

5 THE SETTING OF THE CITY

5.1 Defining the Setting of the City

The distribution and pattern of the Landscape and Townscape Character Areas within the study area are described above and is necessary as a first stage in the holistic characterisation process. While all the Character Areas have an identifiable and coherent identity, their impact and relative influence on both the city and its setting is variable. An assessment of the contribution that these Character Areas make to the 'essence' of Winchester and the unique sense of place, both within the city and its rural setting, can vary both within as well as between contiguous Character Areas.

5.1.1 During consideration of what constituted the historic core it became clear that 'traditional' definitions such as 'the Cathedral precincts', 'the Saxon street pattern' or 'the Conservation Area' had a variety of limitations. These provided insufficient consideration of the role played by the wider landscape and townscape in defining the city and its setting. It also limited the influence of other topics such as history, archaeology, ecology and public perception. A deeper, more inclusive definition was required that considered the totality of the settlement and its influences, whether visible, perceptual or historic.

5.1.2 In Winchester the intimate relationship between the strong landform enclosing a rich, fertile river valley has been a major determinant in the original siting as well as pattern of development of the city. The fluctuating influences of royal, clerical, civic and military patronage has created the rich mosaic of buildings and spaces which, in turn, have been influenced by periods of prosperity and genteel decline. The present qualities of the town and its setting have been the result of great periods of stability, even poverty in some eras, that has retained historic buildings. This contrasts with similar sized cities, for example Basingstoke, Cheltenham or Newark, which have been subject to development pressures during the last century and increasingly over the last 30 years that has led to a considerable erosion of local character.

5.1.3 A second stage appraisal of the Landscape and Townscape Character Areas was undertaken to classify their relative significance and area of influence on the city and its wider landscape setting as part of the holistic process. This assessment and analysis stage integrated the research work of specialist advisers on archaeology, landscape history, ecology as well as the wealth of background material provided by the Steering Group and Trusts and the historic landscape assessment work of the County Council's consultants. From this analysis "areas of influence" were categorised as follows :

- Visually cohesive historic cores
- Visually fragmented historic cores
- Landscape and townscape distinctive to Winchester and its setting
- Landscape and townscape supportive to Winchester and its setting
- Other connective areas of landscape and townscape within Winchester and its setting

5.1.4 In addition to these broad categories, the following additional areas and features were identified, which occur throughout the study area:

- Visually significant landmarks and features
- Visually detracting landscape and townscape



5.1.5 The principal characteristics attributable to each of these categories comprise as follows:

- Visually cohesive historic cores

Areas defined by the highly visible nature of their historicity as pre-1810 settlement cores. Elements such as historic street pattern, building type, scale, architectural style, detailing and materials all generate a strong sense of the story of the city. The area may include subsequent nineteenth and twentieth century development, but the depth of historic character remains clearly visible. This perception of age or multiple layers of history may include modern architecture, but its overarching character remains clearly sensed and valued.

- Visually fragmented historic cores

Areas of pre-1810 settlement (in some cases prehistoric) which due to subsequent recent development are not easily visually discernible. In most cases the street pattern remains, but nineteenth and twentieth century building type, scale and style obscure the clarity of the sense of history, or dilute the unity of character. These areas, whilst having a strong historic lineage, are susceptible to further gradual erosion of character without considered intervention.

