

Character Assessment for Chavey Down West

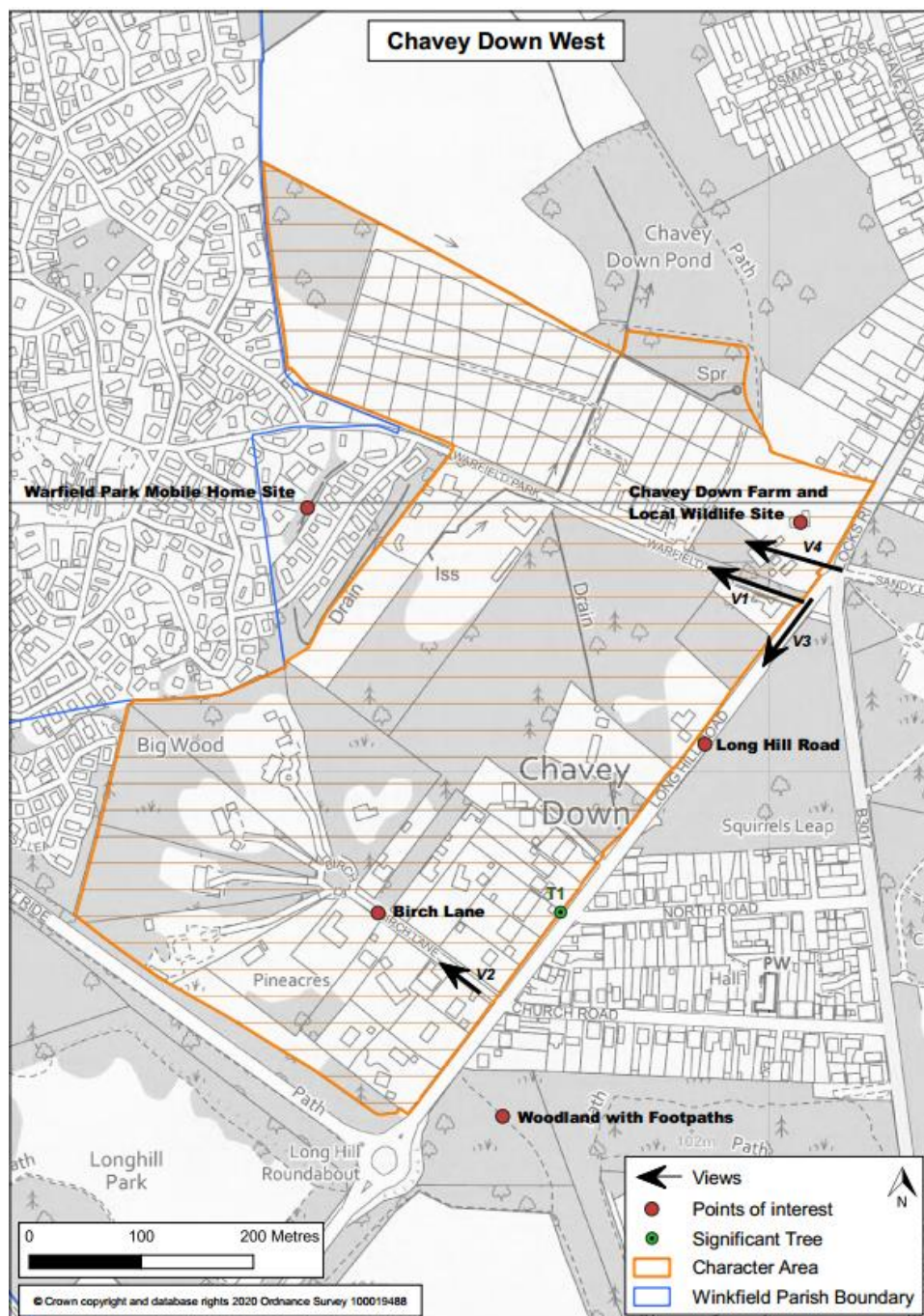
Intrinsically linked to Chavey Down East

Historical Context




Chavey Down was originally Common Land within Windsor Forest. In 1813 common land was enclosed and areas were divided up and bought by various land owners. The area was part of the Manor of Warfield Park Estate and is part of Big Wood.

