

Area 8: Knowle Hill Farmland and Woodland



Description

- 4.118 This landscape character area exhibits a mosaic landscape set on a ridge and undulating valley side. It falls from a high point on Knowle Hill, now part of a public park, towards the borough boundary in the east and towards lower lying land at Horton Heath in the southwest. Field sizes vary considerably and the land has a mixture of arable pasture and amenity uses, adding to the patchwork effect. There are small copses and deciduous woodlands with an enclosed and intricate character.
- 4.119 Along the western and southern edges, the settlements of Fair Oak and Horton Heath are prominent creating a strongly defined boundary. There is a quite rapid transition through parkland fragments like The Cock Pit Farm to a truly rural landscape southeast of this area, on the edge of the borough and beyond.
- 4.120 Along Knowle Lane there is poorly screened industrial development on both sides of the lane and a landfill site on a former sand pit adjoining the golf course to the east. Frequent farmsteads and small plots occupy the rest of the lane, forming a band threading through a landscape of larger fields. The high ground west of Knowle Lane around the top of Knowle Hill forms a well wooded landmark, with very long views to the south and west from the high ground.

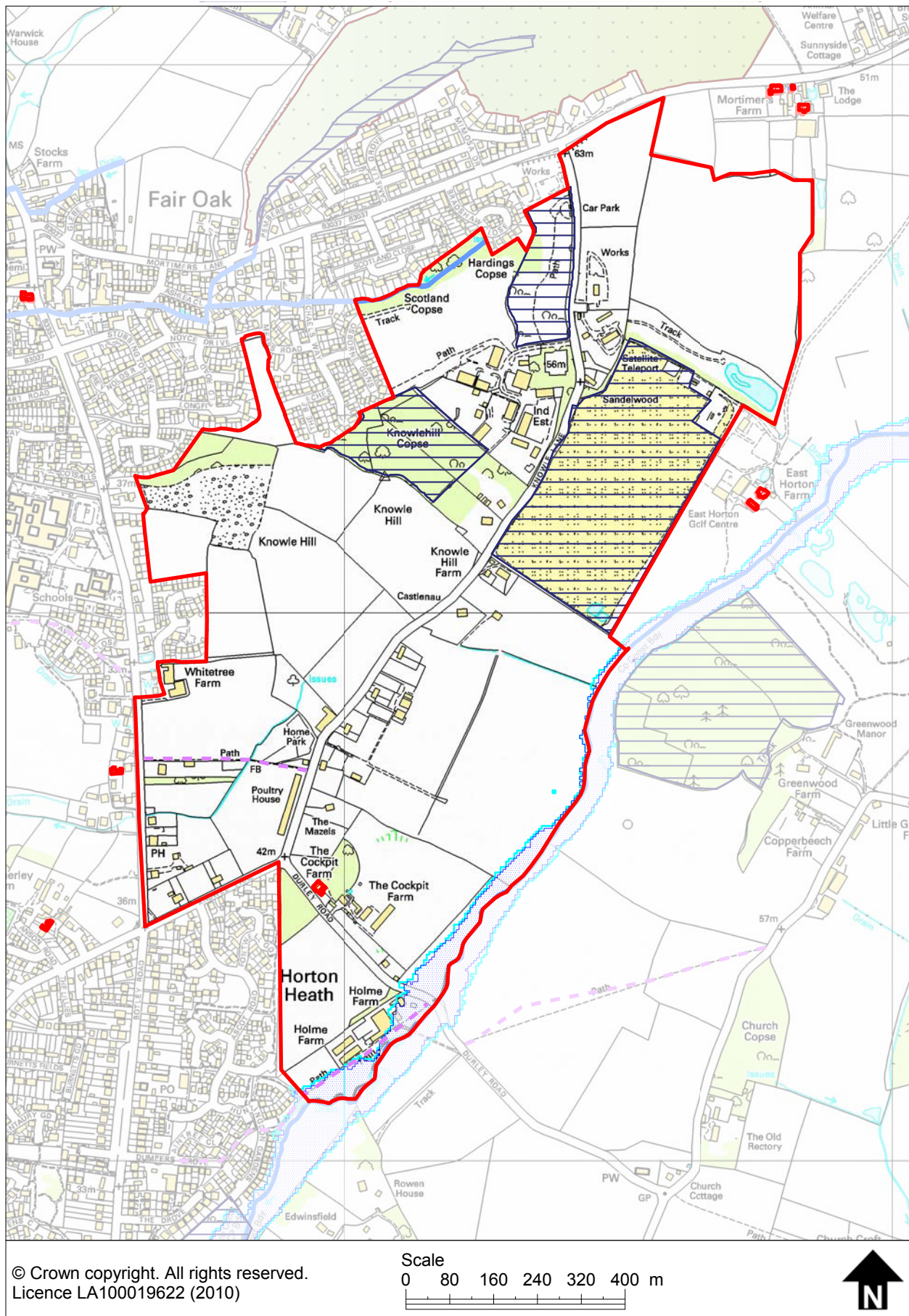
Historic Features







- 4.121 One listed building can be found in the landscape character area, along Durley Road, however it does not significantly influence the character of the landscape.



Figure 22. Former Landfill on Knowle Lane

Designations and Constraints



Key for Designation & Constraints:			
	Character Area Boundary		Main River
	Area designated Ramsar, SPA* & SSSI Area		Floodzone 2
	SAC - Special Area of Conservation		Floodzone 3
	SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest		Right of Way
	SINC - Site of Important Nature Conservation		
	LNR - Local Nature Reserve		
	Historic Parks and Gardens		
	Conservation Area		
	Scheduled Ancient Monument		
	Listed Building		

*SPA - Special Protection Area

HCC Historic Landscape Types:

4.122 Historic landscapes types in this area are:

- 1.9 Small regular fields with straight boundaries (parliamentary type enclosure)
