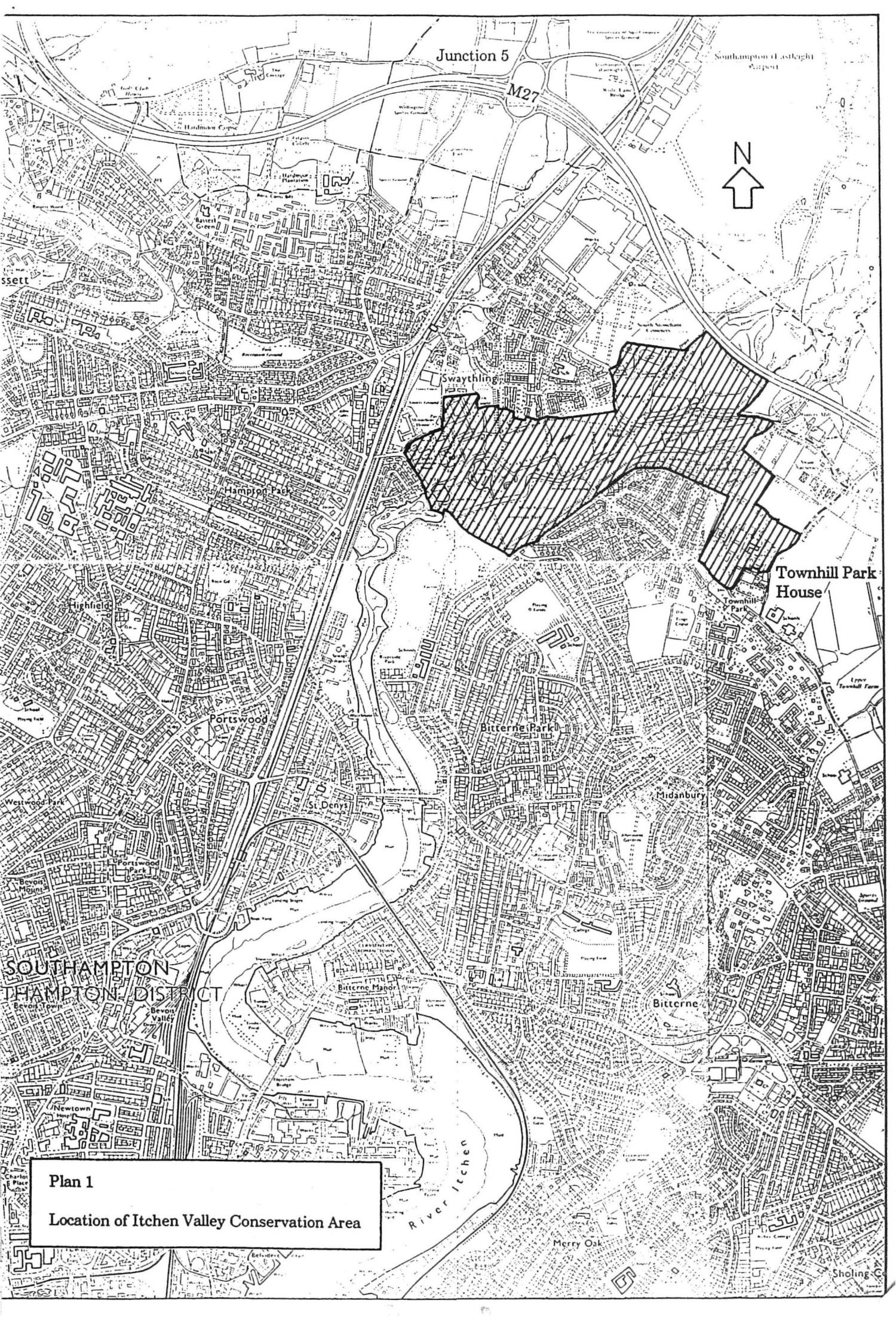

Itchen Valley Conservation Area



DIRECTORATE OF
STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT



Junction 5

Southampton (Eastleigh) Airport

M27



Townhill Park House

SOUTHAMPTON
HAMPTON DISTRICT

Plan 1
Location of Itchen Valley Conservation Area

RIVER ITCHEN

Merry Oak

Sholing C

ITCHEN VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA STRATEGY

This Conservation Area Strategy has been prepared as 'supplementary planning guidance' to the evolving Local Plan and in accordance with Section 7(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Due to the need to protect the area from unacceptable development the Brief has been prepared in advance of the adoption of the Local Plan. The statutory local plan will include this brief as formal supplementary planning guidance.

1993

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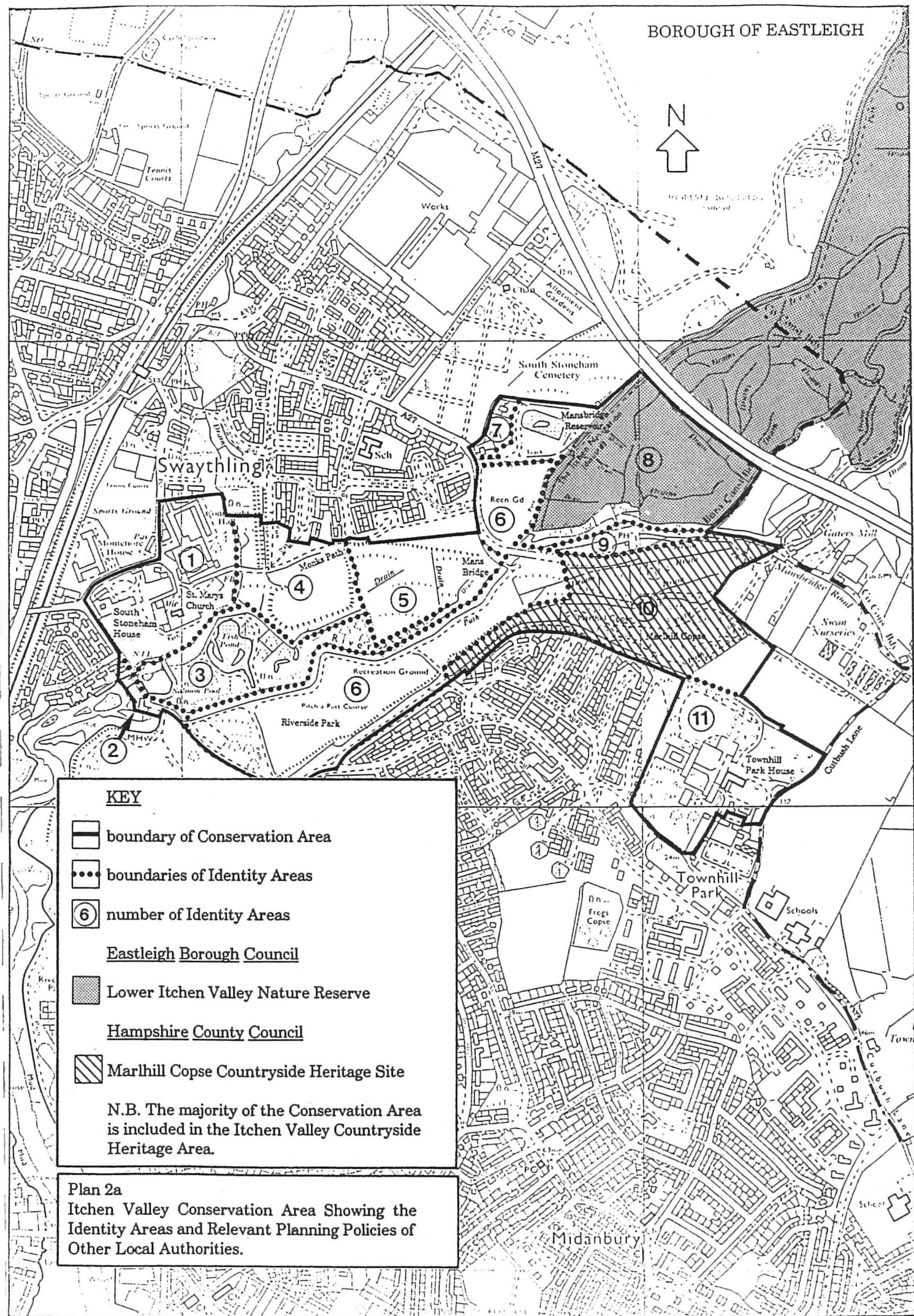
Designed by: Graphics Team

