

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF THE CITY AND ITS SETTING

The landscape and townscape assessment of the city and its setting has followed a systematic approach commencing with a survey of the principal elements within the study area; an analysis of the key factors and issues arising from the survey; and a more detailed landscape and townscapes assessment and characterisation study to identify and delineate Landscape Types and Landscape and Townscape Character Areas.

4.1 Landscape Survey and Description

A wide range of landscape elements were identified both by desk study and field survey. These principally comprised topography and drainage, landcover, vegetation including tree cover, open space network, and the interaction of these physical elements within the settlement and communication structure. The findings of the survey are summarised in a set of three Landscape Survey plans, Drawing Nos 1059 / LP / 3 - / 5 inclusive. Further information pertaining to woodland and tree cover, and open and green spaces within and on the perimeter of the city, both of which are key elements in the landscape setting of the city, are discussed below.

4.1.1 Woodland and Tree Cover

A comprehensive appraisal of the tree cover within Winchester City was included in the Landscape Appraisal carried out in 1983 by Winchester City Council for the Winchester Area Local Plan. Although 15 years have now elapsed since the completion of the report, the broad findings of the study comprising an assessment of the distribution, functions and key issues pertaining to the tree cover, are substantially unchanged. For the sake of completing, the principal findings of the study are included in this current report and summarised below.

4.1.2 The Local Plan Landscape Appraisal (1993) was confined to the built area of the city. An examination of the principal distribution and characteristics of the woodland and tree cover within the broader setting of the city was carried out for this report, in order to provide a comprehensive assessment of the vegetation pattern that affects the whole of the study area.

4.1.3 Tree Cover within the Built Area of the City

The extensive tree cover that filters through the built area of Winchester is a particularly notable feature and contributes much to the charm and character of the city. As well as softening and enhancing the setting of many of the buildings, the trees also provide shade and shelter, and signify seasonal changes.

4.1.4 In the following areas of the city the combination of an elevated location and the scale and density of tree cover has resulted in a particularly significant impact.

- The summit and west facing slopes of St Giles's Hill;
- Sleepers Hill District;
- The predominantly wooded western skyline of the city comprising the tree cover on the summit of Oliver's Battery; the upper section of Sleepers' Hill; Romsey Road; and Chilbolton Avenue;

Well established and important concentrations of tree cover are also located within the following lower lying areas:



APPENDIX 4
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF THE CITY
AND ITS SETTING

APPENDIX 4
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT OF THE CITY
AND ITS SETTING

Landscape Character Assessment of the Study Area

The landscape survey information has provided the base line data to inform the landscape assessment and characterisation of the study area. Prior to the detailed assessment, however, a review of current studies for the area was carried out to ensure that the approach and system of classification was consistent with established delineations.

4.3 Review of Landscape Assessments of Study Area

Landscape assessments have been carried out at national, county and district level within which the study area is located. Each of these separate tiers of assessments are reviewed below.

Countryside Character Project, Countryside Commission, 1996

The Character Map of England identifies the principal landscape character areas within England and provides a comprehensive understanding of landscape character from a national and regional perspective. The study area is located within the following two character areas.

- The South Downs
- The Hampshire Downs

The majority of the study area is located within the Hampshire Downs. A small section of the South Downs designation covers part of the south-eastern section, however, commencing at St Catherine's Hill, and extending eastwards to include the area of chalk upland.

Hampshire County Council Assessments

A comprehensive landscape assessment of the county has been carried out by Hampshire County Council culminating in the publication of 'The Hampshire Landscape' in 1993. At a county level, eleven landscape character areas have been designated, of which the following four occur within the area surrounding the city of Winchester.

- Hampshire Downs
- Mid Hampshire Downs
- South Hampshire Downs
- Itchen River Valley

This sub-regional landscape character classification accords with the subsequent national Character Map of England, but is sub-divided to a finer grain to reflect the variations in the chalkland landscape that can be identified at a county rather than a regional level.

At a more detailed level, the range of landscape types that occur within the county were also identified. The assessment was based on the Countryside Commission's publication 'Assessment and Conservation of Landscape Character' CCP332 (1991), and resulted in the delineation of nineteen rural types' of which the following four are represented in the area surrounding the city of Winchester



River Valley

In addition to raising the awareness of the diversity and distinctiveness of each of these landscape types, the report also identified a number of issues for wider debate, particularly in relation to the forces and causes of landscape change.

Winchester District Landscape Assessment

A landscape assessment of the District was undertaken by Winchester City Council in 1993/94, the summary findings of which accompanied the Winchester District Local Plan, Deposit Draft, August 1994. Following further assessment work to take account of comments received, the final District Landscape Assessment report was published in 1995. The methodology was based on the Countryside Commission's Landscape Assessment Guidelines (CCP 423) and using Hampshire County Council's Landscape Type classification as the principal reference, verified and refined the

Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council Local Landscape Types	Winchester City Council Landscape Character Areas Categories	Local Reference Name of WCC Landscape Character Areas within Study Area
Scarps-Downland (HCC)	Chalk Scarpland	Hursley
Open Arable (HCC) Open Farmland (WCC)	Chalk Scarpland	Hursley
Chalk and Clay	Wooded Chalkland	Sparsholt Ovington Down Owslebury Down
River Valley	River Valley	Itchen Valley

distribution of these county wide types into a series of local landscape types. This ensured that there was a consistency in the hierarchy of the classification from county down to district level. A series of landscape character areas were then identified based either on the dominance or combination of one or more landscape types. The relationship between the county landscape types, the district landscape character area categories, and the local reference name of the character areas that occur within the area surrounding Winchester, is detailed below.