- 1.16 Small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries
- 9.6 Post 1810 settlement (general)
- 11.2 Golf Course
- 12.2 Active and disused gravel workings

Ecological Features

4.123 This landscape character area incorporates several areas of land that have been designated as SINC. Some of this land is ancient semi-natural woodland and supports one or more 'notable species' (see appendix F). Knowle Park is designated a SINC due to the deficiency of other sites of nature conservation within the character area. It is currently undergoing improvements to provide improved habitats for species and increase its attractiveness to wildlife.

Key Characteristics

4.124 The key characteristics for this area are:

- Enclosed undulating valley landform and ridge
- Varied pattern of field sizes and cultivation
- Clusters of buildings and small fields along lanes
- Views across valley to wooded horizons north and east
- Urban influence in the western edge

Landscape Types

4.125 Landscape types as set out in the Hampshire County Council Integrated Character Assessment 2011 for this area are:

- Lowland Mosaic, Small Scale

Landscape Character Sensitivity

4.126 The landscape is predominantly rural, bounded by the urban edge of Fair Oak and Horton Heath. It has a varied landform and vegetation structure, and is attractive without being of particular distinctiveness. It has amenity value with much land being publicly accessible from Knowle Lane and the nearest residential areas. It has local wildlife value.



Figure 23. View from Knowle Hill panorama

Visual Sensitivity

4.127 The mosaic of developed land, woodland and mixture of field enclosure types limits intervisibility within the character area. The character is complicated further by the undulating landform and prominent woodland set on a ridge with views out.

Key Issues

4.128 The key issues for this area are:

- Prominent industrial development in the highest point of the character area, increases pressure for further industrial uses
- Prominent urban edge of Fair Oak and Horton Heath
- Inconsistent management practices of woodland and farmland
- Development pressure on Knowle Lane and to the rear of Scotland Close



Figure 23. View from Knowle Hill panorama