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**ITCHEN VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA
DRAFT STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

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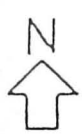
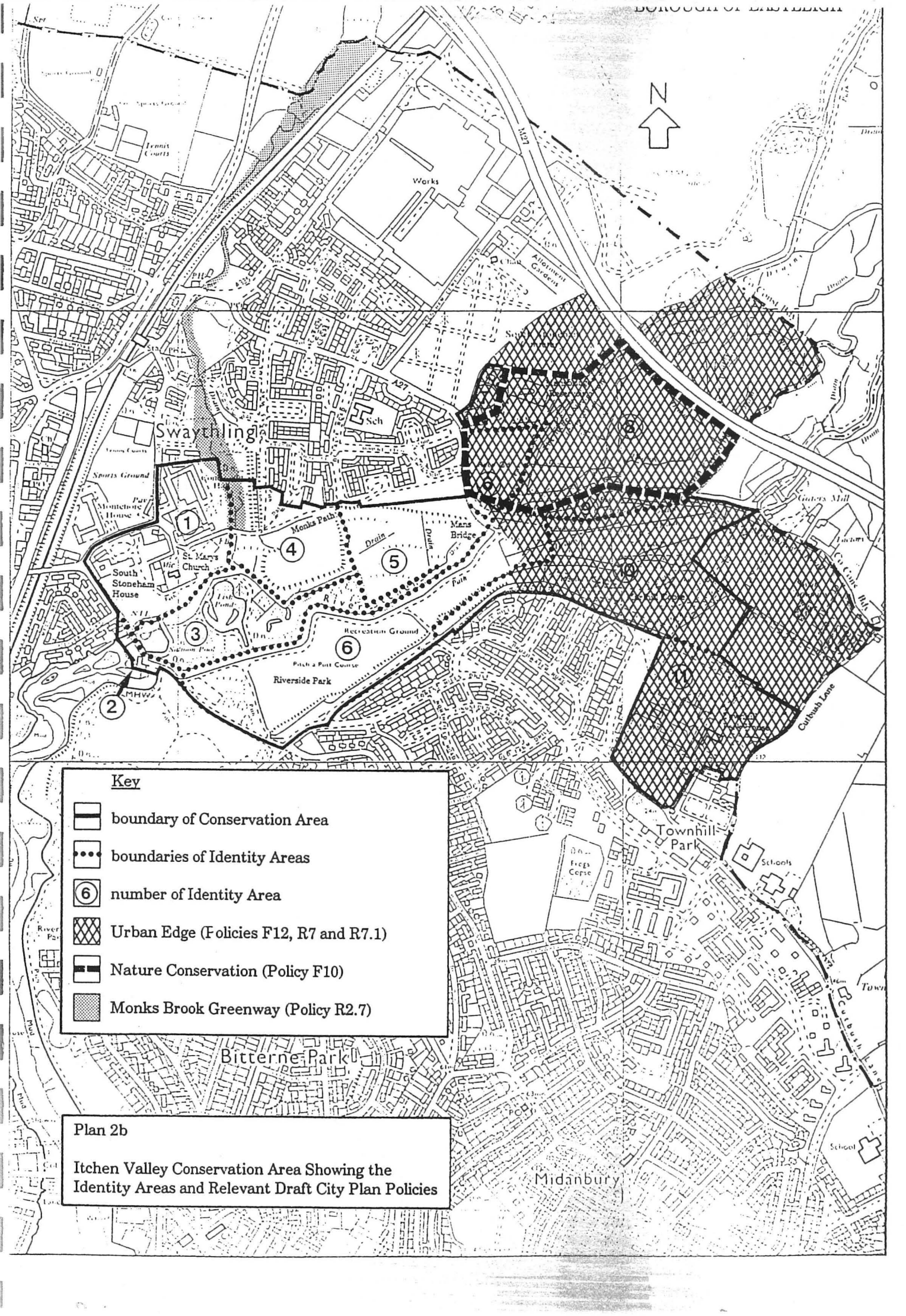


KEY







-  boundary of Conservation Area
-  boundaries of Identity Areas
-  number of Identity Areas
- Eastleigh Borough Council
-  Lower Itchen Valley Nature Reserve
- Hampshire County Council
-  Marlhill Copse Countryside Heritage Site

N.B. The majority of the Conservation Area is included in the Itchen Valley Countryside Heritage Area.

Plan 2a
Itchen Valley Conservation Area Showing the Identity Areas and Relevant Planning Policies of Other Local Authorities.



