjacent Northern Downs area
- Notable archaeological and historical features within area indicative of long period of occupation

General Description

Landform and Landcover

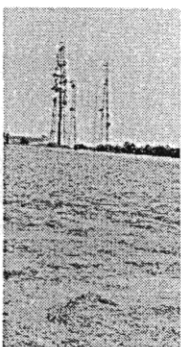
5.5.14 The ridgeline extending northwards from Nan Trodds Hill to the summit area of Teg Down forms the principal landform enclosure on the western side of Winchester. A series of prominent spurs extend eastwards from this ridge into the heart of the city. To the west and south the rolling landform and minor dry valleys is typical of the dissected chalk dip slopes. The influence of deposits of clay with flints and clay related soils within the Western Downs has resulted in a more variable pattern of land use and enclosure. Intensive farming is still predominant, but substantial areas of woodland together with areas of parkland and more enclosed and intricate field patterns are interspersed between the areas of open arable downs.

Visual Appraisal

5.5.15 A number of significant views of the city are obtained from the Western Downs, principally from elevated locations on the perimeter of the visual envelope. The most notable views are:

- The framed view of the cathedral rising above a foreground of the tree cover within the Itchen valley from the elevated prospect of Shawford Down to the south of the city

The strong avenue of WW1 commemorative Beech trees along Compton Road defines this vista from Compton Ridge to the cathedral.



- A memorable prospect of the cathedral and historic core from Compton Ridge with the buildings rising above trees, and a foreground of open farmland and the majestic avenue of beech trees along the Compton Road

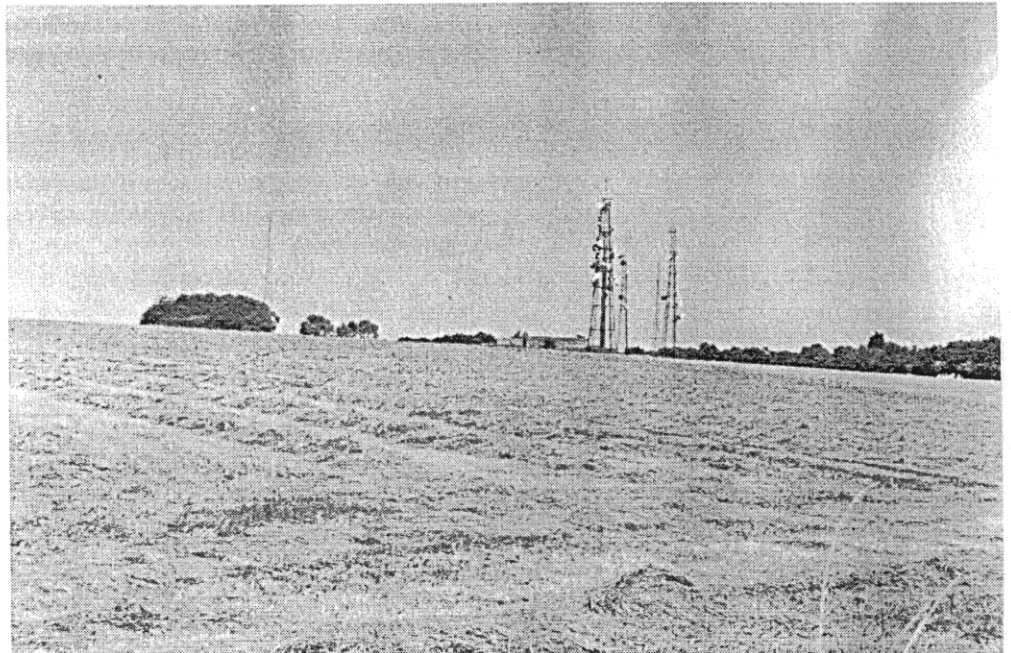
- A panorama from the elevated position of Bushfield with St. Cross, the Cathedral and Winchester College rising above a framework of trees
- The first views of the south-western side of Winchester and the ridgeline setting of Oliver's Battery from the A3090 Romsey Road in the vicinity of Yew Tree garage and the approach to the village of Pitt.

5.5.16 In addition, the views towards the Eastern Downs and the distinctive series of skyline landmarks including St. Catherine's Hill are also a notable feature.

5.5.17 A number of memorable skyline features within the Western Downs are significant in the setting of the city. These provide a point of reference and familiarity in views both out of and into the city. The most important features comprise

- The woodland copses on the summit of Yew Hill to the south east of the city
- The line of beech trees on the intermediate ridge to the west of Bushfield
- The telecommunication masts at Teg Down.

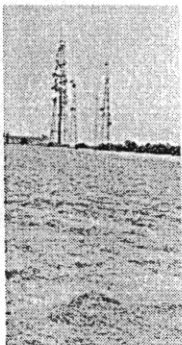
Telecommunication masts at Teg Down are a prominent feature on the city's western skyline.



5.5.18 A number of other memorable features at a lower elevation also contribute to the setting of the city. These focal points comprise :

- The majestic beech avenue adjacent to the Roman Road leading from St. Cross to Compton
- The impressive brick Hockley Railway Viaduct.

5.5.19 There are few visually detracting elements within the area. The most notable is the group of telecommunication masts at Teg Down. Although a prominent skyline feature the masts detract from the attractive rural character of the surrounding area. In longer distance views, the masts appear as a fine tracery on the skyline but their height distorts the perceived scale of the ridgeline. The prominent Northfields Poultry Farm factory building is also visible from elevated sections of the Western Downs.



Communications Network and Principal Approaches into the City

5.5.20A radial network of roads converge on the city from the south and west including three Roman Roads, comprising the B3335 Compton Road, Sarum Road, and the A272 Andover Road which follows the boundary between the Western and Northern Downs. Each display a characteristic linearity but are not intrusive as field and woodland patterns have integrated with the ancient road alignments.

