
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for

**Old Oak Farm, Winchester Road,
Fair Oak, Hampshire, SO50 7HD**



L179R01

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This report should be read in conjunction with Appendix One - Methodology L179/R02

This report has been commissioned by Mr. Jason Lomas in regard to the redevelopment of Old Oak Farm. Winchester Road, Fair Oak, SO50 7HD.

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GLOSSARY

Assessment unit Assessment units are reporting units which may be Landscape Character Areas or Landscape Character Types, or subdivisions of either, depending upon the scale and purpose of the Landscape sensitivity assessment. Some practitioners have referred to these as land parcels, or sensitivity parcels. They may be informed by desk and field study and will be areas of broadly similar characteristics.

Capacity – the maximum amount that something can contain ****

Elements Individual parts which make up the landscape, such as, for example, trees, hedges and buildings.*

Feature Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements in the landscape, such as tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines OR a particular aspect of the project proposal.*

GLVIA 3 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

Key characteristics Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.*

Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors ***

Landscape capacity refers to the amount of specified development or change which a particular landscape and the associated visual resource is able to accommodate without undue negative effects on its character and qualities.

Landscape character A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.*

Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.*

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) The process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape, and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.*

Landscape Character Types (LCTs) These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes. *

Landscape management means action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes ***

Landscape planning means strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscapes ***

Landscape policy means an expression by the competent public authorities of general principles, strategies and guidelines that permit the taking of specific measures aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes ***

Landscape Sensitivity Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource. Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value.

Landscape Susceptibility Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape susceptibility is the degree to which a defined landscape and its associated visual qualities and attributes might respond to the specific development type / development scenario or other change without undue negative effects on landscape character and the visual resource.

Landscape value The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.*

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework

NPSG - Laverstock and Ford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Overall sensitivity A term applied when landscape sensitivity reporting is generalised across the assessment unit (even though it must be accepted that such sensitivity to particular developments is likely to vary within the assessment unit).

Sensitive – quick to detect, respond to, or be affected by slight changes or influences ****

Susceptible – likely to be influenced or harmed by a particular thing ****

SHELAA - Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Strategic Forming part of a long term plan to achieve a specific purpose

* Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition, Routledge.

** Defra 'An introductory guide to valuing Ecosystem services' (2007).

*** Council of Europe (2000), European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, Florence, Oct 2000.

**** Oxford University Press (2005), Compact Oxford English Dictionary.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report has been commissioned by Mr. Jason Lomas in order to inform the owners of Old Oak Farm, Winchester Road, Fair Oak of the issues relating to landscape and visual amenity for the proposed replacement dwelling at Old Oak Farm. Baseline surveys of both landscape and visual amenity have been carried out and a landscape and visual assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken in order to advise on the potential effects of the proposed development.
- 1.2. This landscape and visual appraisal has been prepared in accordance with:
- ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013’. (GLVIA 3).
 - ‘An approach to Landscape Character Assessment’. Natural England 2014.
- 1.3. Site visits were carried out in June and September 2023

2. SITE CONTEXT

Location

- 2.1. Old Oak Farm is located on Winchester Road on the outskirts of Fair Oak to the south of Winchester and the east of Eastleigh, Hampshire. It lies within the parish of Fair Oak and Horton Heath parish. The farm lies between the historical hamlets of Crowdhill to the south and Fisher’s Pond to the south and would likely to have originally been part of the Manor of Marwell which lies to the north-east.

Heritage and History

- 2.2. Old Oak Farm lies near the top of the hill which falls to the south to a tributary of the River Itchen known as Bow Lake. This area was part of the manor of Marwell which lies to the north-east of Old Oak Farm and in the mediaeval period the valley floor was flooded to create fish ponds to provide fish for the Manor Hall which acted as a secular college for the Bishop of Winchester. Fisher’s pond is one of the last remaining ponds in the area.
- 2.3. Two hundred years ago, the Parish of Bishopstoke covered over 3,430 acres and extended as far as Fair Oak, Horton Heath, Crowd Hill, and Fishers Pond, yet according to a census of 1788, ordered by the Bishop of Winchester, the Manor contained only 746 people. From the 1826 Enclosure map, there were 40 buildings in the village, most of these were in the lower end, near the River Itchen & Bishopstoke Mill. The 1825 Enclosure act established certain roads in Bishopstoke, now called Church Road (Winchester Road), Stoke Common Road, Jockey Lane, Spring Lane (Back Lane), Riverside and Fair Oak Road (Middle Street), which led to Fair Oak. Fair Oak was established as a civil parish in its own right in 1894, covering an area of 1,680 acres (680 ha) which previously formed the eastern end of Bishopstoke parish.^[7] In 1908, Fair Oak was described thus: “The village of Fair Oak consists of widely scattered houses and farms reaching from Crowdhill on the north to Horton Heath on the south. From Crowdhill, part of which is in Fair Oak, a fine view can be gained of the surrounding country, the Itchen valley stretching away to the south-west towards the Solent, and the chalk downs which lie round Winchester sweeping away to the north.”

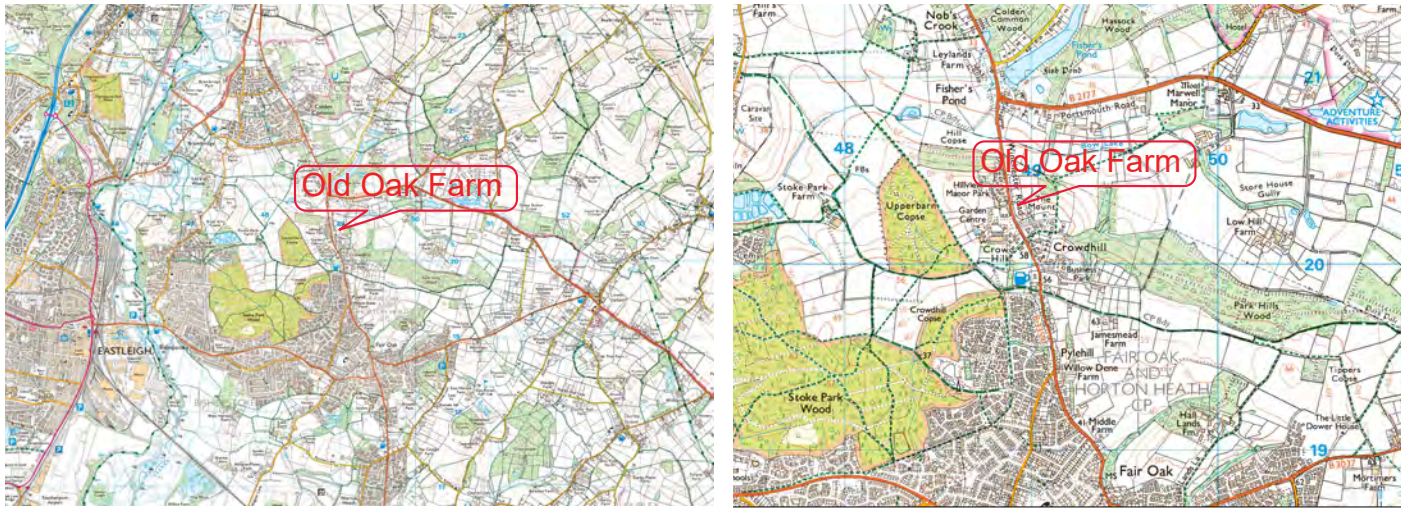


Fig. 2.1 and 2.2 Location plans.



Fig. 2.3. Excerpt from OS map - six inch 1840-1880
[Origin: National Library of Scotland](#)



Fig. 2.4. Excerpt from OS map - six inch 1842-1952
[Origin: National Library of Scotland](#)



Fig. 2.5. Excerpt from OS map - six inch 1880-1900
[Origin: National Library of Scotland](#)