Key

-  boundary of Conservation Area
-  boundaries of Identity Areas
-  number of Identity Area
-  Urban Edge (Folicies F12, R7 and R7.1)
-  Nature Conservation (Policy F10)
-  Monks Brook Greenway (Policy R2.7)

Plan 2b
Itchen Valley Conservation Area Showing the Identity Areas and Relevant Draft City Plan Policies

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A conservation area is an area "... of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance ..." (S69 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).
- 1.2 The Itchen Valley Conservation Area was designated on 9 January 1986 in response to pressure for development in some parts of the Conservation Area and in response to the need to protect and manage the landscape, conserve habitats and preserve the settings of historic buildings. The City Council, as Local Planning Authority, has a responsibility to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This document sets out such a strategy for the Itchen Valley Conservation Area.
- 1.3 The Itchen Valley Conservation Area covers an area of approximately 73 hectares (180 acres) stretching from Woodmill and South Stoneham in the west, through Riverside Park and Monks Path towards Mansbridge and Townhill Park to the east. The area is predominantly open, undeveloped land lying to the north and south of the River Itchen and includes a wide range of landscape features and natural habitats. It also includes a small number of significant listed buildings. The boundary of the Conservation Area is shown on Plan 2. The Gaters Mill and Romill Close Conservation Areas are located close to the Itchen Valley Conservation Area within Eastleigh Borough Council.
- 1.4 As a large open area lying on the edge of the City the Conservation Area is very important in landscape, open space and nature conservation terms. A swathe of green penetrating the built-up area, it links the City with the surrounding countryside. The Conservation Area is much valued as a location for a variety of recreational pursuits - the active, such as canoeing and pitch and putt, and the less strenuous, such as walking. The Conservation Area is a vital link in the footpath network with paths following the river north to Winchester and south through the City.
- 1.5 Section 2 provides the context for the Strategy. The aim and objectives are set out in Section 3. The remaining sections set down the policies and proposals designed to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area. Sections 4, 5 and 6 provide further explanation of the objectives as they apply to the Conservation Area as a whole. Section 7 establishes general policies which cover the whole area. Sections 8-18 deal separately with different parts of the Conservation Area, described as "identity areas". Each area is analysed in terms of actions required for its preservation and opportunities available for the enhancement of the identity area.

2. BACKGROUND POLICIES

- 2.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 makes provision for the designation of conservation areas and Section 71 requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare schemes of preservation and enhancement for such areas. The designation of a conservation area is therefore only a preliminary to action to preserve or enhance its character and appearance. This must be considered in the context of any existing relevant policy which includes or adjoins the conservation area.
- 2.2 The South Hampshire Structure Plan First Alteration identifies the protection of the landscape and areas of nature conservation or archaeological interest as being of particular importance. It also emphasises the need to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas.
- 2.3 The preparation of policies for the protection of the special character of the Itchen Valley Conservation Area provides an opportunity to further one of the priorities for the City as a whole as contained in the City Strategy - that of the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment.
- 2.4 A local plan which covers the whole of the City of Southampton is currently in preparation. It is being prepared as a statutory local plan under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. As such, it is required to set out policies and proposals for the development and other use of land. The plan when adopted will replace the County Borough of Southampton Development Plan which was approved in 1956. A Local Plan is currently being held on Deposit and has been adopted as a basis for planning decisions.
- 2.5 The Local Plan policies which apply to the Conservation Area make it clear that this is an area where no fundamental changes to the existing pattern of land uses should occur. The eastern part of the Conservation Area is subject to policies for the protection of the urban edge where development proposals should not normally be permitted and where the City Council will enhance and maintain the generally open character of the area (Policies G28 and G29). Other policies emphasise the need to safeguard sites of nature conservation importance, develop and implement management plans and protect areas from development (Policies G4, G5 and G22). Overlapping the Itchen Valley Conservation Area and extending northwards into Eastleigh Borough is the Itchen Valley Country Park, and Lower Itchen Valley Nature Reserve. The City Council's policies for protection of the Conservation Area are reflected in Eastleigh Borough Council's policies for, and management of, the land to the north.
- 2.6 Concern about our environment is a high priority of the City Council. The upper part of the Itchen Valley, the majority of which falls within the Itchen Valley Conservation Area, provides a focus for several of the Council's environmental initiatives. These include nature conservation, landscaping improvement, protection of the urban edge, provision of footpath links along stream valleys (Greenways Policy) and the protection and enhancement of historic buildings and their settings.
- 2.7 An adopted Nature Conservation Strategy covering all of Southampton has been published and this identifies 3 sites of nature conservation importance in the Conservation Area. The policies aim to fulfil the objectives of the Strategy to produce guidelines to protect, promote, improve and create areas of nature conservation value in Southampton. Of particular importance is Policy 5 which emphasises the importance of providing appropriate management to the diverse habitats within the areas.
- 2.8 In addition attention is drawn to the Countryside Heritage Policy adopted by Hampshire County Council in 1984. Briefly, this includes three major components:
- (1) The identification and recording of Countryside Heritage sites which may be of national or local importance in terms of nature conservation, archaeology, history or scenery.

- (2) The identification and designation of Countryside Heritage areas which include areas of the County outstanding for their combination of distinctive landscape, ecological, archaeological and historical features.
- (3) Management of Countryside Heritage sites to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

2.9 The Itchen Valley Conservation Area contains a Countryside Heritage site, Marlhill Copse, which is one of 3 in Southampton. It has also recently been included in the Itchen Valley Countryside Heritage Area.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 A conservation area by definition has a special character or appearance which is desirable to preserve or enhance. The character of the Itchen Valley Conservation Area is fundamentally different from other conservation areas in the City which are all built-up, urban areas. Consequently a different approach to the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area is necessary. The special character of the Itchen Valley Conservation Area is necessary. The special character of the Itchen Valley Conservation Area is derived from its open, undeveloped state and is created by the relationship of features within the landscape: the River Itchen; the historic salmon pools; open meadowland; dense woodland; individual trees and hedgerows; formal parkland; and a number of historic buildings and structures which, to a great extent, have retained their landscape settings. The Conservation Area is not just a visually important area, it also has a valuable role in the provision of outdoor recreational facilities for a large part of the City. Consequently the main aim of this Strategy is:

- * to preserve and promote the Conservation Area's unique environmental and recreational value and to encourage its enhancement

3.2 To achieve this aim the Strategy sets out policies and proposals

- * to preserve and manage the landscape;
- * to preserve and manage natural habitats;
- * to preserve both the interiors and exteriors of historic buildings, the settings of these buildings and other important historic features; and
- * to realise the potential of the Conservation Area as a location for outdoor recreation, providing that this does not conflict with the objectives outlined above.

There is a strong casual relationship between the type of land use in the Conservation Area and its character. Thus, to achieve the objectives of preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area's landscape, ecology and historic buildings it is necessary to restrict new land uses to those which are compatible with the objectives.