5.5.21The more sinuous A3090 Romsey Road and the B3409 Stockbridge Road are also important links into the city. Although the road approaches from the west, and the perception of Winchester, is not as dramatic and sudden as some of those within the Eastern Downs, there are nevertheless a number of significant 'arrival' points signifying the transition from 'rural' to 'urban'. The most notable comprise :

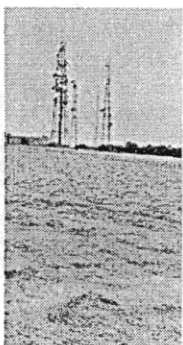
- the A3090 / B3335 roundabout on the Roman road leading from Compton to the southern perimeter of the city and leading into St. Cross and west to Bushfield
- the A31 Romsey road roundabout east of the village of Pitt leading into the south-western side of the city.

5.5.22Avenues of mature trees and linear belts of woodland line the perimeter of many of the approach roads from the Western Downs into the city further emphasising the transition from rural to urban character. The most significant examples of this attractive and characteristic feature are located at :

- Compton Road, with its distinctive avenue of mature beech trees leading northwards into the St. Cross district
- Romsey Road, A3090 with strong tree cover commencing to the north east and south east of the roundabout leading into Sleepers' Hill and Stanmore districts respectively
- Sarum Road, with tree enclosure commencing to the south of Sarum Farm and continuing into the West Hill and West Downs districts
- Stockbridge Road, A272 with strong tree cover associated with the residential district of Weeke.

5.5.23There is an extensive network of rights of way, lanes and tracks throughout the area. The most significant regional footpath is the Clarendon Way which is the regional section of The Pilgrim's Way that links Canterbury with Salisbury. Within the

At Bushfield and Whiteshute Ridge, The Pilgrim's Way crosses an area of species rich chalk downland which penetrates into the heart of the city.



Western Downs this ancient route approaches Winchester along Sarum Road and then follows a more tortuous route past Crab Wood, Teg Down, Lanham Lane and into Oliver's Battery and then onto the Whiteshute Ridge via the hedgerow and tree lined Whiteshute Lane. Beyond this section it descends into the Itchen Valley.

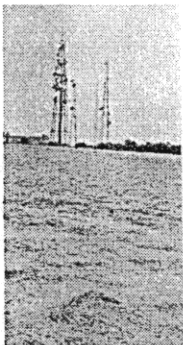
Settlement Pattern

5.5.24 The principal settlements within the Western Downs are confined to the south and north interspersed with occasional small hamlets such as Pitt, and isolated farms and dwellings. The suburb of Compton occupies a prominent ridge top location south of the city, below which the older, smaller Compton Street is contained within a shallow valley. The north-western part of the area has a more diverse and settled character and includes the large village of Littleton, and the recently established Sir John Moore Barracks. Although only 1 km from the northern edge of Winchester, Littleton retains an independent and separate identity from the city.

Nature Conservation

5.5.25 The principal biodiversity interests within the Western Downs comprise areas of unimproved chalk grassland and ancient semi-natural woodland. In recognition of their high biodiversity interest the species rich chalk grassland areas are all designated as SINC's. They are principally located on steep slopes and escarpments and include Shawford Down, Yew Hill at the north-western end of the Compton Ridge, Bushfield, Whiteshute Ridge, the Royal Winchester Golf Course and Teg Down, and Flowerdown near Littleton. Yew Hill is managed by the British Butterfly Conservation Society. Although the areas of unimproved chalk grassland are fragmented and not as extensive as in the Eastern Downs they are nevertheless of great importance. West of the city, the oak dominated Crab Wood is ancient semi-natural woodland and a SSSI in recognition of its high biodiversity interest. The eastern half of the wood is managed as a Statutory Local Nature Reserve by Hampshire County Council and the Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Northwood Park Woods to the north-west are also ancient semi-natural woodland.

The Royal Winchester golf course at Teg Down. Manicured greens thread through areas of species rich downland.



Heritage

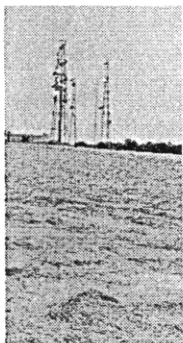
5.5.26 Mesolithic flint tools at Compton Down and west and north of Bushfield provide evidence of occupation of the Western Downs during the early prehistoric period. Bronze Age round barrows are also recorded at Oliver's Battery and at Compton. With the establishment of the strategically located Oram's Arbour during the Middle Iron Age, a series of enclosed settlements developed within the vicinity of this tribal focus and link. A 'banjo' enclosure is recorded at Pitt Down, near Hursley, and a rectangular enclosure at Oliver's Battery. The Teg Down enclosure at the Royal Winchester Golf Course is also a significant feature. The Roman road network within the Western Downs is also particularly noteworthy with the Andover Road, the Old Sarum Road, and Compton / Bitterne Road (B3335) all converging on Winchester.

Open arable downs and the Royal Winchester Golf Course at Teg Down sited over an earlier settlement.



Historic Field Pattern and Features

5.5.27 In comparison to the general uniformity of the historic field pattern within the Northern and Eastern Downs, the Western Downs display a more complex and varied pattern of field enclosure. At Compton Down the field pattern comprises small and medium rectangular fields typical of the 17th and 18th century parliamentary enclosures. This pattern reoccurs in the area between the A3090 and Sarum Road, with evidence of field amalgamation, and also in the north-western part of the area, although the open field pattern here is interspersed with some substantial areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and 19th century parkland woods. Evidence of earlier field patterns thread through the remainder of the area with wavy and irregular assart fields and small copses typical of the late medieval period, together with a pattern of lanes, tracks and rights of way which contribute to the 'layers' of the historic landscape.