The area in Birch Lane became developed just after the second world war with families over spilling from London and installing caravans along the old dirt track. These were gradually replaced with housing. The rear of the area is classified as Countryside whilst the relatively smaller plots to the front are settlement.

The area near Chavey Down Farm is the second highest point in Berkshire and in the 1700's was the location of a Windmill. Chavey Down Farm is on the Historic Environment Record.



| Locally Distinctive Contextual Features | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age of Buildings | Post 1945 but mostly demolished and rebuilt since 1960 |
| Type and Tenure of Buildings | Large detached. Some large properties with some bungalows |
| Main Uses | Residential |
| Building Heights | Mostly 2 storey |
| Prominent Building Materials | Mixed |
| Prominent Boundary Treatments | Hedges and trees. Some open frontages. Some high gates |
| Open Space/Vegetation | Enveloped in pine and deciduous woodland. Laurel and shrub under-planting and rhododendron. |

| Built And Landscape Character | |
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|   | <p>Development is mostly linear with a few incursions into the hinterland at the Pines, Birch Lane and Conifers.</p> <p>The residential area to the West of Long Hill Road has a low density of approximately 4dph within settlement and 1dph out of settlement. It is characterised by large, well dispersed houses set in extensive grounds, whilst being essentially rural with substantial woodland screening and vegetation between dwellings.</p> <p>Strong lines of overhanging mature trees dominate Long Hill Road and give a dark skies feel. Horses and cars share the road which can see very heavy and speeding traffic.</p> <p>Long Hill Road sees some very narrow pavements to one side of the road only with granite sett edging. This eventually gives way to a wider pavement mostly edged by trees, bushes and hedges.</p> <p>Birch Lane is a private, unmade road with no road markings, pavements or street furniture.</p> <p>Long Hill Drive is a private road giving access to Warfield Park Mobile Home Site.</p> |
| <p>A planning appeal inspector for 16/00328/ful described the area thus "The character and appearance of the area reflects a transition from the suburban fringes of Bracknell to the open countryside of paddocks and woodland, punctuated by linear residential development and low density large detached dwellings surrounded by planting. The mobile home development at Warfield Park to the west and north-west of the appeal site has a distinctive character of its own, akin to a holiday park or campsite with buildings scattered across a network of driveways."</p> | |
|  | <p>Generally, the development form and architectural language are of little consistency although "The Pines" and "Conifers" developments each see 3 houses of almost identical style which is not typical of the area.</p> <p>Large suburban houses in generous gardens vary greatly in architectural style and there is no consistency in terms of period, alignment or material palette.</p> <p>Properties range from large bungalows to large detached properties with wrap around gardens and large frontages.</p> |



Boundaries are well defined and densely planted with shrubs, hedges and tall trees hiding wooden and chain link fencing. Properties on Long Hill Road have open driveways allowing views on site. The few existing gates are mainly iron worked but one or two are fully boarded.

The house frontages to the West of Long Hill Road are generally set further back than the East side with a mostly uniform building line.

Birch Lane is informal in terms of street design. Properties are set behind high hedges, walls and security gating creating an enclosed feel.

Locally Distinctive Positive Features

Large houses in large plots nestled in dense woodland with attractive views from the roadside, with glimpses of outlying woodland.

The area enjoys a sense of naturalness, making a particular contribution to the sense of place. Residents not on main roads enjoy a strong sense of tranquillity which is highly valued so close to dense urban areas.

This is a sensitive ecological environment. The area is a habitat for several protected species such as bats and badgers with environmental DNA being found at the nearby Brackens for Great Crested Newts.

In terms of scenic quality Chavey Down Farm represents the second highest point in Berkshire and there are substantial views over the farm and from the higher village over the tree canopy to the Chilterns

Negative Aspects

Glimpsed views are starting to disappear due to the use of high close boarded security gating.