4. LAND USES

- 4.1 Since the special character of the Itchen Valley Conservation Area is derived from its undeveloped "natural" state it follows that new development within the Conservation Area is very much the exception rather than the rule. The underlying theme for the future of the area is that of little change to the existing land uses.
- 4.2 The most appropriate use for the majority of the Conservation Area is outdoor recreation. Much of the Conservation Area is already used in this way for walking, pitch and putt, football and water-based activities such as canoeing and fishing. The need to preserve and enhance the nature conservation value of the area as a whole and some sites in particular determines the type of recreation which might be appropriate within individual identity areas. The following classification has been used in this Strategy:

Quiet activities

These activities are appropriate in areas with importance landscape and physical features such as woods, streams, slopes and wildlife habitats. Facilities will be low-key because of the need to safeguard the nature of the sites, though informal paths may be laid and information boards provided. People will be kept away from the most vulnerable wildlife habitats.

Informal recreation

This includes activities such as playing, picnicking, cycling and fishing. Associated facilities such as car parking and toilets may be needed to serve the most popular areas.

Active pursuits

These activities have greatest impact on the surroundings by way of noise, intensity of use (numbers and concentration) and/or the physical facilities necessary for their operation. Activities currently taking place in the Conservation Area which fall into this category are pitch and putt, canoeing and the sports using the playing fields. They attract people from further afield and facilities such as car parking and toilets may be required.

- 4.3 New built-leisure provision is generally not acceptable although facilities required as ancillary to the active pursuits may be appropriate provided they are well designed, inconspicuously sited and do not have a significant impact on their surroundings.
- 4.4 There are also some agricultural uses within the Conservation Area - grazing in areas 5 and 8. Grazing in area 8 is essential to retain its wildlife value and, where possible, grazing could be extended within the Conservation Area in the future.
- 4.5 There are no proposals to change the existing pattern of land uses in the Conservation Area as a whole, however if there was pressure to change any use the merits and disadvantages of the proposed use would be assessed against the aim and objectives set out in Section 3.
- 4.6 There are three main roads which pass through the Conservation Area, Woodmill Lane to the west, Cutbush Lane to the south-east and Mansbridge Road which cuts through the northern sector. There are a number of bus routes which serve the area and surrounding housing development, and Swaythling Railway Station is situated just outside the boundary to the north-west, a short walk to the Conservation Area. There are two public car parks, at Riverside Park (Identity Area 6) and the Reservoir (Identity Area 8). Townhill Park House, the Swan Public House, Swaythling Fisheries, the University and Stoneham Church have their own limited private parking. There is an existing hierarchy of footpaths throughout the Conservation Area, but there are no cycleways.
- 4.7 Given the objectives of the Strategy as set out in paragraph 3.2 it follows that pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access into and through the Conservation Area need to be controlled. Within the

Conservation Area people must be directed to those areas which can absorb a high intensity use without damaging the nature conservation value or landscape. This can be achieved by careful siting of access points, through routes, circular walks, car parks and facilities.

- 4.8 The individual access needs of each identity area will be discussed in the chapters relating to each area. They fall into two categories, firstly areas in which access will need to be increased or improved to realise their recreational potential and secondly areas in which access will need to be restricted to protect their recreational, nature conservation or landscape value.
- 4.9 A footpath network (giving public access) already exists throughout the area, ranging from some well defined and signed paths to others which are unmade desire lanes. This network should be improved to include a number of well-signed circular walks of differing lengths designed to provide easy access for people with wheelchairs and those with prams or pushchairs. Seats should be provided at appropriate points on these routes to allow people to sit and appreciate the beauty of the area. The footpath network should link access points to destination points such as interesting features and facilities as well as providing interesting and varied walks. This should also include providing links between the Itchen Valley Conservation Area and the open countryside beyond.
- 4.10 Some management of the existing footpaths already takes place. This should be increased when resources become available to ensure safe access to the public.
- 4.11 Cycling is not only a means of transport but it is also a form of recreation. The Local Plan proposes a cycle route from Woodmill Lane to Mansbridge Road following the southern bank of the River Itchen (Policy T17 (vii)). This is the path most frequented by visitors to the area and to avoid pedestrian - cycle accidents it is proposed to identify a new cycle route from Wessex Lane to Mansbridge Road. This route will follow Monks Path from Connaught Hall to Meadowside Close. From Meadowside Close to Mansbridge Road the cycle route will share the existing hard surfaced footpath which lies to the south of Itchen View. The central section between Monks Way and Meadowside Close will require hard surfacing, but it is not proposed to introduce further lighting in order to retain the natural character of the Conservation Area.

5. LANDSCAPE AND HABITATS

- 5.1** The value of the Conservation Area in landscape terms cannot be overestimated. As an open area it provides a break in the built-up area, a valuable buffer within the City. Its mature trees, especially those in elevated positions such as Marlhill Copse form an important element in the townscape of the City. The area contributes to the gradual transition from City to countryside, 'softening' the urban edge. In managing the landscape of the area particular attention must be paid to the protection (and creation, where necessary) of views, landmarks, shape, colour and a creation of a variety of landscapes.
- 5.2** Investigation of the nature conservation value of the area carried out as part of the Nature Conservation Strategy highlights the Conservation Area's importance in nature conservation terms. Although individual parts of the Conservation Area can be identified as having high nature conservation interest its real wildlife value derives from the variety of habitats in the area as a whole. The County-wide importance of Marlhill Copse has been recognised in its designation as a countryside Heritage Site. An entomological survey in 1989 found the meadow areas remarkably rich in insect life so much so that the possibility of designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest is being investigated. The City Council will prepare a management plan for the Conservation Area to protect and enhance the landscape and habitats.
- 5.3** The varied nature conservation interest of the area creates an as yet untapped resource for environmental education. The City Council will consider the best way of realising this potential which may include facilities such as nature trails, information boards and an interpretation centre, as long as this does not conflict with the objectives outlined in paragraph 3.2.

6. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

6.1 The majority of the Itchen Valley Conservation Area is free from development, although much adjacent land has been developed for residential use. There are however several important historic buildings within the Conservation Area. The following buildings are listed as being of architectural or historical interest:-

Townhill Park House	Grade II
Stable Block to Townhill Park House	Grade II
Drinking Fountain, Woodmill Lane	Grade II
St Mary's Church, South Stoneham	Grade I
Boundary wall (N) to church	Grade II
South Stoneham House	Grade II*
Mans Bridge	Grade II

6.2 With the possible exception of the Drinking Fountain all the listed buildings within the Conservation Area depend to a greater extent on their open setting contributing to their characters. It is therefore vital that not only are unsympathetic extensions and alterations to listed buildings prevented but so is development which is damaging to the setting of the listed building.

6.3 The Heritage Strategy for Southampton published in 1985 contains policies for protecting and enhancing the heritage of the City including Conservation Areas, Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings. The Local Plan also endorses the protection and enhancement of historic buildings.