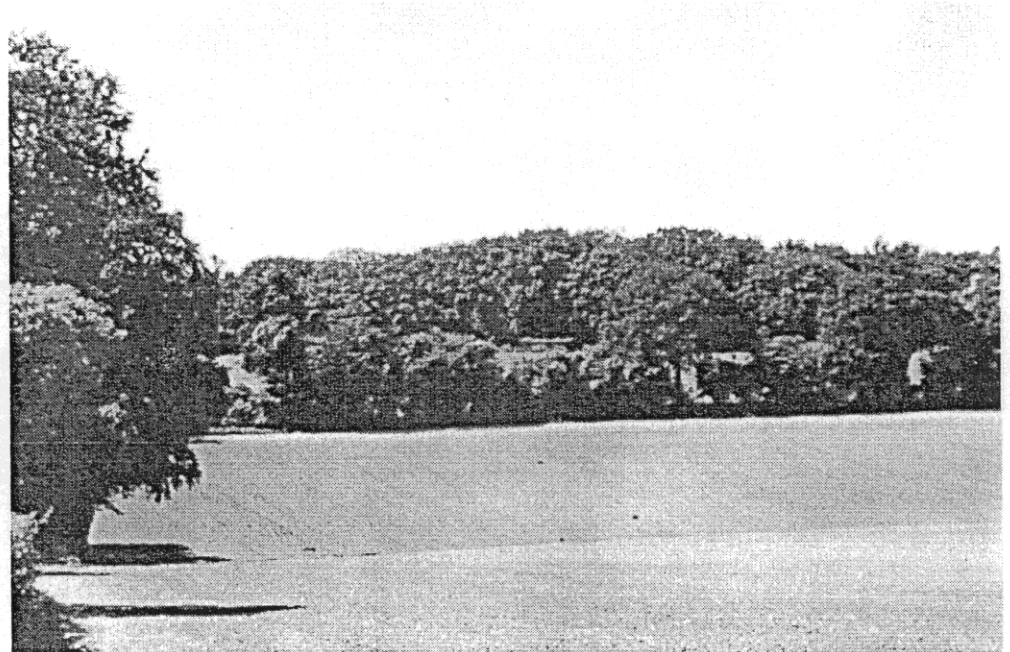


Areas of Influence within the Western Downs

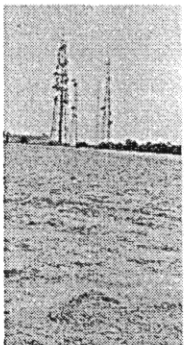
- A significant area of distinctive landscape extends into the western edge of the city from the extensive woodlands at Crab Wood, West Wood and Farley Mount Country

Park to the more open ridge top and downland setting of Weeke and Teg Downs. Lanham Lane follows the northern edge of the area with the Clarendon Way following part of this ancient tree lined route. Teg Down encompasses the Royal Winchester Golf Course, with its highly managed appearance, and the imposing telecommunication masts on the ridge top above Sarum Farm. The potentially detracting influences of these land uses are counteracted by an impressive landform of steep escarpments and dry valley systems, the remnants of species rich downland, the archaeological feature associated with the Teg Down earthworks, and the close proximity of this impressive landscape to the residential districts of Weeke and West Down. Views to the city from the woodlands to the west are limited to the eastern edge of Crab Wood from where glimpsed views of housing on the perimeter of Winchester may be seen. Nevertheless, this is a much valued area of woodland within easy access of the city and of considerable landscape and biodiversity interest. The notable transition from an enclosed woodland character into a more open prospect as the city is approached enhances the distinctiveness of the landscape.

Crab Wood, on the western edge of the city, is an important area of ancient semi-natural woodland.



- An area of distinctive landscape is located on the south-western boundary of the visual envelope and extends north-westwards from Shawford Down along a prominent escarpment on the perimeter of Compton to the ridge top summit of Yew Hill. The steep, partly wooded slopes with areas of species rich grassland, particularly within Shawford Down, form a prominent skyline feature and an important feature in the setting of the city. From the summit of the Compton ridge a remarkable distant view of Winchester Cathedral rising above a foreground of woodland is obtained, with the beech avenue along Compton road further framing the view.
- Whiteshute Ridge, and the adjacent area to the north of Bushfield, forms a distinctive landscape of considerable importance to the setting of the city. This elevated area of open land extends from the south-west penetrating into the heart of the city and forming a green backdrop to the historic buildings associated with the Hospital of St. Cross and its adjacent residential district. The Badger Farm housing area to the north-west also benefits from the proximity of the green

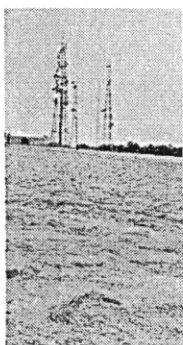


*A panoramic prospect of
Winchester from Bushfield.*



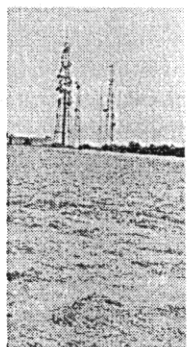
enclosure provided by Whiteshute Ridge which includes a significant area of unimproved chalk grassland restored, thanks to the commitment and endeavours of the Whiteshute Ridge Conservation Group, acting on behalf of Badger Farm Parish Council. Unimproved chalk grassland with scrub invasion also extends across the north-east facing slopes below Bushfield Camp and a prominent line of mature beech trees. From this elevated open land a memorable view to the north is obtained of the Cathedral and Hospital of St. Cross, framed by a foreground of tree cover.