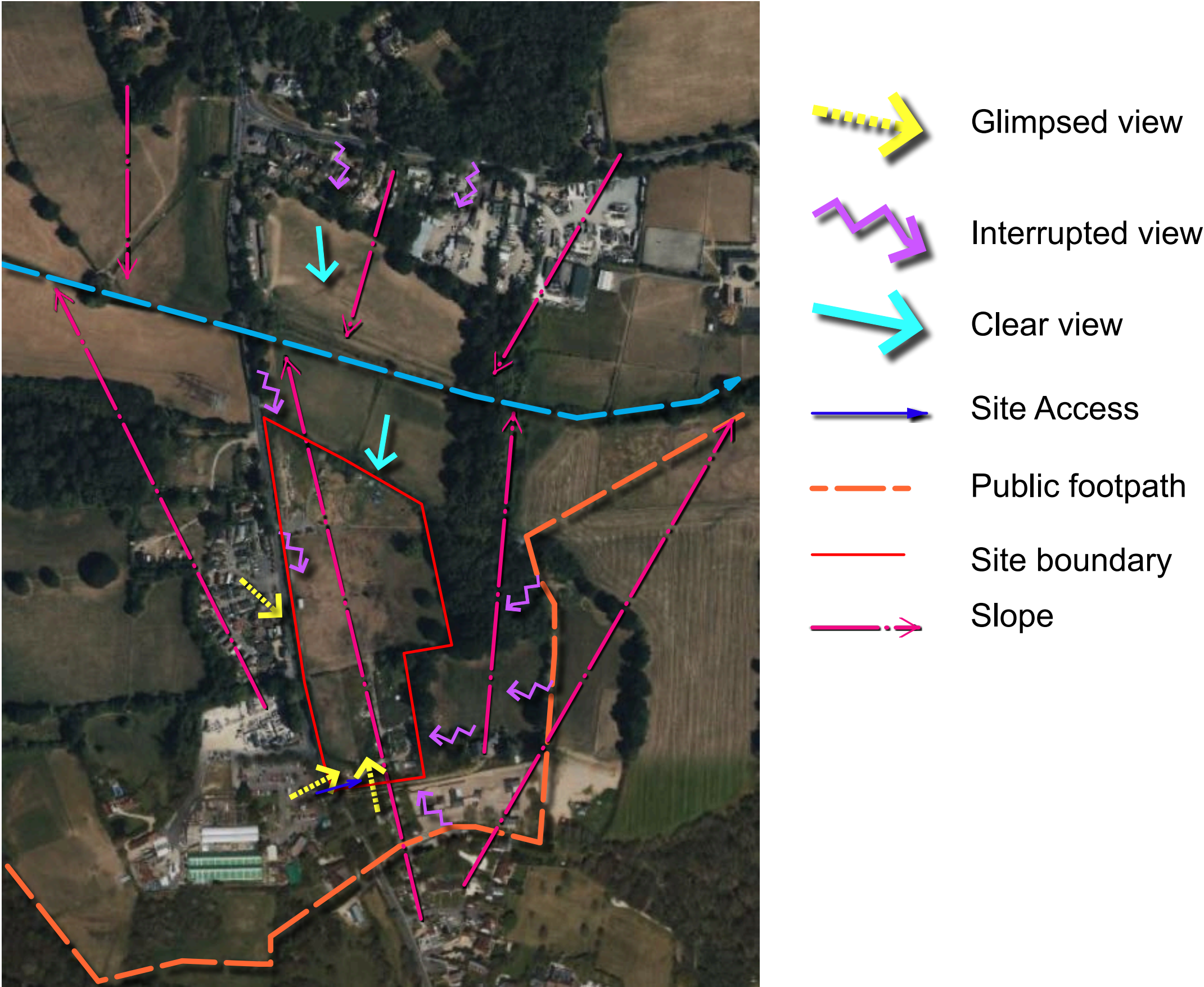


Fig. 2.6. Landscape context - topography, access and views

3. DESIGNATIONS AND POLICIES

Designations

- 3.1. The site has no landscape designations, it lies just outside the South Downs National Park (SDNP). The boundary to the National Park lies 1,400m to the northeast. The site is subject to the Eastleigh Borough Council planning policies and Local Plan.

Listed Buildings

- 3.2. Old Oak Farm is not listed; there are only two listed buildings in close proximity to the site, both of which are grade II listed. These are 'Crowd Hill Farm House' which lies 265m to the west and a pair of semi detached cottages '1 Poplar Cottage' and '2 Pyle Hill Cottage' which are located 575m to the south along Winchester Road.

Conservation Area and Scheduled Monuments

- 3.3. Old Oak Farm does not lie within a Conservation Area.
- 3.4. There are several Park Pales which are designated as Scheduled Monuments to the north of the site; these is associated with the Marwell estate which also contains a moated site which is also designated a scheduled monument. The closest of monument is 210m to the northeast.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 3.5. There are no SSSIs within the study area.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

- 3.6. There are a number of SINC's in close proximity to the site, the closest of which is 'The Mount, Fair Oak/Horton Heath' which lies 160m to the northeast of the site. Also within close proximity are 'Fielders Farm Meadows' 190m north and 'Chestnut Gully Wood' 225m to the east.

Ecology

- 3.7. Stoke Park, an area of woodland to the west of the site, has been identified as a priority area within the BAP. Large areas of woodland provide suitable habitats for many species associated with woodland cover. The dormouse, badgers, roe deer and a number of rare butterflies are known to live here. The area has a network of hedgerows that create green corridors through which woodland animals can move from woodland to woodland.

Planning Policies

- 3.8. Old Oak Farm lies within the borough of Eastleigh. The site has no landscape designations but it lies outside the settlement boundary. The policies listed below are extracted from the Eastleigh Local Plan.
- 3.9. The following policies are listed within the Eastleigh Local Plan and are specifically relevant to the Old Oak Farm location. The area is covered by policies: S1: Delivering sustainable development, S5: New development in the countryside, DM1: General criteria for new development, DM2: Environmentally sustainable development, DM3: Adaption to climate change, DM4: Zero or low carbon energy
- 3.10. The site lies 65m west of the HCC MCA Minerals and Waste Consultation Area (Hampshire only)

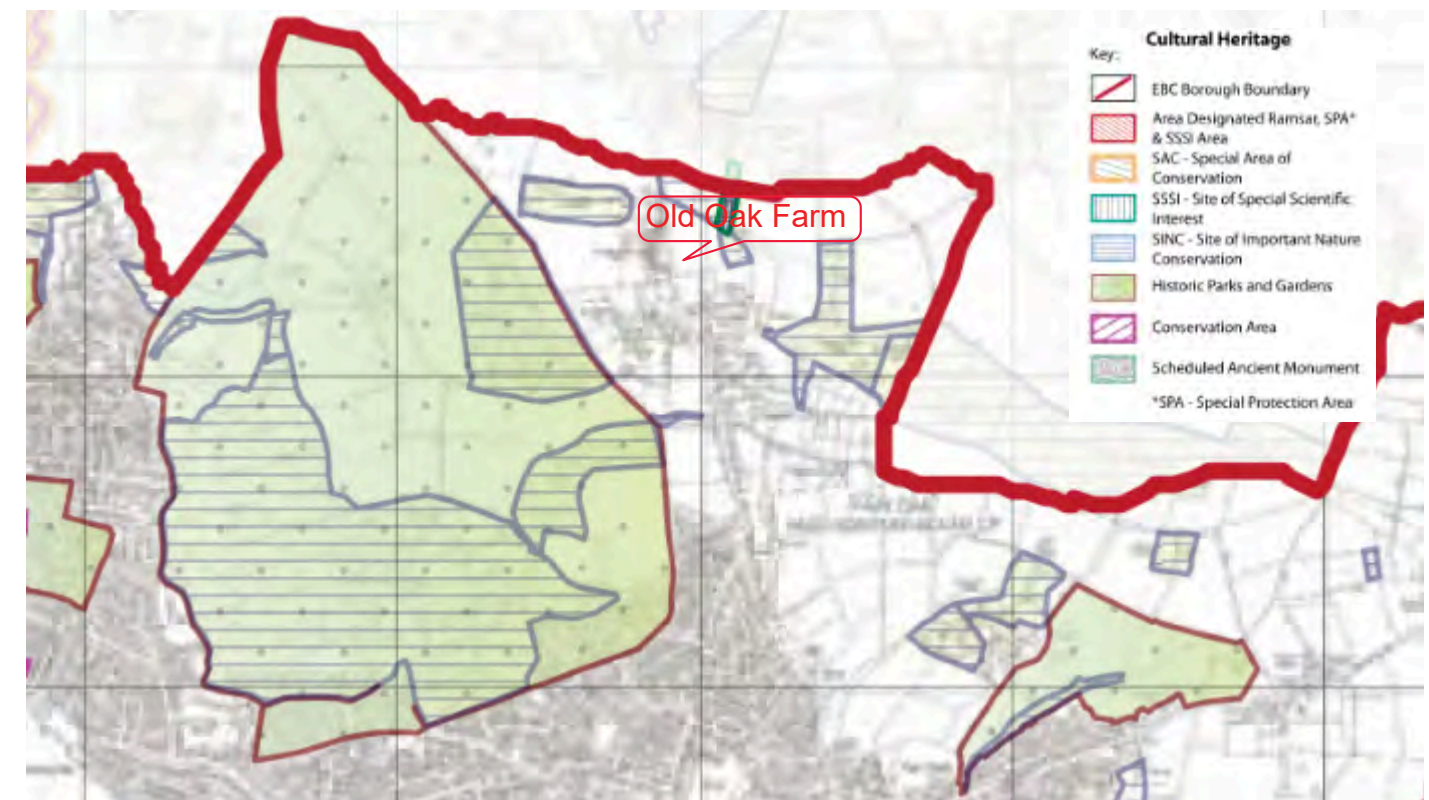


Fig. 3.1 Eastleigh Cultural Heritage Mapping from Eastleigh Landscape Character Assessment

<https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/2519/chapter-3-the-landscape-of-eastleigh-borough.pdf>