- Distinctive townscape/landscape

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

- Supportive townscape/landscape

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

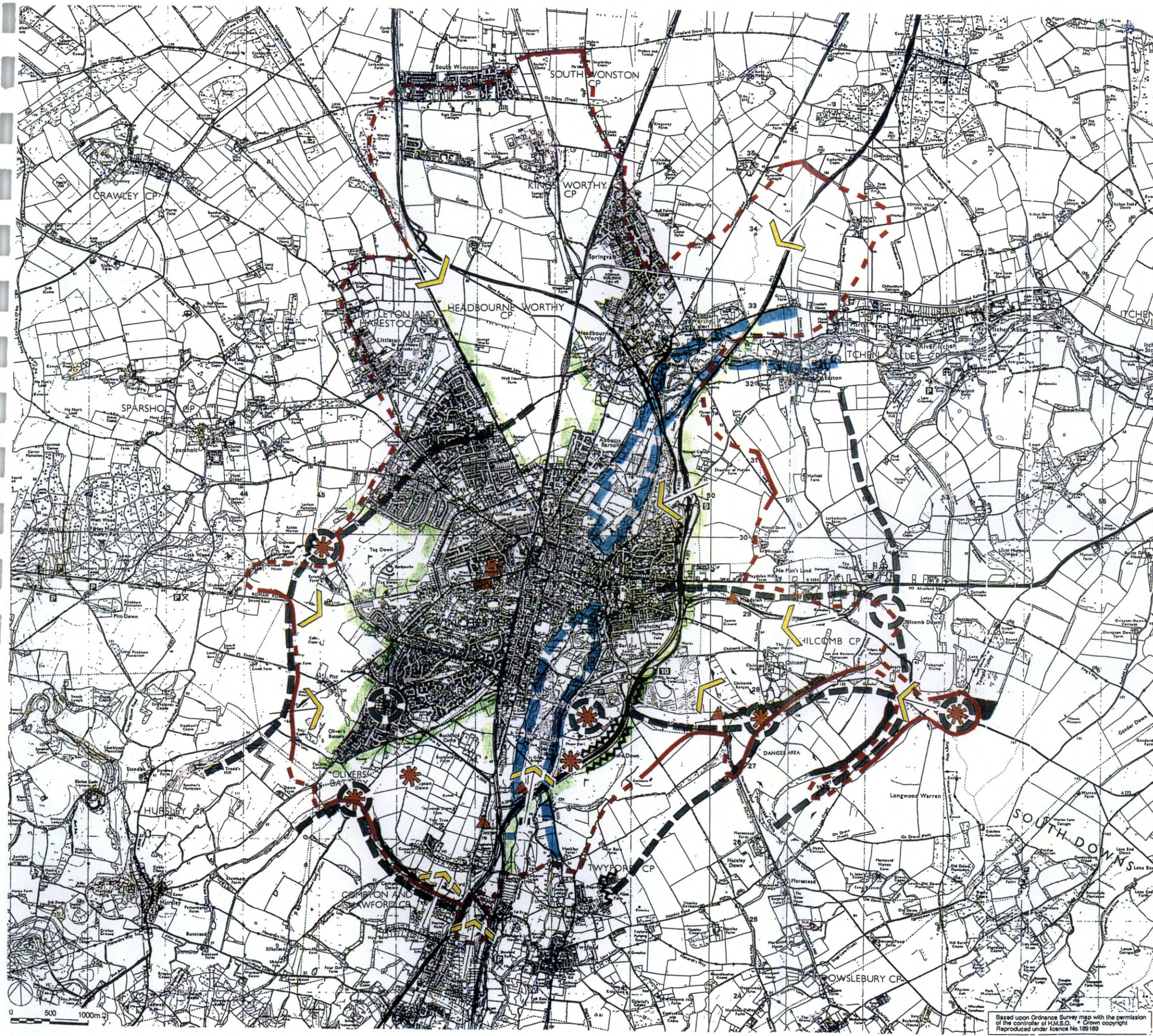
- Connective townscape/landscape










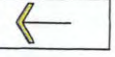
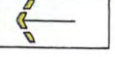

Townscape/landscape which is an integral part of the City of Winchester and its environs, but lacks individual distinction, or does not play a significant contribution to the setting of the city. This does not signify that these areas are unimportant, or lacking in their own integral sense of place. Rather, they are often areas divorced from or weakly attached to their landscape setting, or from landmarks within the landscape or historic cores. Nevertheless, these areas often contain features of landscape or townscape significance or provide views to such features. The use of mass produced building materials, standard layouts, styles and details also contributes to the loss of local identity, although this is common to many other areas.