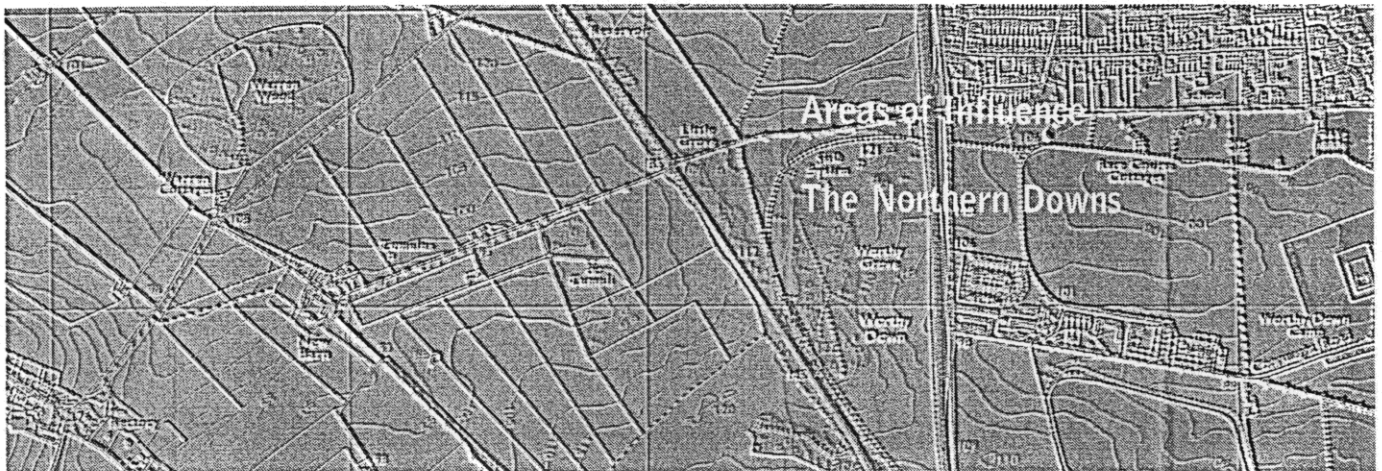
- The mature beech trees that line the Roman Road leading northwards from Compton into the city are a distinctive landscape feature from a number of viewpoints in the southern part of the city and its setting. The trees were planted at the end of the First World War, as a tribute to the soldiers that fought in the war, and have now matured into a noble avenue which forms a memorable approach to the city.
- North of Teg Down, and the districts of Weeke and Harestock, a limited area of supportive landscape has been identified forming the margin of the residential areas and the ancient route of Lanham Lane and Salters Lane. This is an important buffer area on the limit of the built area with filtered views into and links with the farmland to the north-west.
- The open arable farmland within the 'vale' below the Compton ridge, and extending north-eastwards across Badger Farm Road into Bushfield, forms a supportive landscape. The area is an important link between the distinctive landscapes of Compton Ridge and the Whiteshute Down / Bushfield north areas. Its value lies in its openness which maintains the continuity of the 'green wedge' that penetrates the heart of the city from the south-west. The redundant character of the former army camp at Bushfield is very localised and does not significantly affect the broader impact and importance of this area.



- North of the 'pinch point' between the distinctive Yew Hill and the south-western perimeter of Oliver's Battery a further area of supportive landscape extends up to Teg Down. Although less impressive than the distinctive woodlands and downland north of Sarum Road, this broad sweep of predominantly open arable land is nevertheless important in the setting of the city and extends the rural landscape character up to the edge of the built area.
- The extreme north-western part of the Western Downs is identified as an area of connective landscape. Views into the city are generally obscured as a result of the enclosure afforded by the pattern of trees, hedgerows and areas of woodland as well as the settlement of Littleton and the army camp of Sir John Moore Barracks at Flowerdown. Nevertheless, there are occasional glimpses of the distinctive landmarks on the summit of the Eastern Downs, particularly from Lainston House. In comparison with the more open 'green wedges' of land that extend into the heart of the city and the open elevated downs to the east, this area has a stronger sense of enclosure and diversity forming a contrasting approach into the city.

The broad expanse of open arable chalk downs extending up the south-western perimeter of the city at Oliver's Battery.



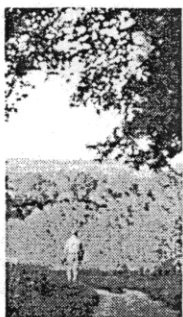
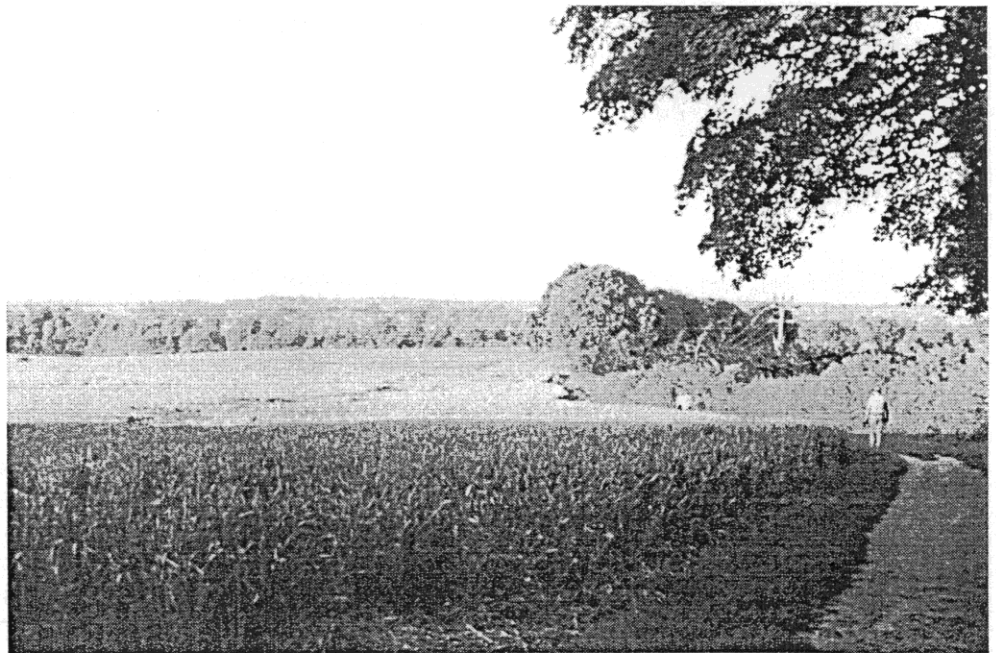


Supportive and connective landscape
Principal Characteristics

The Northern Downs

- Gently undulating dissected chalk plateau with predominantly south facing slopes leading down to Itchen Valley
- Open expansive character with long distance views southwards across farmland towards Winchester and principal enclosing ridgelines

A sweep of open farmland, punctuated by distinctive mature tree belts extends into the heart of the city from the north of Barton Farm.



