



9th March 2021

CPRE HAMPSHIRE

TRACT OF LAND TO THE WEST, SOUTH WEST, AND SOUTH EAST OF OLIVER'S BATTERY, WINCHESTER

NPPF VALUED LANDSCAPE

This tract of land consists of an area of land to the west and south west of Oliver's Battery proposed to accommodate a Garden Village of some 5000 dwellings, with adjoining area proposed to accommodate solar panels (together **the Western Area**). Along with an area of land to the south east of Oliver's Battery proposed to accommodate commercial development, park and ride, approach road and solar panels (**the Eastern Area**).

CPRE Hampshire has now had the opportunity to make a physical assessment of this tract of land in the context of an NPPF Valued Landscape which should be protected according to national planning guidance. This assessment has regard to:

- Hampshire Integrated Character Assessment (**HICA**)
- Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment (**WDLCA**)
- a study of criteria used by Inspectors on appeal in deciding whether appeal sites are NPPF Valued Landscapes
- our own observations

While the two Areas are not joined adjacent to each other, separated as they are by Texas Field at Oliver's Battery, they both fall within HICA County Character Area CCA 7f: West Winchester Downs. This is a continuation of the main South Downs chalk landscape, although the main escarpment is less distinct. It stretches from the Itchen Valley to the Test Valley. Off this escarpment are numerous spurs and small escarpments with dry valleys and woodland blocks extending southwards to cover both the Western and Eastern Areas. It is a very undulating landscape often with far reaching views over adjoining downs and lowland landscapes but also more visually enclosed landscapes in dry valleys and woodland.

Both the Western and Eastern Areas strongly reflect these key characteristics of CCA 7F: West Winchester Downs, as described below



Assessment of landscape character and physical distinctiveness of the Western Area

The Western Area extends from Oliver's Battery for some 2.25 km to the south west down Port Lane to the village of Hursley; to the west it extends from Oliver's Battery some 2km over Nan Trodds Hill and the mini-scarp of Juniper Bank to Standon; and to the north west from Oliver's Battery up Millers Lane to the A3090 Winchester to Romsey Road. The boundary to the south east is formed by a mini-scarp running parallel to Port Lane some 0.4km distant, then Bunsted Lane leading south, the Otterbourne to Hursley road leading west to Hursley, the A3090 through Hursley and Standon, and then Millers Lane to Oliver's Battery. The adjoining area for solar panels extends from Standon some 1km north to Groveland's Copse, and 1.5km east north east over Stopham's Copse.

Adjoining the Western Area to the north west over the A3090 and including the solar panel area is fine undulating chalk downland and woodland blocks with Farley Mount and Crab Wood some 3km distant at the ridgeline. To the west over the A3090 and the village of Hursley is Hursley Park extending some 2km to the west. To the south east there is more fine undulating downland with hedgerows and woodland blocks extending to the M3 and Shawford Down some 2.5km distant. This is crossed by the Monarchs Way long distance footpath which continues on over Shawford Down into the South Downs National Park to the east. Adjoining Millers Lane to the north east is South Winchester Golf Club leading into the City of Winchester and bounded to the south east by the settlement of Oliver's Battery.

The village of Hursley is an unspoilt and historic linear estate village which grew up to serve Hursley House, a Grade 2*listed Queen Anne style mansion. The village has 128 listed buildings. Some 1km north of Hursley is the remains of Merdon Castle, a motte and bailey castle on a chalk spur facing southwest.

As appears from the above description of the adjoining countryside and features, the Western Area projects into a much larger tract of open undulating chalk downland of high quality extending to the north west, south west and south from Oliver's Battery, which is all part of CCA 7F: West Winchester Downs referred to above. This whole area is uncluttered by development, very tranquil away from the A3090, free of light pollution, and includes the village of Hursley, Hursley House and Park, Merdon Castle, Farley Mount and the Monarch's Way.