Hazeley Down is confined to one landscape type only, comprising open farmland and is classified as an Open Chalkland Landscape Character Area. Hursley is identified as Chalk Scarpland because of the presence of a number of erosional escarpments that extend through the area. There are, however, significant areas of chalk and clay and open farmland landscape types also within the Landscape Character Area. The remainder are a mix of open farmland and chalk and clay, or chalk and clay only in the case of Owslebury Down, but have all been classified as Wooded Chalkland Landscape Character Areas because of the numerous woods, and intermittent sense of enclosure that permeate the areas.



In addition to the refinement of Hampshire County Council's landscape types, and the identification of Landscape Character Areas at a District level, the Landscape Assessment also delineated a number of Areas of Special Landscape Quality (ASLQ), two of which are located within the study area, as described below.

- Itchen Valley ASLQ

The ASLQ is divided into two separate sections, and includes the Itchen river valley and adjacent areas of open farmland and chalk and clay landscape types to the east and to the south of Winchester.

- North Hursley ASLQ

The ASLQ extends across the south-western part of the study area and includes the ridgeline and escarpment at Compton Street and the areas of open farmland that extend south from Sarum Road.

Although the assessment was at a District scale and therefore addressed issues appropriate to a wider area of survey, the distribution of these Landscape Character Areas has proved a useful reference for the current study.

Winchester Area Local Plan - Landscape Appraisal

A landscape assessment of the Winchester area was carried out in 1983 for the Winchester Area Local Plan, by Winchester City Council. The study formed part of the review of the Winchester Town Map (1966) with the purpose of informing the emerging Local Plan.

The broad landscape setting of Winchester is briefly considered in the early section of the report, together with an appraisal of the principal views out of the city from a few key vantage points. The majority of the study, however, is confined to the built area of the city only, and therefore does not include a detailed appraisal of the setting of the city or any characterisation assessment. Although it is now 15 years since the report was completed, it remains a valuable reference, particularly in the context of the townscape aspects of the current study. The details of the tree cover and condition, and the open space network throughout the city are a very useful source of information, and provide a checklist for verification of change since the survey and appraisal was prepared.

4.4 Delineation of Landscape Types

The establishment and delineation of the landscape types within the study area is a fundamental stage in the characterisation process. A detailed examination of the Hampshire County Council landscape types was therefore undertaken in order to identify, verify, and where necessary refine the delineation of the boundaries.

The methodology adopted was based on the Countryside Commission's 'Landscape Assessment Guidelines', 1993, CCP423 adapted to the scale and level of detail required for the study. Field mapping was conducted at a scale of 1:25,000 for areas beyond the built area of the city; elsewhere, mapped information was recorded at 1:10,000. A systematic approach was adopted, with the following principal stages.

- Desk Study

Review of mapped data including OS maps, geology; soils; HCC GIS data at 1:25,000 scale for landscape types and county character areas, national and local policy considerations, landcover and habitat data; aerial photographs; and a wide range of technical reports which either incorporated or was confined to specific sections of the study area.

- Preliminary Field Assessment

Familiarisation with the study area and identification of the principal characteristics and distribution of the HCC landscape types;



- Preliminary Analysis

Assessment of map overlays for geology, soil types, topography and landcover pattern to review the delineation of the boundaries of the landscape types; cross reference with aerial photographs and District Council Assessment boundaries; identification of any potential anomalies or areas requiring more detailed examination;

- Detailed Field Assessment

Site verification of potential anomalies in landscape type boundaries and areas requiring further field assessment;

- Final Analysis and Classification

Final refinement and classification of landscape types and boundaries at 1:25,000 and identification of preliminary Landscape Character Areas;

Although the Hampshire County Council landscape type descriptions are appropriate at a county level, further qualifying descriptions were introduced for the landscape types within the study area in order to reflect local variations and features. These are summarised below.

Hampshire County Council Landscape Type Description	Local Landscape Type Description
Scarps - Downland	Open Chalk Upland with Downland and Escarpments
Open Arable	Open Arable and Pasture Downs
Chalk and Clay	Open Chalk and Clay Downs Enclosed Chalk and Clay Downs
River Valley	River Valley

Two further categories of landscape type have been introduced, comprising golf courses and areas of formal recreation land on the perimeter of the city, and areas of designed historic parkland. Although occurring within broader landscape types, their separate identification reflects the locally significant impact they have on the landscape.