- Intensively farmed, predominantly arable land with more limited areas of improved pasture
- Predominantly large scale, rectilinear fields with low trimmed or absent hedgerows and few hedgerow trees, interspersed with linear and angular deciduous and coniferous shelterbelts and copses
- Extensive area of mixed deciduous woodlands at Burnt Wood, Shroner Wood, and Itchen Wood to north-east of area

- Area of biodiversity interest at locally higher land at Worthy Down including species rich chalk downland and ancient semi-natural woodland at Worthy Grove
- Network of ancient and contemporary linear communication routes crossing the landscape and leading into or passing adjacent to Winchester
- Strong tree belts and perimeter woodland adjacent to the A272 / B3420 Andover Road defining the Roman Road approach into Winchester
- Notable pattern of old drove roads extending through area, including Ox Drove and Alresford Drove to south and north of South Wonston respectively
- Sparsely populated settlement pattern with occasional farms interspersed with more substantial settlements
- Archaeological evidence and features within the area indicating long period of occupation.

General Description

Landform and Landcover

5.6.1 From Winchester the Northern Downs rise gently to the north and north-east presenting a broad, gently undulating, expansive landscape that fades into the distant horizon from vantage points within and on the perimeter of the city. This intensively farmed landscape is dominated by large, rectilinear, mainly arable fields, bold linear and angular shelterbelts, and larger areas of woodland.

Visual Appraisal

5.6.2 The open landscape provides long distance views to elevated parts of the city with the Police Headquarters and Prison watch tower forming notable features. The historic core within the valley is obscured from view. The principal ridgelines rising above the Itchen Valley to the south-east and south-west are also prominent, with The Clump and Great Clump at Cheesefoot Head, Deacon Hill clump, St. Catherine's Hill, and the masts at Teg Down forming distant landmarks on the skyline. The Water Tower at Worthy Down is a distinctive local landmark within the Northern Downs.

Communications Network and Principal Approaches into the City

5.6.3 Principal communication routes with a strong linear form cross the area and converge on or pass close to Winchester. The old Roman road routes followed by the B3420 / A272 Andover Road and A33 Basingstoke Road are particularly noteworthy. Their linear form is not intrusive in the landscape as field and woodland patterns have been integrated with the ancient road alignments. The green corridor of the Andover Road is particularly significant with a progression from more extensive perimeter woodland at Crawley and Worthy Down to linear woodland and avenue planting as the road extends into the built areas. The large scale of the landscape has also been able to absorb the impact of the more recently constructed roads comprising the A34(T) and the M3 although the cuttings and embankments, and the Three Maids Hill junction are locally intrusive.



Tree lined approach into Winchester from the north on the B3420 Roman Road.



5.6.4 Although the main line railway cuts across the field pattern, it is largely hidden within often inaccessible or remote sections of farmland. The naturally regenerated vegetation that has developed along the embankments and cuttings now form part of the pattern of woodland within the agricultural landscape. Remnant alignments of disused railway lines also cut across the landscape with impact confined to intermittent embankments and cuttings with strong linear belts of indigenous vegetation and bridge structures.

Settlement Pattern

5.6.5 There are notable contrasts in the settlement pattern. Sparsely populated areas with occasional farms are interspersed with the larger settlements of Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy close to the perimeter of Winchester, the Worthy Down Army Camp to the north, and the village of South Wonston on the northern perimeter of the study area.

Nature Conservation Interest

5.6.6 As much of the area is intensively farmed the level of biodiversity interest is generally low. There are, however, important areas of nature conservation interest at Worthy Down to the north west which supports an area of unimproved chalk downland and Worthy Grove, an area of ancient semi-natural woodland. Two further areas of ancient semi-natural woodland are located to the north-east at Shroner Wood and Burnt Wood. All of these areas are designated as Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC).



Heritage

5.6.7 The wide range of archaeological evidence and features within the area are indicative of a long period of human occupation. The earliest evidence includes scattered finds of Palaeolithic implements at Kings Worthy and west of Itchen Wood and Mesolithic materials at the Lunways Inn adjacent to the Basingstoke Road. At South Wonston, three Neolithic burial mounds (SAM) are located at West Hill Road together with some later Bronze Age burial mounds. Within the nearby Worthy

Down there is an interesting example of territorial ranch boundaries. There are Iron Age settlements adjacent to Barton Farm on the northern perimeter of the city, at South Wonston and Worthy Down, and also at Bridgetts / Burntwood Farm which was later replaced by a Roman settlement with a street pattern. In addition to the Roman road network, there is evidence of a Roman settlement at Woodhams Farm to the north-west of Kings Worthy. There is documentary evidence of Saxon settlements in the vicinity of Abbots Barton, Abbots Worthy and Headbourne Worthy whose church is well known because of its surviving Saxon roof.

5.6.8 In the more recent historic period it has been documented that a foreign contingent of mercenary Hessian troops was encamped, from May 1756 to May 1757, in the triangle of land between the roads to Andover and Basingstoke and now bisected by the railway. The Seven Years' War (1757-64) greatly increased the military influence on the city. As well as the German soldiers and officers of the Hessian contingent, subsequent garrisons included detachments of the English County Militia.

Open farmland extends up to the northern edge of the city adjacent to Park Road. It was on this site that the Hanseatic militia camped in 1756.



5.6.9 The strong military influence continues to this day in Winchester, the most recent example being the establishment of the Sir John Moore Barracks at Flowerdown. Here, extensive woodland planting softens the appearance of this intensive modern development on the city's edge.