The Western Area lies within and WDLCA Local Landscape Character Area LLA 1: Hursley Scarplands. This part of the Hursley Scarplands LLA is made up of Landscape Types Chalk and Clay (Farmland) and Scarp, with Open Arable (Exposed) and Scarp in that part north of Port Lane that surrounds Down Farm. It meets the western end of Oliver's Battery at Millers Lane at its eastern end and the village of Hursley at the western end, but contains no settlement of any type other than the farmsteads of Down Farm, with a Grade 2 listed farmhouse, and Parsonage Farm. The only other development is an electricity substation on Port Lane below Yew Hill, to which two parallel lines of medium sized pylons cross from the A3090 and Texas Field.



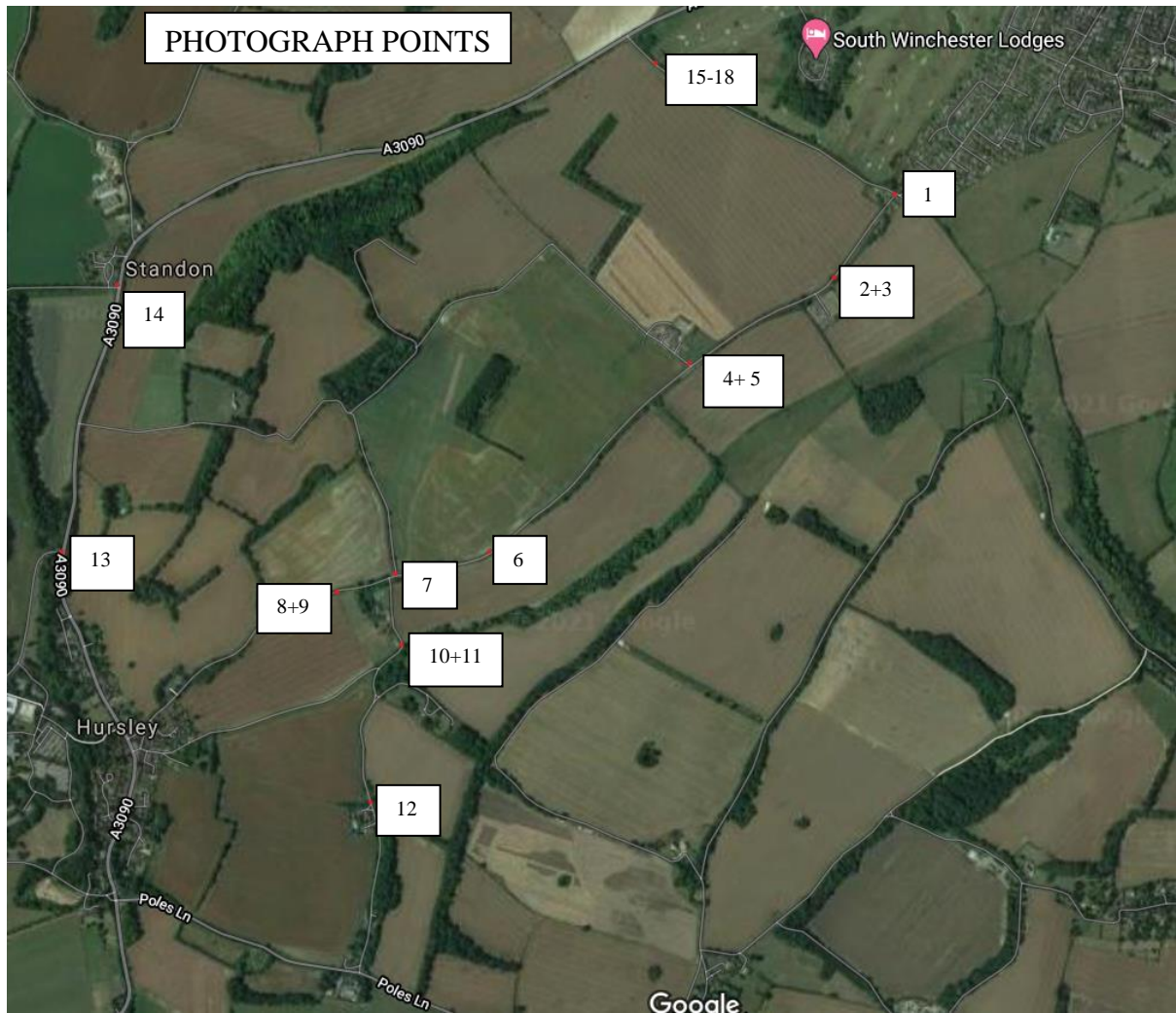
The largest part lies in the dry chalk valley situated between a north facing scarp south of Port Lane which is the southern boundary, and a further north facing scarp near the A3090 incorporating Juniper Bank and Nan Trodds Hill. It has a strong landscape structure enclosed to the north and south by the two chalk scarps which form ridgelines. These are covered in beech and yew hangers, except near Yew Hill where the southern scarp is chalk grassland. Between the scarps the landscape is made up of rolling chalk ridges and dry valleys. This is more open at the eastern end with large arable fields at Downs Farm, changing to more enclosed undulating farmland with smaller arable or grassland fields with wavy boundaries, tree belts and hedgerows at the western end. There is an important dry valley leading north-eastwards from Port Lane at the junction with Bunstead Lane. The Monarchs Way crosses the Western Area at leading from Hursley to Parsonage Farm to cross Bunstead Lane.