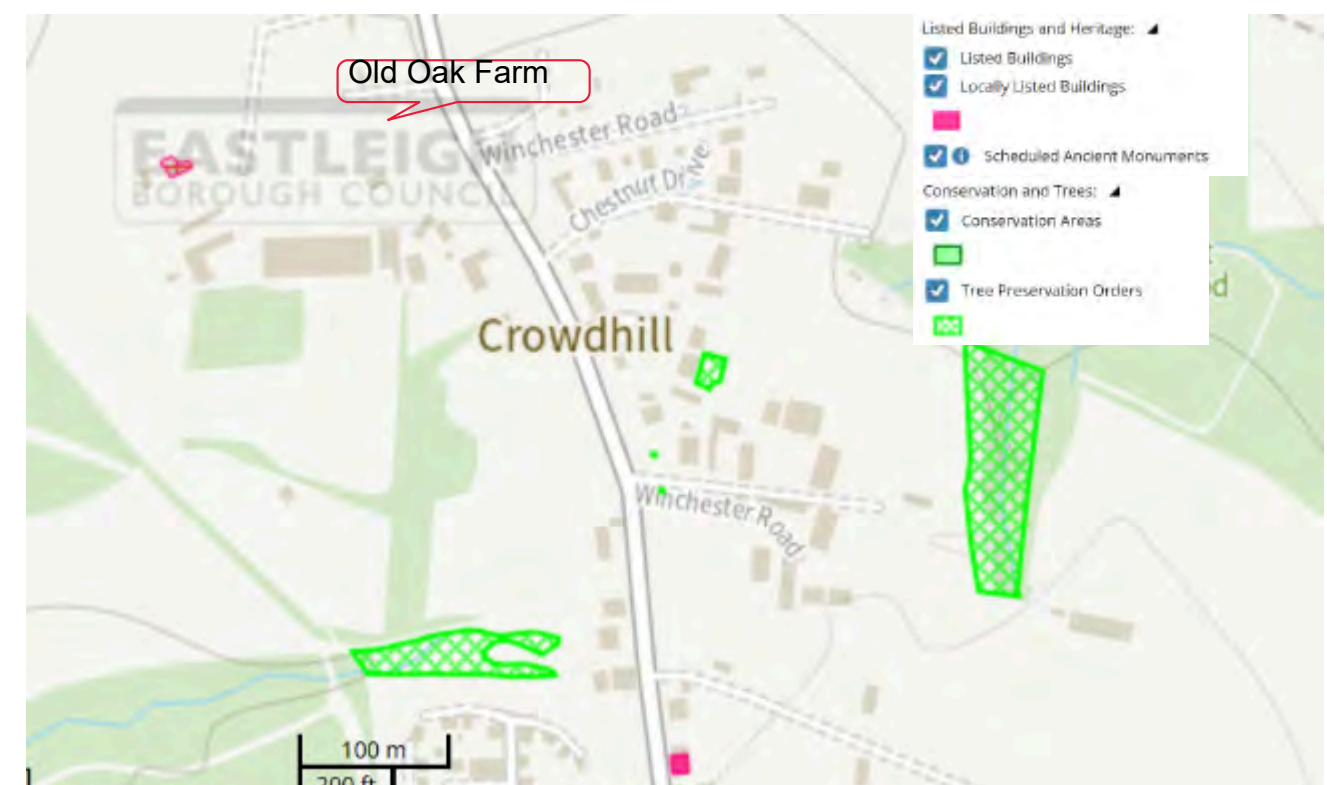


Fig. 3.2 Landscape designations and listed buildings - Eastleigh Interactive Mapping

<https://emaps.eastleigh.gov.uk/WebMaps/Map.aspx?MapName=WebMaps>

Policy S1: Delivering sustainable development

- 3.11. To be sustainable, new development in the Borough should:
- a meet community needs without compromising the identity of the Borough or its individual settlements, or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
 - b enhance social equality by ensuring equal and easy access to a range of community facilities and services and by promoting the development of employment, education and skills training opportunities;
 - c maintain and help to grow a high-performing local economy that benefits the Borough, south Hampshire and the wider economy, without adverse impact on south Hampshire's city, town and other centres, the quality of the local environment or local transport networks;
 - d have regard to the potential impacts of climate change, and the need to limit greenhouse minimise the need to travel longer distances and, where travel is necessary, prioritise more sustainable forms of transport, such as active travel, other alternatives to car use, or a combination of active travel and other alternatives to car use; gas emissions including through carbon sequestration and by promoting measures to design buildings and spaces which are adaptable to predicted climate change, and restrict development in areas at risk from flooding, minimise energy use and encourage the generation of renewable energy, and by minimising emissions from motorised transport, industrial activity and domestic uses;
 - e minimise the need to travel longer distances and, where travel is necessary, prioritise more sustainable forms of transport, such as active travel, other alternatives to car use, or a combination of active travel and other alternatives to car use;
 - f avoid impacts on the Hamble and Itchen catchments and associated flora and fauna species by preserving water quality and flows from development and safeguarding potential yield of local water resources used for public water supplies having regard to the impacts of abstraction;
 - g seek opportunities to optimise density of new development and redevelopments;
 - h use resources wisely and minimise the generation of waste in the construction, occupation and use of buildings;
 - i maintain local environmental quality, including avoiding damage to, and where possible enhancing, the existing valued urban and rural environments in the Borough and heritage assets;
 - j have regard to the purposes of the South Downs National Park, including regarding its status as an International Dark Night Skies reserve; and
 - k maintain, enhance, extend and connect the natural habitats within and landscape value of the Borough, extending natural habitats into new and existing development to achieve an environmental net gain.
- 3.12. Applicants are encouraged to undertake pre-application consultation with the relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees.
- 3.13. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- 3.14. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- 3.15. any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- 3.16. where specific policies in that Framework or other international or national legislation indicate that development should be restricted

Policy S5: New development in the countryside

- 3.17. Planning permission will be granted for new development in the countryside provided it is related to:
- a the provision of employment through agricultural development (policy DM17), the extension and replacement of existing employment uses (policy DM18) and the re-use of existing buildings (policy DM19)
 - b b. residential extensions and replacement buildings (policies DM18 and 26), limited residential conversions (policy DM19), rural workers' dwellings (policy DM27) and accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (policy DM31);
 - c community, tourist, or visitor uses through the re-use of buildings including facilities for the interpretation of heritage assets (policies DM12);
 - d outdoor recreation and open space (policies DM32 and DM33);
 - e allotments and community farms (policy DM32);
 - f cemeteries (policy DM37); and
 - g essential public utilities (policy DM9).
- 3.18. In permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to:
- a avoid adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, the intrinsic character of the landscape including the avoidance of adverse landscape impacts on areas adjoining national parks and their settings, the significance of heritage assets and on the biodiversity of the area;
 - b secure long-term beneficial management practices that will enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the countryside and coast;
 - c avoid sterilisation of mineral resources, in accordance with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan;
 - d safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land unless the benefit of the development clearly outweighs the loss; and
 - e protect soils during construction wherever possible in line with the 'Defra code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites'

Policy DM1: General criteria for new development

- 3.19. All new development should (as relevant):
- a not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance:
 - b residential amenities of both new and existing residents; the character and appearance of urban areas, the countryside and the coast;
 - c biodiversity (avoiding significant adverse impacts); and
 - d the significance of heritage assets;
 - e make efficient use of the site, maximise opportunities to increase density and have regard to potential development opportunities on adjoining land;
 - f take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character

appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood, and be compatible with adjoining uses and be well integrated with these in terms of mass, scale, materials layout, density, design and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings spaces and views. Where adjoining development is poor in urban design terms, new development should contribute to improving the character of the area;

- g not involve the loss of or damage to trees, woodlands, hedgerows, ponds, priority habitats or other landscape features of value to the character of the area, for appearance or biodiversity unless they can be replaced with features of equivalent or enhanced value, (recognising that some species and habitats may be irreplaceable);
- h include a landscape scheme covering the design and layout of external space;
- i protect and enhance public rights of way and National Trails and provide fully connected green infrastructure that interlaces the development and connects into the wider network;
- j provide satisfactory management arrangements for all landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement;
- k incorporate provision for people with disabilities and create accessible communities that cater for all;
- l incorporate design measures to inhibit criminal and anti-social behaviour;
- m incorporate provision for on-site waste management; and
- n include provision for public art associated with new large scale development in accordance with the Council's adopted Public Art Strategy

Policy DM2: Environmentally sustainable development

3.20. The Borough Council requires that:

- a all new build residential development (C3 Use Class only) must achieve at the time a Reserved Matters or Full Planning Application is submitted:
- b a 19% improvement in predicted carbon emissions, compared with the building regulations standard current at the time, through increased energy efficiency of the building fabric, unless this is superseded by an updated building regulations requirement equivalent to 'zero carbon homes'; and
- c a predicted mains water consumption of no more than 110 litres/person/day.
- d all other development that is above 500 sq.m of floorspace measured externally (including extensions and conversions to existing buildings) must achieve BREEAM 'excellent' (or equivalent) or BREEAM 'very good' plus 'passivhaus' certification including a 15% improvement in predicted carbon emissions, compared with the building regulations current at the time, through low or zero carbon energy generation on site or in a Borough location agreed by the Council.
- e all other larger developments above 10,000 sq.m of floorspace should also seek to fund post occupancy evaluation (POE) in addition to the above.

3.21. In addition to the above, all development above 500 sq.m of floorspace measured externally (including extensions and conversions to existing buildings) and external spaces within the curtilage serving developments of this size should where practical and viable:

- a incorporate energy-efficient passive design principles, the best use of natural daylight and natural ventilation systems wherever possible;
- b connect to any existing near or adjacent low carbon local energy network unless this is proved unviable;
- c use recycled, low embodied carbon, low environmental impact and locally sourced materials in construction where possible;

- d be designed with sufficient flexibility to enable the life of the building to be extended by re-use for other purposes where feasible;
- e aim to deliver at least 1% of all residential units within the whole scheme which achieve full 'passivhaus' certification.