Historic Field Pattern and Features

5.6.10 Much of the field pattern within the Northern Downs is typical of the parliamentary enclosure of 17th. and 18th. centuries, with evidence of some field amalgamation forming areas of 'prairie landscape' to the west of the M3, together with a localised concentration of smaller field units to north-east of Kings Worthy. Old drove roads also extend through the area, including Ox Drove and Alresford Drove to south and north of South Wonston respectively.



Areas of Influence within the Northern Downs

- On the western perimeter of the Northern Downs the A272 / B3420 is lined by mature woodland and avenue planting. This tree lined route is a distinctive landscape feature forming a memorable approach into the heart of the city along the route of the old Roman Road. As well as linking into areas of influence within the built area of the city the linear tree belts also provides a structural framework separating and containing adjacent residential districts.
- An area of supportive landscape extends southwards from the A34(T) and the road junction and roundabouts at Three Maids Hill. The importance of this area in relation to Winchester lies in the strength of the open rural landscape penetrating the heart of the city. There is a clean break from rural to urban along the built edge of the city at Abbots Barton. Views to the housing edge are softened by belts of woodland within the adjacent farmland, notably at Barton Farm, south of Well House Lane, and also on the perimeter of the built up area.

The first prospect of the city from the M3 southbound is near Bridgetts Lane where the motorway emerges from cutting.



- A second area of supportive landscape lies to the north-east of Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy extending to the limit of the visual envelope of the city at Burntwood Cottages adjacent to the Basingstoke Road and Bridgetts Lane. Within this open landscape the first glimpses of Winchester and important skyline landmarks are gained from the A33 and M3 as they converge onto the City, before the views are obscured by the settlements of Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy, and the treed enclosure of the Itchen Valley. In addition to the important sense of anticipation as the City is approached, this open and expansive landscape provides a notable contrast to the more intimate enclosure of the settled valley to the south and west.
- North of the supportive landscape lies a broad sweep of connective landscape. Defined by the northern edge of Worthy Down, and the line of Alresford Drove road from South Wonston to Itchen Wood; the village of Kings Worthy is also included in the area. This linked area forms part of the approach into Winchester. Although views of the city may



not be possible from many sections of this peripheral connective landscape the proximity of the city is indicated by familiar 'signposts' such as the prominent water tower adjacent to Worthy Camp on the A34(T). Kings Worthy, although an independent settlement, marks the transition to a 'settled character' along both the A34(T) and the A33 before Winchester itself is reached. The extensive woodlands associated with Shroner and Itchen Woods also lie outside of the visual envelope of the city, but are visible from sections of the M3 and Basingstoke Road. This area marks the emergence from a more enclosed landscape pattern south-westwards into an open landscape from where the first glimpses of the skyline landmarks and ridge top buildings are seen, identifying the approach into Winchester from the north-west.



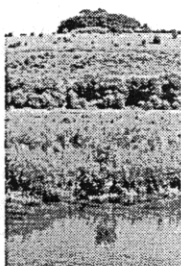
5.7 Trends and Pressures on the city and its setting

Historic Cores

- 5.7.1 The city centre and outlying cores of historic settlement, that is Oram's Arbour, Hyde and Weeke Manor are finite and irreplaceable resources that shape the character of Winchester. By its very nature, the city centre and inter-relationship of its buildings, spaces and users are the prime factor in the health and vitality of the settlement.
- 5.7.2 That people live in the city centre is an indicator of its quality and the life it can offer to its residents. Winchester centre with adjoining residential areas such as Christchurch, St John's and Hyde is very compact and permeable. The continued proximity of residential areas is important, as is the encouragement of increased residential use of buildings within the city centre.
- 5.7.3 Whilst the city centre benefits greatly from its compact form this does lead to problems of transport and pressure on roads. The High Street has been partially pedestrianised which enhances the quality of the area. However, other city centre streets are subject to high traffic volumes leading to noise, disturbance, dust, fumes and associated problems. Whilst this issue is not confined to Winchester, it is of concern and does impact upon the quality of the city.
- 5.7.4 Some examples of modern redevelopment within the historic street pattern have been detrimental. The prime case is Ashburton Court where the scale, forms, materials and massing are unrelated to the surrounding townscape and intrude into views both within and from outside the city. Redevelopment on this scale is unlikely to be acceptable in the future. Nevertheless, lessons have been learnt and more recent public buildings, such as the Hampshire Records Office, show how modern design can add to the quality of the city. Good modern architecture has a role to play in this historic city and should be encouraged where required.
- 5.7.5 Equally, the wealth of historic buildings often requires sensitive adaptation for modern users and this presents many challenges to owners, designers and the public authorities. Winchester has a range of buildings modernised with respect for their origins or converted from past uses. Implicit in ensuring a healthy city centre is the need to ensure buildings have active use that does not conflict with the original fabric or surrounding townscape and contributes to the quality of the city.
- 5.7.6 The other historic cores, Oram's Arbour, Hyde and Weeke Manor are less dynamic than the city centre. In these areas, emphasis has been and is likely to continue to be conservation which aims to maintain their special quality and character.

Green Wedges and Corridors

- 5.7.7 One essential element of Winchester's characteristics is the penetration of green spaces into the city. The principal areas are the Itchen Valley, Barton Farm, Teg Down and Bushfield.
- 5.7.8 Of these, two are protected from adverse change by their existing and management uses. That is the Royal Winchester Golf Club at Teg Down and the high nature conservation value of the Itchen Valley.
- 5.7.9 The sites at Barton Farm and Bushfield have a major role in the setting of the city and how it addresses the surrounding landscape. They are both very high profile sites, sensitive in their location and importance for the setting of the city. Barton



Farm, owned by Winchester College, is actively farmed. Bushfield, in multiple ownership, has been subject to development proposals which have been the subject of much debate.

5.7.10 The future uses of these two sites cannot be considered in this study. They form part of a much wider debate in the Local Plan process, informed by this study which has drawn together and illustrated the varied environmental aspects to be considered and weighed. The qualities of landscapes at Barton Farm and Bushfield are varied. Barton Farm is in active arable cultivation, Bushfield contains areas of currently vacant land. Their importance to the city setting lies in their location to the city's edge. This study has shown that Barton Farm falls within an area of supportive landscape. Bushfield, due to its landform, is considered to be part of a distinctive landscape, particularly important for its backdrop to the Itchen Valley and St Cross as well as providing a key vista over the city to the Cathedral, St Cross and the Itchen Valley.