Surrounding woodland is under severe threat from development with protected and especially unprotected trees being felled and not replaced.

Long Hill Road is a 'rat run' between the M3, M4 and M40.

Pressure exists to fell trees where planning permissions have not allowed for their growth or development: neither have they allowed for future occupiers' problems with shade.

The green gap between the area and Warfield, especially between the mobile home park and Chavey Down Farm and to the rear of Birch Lane is under pressure.

A very narrow, crumbling pavement on one side only of Long Hill Road is a danger to young children walking to school and the park.


Many large plots have been subdivided into smaller ones and some plots have large extensions or garden outbuildings relative to the plot size and setting.





Detractors


Solid gating and fencing can deprive the area of views.

Tall solid frontage walls with no tree or hedge cover and manicured front areas can detract from the more natural setting.

Overhead wiring and grey stainless steel street lighting.

| Landscape | |
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|  | <p>Enveloped by woodland, the area is a delicate and vital landscape gap between North Ascot, Chavey Down and Warfield. Protected trees lie all around, with the village to the East and Harvest Ride to the South.</p> <p>Planting is mixed conifer and deciduous with laurel and lilac rhododendron</p> <p>The land is very wet being home to ponds and natural springs dating to the 18th century. The Wetland and Bog habitats are very supportive of a large variety of flora and fauna with reed beds, wildlife and potentially protected species</p> <p>Land at Chavey Down Farm is a designated Local Wildlife Site and land adjacent to Long Hill road is a woodland with footpaths. Both are an oasis for wildlife endangered by urban sprawl.</p> <p>Historic tree lines originally for the Manor of Warfield still line Long Hill Drive leading to Warfield Park.</p> |

| Valuable Views Worthy of Protection | | | |
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| V1 Long Hill Drive and historic tree line | V2 Winding, sloping view into Birch Lane | V3 Overhanging tree canopies on Long Hill Rd | V4 Views across Chavey Down Farm |
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| Essential Individual Trees Providing Character | |
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|  | <p>The Cypress facing North Road</p> |

| Design Guidance |
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| <p><u>Landscape and Vegetation</u></p> <p>BFC's Landscape Recommendations (Luc draft 2015) says that "Proposed developments in this area would have to show that they will not adversely affect the gap function of the landscape."</p> <p>The rural wooded gaps between Chavey Down (Birch Lane) and Warfield/Chavey Down Road should be kept, reinforced and protected from coalescence of development (especially from Warfield Mobile Home Park and to the rear of Birch Lane) with tree and hedgerow planting in keeping with the local landscape pattern. It is vital that the area retain</p> |

its tree cover and historic trees especially the boundary line on Long Hill Drive.

Landscaping should form an integral element in layout design, making provision for new planting, and sensitive boundary treatments.

Woodland, Trees and hedges play a particularly important role in screening and providing a distinct setting for within the area and should be protected and maintained.

The dominance of the wooded landscape over the built form should be retained and inappropriate mass and height in new development should be avoided.

There is a good evergreen/ deciduous mix to maintain a green feel through the winter months.

Design

Development should reflect the predominant form in terms of existing height, scale, bulk, spacing, form and appearance of buildings.

Infill development on back-land sites should not impact on the existing street scene; access roads will be hidden/screened with mature trees and hedges and should be in the form of small winding cul de sacs.

Development should avoid dominant, incongruous extensions and alterations to a building, both in relation to itself and neighbouring buildings and spaces and will not unreasonably harm the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties or persons using outdoor space.

Other

Designated local wildlife areas will be properly protected and maintained for the purpose of their designations.

Future development needs to be mindful of sporadic flooding and extra run off.

Listed Buildings in The Prescribed Area

None

Non Protected Buildings/Features Worthy of Protection/ Heritage Assets



Chavey Down Farm (Previously Chavey Down Lodge) is on the Historic Environment Record.

The farm was built around the mid 1500's and is the oldest property in the area.

There is reference to Chavey Down Lodge and the Windmill in William Faden's Plan of Windsor Forest, surveyed 1788-1791.