Policy DM3: Adaption to climate change

3.22. All development should be designed to adapt to the predicted climate change impacts for the Borough.

- a To reduce the potential impacts of surface water flooding, sustainable drainage systems need to be implemented as part of an integrated SuDS strategy for the site in accordance with policy DM6 (Sustainable surface water management and watercourse management) and as part of the landscape framework for the site including green open space and green roofs where appropriate.
- b New development should have a cooling strategy which can include:
 - c i. cooling through generous green infrastructure and trees
 - d ii. areas of shade
 - e iii. water cooling
 - f iv. building design and orientation to reduce overheating
 - g v. 'cool roofs' or green roofs and green walls
 - h vi. porous cool pavements
- i To adapt to water stress, new development should be designed to reduce demand.
- j Measures can include:
 - k i. reduced residential mains water consumption (as per policy DM2)
 - l ii. water efficient appliances, fittings and leak detection devices for non-residential and non C3 use class residential development
 - m iii. rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling
 - n iv. drought resistant landscape design and planting

Policy DM4: Adaption to climate change

3.23. The Borough Council will permit the development of infrastructure to:

- a generate zero or low carbon energy; and/or
- b make more efficient use of energy sources e.g. installations deploying combined heat and power CHP technology);
- c Subject to general development criteria and provided that the development:
- d has no significant adverse impact on the landscape or landscape features, biodiversity or the significance of heritage assets;
- e does not involve the loss of land in public recreational use (see policy DM32);
- f does not involve the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land

4. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

National Character Area (NCA) Profile: 128 Hampshire Downs

- 4.1. The UK National Character Area Map divides the UK into areas of similar character
- 4.2. Natural England's has responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, to provide profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.
- 4.3. NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change
- 4.4. Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.
- 4.5. Old Oak Farm lies within [Profile Area 128: Hampshire Downs](#).

Summary

- 4.6. The South Hampshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) is a low lying plain between the chalk hills of the Hampshire and South Downs and Southampton Water. Its highest point is an outlying chalk ridge – Portsdown Hill – but the bedrock geology is mostly open marine, estuarine and freshwater Tertiary deposits. The NCA is dominated by the city and port of Southampton and its adjoining towns and suburbs – 29 per cent of the area is urban. In the more rural areas, it is a mixture of farmland, particularly pasture, and woodland
- 4.7. Some 18 per cent of the land cover of the NCA is woodland, of which almost half is designated ancient woodland, a legacy of the Forest of Bere, a Royal Hunting Forest that once covered the area. Today the most significant blocks of woodland are West Walk near Wickham, Botley Wood at Swanwick and Ampfield Wood near Romsey.
- 4.8. Although a high percentage of the area is urban, the NCA has considerable biodiversity interest. Southampton Water is internationally recognised for its importance for breeding and overwintering waterfowl and waders and for its wetland habitats such as mudflats and salt marshes. Three Natural 2000 designations cover parts of the area – Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site, Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation
- 4.9. The NCA is drained by several rivers: the lower reaches of the Test and Itchen, the source and headwaters of the Hamble and the middle section of the Meon. These provide not only a refuge for species in decline elsewhere, such as otters, but also examples of unusual habitats such as the estuarine woodlands on the Hamble. Both the Test and Itchen are important sources of potable water.

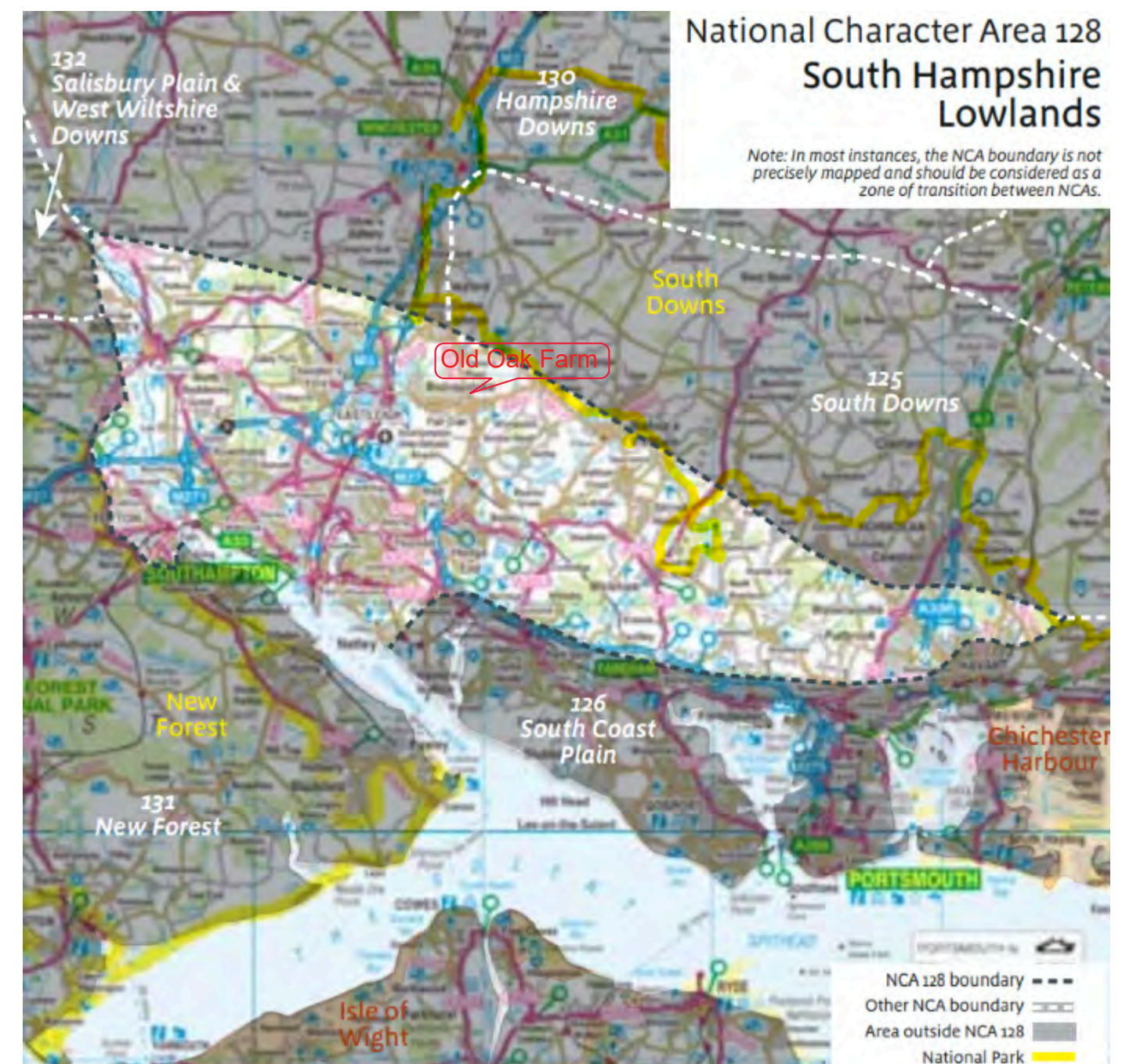


Fig. 4.1 Excerpt map from The National Character Area Profile

- 4.10. The NCA however faces many challenges, particularly ongoing development. This will need to be implemented sensitively in order to safeguard not only the designated sites within the NCA but also the important adjacent sites such as the New Forest and South Downs National Parks.

Key Landscape Characteristics

- 4.11. Low-lying, undulating plain abutting the chalk downs to the north and the coastal plain and Southampton Water to the south. An underlying geology of open marine, estuarine and freshwater Tertiary gravels. Soils over much of the area are heavy and clayey with localised pockets of more freely draining soils on higher land.
- 4.12. Fast-flowing chalk rivers in wide, open valleys with watermeadows and riparian vegetation that provide valuable wildlife habitats for species such as breeding and overwintering birds, otter, water vole, Atlantic salmon, brown trout and the endangered, native

white clawed crayfish.

- 4.13. Well-wooded farmed landscape (particularly to the east of Southampton), characterised by ancient woodland such as Botley Wood and West Walk, the remnants of the Royal Hunting Forest of Bere.
- 4.14. Mixed agricultural landscape dominated by pasture with small pockets of horticulture and arable.
- 4.15. An intimate and enclosed field pattern with many small and irregular fields generally bounded by mixed-species hedgerows or woodland.
- 4.16. In parts, a very urban NCA dominated by the city and port of Southampton and other large towns such as Waterlooville and Havant. The more rural hinterland is characterised by small, loosely clustered or dispersed settlements, intermixed with isolated farmsteads.
- 4.17. Fragmented by major transport links, including the M3 to London and the M27 to Portsmouth which cross the NCA
- 4.18. Statements of Environmental Opportunity
- 4.19. SEO 1: Promote creative and effective sustainable development – including a well-connected network of high-quality greenspace in and around Southampton, Romsey, Eastleigh and Havant – which benefits local businesses and communities, protects local distinctiveness, encourages public understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment, and helps to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- 4.20. SEO 2: Conserve, manage and enhance the semi-natural habitats of the river valleys, their estuaries and intertidal areas along the coast, to maintain water availability and flow, reduce flooding downstream, improve water quality, and enhance their biodiversity and landscape benefits.
- 4.21. SEO 3: Protect, manage and enhance the area's historic well-wooded character – including its ancient semi-natural woodlands, wood pasture and hedgerows – to increase biomass provision, link and strengthen habitats for wildlife, and improve recreational opportunities.
- 4.22. SEO 4: Conserve, manage, link and enhance the traditional mosaic of semi-natural grassland habitats – including chalk grassland, water meadows and unimproved grassland – for the benefits they provide in protecting and regulating soils and water, climate change adaptation as well as recreational opportunities and improved biodiversity.