5.7.11 Other less prominent green corridors such as tree lined roads and suburbs, the railway cuttings, footpaths, bridleways and other open spaces weave through the city introducing a close proximity to nature. These areas of greenspace are important visually, for nature conservation and for recreation and should be actively managed to encourage their long term health and contribution to the setting of the city.

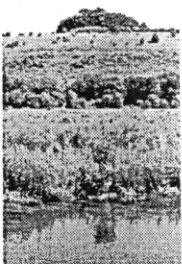
5.7.12 Forest scale trees are a significant asset to the characters of Sleepers Hill, St Giles's Hill, Romsey and Andover Roads, Chilbolton Avenue, Berewecke Road, Park Road, Stockbridge Road, Lanham and Salters Lanes. Reaching stages of maturity or over maturity much of this treescape is fragile and susceptible to pressure from development, and traffic disturbance.

5.7.13 A comprehensive survey of and strategy for the city's trees is required. This would update work done in the early 1980's, and development of a management strategy would ensure continuation of these forest scale trees in the future fabric of the city. Trees of this importance require space to grow and thrive which, in turn, should be reflected in city policies for siting and density of new development proposals and the management of traffic on the city's roads.

River Itchen

Water abstraction

5.7.14 The adverse effects of water abstraction on the biodiversity of the River Itchen is one of the area's priority issues. Until the early 1990s, water levels in the aquifer seem to have changed very little, and appeared healthy. However, a recent series of dry summers and changing rainfall patterns has caused concern, particularly regarding the long time necessary to fully recharge the aquifer. Abstraction from the aquifer, and directly from the river, both contribute to low flows. English Nature have already observed adverse effects on the *Ranunculus penicillatus* vegetation which may be due to a combination of low flows and changing rainfall patterns. The Environment Agency are undertaking a major study to identify these impacts upon *Ranunculus*. The Environment Agency are also carrying out a review of water abstraction in the Itchen catchment. Development which requires an increase in the amount of abstraction will need to be assessed against the requirements of the River Itchen cSAC.



Water Quality

5.7.15 The River Itchen is, reportedly, one of the least polluted chalk rivers in England. The water quality is highest in the headwaters and gets worse downstream. The river is generally protected from fertiliser and pesticide run-off, because the adjacent land is not intensively farmed. In the past, pollution from fish farms was a major issue, although fish-farming was considered to be under control by the early 1990s. The levels of nitrates in the aquifer is of concern to some local residents, and will need to be kept under review by the Environment Agency.

River Bank Management

5.7.16 In some locations, excessive trampling and poaching by cattle has caused erosion of the bank, widening the river and increasing siltation. The usual response is to fence off sections of the river bank, and re-instate eroded areas by filling with chalk. Fencing the banks significantly reduces their nature conservation value. Lightly grazed bankside vegetation is an important micro-habitat for many invertebrates, including a number of the nationally scarce species. The Environment Agency consider that fencing the banks is a necessary flood defence measure, unless cattle are grazed at extremely low densities. Marginal habitats along the river can be enhanced by low level berms and measures to encourage silt deposition in specific areas. Grazed and poached margins should be encouraged on the drainage ditches feeding into the main channel.

Fishery Management

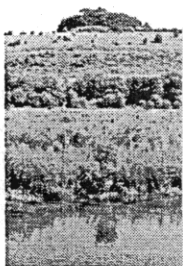
5.7.17 It is recognised that private fishing has generally contributed towards maintenance of the river's biodiversity. There is, however, some concern that the emphasis on game fish has caused a decline in populations of natural fish species. The escape of American Signal Crayfish from fish farms introduced crayfish plague to the river, causing a dramatic decline in the population of native white-clawed crayfish.

Drainage

5.7.18 There has been a perceived drop in soil moisture levels within the river flood-plain, probably as a result of improved drainage in some areas, the loss of carriers within the disused water meadows, and local abstraction, for example at Winnal. Lowering of soil moisture levels has adversely affected wet grassland and mire communities and the plants which they support. Nine out of twenty rare and uncommon species recorded in the 19th century are now thought to be extinct. The combination of lowered water levels and changes in agricultural management has caused a general decline in fen vegetation; an expansion of unmanaged tall fen at the expense of herb-rich meadow vegetation and an increase in the amount of species-poor improved grassland, particularly downstream. Lowering of soil moisture levels has caused a dramatic decline in populations of breeding birds associated with wet grassland such as snipe and redshank.

Vegetation Management

5.7.19 The majority of the valley is in permanent pasture, but there has been a slow trend towards increased use of herbicides and fertilisers in the most productive areas and neglect in the least productive areas. This has contributed towards the changes in vegetation discussed in Appendix 3. On the positive side, many of the former water-meadows were species-poor and have now been colonised by more interesting fen vegetation.



The Downland

Grassland Management

5.7.20 Grasslands are dependent on continuity of management to maintain their nature conservation value. Cessation of grazing ultimately results in successional change towards scrub and secondary woodland. The long term management of chalk grassland is a major issue, particularly if changing agricultural subsidies make stock grazing even more uneconomic. Sheep or cattle grazing is the most successful management method for large sites which have outstanding botanical or invertebrate interest. Owners of SSSIs are able to receive financial aid from English Nature to ensure optimum site management. Owners of lower quality sites may be able to receive financial support through Countryside Stewardship, although it is unlikely that this scheme will ever be able to cover large swathes of countryside.