- Visually significant landmarks

Positive and visually significant landscape and townscape landmarks which are recognisable and quintessential to the City of Winchester and its setting. These





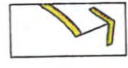

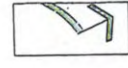



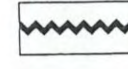



- Boundary of zone of visual influence of the city
-  Open and unobscured views from boundary of ZVI
-  Filtered and intermittent obscured views from boundary of ZVI
-  Principal ridgelines and hills intercepting views
-  Green corridor of River Itchen floodplain extending into heart of city
-  Green corridors of open countryside extending up to edge of city
-  Significant areas of vegetation
-  Prominent group of buildings
-  Memorable landmarks on skyline
-  Other memorable features
-  Principal viewpoints into city
-  Glimpsed / filtered views of city
-  Visual detractors





-  Zone of visual influence of historic core
-  Principal historic buildings and features forming focal landmarks within city
-  Notable prominent skyline buildings within city
-  Memorable landmarks and skyline features visible from the city
-  Direct and filtered views to Eastern Downs
-  Views to Itchen Valley from city
-  Framed vistas and notable views to historic buildings and features

- Settlement edge**
-  Soft, visually contained edge
-  Harsh or visually exposed edge

-  Significant tree cover within city obscuring or limiting views


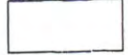



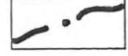
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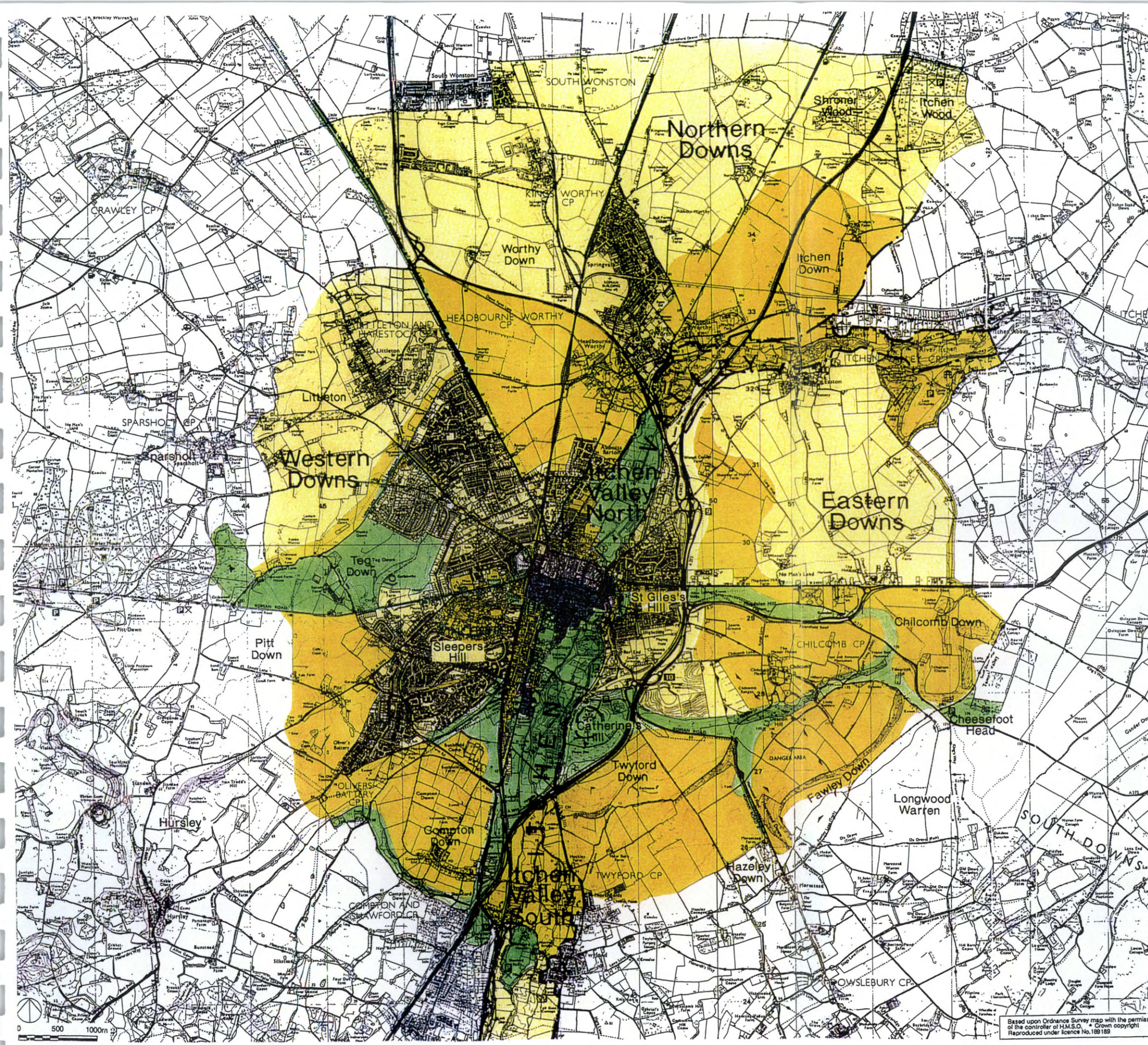