Eastleigh Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.23. The document was produced in 2011 and formally adopted by Eastleigh Borough Council in March 2022.
- 4.24. The main report includes Borough wide information and guidelines, which should be used in conjunction with the more detailed documents on each specific landscape character type and area.
- 4.25. This Assessment should be read in conjunction with the national character areas and Hampshire integrated landscape assessment.

Landscape History

- 4.26. In 1810, before the coming of the railway, much of the Eastleigh borough was quite poor economically and not heavily populated. Eastleigh was a collection of farm buildings; Bishopstoke was a slightly larger settlement; Allington was a hamlet serving a manor; and Hamble and Bursledon were villages based on the ship building industry. The largest

settlement, although still only a village, was Botley on the banks of the River Hamble. It served a manor and had a small harbour and substantial mill.

- 4.27. The borough's population expanded rapidly with the coming of the railway in 1840 and the relocation of engine carriage and locomotive works at the beginning of the 20th. Eastleigh in particular flourished and spread out into farmland and common land. The once small settlements of Bishopstoke and Hedge End grew rapidly, particularly with the development of new housing after World War II (WWII).
- 4.28. Before WWII, land within the borough that was not built up still remained as farmland or woodland, with larger remnants of common land still surviving. Farmland was managed non-intensively with hay meadows full of wild flowers and arable fields that had a rich flora and fauna due to the lack of herbicides or pesticides. Hedgerows, copses and farm ponds were an integral part of the farm system, managed for game, livestock and the various goods they produced.
- 4.29. The years after WWII saw intensification of agriculture as Britain aimed to be self-sufficient in food and this, combined with the increasing demand for housing, took its toll on the borough's landscape and biodiversity.
- 4.30. Artificial fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides were introduced to farmland and once rich meadows and fields lost many species. Woodlands that were once managed for their wood products fell into neglect and many hedgerows, ponds and commons were destroyed.
- 4.31. In more recent times, specific areas of land within the countryside have been identified as strategic and local gaps. These have served to protect the individual identity of major and smaller settlements, preventing their coalescence. As such, this land has remained fairly undeveloped, due to greater control over proposed uses and development of these areas.
- 4.32. The floodplain of the River Itchen, was largely as today, free of development with the meadows being used as grazing for sheep and cattle.

Topography

- 4.33. The Hocombe-Fair Oak Ridge, rising to over 60 m above Ordnance Datum (AOD), dominates the northern part of the borough. Between Eastleigh and Fair Oak it is cut through by the River Itchen, which has a wide and distinctive flood plain and gravel terraces. To the south the land rises again, to over 80 m AOD around West End and Netley Hill, with a very broad, low ridge extending northwards through Horton Heath. This landform encloses the wide, irregular catchment of the unnamed stream that joins the Itchen near West Horton Farm.
- 4.34. Old Oak Farm lies within 'Area 7: Bishopstoke - Fair Oak Woodland and Farmland'. The landscape type is classified as 'Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale'

4.35. General Description

- 4.36. The main unifying feature of this character area is the ridge that extends eastwards from the edge of the Itchen Valley, through Stoke Park Wood and Crowdhill/ Pylehill to Tippers Copse, where the land falls to the northeast. The full extent of the ridge cannot be seen from any one viewpoint. Settlement screens it in the south, and woodland and undulations in the landform screen views on the ridge itself and to the north. There are frequent woodlands and, in many parts, small fields with hedges and hedgerow trees. The overall impression is one of a wooded, rural landscape with views provided of substantial woodland blocks, particularly in the west of the area.
- 4.37. The B3354 Winchester Road crosses the area north-south. Settlements at Pylehill and Crowdhill have developed along the road, mainly to the west, and there is a distinctly

urban fringe character. In the east the landscape character becomes more fragmented. There is a rather degraded parkland character around The Little Dower House, Mortimers Lane and the strong hedgerow pattern is disrupted by the golf course south of Mortimers Lane.

- 4.38. The majority of the western and southern boundaries of the character area are formed by the settlement edges of Bishopstoke and Fair Oak. The northern and eastern boundaries are less clearly defined, although in part are delineated by water courses.

Key Characteristics

- Undulating ridge
- Frequent woodland blocks
- Rectilinear pattern of small fields with good hedgerow trees
- Small copses add to wooded character
- Views across rural landscape from the northern edge and to the south from woodland clearings
- Prominent roadside residential development
- Distinct sub-area with a very strong hedgerow pattern to the north east

Landscape Types

- 4.39. [Hampshire County Council Integrated Character Assessment 2011](#) (HILCA) provides an overview and strategic assessment of the landscape of Hampshire and incorporates the more local borough assessments. Eastleigh BC assessment refers to the HILCA Landscape types and lists Old Oak Farm as lying in Area 7: Bishopstoke-Fair Oak Woodland and Farmland and with the landscape types for this area as:

- Lowland Mosaic, Medium Scale
- Lowland Mosaic, Small Scale

- 4.40. The southern area of Old Oak Farm on which the current buildings lie are within landscape type Lowland Mosaic, Medium Scale. Relevant characteristics include:

- Undulating predominantly clay soils with sandy gravelly outcrops
- Clay soils low lying - seasonally wet and not particularly good agricultural grade.
- High biomass and moderately high heathland creation opportunity
- Associated with small chalk fed streams.
- Large Ancient woodlands, blocky shaped woodland and thick hedgerows
- Proportion of grazing land slightly more than arable but less permanent pasture than most other Lowland Mosaic Types.
- Low built up percentage compared with other Lowland Mosaic Types
- Significant association with common land and open access
- Surprising sense of remoteness as often close to large centres of population.
- Rich in wildlife designations and BAP priority habitats particularly Ancient semi natural woodlands, hedgerows, neutral and acid grassland, heath associated habitats, freshwater associated and wet woodland.
- High proportion of assarting
- Numerous cultural associations from the medieval period and Royal hunting forests including deer parks and lodges and woodpasture. Little intensive exploitation pre Saxon period and less intensively post disafforestation than most lowland mosaic types.

- Few settlements and development.
- Particular association with Common Edge settlement type.
- Low density dispersed settlement pattern where this type occurs in North and South Hampshire and South of New Forest National Park.

Landscape Character Sensitivity

- 4.41. Overall it is an attractive landscape with Stoke Park Woods providing distinctive features that have amenity and wildlife value.
- 4.42. Contained within the area is a very distinctive parkland landscape.

Visual Sensitivity

- 4.43. The area is predominantly rural, with woodlands, for the most part, shielding the development at the urban edge. It has an undulating landform, good vegetation cover, and often has wide views out. The significant woodland elements in this area can be seen from some distance away.

Key Issues

- 4.44. The key issues for this area are:

- The erosion of the rural character of Winchester Road through increased levels of residential development
- The number of ecological sites in the area which need to be interconnected

Area 7: Bishopstoke-Fair Oak Woodland and Farmland

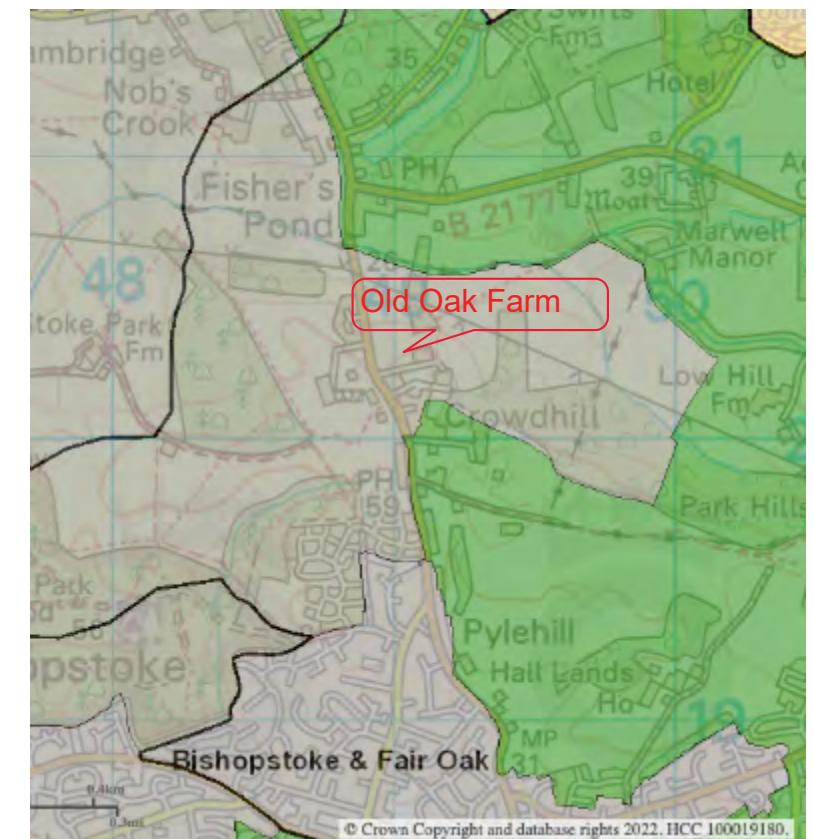


Fig. 4.2. Eastleigh BC landscape character assessment maps. Green area is LCT Lowland Mosaic Small Scale. Brown is LCT Lowland Mosaic Medium Scale.