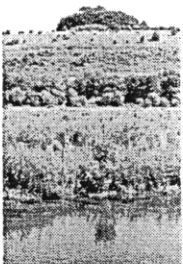
5.7.21 A possible alternative to grazing is cutting. Sites which have tractor access can be mown, and this method has been successful in maintaining the long-term botanical interest of chalk grassland swards on golf-courses and other recreational sites, as well as on chalk grassland nature reserves. The South Downs Conservation Board are actively developing management proposals that would be applicable to these downland areas. Research has shown that mowing more than once a year maximises botanical diversity. However, mowing can have adverse effects on the invertebrate fauna, unless it is carefully carried out, with refuges for overwintering stages of the life-cycle being managed on a rotational basis. Very small sites, particularly on steep slopes, can be managed by rotational hand cutting, although a committed work force is required to make this viable. When managing any site it is important that a balance is maintained between grassland and species-rich scrub, which is of value for breeding birds and a range of invertebrates.

5.7.22 A further management technique which can be used to maintain chalk grassland is rotational burning in late autumn or early spring. Burning has long been used for grassland management in the uplands, but has not been widely used in the lowlands. Burning is not an ideal management technique as it can lead to the spread of rank grassland, but it has been used successfully to maintain diverse calcareous grassland where grazing is impracticable, for example on the Devil's Dyke in Cambridgeshire. Burning can be an effective reclamation technique when used in conjunction with grazing or cutting. Burning small patches creates a vegetation mosaic of different ages and structures which may be beneficial to invertebrates.

Fragmentation

5.7.23 St Catherine's Hill is now the largest, continuous block of unimproved downland in the study area, and is the most important relict of the formerly huge expanse of downland east of Winchester. Significant areas of unimproved chalk grassland also remain on Twyford Down, within the boundaries of Hockley Golf Course, and within the boundaries of the Royal Winchester Golf Course at Teg Down. Although both golf courses are important for the grassland species they support, the unimproved grassland is often rank and is fragmented by areas of improved and semi-improved grassland, scrub and trees.

5.7.24 Prior to construction of the M3, St Catherine's Hill was contiguous with chalk grassland on Twyford Down, and it is likely that there was considerable interchange of plants and animals between the two areas. Construction of the M3 has severed the link between them, and in the long term could have adverse effects on the chalk grassland flora and fauna due to difficulties of ensuring effective management.



- 5.7.25 The majority of other chalk grassland sites are small and fragmented, being generally confined to relatively inaccessible areas on steep slopes. The smaller sites are often difficult or uneconomic to manage, and many have been adversely affected by scrub invasion. Some, such as Magdalen Hill Down, have been acquired by nature conservation organisations, and remedial work, including scrub clearance has been carried out to benefit the flora and fauna.
- 5.7.26 Potentially there are opportunities for re-creating chalk grassland, primarily on land which is in arable cultivation, to link existing sites. The restoration of the former A33 to chalk grassland is considered by local residents to be a success, and has expanded the area of chalk grassland in the vicinity of St Catherine's Hill. The effectiveness of other restoration proposals will depend on the nature of the soils, the past land-use and the potential for long-term grassland management.

Recreation and Public Access

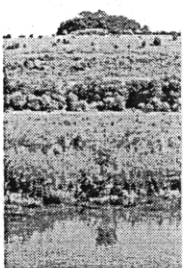
- 5.7.27 St Catherine's Hill is well used both by residents of Winchester and visitors from further afield for informal recreation. The three paths to the top of St Catherine's Hill all show signs of erosion, and it may be necessary to re-route them on a rotational basis to prevent long-term damage. Certain other activities can also cause local impacts on the vegetation. For example, mountain biking, which is illegal away from the bridleways, and tobogganing. Visitor access may limit potential management regimes. In particular, sheep grazing may be impossible on sites which are well used for dog-walking, and burning may not be considered safe on sites with open access.

Ancient Woodland

- 5.7.28 Broadleaved woodland is one of the more robust habitat types, being the climax vegetation in the study area. However, there are issues which limit the potential biodiversity interest. Most of the ancient woodlands were historically managed as coppice-with-standards, which provided structural diversity and was of benefit to many plants and insects. Lack of coppice management, largely since the Second World War, has reduced structural diversity and caused damage to populations of certain species such as nightingale and fritillary butterflies. Re-introduction of coppice management should be considered in ex-coppice woodlands, but should only be implemented if it is likely to be sustainable in the long term. Coppicing around rides and glades is likely to produce the maximum benefit for both wildlife and human visitors. In the long-term, areas which are not actively managed are likely to develop increased biodiversity, with particular benefits for species which rely on dead wood such as beetles and woodpeckers.
- 5.7.29 Recreation can be an issue in certain, sensitive ancient woodlands. Sites such as Crab Wood LNR and Shroner Wood are well used by local residents for quiet recreation, and this is entirely compatible with maintenance of the woodland interest. Other recreational pursuits are less compatible with retention of woodland interest. Potentially damaging activities include uncontrolled mountain biking, motor-cycle scrambling and war gaming.

Arable Land

- 5.7.30 There is a large area of arable land within the study area. As in much of the rest of southern England, this has suffered as a result of the intensification of agricultural production. Regular use of herbicides, often right into hedge bottoms, has added to the decline of many attractive arable weeds. The shift towards autumn sowing, and



the lack of winter stubble has had a major impact on many formerly common species of farmland bird and mammal, such as grey partridge, skylark and brown hare. Changes in agricultural subsidies are required to encourage more 'wildlife friendly' farming, with retention of a larger area of winter stubble, creation of wildlife headlands adjacent to arable crops and creation of reserves for corn-field annuals.

5.7.31 There would be benefits, both for wildlife and local people, from replacing areas of lower grade arable with more extensive pastoral systems. A strategy could be developed which identified key localities for grassland re-establishment and management. The priority areas would be:

- adjacent to and linking existing areas of semi-natural habitat
- in areas which could be used by local residents for quiet recreation
- in locations where grassland would make an important contribution to the landscape setting of the city.

5.7.32 Prior to implementation of any changes, it is likely that there would need to be changes in national agricultural subsidies, to make extensive sheep and cattle grazing more economically viable.

