

## Area 16: Victorian Parkland



## Description

- 4.225 The dominant and unifying feature of this small area between the settlements of Netley and Hamble-Le-Rice is its Victorian parkland character. This character is derived from the surviving buildings of the Netley Hospital and the groups of parkland trees, especially the pines. The Royal Victoria Country Park was established in 1980 by HCC. The park occupies much of this character area fitting into the historic character without significant impact. The coastal influence is very strong in the southern part, with views across Southampton Water framed by parkland.
- 4.226 To the north, as the land rises, and around the Police Training Centre, the neat parkland character is diminished, with woodland and unmanaged, rough grassland becoming prominent. Nevertheless there is a strong parkland element most evident from the groups of mature conifers.

## Historic Features

- 4.227 The site of the Royal Victoria country park was originally the site of the British Army's first purpose-built military hospital. It was Queen Victoria who, following a visit to Fort Pitt, the primary hospital for wounded soldiers, generated the support for the building of new hospital. In January 1856 the site in Hamble was brought and in May that year, Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone. In 1863 the hospital starting caring for patients and the Army Medical School moved onto the site. The hospital functioned through the WWI and WWII. Gradually the historic building became more rundown and demolished in 1966 following the fire in 1963. Only the chapel was left. In 1978 the final patient left Netley. The site was then brought by HCC and the Royal Victoria Country Park opened in 1980.



Figure 43. The Chapel Museum at Royal Victoria Country Park



4.228 Royal Victoria Country Park (formerly Royal Victoria Military Hospital) is listed on the national English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, as well as the local Hampshire register. The Military Hospital Cemetery established in the grounds of the former hospital is individually listed on the local register:

4.229 Military Hospital Cemetery – “Royal Victoria Military Hospital Cemetery. Cemetery established in grounds of former military hospital.”

4.230 Royal Victoria Country Park – “Former grounds of 19th century army hospital, now demolished; chapel (grade II\* listed building) remains; grounds probably laid out by William Bridgewater Page; now a country park with woodland walks; views of Southampton Water, play areas, summer activities, heritage exhibition centre.”

4.231 The buildings which dominate this landscape are those of Netley Military Hospital. The surviving buildings are in the country park and the majority of these buildings are listed. Other listed buildings are located just outside the boundary of the Country Park.

#### HCC Historic landscape types:

4.232 Historic landscapes types in this area are:

4.3 Other pre-1810 woodland

11.3 Major sports fields and complexes

#### Ecological Features

4.233 The area falls within the Solent Coast and Hamble Estuary Priority Area. At Royal Victoria Country Park some of the grassland is significant as it contains the priority species of Green Winged Orchid and the Suffocated Clover. The mud/shale



Figure 44. Panorama of Royal Victoria Country Park



Figure 45. View of the Southampton Water from the museum

foreshore along Southampton water is designated a SAC, SPA, Ramsar and SSSI for its importance to overwintering birds and related habitats.