5. BASELINE LANDSCAPE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

Landscape Character of Old Oak Farm, Fair Oak

Landform

5.1. Old Oak Farm lies towards the top of a hill rising from the Bow Lakes river valley to the north to Fair Oak and Crowdhill to the south. The farm lies just below the ridgeline and gives good views to the north over the valley towards Colden Common and Owslebury. This is an area of mixed rural agricultural land with extensive development, mostly low level housing developments, punctuated with woodland copses. Although the views are extensive, the general development within the area does not result in a remote feel to the area.

Cultural and Social Heritage

5.2. Old Oak Farm itself is fairly recent, only occupied in recent times. However, Marwell Manor was in existence from approximately 500AD and the fish ponds to the north of Old Oak Farm were in use in mediaeval times. There are ancient park pales also to the north of the farm which were part of that settlement and are now scheduled monuments. Development in the area was slow: the OS map of 1961 still shows little development outside the hamlets of Crowdhill and Fair Oak itself, however since the 1960s considerable development has taken place, particularly with the creation of housing estates on the sites of old demolished manor houses and farms including Fair Oak Park and Stoke Park.

Built Form

5.3. The existing property consists of two mobile homes (Old Oak Farm and Hotel California) and associated outbuildings including caravans and vans. There are also foundations for a stable block building on the southern boundary, although the block has yet to be completed. These are located on the easternmost part of the property.

5.4. The remainder of the area is in use as associated garden and includes chicken coops, dog kennels, and household items that would usually be stored inside a garage or other outbuilding. Various old cars and caravans are also kept on the site primarily for

residential storage purposes but also in connection with the keeping of the applicant's horses. The site has an unkempt appearance.

5.5. The central area of land between the evergreen hedges is naturally split into two parts - the higher area to the southern side of the access track which includes a flat area of land that has been 'cut into' providing an amphitheatre-type shape to the land here, and a lower area to the northern side of the track provided by the natural slope of the land.

5.6. The adjacent property directly to the south is a residential dwelling 'Waratah' which was recently granted permission for four dwellings in its rear garden. These are single storey and low, timber clad bungalows. The nearest dwellings on Winchester Road are the mobile homes at Hillview Manor Park to the north-west and the garden centre immediately to the west.

Land Use

5.7. The existing property sits well back from Winchester Road within an area of paddocks. Some of the paddocks are given over to grazing of horses and goats. There is an area of garden to the west which is somewhat overgrown. The mobile homes are not visible from the main road and the access from Winchester Road is a simple track with metal gate. There are areas of storage of materials including derelict caravans alongside the track to the northern paddocks. All the tracks are informal gravel or rubble surfaced.

Vegetation

5.8. The property is well enclosed by vegetation. A mature but uncut native hedge borders Winchester Road along the entire length of the property which prevents views into the property. There is an evergreen fir hedge just behind this native hedge. To the north of the property is a native hedge and there are field boundaries also of native hedges and self set brambles and pioneer tree and shrub species. The southern boundary is also a fir hedge and there are further fir hedges dividing the property. The eastern boundary consists of mature goat willow, pedunculate oak and hawthorn with a hedge below. This also prevents views from the neighbouring property to the east.

Communications and Public Access

5.9. Old Oak Farm lies on the B3354, Winchester Road which is the main road through Fair Oak. There are occasional views into the paddocks of Old Oak Farm from the northern parts of Winchester Road but the existing buildings are hard to see. There is a public right of way (footpath) which runs through Crowdhill to the north of the property, crossing Winchester Road to run through the garden centre to the west and The Mount to the east. There are no views from the footpath to the property due to the intervening vegetation and topography.

Hydrology

5.10. There are no waterways on the site although there are areas which flood in the winter to give a natural wetland area.

5.11. The nearest water body is Bow Lake and Fisher's Pond to the north.

Enclosure

5.12. Old Oak Farm is well enclosed to the west by the native hedge and fir hedge adjacent to Winchester Road. The existing buildings are also screened from the east by the existing mature trees and hedge along the eastern boundary. To the north the existing fir hedge and other planting also encloses the property although the adjacent house to the south does have views from its upper windows over Old Oak Farm and the landscape beyond.

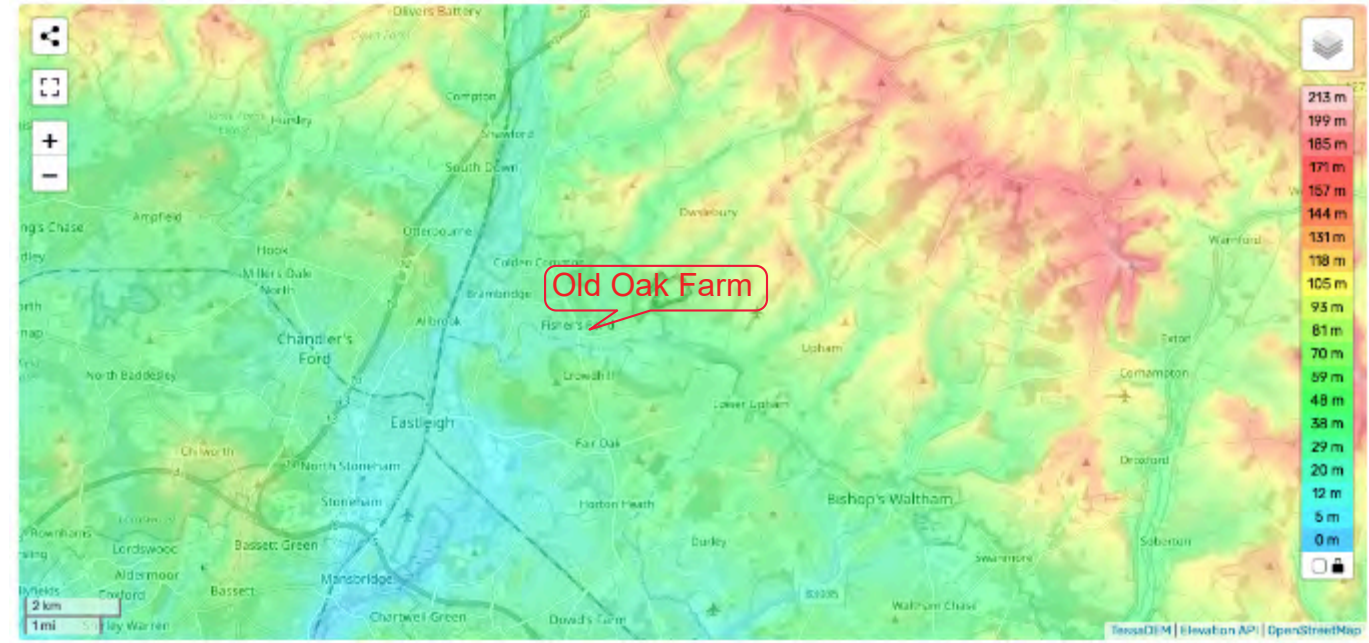


Fig. 5.1 Topography of Old Oak Farm.

There are also existing hedges within the property which give further visual enclosure.

- 5.13. The property is visually open to the south, although the existing buildings are enclosed by a hedge and timber fence in places. There are long views over Fisher's Pond valley to the slopes of the SDNP beyond. The copses of Colden Common are visible in the landscape.

Aesthetic and Perceptual Landscape

- 5.14. This area of Fair Oak is indistinct and the property does not lie within a nucleated hamlet or village, but rather within an area of linear and sporadic individual development on The Mount.
- 5.15. Fair Oak to the south is a sprawling village which expanded due to housing development mostly in the 20th Century, particularly on the grounds of older manor and other large houses and estates.
- 5.16. The area could be considered semi-rural; the long views to the south give a rural appearance but the expanse of development to the south detracts from this. The landscape is not pristine; fields are divided into paddocks for grazing and other use although as the land rises towards the SDNP to the north over Bow Lake it does become more rural.

Visual Landscape

- 5.17. Old Oak Farm lies on the side of a valley which runs from Bow Lakes and Fisher's Pond in the north to Crowdhill in the south. Due to this topography there are long views from parts of the property over the valley towards the Owslebury downs to the north. However, due to the extensive enclosure by vegetation on the site there are very limited views into and out of the property from the south, east and west.

Tranquility

- 5.18. There is no tranquility designation for Old Oak Farm. The long views over the valley to the downs to the north does give a rural feel however the proximity of the Winchester Road does give a steady low level of traffic noise which does reduce the tranquility.