6.4 In addition to existing historic buildings, Southampton is rich in archaeological heritage. The City has been surveyed and 15 areas of archaeological importance have been identified. The majority of the Conservation Area falls within "Local Area of Archaeological Importance No.9 - Swaythling". Remains date from Roman times and include mediaeval fisheries and the more modern industrial archaeology of the Itchen Navigation and the Mansbridge waterworks.

6.5 The Itchen Navigation and Mansbridge Reservoir have been the subject of several recent studies and has shown that there is a far more complex system to be investigated than first thought. It is still possible to walk the whole length of the Navigation from Northam Bridge to Winchester and from Woodmill northwards the original towpath can be followed most of the way.

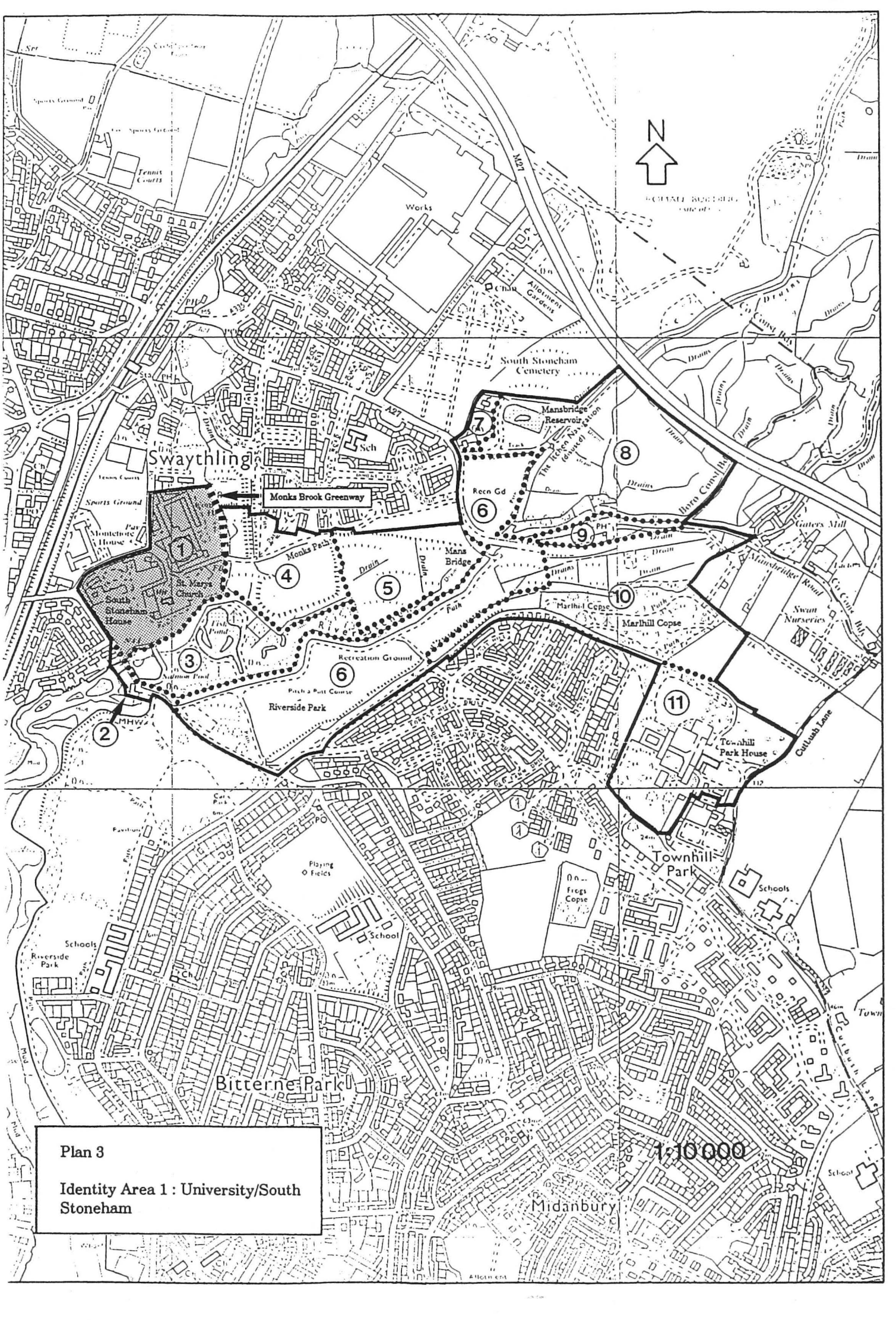
6.6 The site of the tidal lock at Woodmill is readily apparent but nothing can now be seen of the lock itself. It is probably that excavation would expose substantial remains. Certainly the site could be improved by an information panel. The towpath between Woodmill and Mansbridge is now metalled as far as the bridge, but needs to be defined between the bridge and Mansbridge Lock. The Navigation proper diverts from the Itchen just north of the bridge and the cut is very overgrown and ill-defined, until it reaches the lock. Most of the locks on the Navigation are turf locks using earth banks with brickwork or stone only for the gate supports at the head and tail of each lock.

6.7 Mansbridge Lock itself is very overgrown but the remains of the brick gate supports survive. The lock is roughly 32m between gates and the lock bridge has been replaced by an earth bank which cuts the lock in half. It may be possible to clear the undergrowth, restore the gate supports and perhaps replace the cross bank with a wooden bridge thus making the site easier to interpret. The extent of clearance for the purposes of exposing the lock will need to be balanced against the effect on the nature conservation value of the Navigation.

6.8 The length of the Itchen Navigation, and the Reservoir site provides a wealth of archaeological interest and coupled with the extensive flora and fauna could provide an important area both for recreation and education. Selective clearance and restoration would enable interpretation of this historic industrial resource contributing to the overall presentation of the Itchen Valley Conservation Area.