Distribution of Landscape Types

The range and distribution of the landscape types that surround and extend into the heart of Winchester are illustrated on Drawing no 1059 LP / 7. There is a notable contrast between the eastern and western sides of the city, however, with 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 this broad transition.



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. With the exception of the settlements of South Wonston and the Worthy Camp, the area is sparsely populated and confined to intermittent isolated farms.

To the 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 steep slopes support intermittent areas of species rich chalk grassland as well as some woodland. The landform of this scarps-downland landscape type is dramatic, with spectacular dry valleys sweeping down from the elevated chalk upland to the Itchen Valley. At Chilcomb to the east of Winchester the Magdalen Hill Down and Deacon Hill escarpments enclose a lower vale of open arable and pasture downs

Hazeley Down forms the southern limit of this broad area of open chalkland. Further south there is a subtle change, with a transition to a smaller or more intricate field pattern and more tree cover. Intermittent deposits of clay-with-flints has resulted in an open chalk and clay downs landscape type. To the east at Longwood Down, however, there is a significant increase in woodland cover resulting in an enclosed chalk and clay downs classification.

To the west of the city the pattern of landscape types is more complex. The area is underlain by Upper Chalk together with some superficial deposits of clay-with-flints to the south west of the city. The soil map, however, indicated a more variable soil pattern with some significant areas of clayey and silty clay soils occurring. Although the overall character is still chalkland, the intermittent incidence of areas of clay based soils explain the greater variation in landscape type that occurs in this area.

A broad 'wedge' of open, predominantly arable, farmland penetrates into the western edge of the city at Lanham and Weeke Down, and extending south to Port Lane. This open character of this area is similar to the expansive arable downs to the north and east of the city and is therefore classified as open arable and pasture downs. To the north of this area, the pattern of landscape types is much more varied, however, with a sequence of enclosed small scale fields surrounding the settlement of Littleton, and the villages of Dean and Sparsholt; intermittent areas of more open arable fields; significant area of designed parkland landscape at Northwood Park and Lainston House; and extensive areas of woodland comprising Crab Wood and West Wood, and extending westwards beyond the area of the landscape assessment. The soil map indicates evidence of clay and fine silty clay soils within the area that may be associated with occasional intermittent deposits of clay-with-flints, although the latter is not recorded on the 1949 issue geology map. This change in soil type, together with the predominantly enclosed character, has resulted in a classification of enclosed chalk and clay downs.

To the south west of Winchester a significant 'wedge' of open farmland extends into the heart of the city from Olivers Battery, Badger Farm and Bushfield. A prominent escarpment at Compton Down extends across this undulating area to the south-west of which are further areas of clay or silty clay soils. Although there are a number of significant areas of woodland permeating through the farmland, the general character is open, so it has been classified as open chalk and clay downs.



The landscape type adjacent to the River Itchen is river valley throughout with the classification confined to the valley bottom and floodplain. Although other landscape types extend up to the perimeter of the river valley and extend across the valley sides, the river valley is a distinctive and separate type comprising the immediate confines and area of influence of the river.

4.5 Delineation of Landscape Character Areas

The identification of landscape types is the first stage in the characterisation process and an essential lead into the subsequent identification of Landscape Character Areas. The well defined and distinctive character of each of these landscape types has resulted in the delineation of a series of Local Landscape Character Areas within single rather than a combination of landscape types. These each have a geographical identity derived from the local area within which they occur. The only exception to this 'single landscape type' approach occurs within the Itchen Valley. Here, a general accordance with Hampshire County Council's Character Area boundary for the Itchen Valley has been followed. As a result, the two Itchen Valley Character Areas embrace a number of landscape types which occur along the valley sides as well as the valley bottom.

The final delineation of the Character Areas was 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 superimposed on these broader variations of landscape pattern were also considered, notably the influence of historic landscape patterns and heritage features, areas of nature conservation interest, and the settlement and communication patterns. These all contributed to the unique identity and 'sense of place' that is particular to each of the Character Areas.

The distribution of the Local Landscape Character Areas is illustrated on Drawing No 1059LP / 7 and summarised below. These form the first stage in the characterisation of the landscape setting of Winchester.

Schedule of Local Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Type(s) occurring within Character Areas	Local Landscape Character Areas	
Open Chalk Uplands with Downland and Escarpments	1A	St Catherine's Hill
	1B	Magdalen Hill Down / Cheesefoot Head / Twyford Down
	1C	Shawford Down
Open Arable and Pasture Downs	2A	Worthy Down
	2B	Itchen Down
	2C	Winnall Down
	2D	Vale of Chilcomb
	2E	Longwood Warren
	2F	Hazeley Down
	2G	Compton Down
	2H	Pitt Down
Open Chalk and Clay Downs	3A	Ovington Down
	3B	Owlesbury Down
	3C	Hursley Down
Enclosed Chalk and Clay Downs	4A	Sparsholt and Littleton
	4B	Shroner and Itchen Woods
	4C	Longwood
River Valley Open Arable and Pasture Downs Open Chalk and Clay Downs	5A	Itchen Valley North