The public roads, consisting of Port Lane, Collins Lane and Bunstead Lane form an attractive network of historic rural roads, narrow with bounding hedgerows. At the western end, Port Lane develops a more formal quality of a narrow lane with wide grass verges and well maintained hedgerows, giving it a somewhat unique sense of place.

This whole landscape between the two scarps is of distinctive character and provides a clear sense of place. It is unspoilt and very representative of CCA 7F: West Winchester Downs and LLA 1: Hursley Scarplands. The highly rural landscape at the western end, with its undulating farmland, tree belts, hedgerows and narrow lanes presents a strong rural character of considerable charm. At the eastern end the more formal Port Lane and the chalk grassland scarp giving firm character and sense of place to the less distinctive open arable farmland.

The part of the Western Area proposed for a solar farm north of Standon is outside this enclosed landscape to the north of the A3090 but within the same LLA of undulating chalk ridges, and made up of arable fields bounded by lanes and hedgerows and containing two areas of woodland, Stopham's Copse and Grovelands Copse. It is again very representative of CCA 7F: West Winchester Downs and LLA 1: Hursley Scarplands.

Assessment of public experience of the landscape of the Western Area



Port Lane starts from Oliver's Battery at the junction with Millers Lane, as in the photograph below. It is in regular use for recreation by walkers and cyclists. On the north side are long distance views over open arable downland to Nan Trodds Hill and Juniper Bank on the northern scarp. Tranquillity is disturbed to some extent by the line of medium sized pylons coming down from the ridgeline, but these are quickly left behind when moving west along the lane. The substation to which the line of pylons connects on the southern side of Port Lane is hidden behind the hedgerow which bounds the lane.





Looking to the south, some 0.3 km distant across a strip of arable land is the southern chalk scarp with chalk grassland face and leading up to Yew Hill.





Further views are available of the northern and southern scarps and the woodland on Yew Hill from Port Lane at Down Farm.



Further on down Port Lane becomes wooded on the south side, but this clears towards the junction with Bunstead Lane to provide clear views over the roadside hedgerow to the chalk scarp now faced with yew and beech, as shown here from the junction with Bunstead Lane.



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At the junction with Bunstead Lane looking north can be seen a picturesque dry valley leading north east into the chalk downland below the northern scarp and Nan Trodds Hill.