7. GENERAL POLICIES

- (1) THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS IN THE ITCHEN VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED UNLESS THEY ARE:**
 - (i) SMALL BUILDINGS REQUIRED AS ANCILLARY TO USE OF LAND FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION IN IDENTITY AREA 6, OR CHILDRENS PLAY IN IDENTITY AREA 5 (SEE PARAGRAPH 4.3) WHICH MAY INCLUDE AN INTERPRETATION CENTRE; OR**
 - (ii) SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED TO ENSURE THE LONG TERM PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF TOWNHILL PARK HOUSE AND GROUNDS**
- (2) NEW BUILDINGS, ALTERATIONS, EXTENSIONS, REPLACEMENTS AND CHANGES OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS MAY BE PERMITTED IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. HOWEVER THESE SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH AND ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OF THE ITCHEN VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA, AND ITS LISTED BUILDINGS.**
- (3) A NEW CYCLE ROUTE IS PROPOSED FROM WESSEX LANE TO MANSBRIDGE ROAD. THIS WILL BE LOCATED SO THAT MINIMUM DISTURBANCE IS CAUSED TO THE VISUAL AND WILDLIFE VALUE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.**
- (4) PROPOSALS TO INCREASE ACCESS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THEY WILL NOT SERIOUSLY DAMAGE THE VISUAL OR NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE OF ANY OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.**



SCOTT & BOWDEN
SURVEYORS

Swaythling

Monks Brook Greenway

South Stoneham Cemetery

Mansbridge Reservoir Station

6

8

4

5

10

11

2

3

6

11

Townhill Park

Bitterne Park

Midanbury

Plan 3

Identity Area 1 : University/South Stoneham

1:10,000

8. IDENTITY AREA 1: UNIVERSITY/SOUTH STONEHAM

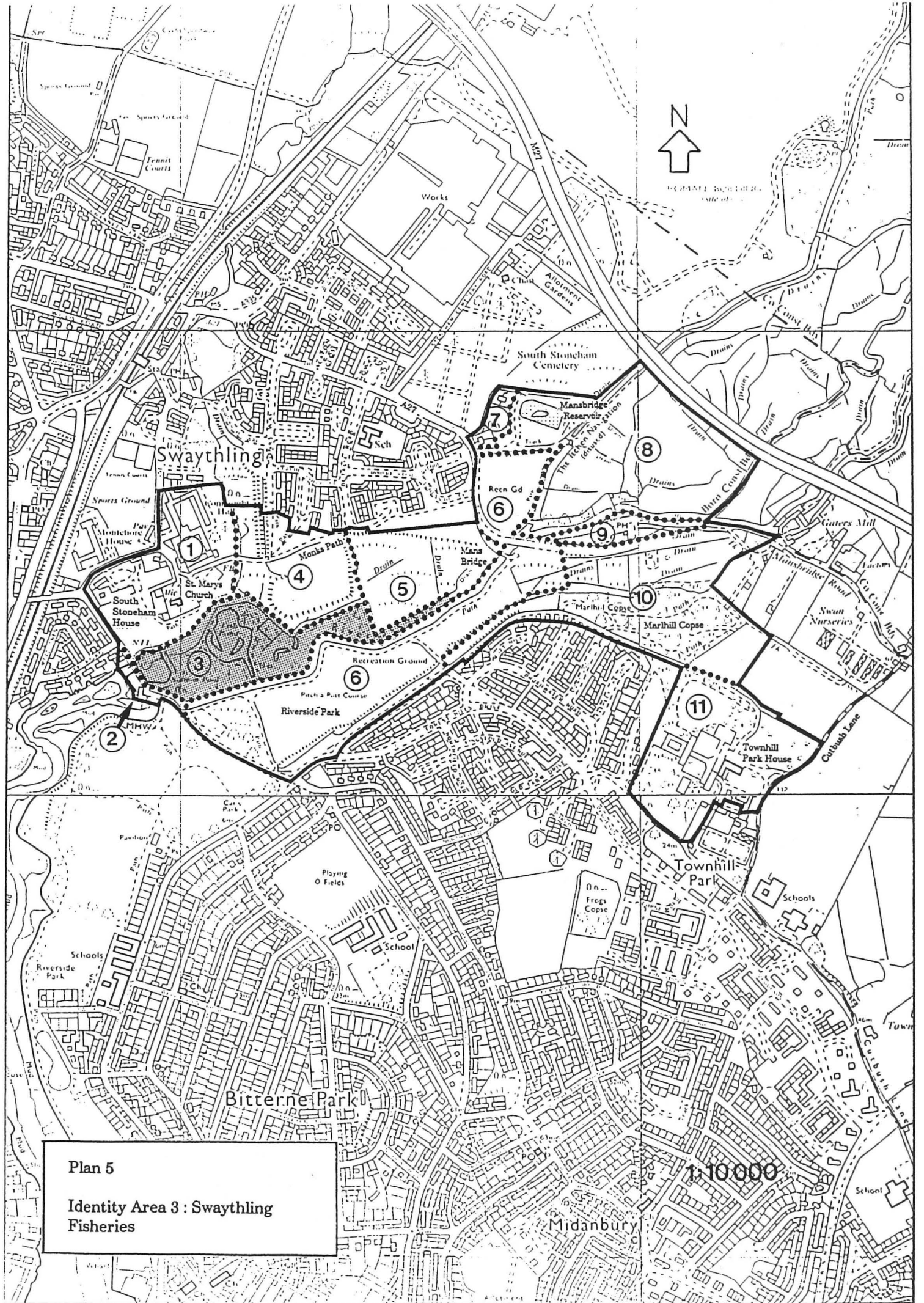
- 8.1 This identity area lies in the north west of the Conservation Area and is bounded by Monks Brook to the east and Swaythling Fisheries to the south. Vehicular access into the site is afforded by Woodmill Lane and Wessex Lane. Monks Path approaches the site from the east across Monks Brook and provides pedestrian/cycle access. The area includes some important buildings: South Stoneham House and formal gardens, South Stoneham Church and the more recent Connaught Hall. The area is also richly landscaped with woodland trees. In the east of the identity area, running alongside Monks Brook is part of the Monks Brook Greenway. The Greenway extends into identity area 4 and northwards to the City boundary. Within the Greenway the emphasis is very much on protection of the landscape and habitats with controlled pedestrian access where appropriate. Consequently development is inappropriate.
- 8.2 The majority of land is owned by the University of Southampton and consequently public access is limited. South Stoneham House, acquired by the University in 1921, and nearby Connaught Hall are used as halls of residence. South Stoneham House was built in 1708 and the gardens and surrounding area was redesigned by Lancelot Brown in the 1770's. Alterations were made to the house circa 1900, and the house was listed grade II* in July 1953. The attractiveness of the house, despite the addition of a tower block in the 1960s, owes much to its setting - the broad sweep of the garden down to the salmon pool, Monks Brook and the River Itchen. The area known as Swaythling Fisheries to the south (identity area 3) was originally designed as part of the South Stoneham House estate and thus, despite the fence indicating different ownerships, the two identity areas are closely linked historically. Within the grounds of South Stoneham House and Connaught Hall are many important trees - belts of trees around the edges of the gardens (especially along Monks Brook) and individual trees in more central positions. Southampton City Council has an arrangement with the University over the management and felling of trees. These are also protected by conservation area legislation.
- 8.3 The Church of England owns South Stoneham Church and associated land. This church is now St Marys, the Parish Church of South Stoneham and the village church of Swaythling. The Church appeared as a daughter church to that of Swaythling in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Parts of the present building date back to Norman times and there is evidence of a timber structured church as early as Saxon times. It was listed grade I in 1952. The approach road to the Church will be resurfaced in 1993 with funding from Hampshire County Council. A boundary wall borders South Stoneham Church and South Stoneham House and was probably built about the same time as the house. Listed grade II this red brick wall, stands about eight feet in height laid in English Bond. Monks Path, an historic route, continues to provide an important link east-west through the Conservation Area. It is hard-surfaced and lit within this identity area.
- 8.4 **THE APPROACH**
- 8.4.1 In this part of the Conservation Area the importance of the undeveloped areas derives not so much from its nature conservation value since the majority is formal gardens, rather from its relationship to the important listed buildings (creating a landscaped setting) and its contribution in landscape terms to the whole conservation area. There may be the opportunity for small extensions to existing buildings provided they respect the character of the existing building, the Conservation Area, and do not detract from the setting of any listed building.
- 8.4.2 Access will continue to be limited whilst the land remains in private ownership.
- 8.4.3 Monks Path will become a major part of the footpath/cycle network and will need to be suitably signed.