Dark Skies

- 5.19. Old Oak Farm does not lie within a dark skies reserve however it is rated as 1-4 NanoWatts/cm²/sr or 'Brighter' on the [CPRE register](#) of England's light pollution and dark skies map.
- 5.20. There is light pollution from the nearby towns of Eastleigh and Fair Oak and more locally from the caravan park to the west and houses on the edge of woodland and the B2177 Portsmouth Road to the north. There is also light pollution from the overlooking windows of the house Waratah immediately adjacent to the south.

Visual Amenity

- 5.21. The topography and enclosure of Old Oak Farm means that views of the property are restricted from the south, east and west, with only glimpsed views from the north-west along Winchester Road as the land falls to the north.
- 5.22. There are no views from the nearby public right of way to the east and west and no views also from the garden centre to the west.
- 5.23. There are views from the house Waratah to the immediate south as the upper storey windows over look the paddocks; however the intervening hedges do restrict views from

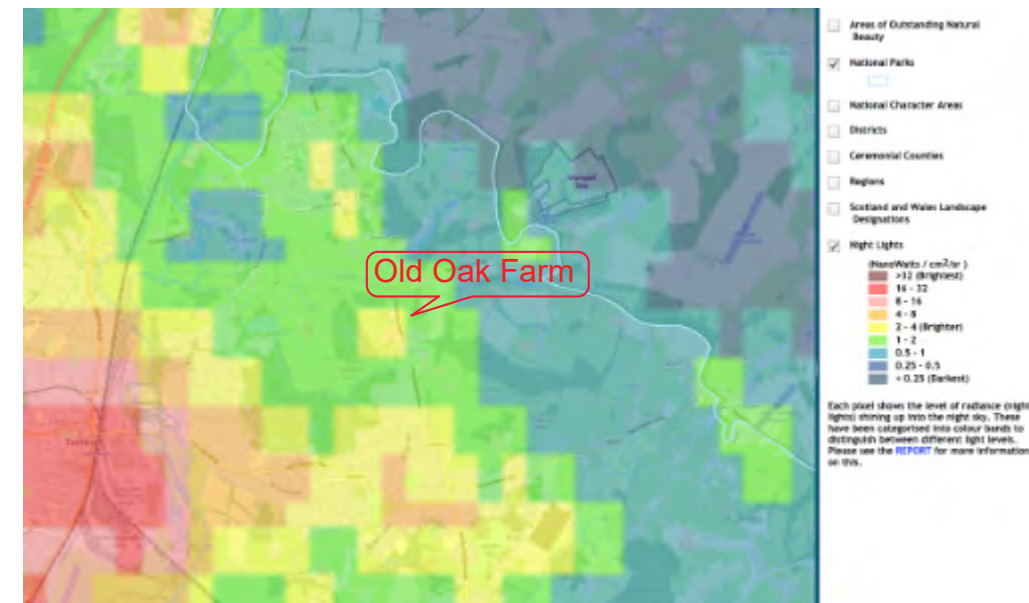


Fig. 5.2 Dark Skies of Old Oak Farm.

lower storeys.

- 5.24. There are views from the fields to the north including along Bow Lake which will have clear views up the hill towards the property. There are also likely to be views from the houses along B2177 Portsmouth Road although these are likely to be restricted in parts due to intervening vegetation and woodland copses. There are no clear views from Portsmouth Road itself.
- 5.25. There are unlikely to be views from the footpaths further to the north including around Nob's Crook, due to the intervening woodland and vegetation. There may be views from more distant footpaths and roads higher on the downs but these will be very distant, as the property does not lie on the ridgeline - Waratah is the highest property and lies above Old Oak Farm - it is unlikely to be individually discernible.

Building Proposals

- 5.26. The proposed buildings have developed over an extensive period of consideration of landscape and visual implications, with sections prepared to show how the views over the open country to the north both from the proposed properties and from the rear windows of Waratah which overlooks the property from the south.
- 5.27. Design development determined that using the contours of the land, and the existing hedge lines to help nestle the dwellings into the landscape meant that a flat-roof or low mono pitched, more contemporary solution could work well on this site. With views over the site from 'Waratah', such roofs would lend themselves to be planted with sedum or similar to soften any view from this dwelling.
- 5.28. It was considered that if such a design were to be used, then the resulting visual impact from any public vantage point would be minimised, whilst providing the material planning benefits envisaged, both in terms of living conditions for the applicant, the ongoing protection of the mature Oak trees and a general tidying up of the site through the provision of a stable block for the horses (allowing many of the containers and caravans to be removed from the site), and a larger size of dwelling (allowing inside storage provision thus removing externally stored domestic paraphernalia).