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Looking westwards the views are now of the more enclosed undulating farmland, smaller arable or grassland fields with wavy boundaries, tree belts and hedgerows.
View to the south west leading down to the village of Hursley.



And view to the north west



Bunstead Lane and Collins Lane leading to Hursley and Bunstead respectively are attractive rural lanes with views over hedgerows to the landscape.



and with the Monarchs Way crossing Bunstead Land at Parsonage Farm.



Views into the Western Area from the A3090 on leaving Hursely going north are more limited by a tree line on the roadside and field boundaries at the far side of the adjoining fields, but show attractive agricultural land leading up towards a ridge. Further on at Standon the ridge becomes the northern scarp.



At the top of Millers Lane, itself an attractive and historic lane, there are panoramic views from the northern scarp to the west over Down Farm round to the southern scarp and Yew Hill to the south, slightly degraded by the pylon lines in the adjoining field. The electricity substation is visible at the valley bottom looking towards Yew Hill, but does not stand out against the scarp and the eye is drawn to the woodland on Yew Hill.





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Tranquillity in terms of noise is hardly disturbed over the whole Western Area, and it has high quality dark skies at night.

Accordingly, taking account of

- the attractive and distinctive chalk downland landscape enclosed between chalk scarps
- the attractive enclosed and undulating farmland, with tree belts, hedgerows and rural lanes at the western end
- the setting of the Monarchs Way
- the lack of development and overall sense of tranquillity
- the high quality public experience of this landscape from public rights of way
- the important contribution of this tract of landscape to the characteristics identified in HICA CCA 7f: West Winchester Downs and WDLCA LLA 1: Hursley Scarplands

CPRE Hampshire considers that the Western Area has demonstrable attributes which raises it above the ordinary, such that it is an NPPF Valued Landscape. Accordingly NPPF paragraph 170(a) applies and requires it to be protected.



Assessment of landscape character and physical distinctiveness of the Eastern Area

The Eastern Area starts some 0.5km to the south south east of Oliver's Battery, beyond the area known as Texas Field, and extends south south east some 0.8km along a dry valley to near Compton's End bounded to the west by a mini scarp, then north north east up an established tree line and public right of way for 0.6km before turning south east for 0.6km to Attwood Drove Farm. Then a further 0.6km to the north north east to reach Badger Farm Road (A3090), now some 1.3km east south east from Oliver's Battery. Then for some 0.8km along Badger Farm Road past Bushfield Farm before turning south west along a public right of way to the starting point.

The Eastern Area is the north western part of a larger tract of countryside (**the Eastern Tract**), broadly a square, extending south east from Oliver's Battery down to Appleshaw House and the M3/A3090, some 2.2km distant, and some 1.5km north east from the mini scarp to Badger Farm Road. This Eastern Tract includes the scarp, Yew Hill Butterfly Reserve, Texas Field and Otterbourne Road. It has a long history of human settlement, as evidenced by two tumuli on Texas Field and remains of mediaeval strip fields in the chalk grassland on the side of the scarp in places where it is not wooded.

Adjoining the Eastern Tract to the east is the River Itchen, beyond the M3. To the north east Bushfield Camp, disused, is beyond Badger Farm Road. To the south west beyond the mini scarp is a tract of fine downland open countryside with hedgerows and woodland blocks leading down to Silkstead and the Hursley to Otterbourne Road. This is bounded to the south east by the M3 and Shawford Down, and crossed by the long distance path, Monarch's Way. Circling on clockwise this tract of chalk downland adjoins the mini scarp which is the southern boundary of the Western Area, leading on through the Western Area to Farley Mount and Teg Down. This whole extensive tract of chalk downland surrounds the south western part of the City of Winchester.