9. IDENTITY AREA 2: WOODMILL

- 9.1 This identity area lies at the western end of the Conservation Area, adjacent to the Swaythling Fisheries and Riverside Park. This is the smallest of the identity areas and constitutes a river crossing point forming the major access into this part of the conservation area. The road is well trafficked and access is complicated by an entrance into the Fisheries site. There is however good access to the river, both upstream and downstream. The existing land uses apart from Woodmill Lane are: house and garden to the north of Monks Brook (privately owned); and the Woodmill Sailing and Canoeing Centre (owned by Hampshire County Council).
- 9.2 The old Woodmill is a large 19th century brick mill standing at the head of the tidal Itchen and the former Itchen Navigation. The tide lock was close to the Mill, and was constructed to transport barges from sea waters to the navigable freshwaters. The canal (Itchen Navigation) was commissioned by an act of Parliament in 1665 and completed in 1710. The Navigation ran from Woodmill for just over 10 miles to Blackbridge Wharf at Winchester via 17 locks. However, it did not become productive until the beginning of the 19th century when the most important cargo was coal. With the opening of the railway line from Southampton to Winchester in 1858 the canal's usage began to decline so that by 1869 it had become disused.
- 9.3 Resurfacing of Woodmill Lane took place in 1992 to both improve the appearance of the road and improve pedestrian safety. This was funded by Hampshire County Council.
- 9.4 **THE APPROACH**
- 9.4.1 There is no scope for significant development within this identity area. Although the old Woodmill is not a listed building it is an important building within the Conservation Area and therefore should be retained. Any alterations or extensions to the building must be sensitive to the setting of the building and the character of the Conservation Area. The Mill is part of the navigable Itchen and there is potential for creating an interest in its industrial archaeology by providing an information panel.
- 9.4.2 An improvement to the concreted area in front of the Woodmill would benefit the appearance of the area eg use of more sympathetic materials to complement the resurfacing of Woodmill Lane.
- 9.4.3 Access to the waterfront will be retained for recreational purposes.
- 9.4.4 The crossing point of the River Itchen (where Woodmill Lane has a right angle bend) and the narrow bridge over Monks Brook create a bottleneck to vehicles. However, the narrow, bendy nature of Woodmill Lane creates the character of this part of the Conservation Area. Thus, with the exception of the resurfacing no further highway improvements are programmed.

10. **IDENTITY AREA 3: SWAYTHLING FISHERIES**

- 10.1 This identity area lies in the west of the Conservation Area, and access is obtained from Woodmill Lane. This is an area of considerable historical significance through its association with salmon fishing and fish farming. It was originally landscaped as part of the Swaythling Estate although the ponds can be traced back to at least mediaeval times. The salmon pool in its present form is unique in the south of England.
- 10.2 The site is largely river bottom land and well-treed. The existing woodlands contribute to the quality of the landscape around the fishponds and can be divided into two broad groups. Firstly self sown thickets of Willow, Alder and other waterside species, suffering from lack of anchorage. Secondly, forest trees planted by the estate but since neglected. Species include Beech, Lime, Chestnut and Yew and there are indications that many are suffering from disease and lack of maintenance.
- 10.3 The land is in private ownership and is run as a commercial salmon and trout and eel fishery. Embankments have been raised along the courses of the Itchen and Monks Brook on the north and ways cleared through the woodland. In addition about a quarter of the total area has been raised immediately to the east of the pool.
- ### 10.4 **THE APPROACH**
- 10.4.1 This identity area occupies a central position within the Conservation Area. Although it is not open to the public it still makes a very important contribution to the Conservation Area in visual terms. Its mature trees, especially the shelterbelt running along the northern bank of the River Itchen, create an attractive contrast to the mown grass of Riverside Park, effectively link the 'formal' areas of Riverside Park to the wilder areas of Identity Areas 4 and 5, and are an important element in the landscape of the Conservation Area as a whole. It is therefore vital that the wooded character of this area is retained.
- 10.4.2 The Local Planning Authority consider any significant increase in fishing levels to be inappropriate due to the need to protect the landscaped and wooded character of the area and to due to the nature and location of the access point from Wessex Lane. The Local Planning Authority accepts the need for a management presence on the site, however, only development commensurate with the level of fishing activity is acceptable.
- 10.4.3 An important aspect of the site is its proper management. All works must take care to maintain existing water tables and ground levels. Arboricultural treatment should be designed to reduce felling to a minimum on the grounds of disease or age, and replacement planting should take place with trees suitable to the area. The woodland shelterbelt adjacent to the river should be maintained, with replacement planting comprising native or naturalised trees.