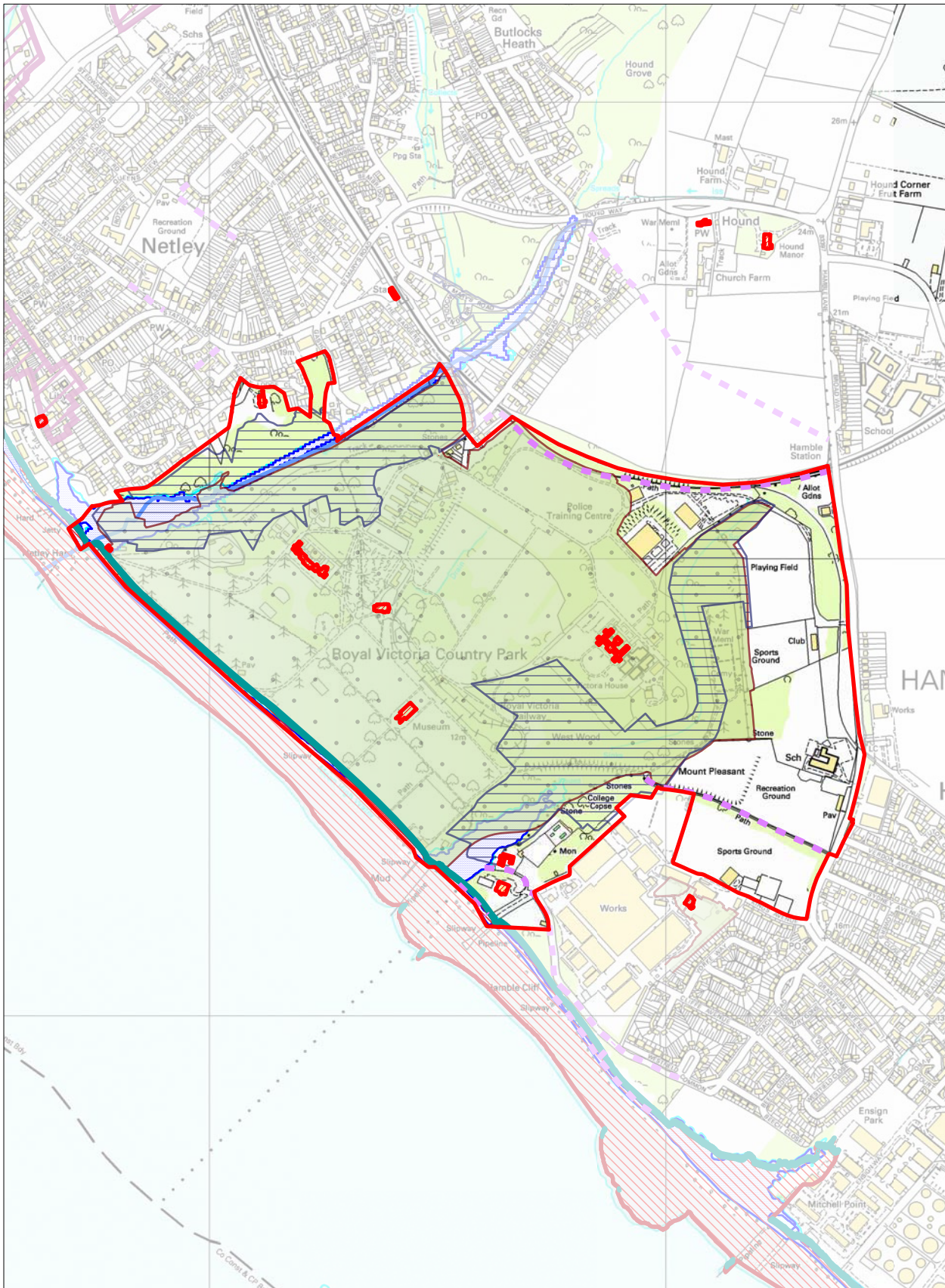
4.234 The woodlands at the northwestern and southeastern sides continue inland towards Hound. The ancient semi-natural woodland is designated as a SIN.



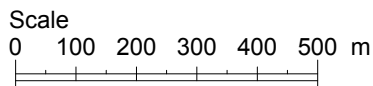
Figure 44. Panorama of Royal Victoria Country Park

















### Designations and Constraints



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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



Figure 46. Park trees





Figure 47. Panorama view of open parkland near shoreline

### Key Characteristics

4.235 The key characteristics for this area are:

- Victorian buildings
- Parkland character
- Coastland character in south
- Wooded edges
- Busy country park

### Landscape Type

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

- Coastal Plain Enclosed

### Landscape Character Sensitivity

4.237 The parkland character dominates this area and is largely free of intrusive development. It has a structure given by the parkland planting and buildings and is particularly distinctive. It has amenity value and the edges have wildlife interest.



Figure 47. Panorama view of open parkland near shoreline

### Visual Sensitivity

4.238 This area is formed by a mixture of woodland and parkland. The open areas tend to be visually prominent with views over Southampton Water and the country park is a popular visitor attraction.

### Key Issues

4.239 The key issues for this area are:

- The conflict between priorities of facilitating public access, nature conservation and managing historic parkland
- Foreshore pressure from rising sea levels
- Poor continuity of footway along the foreshore