The Eastern Tract (in common with the Western Area) lies within WDLCA Local Landscape Character Area LLA 1: Hursley Scarplands. This part of the Hursley Scarplands LLA is made up of Landscape Types Chalk and Clay (Farmland) and Scarp. Development consists of the settlement of Compton Street, which is well contained, and the farmsteads of Yew Tree Farm, Attwoods Drove Farm, both centrally located, and Bushfield Farm adjoining Badger Farm Road. This intrusion of this development on the open landscape is limited.



A defining feature is the mini scarp which contains this tract of landscape to the west and leads down steeply into gently undulating chalk downland with medium sized arable fields bounded by straight hedgerows, which are the result of 18th and 19th century parliamentary type enclosure. This undulating downland rises gradually to the north east across Compton Down over shallow dry valleys. Crossing the area are several public rights of way bounded in the main by hedgerows or lines of trees. Dense and tall lines of trees are either side of the Otterbourne Road. The scarp is chalk grassland with yew and beech hangers on the steeper slopes. At the top is Hurdle Way, a much used bridleway, from which footpaths lead down through the hanger towards Compton Street.

This undulating field composition crossed by tree and hedge lined public rights of way in the shadow of a wooded scarp provides a clear landscape structure of a traditional and strong rural character and appearance. It is also fully very representative of CCA 7F: West Winchester Downs and LLA 1: Hursley Scarplands. The Eastern Tract has high tranquillity in the south west prevailing wind, but when the wind is from an easterly direction is disturbed by trains passing on the railway line and traffic hum from the M3. .

Assessment of public experience of the landscape of the Eastern Area



From public vantage points at the Oliver's Battery Recreation Ground and within Texas Field there are fine views towards the wooded hanger and scarp, and the Yew Hill Butterfly Reserve.



On Hurdle Way in chalk grassland on the scarp adjoining the Yew Hill Butterfly Reserve there are very long distance views across to South Downs National Park, with St Catherines Hill and Cheesefoot Head visible.



Also towards Compton Street and Attwood Drove Farm, showing field pattern and tree lines.





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Continuing along Hurdle Way towards Compton there are frequent long distance views over the hanger and the Eastern Tract as far as St Catherine's Hill and the national park, as shown in the following sequence of photographs:







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And looking north from where Hurdle Way joins Cliff Way.



Then descending from Hurdle Way from a crossing with a bridleway leading from Silkstead, through the hanger to the bottom of the scarp to a footpath leading onto the road to Compton Street, there are views up a shallow valley which runs along the scarp to Texas Field.





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From gaps in the hedgerow along the Public Right of Way running north south through the Eastern Area from Badger Farm Road and then looping to the east to join the road to Compton Street, there are fine views to the south west over farmland towards the scarp, Yew Hill Butterfly Reserve, and Yew Hill:



And from the same position looking south east



From a position some 200m south of Badger Farm Road and 500m west of Bushfield farmstead Farm on a bridleway leading east west, and looking south east parallel to Badger Farm Road, there are fine views over fields in a shallow valley leading down to Otterbourne Road.



Seen also from the other end at a gateway on the Otterbourne road near the roundabout with the A3090.





Accordingly, taking account of

- the attractive and distinctive undulating landscape contained to the west by a chalk scarp with beech and yew hanger
- the attractive undulating farmland, with tree belts, hedgerows and public rights of way
- the setting of the much used Hurdle Way
- the limited development and sense of tranquillity
- the high quality public experience of this landscape from public rights of way
- the important contribution of this tract of landscape to the characteristics identified in HICA CCA 7f: West Winchester Downs and WDLCA LLA 1: Hursley Scarplands

CPRE Hampshire considers that the Eastern Area sits within a tract of countryside which has demonstrable attributes which raises it above the ordinary, such that it is an NPPF Valued Landscape.

Together the Western and Eastern Areas form an essential part of a tract of NPPF Valued Landscape of fine chalk downland with scarps surrounding south west Winchester which extends south west from St Catherine's Hill to Hursley and then northwards to Farley Mount and Teg Down.