Winchester City and its Setting

Areas of Influence

Landscape and townscape influential to Winchester City and its Setting

-  Cohesive historic cores
-  Fragmented historic cores
-  Distinctive
-  Supportive
-  Connective
-  Boundary to areas of influence




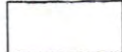




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Winchester City and its Setting

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LANDSCAPE DESIGN ASSOCIATES

include ancient and modern buildings, groups and avenues of trees, landforms, silhouettes, horizons and views.

•Visually detracting Townscape/Landscape

Areas or elements which detract from the distinct and special character of Winchester and its setting. These may include routes, edges, built elements or districts, or degraded landscapes.

5.1.6 The cohesive and fragmented historical cores within the city are pivotal to the essential character of Winchester, although these two categories are not necessarily of greater importance than the remaining areas of influence. The areas of distinctive and supportive landscape and townscape play a crucial role in the setting and perception of the city. They may include sites and features of premier importance and comparable with elements within the historic core, notably St Giles, Sleepers and St Catherine's Hills. The connective areas may also include significant landscape and townscape features but will not share the strength of characteristics that contribute to the 'essence of Winchester'. The importance of this final category lies in linking between and forming a foil to areas of distinctive and supportive landscape and townscape. In addition, all these areas have an importance to local communities and the way they use and identify with 'their' part of the city.

5.1.7 A reallocation of the Landscape and Townscape Character Areas was undertaken to delineate each according to its relative contribution to the setting of the city. This assessment is illustrated on drawing nos. 1059LP/11 and 12. These two maps classify distinct areas which influence the quality of the city and its setting. Thus they identify in a stratified sequence those areas of most significance in defining the character of the city of Winchester and its setting. That is the 'what matters and why' factor, in line with the criteria categorised in paragraph 5.1.5.

5.2 Areas of Influence

5.2.1 The following sections of this chapter identify, describe and analyse each area of influence. They set out the principal characteristics and broad range of factors which, individually and collectively, synthesise into and define the essence of Winchester and its setting. These form the basis of the environmental features important at the study scale within which identifiable environmental attributes are set.

5.2.2 For clarity, these areas of influence are defined in five distinct parcels as follows:

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

5.2.3 Having identified the parameters which identify each area of influence, the remainder of this chapter evaluates the quality and extent of the environmental capital contained within each area of influence and its relative importance within the scope of the study. That is, how each area of influence contributes to and defines the special character of the city and its setting.