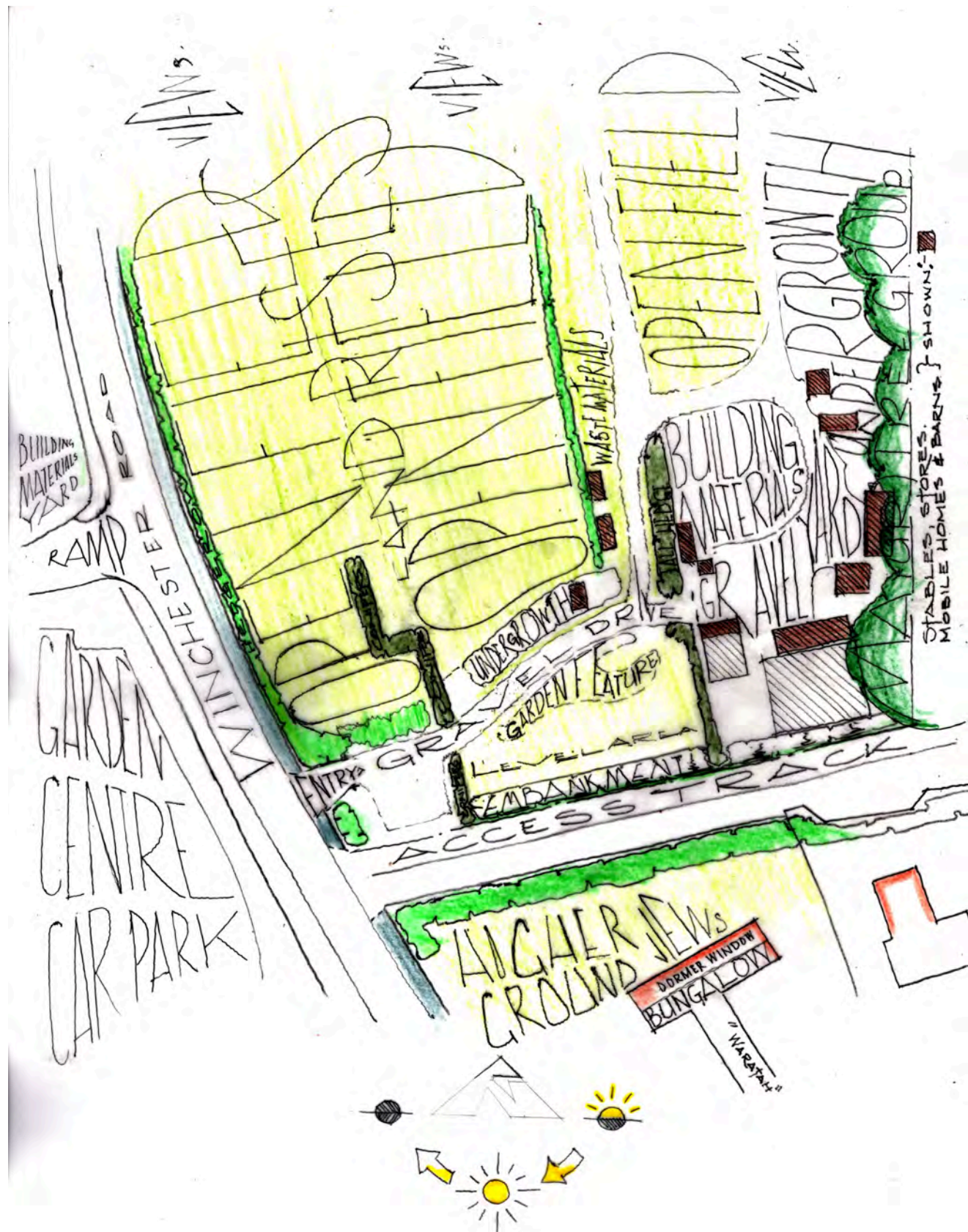


Fig. 5.3. Architectural analysis of Old Oak Farm

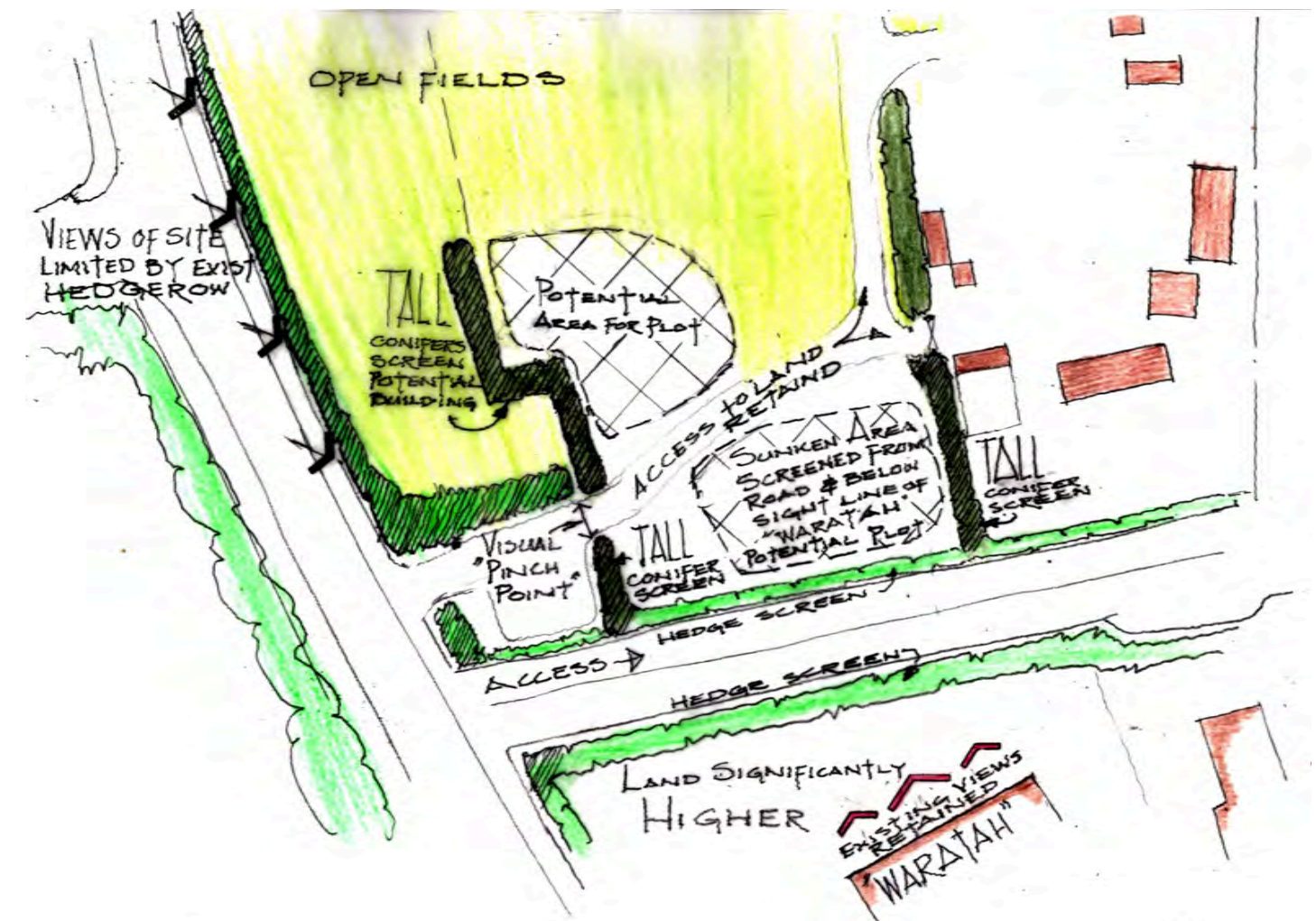


Fig. 5.4. Initial Architectural proposals for the new building locations for Old Oak Farm

- 5.29. As a result, a mono-pitch contemporary design is proposed with large floor to ceiling windows to take advantage of the far reaching views to the north.
- 5.30. Materials used, however, reflect a more rural vernacular, using black horizontal boarding to clad the dwellings. A green roof will further allow these proposals to nestle into the natural slope without undue landscape or visual impact.
- 5.31. A sketch is provided below as to how the dwellings would fit into the landscape when viewed from the north (although there is no public vantage point in this direction). The sketch shows that the massing of the proposed dwellings would be absorbed into the rising topography of the land, and also that backdrop of 'Waratah' at the top of the slope.
- 5.32. The proposal is to remove the existing mobile homes from beneath the mature Oak trees on the eastern boundary towards the centre of the site. One dwelling (Plot 1) would be placed on the higher, southern side of the access track, cut into the embankment, and another (Plot 2) would be sited on the lower, northern side of the access track.
- 5.33. These proposals are shown in the following elevations, plans and sections, indicating how the buildings are terraced into the existing sloping land.



Fig. 5.6. Architectural proposals for Plot 1

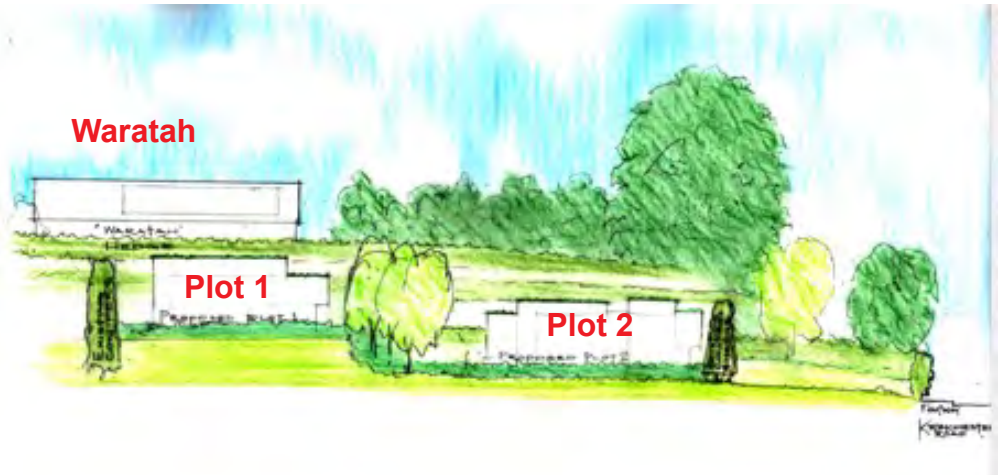


Fig. 5.5 Illustrative schematic showing the buildings viewed against Waratah on the skyline from the north, looking south



Fig. 5.7. Architectural proposals for Plot 2



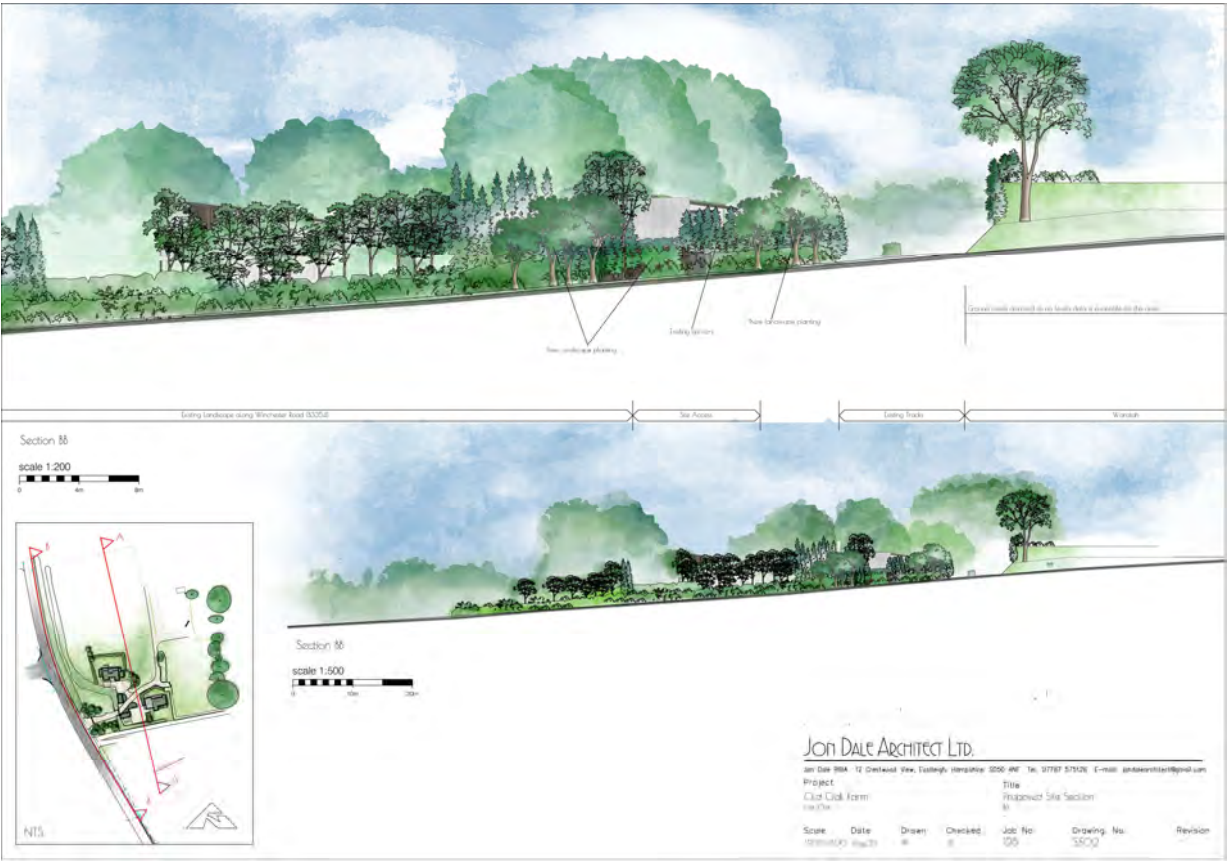


Fig. 5.8. Architectural site section along Winchester Road



Fig. 5.9. Architectural site section through both plots



Fig. 5.10. Architectural site layout