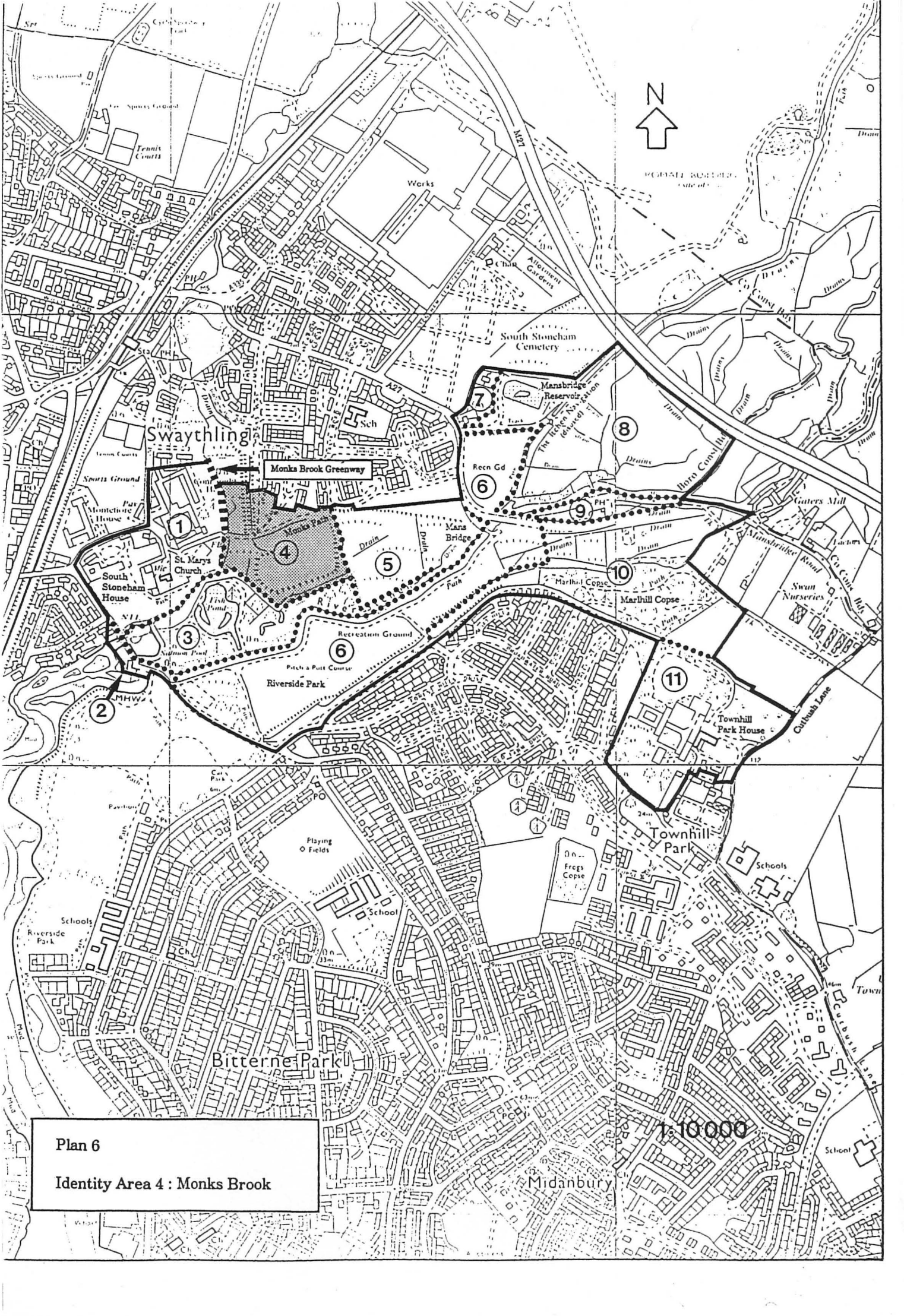
Plan 5
 Identity Area 3 : Swaythling Fisheries

11. IDENTITY AREA 4: MONKS BROOK

- 11.1 This identity area lies immediately to the east of Monks Brook and to the north of a channel which feeds west into Monks Brook. To the north of the area is a housing area designed by Herbert Collins in the 1920s now under the ownership of the Swaythling Housing Society. Since the Conservation Area was designated new development has extended the boundary of the housing area southwards to Monks Path with the exception of the strip of land immediately to the east of Monks Brook and north of Monks Path. This is designated as Monks Brook Greenway where built development is not appropriate. The majority of the identity area lies to the south of Monks Path and is an open area containing a mixture of meadowland, shrubs and mature woodland along the watercourses which is valuable aesthetically and for nature conservation.
- 11.2 The ownership of the land within the identity area is shared between the University who owns the southern section, Swaythling Housing Association who owns the land to the north of Monks Path where development has occurred, and the City Council who owns the land within Monks Brook Greenway.
- 11.3 The drainage of the Brook itself is complicated by a series of man made channels. The salmon pool and the sluice gates at Woodmill (outside the identity area) also interfere with the tidal patterns of the Brook. At high tide the water often overflows its banks so that the wet land either side of the Brook governs the type of vegetation found there. The flora fall into two distinct groups, those above the water table and those below it. There are a variety of wetland species in the Monks Brook Valley bottom and other wet areas, including moisture loving woodland trees such as willow and undergrowth typical of emerging woodland. The banks of the Brook are much drier and have become colonised by Sycamore. The low lying scrubland running along the paths and woodland fringe has been colonised by dense patches of vegetation. The rest of the area is rough grassland interspersed by wildflowers. The area supports a wide range of interesting fauna, mainly insects including moths, butterflies, dragonflies and grasshoppers. A variety of birds is also attracted to the area, including those usually associated with woodland and river valleys.
- 11.4 Monks Path runs east-west across the site. The western part is hard-surfaced and lit but the eastern part is a gravel/hoggin construction without lighting. A path beside Monks Brook within Monks Brook Greenway is almost complete and provides a link north to Eastleigh Borough. There is no formal footpath access into the land south of Monks Path, although children obviously use the area for play.
- 11.5 Monks Brook identity area is valuable site for nature conservation. Fortunately much pressure is taken off the area for recreational purposes due to its proximity to Riverside Park, and as a consequence it does not suffer from intensive use or misuse. However, there is evidence of dumping of household and garden waste along the southern edge of Monks Path. Measures need to be taken to prevent or contain this to protect the majority of the identity area. The present footpath network allows access without destroying the nature of the site or encouraging access into the more fragile areas.
- ### **11.6 THE APPROACH**
- 11.6.1 In recognition of the great importance of the area in nature conservation and landscape terms no development will be permitted to the south of Monks Path. For the same reason no development will be permitted on land within the identity area which lies within Monks Brook Greenway.
- 11.6.2 Only quiet activities are considered appropriate in this identity area because of the need to protect this sensitive area.
- 11.6.3 Monks Path requires resurfacing using a hard surface since it will continue to act as an important footpath/cycle route from Mansbridge to Wessex Lane. There is, however, no intention to introduce lighting to the eastern part of the path, since the path is intended primarily as a

recreational route.

- 11.6.4 If the landowner is agreeable consideration will be given to the possibility of introducing further paths through the area - perhaps as a nature trail - but activities which could damage the nature conservation value of the area will be resisted.



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Plan 6
Identity Area 4 : Monks Brook

Swaythling

Monks Brook Greenway

Bitterne Park

Midanbury

Townhill Park

Townhill Park House

South Stoneham House
St Marys Church

South Stoneham Cemetery

Mansbridge Reservoir

South Stoneham House

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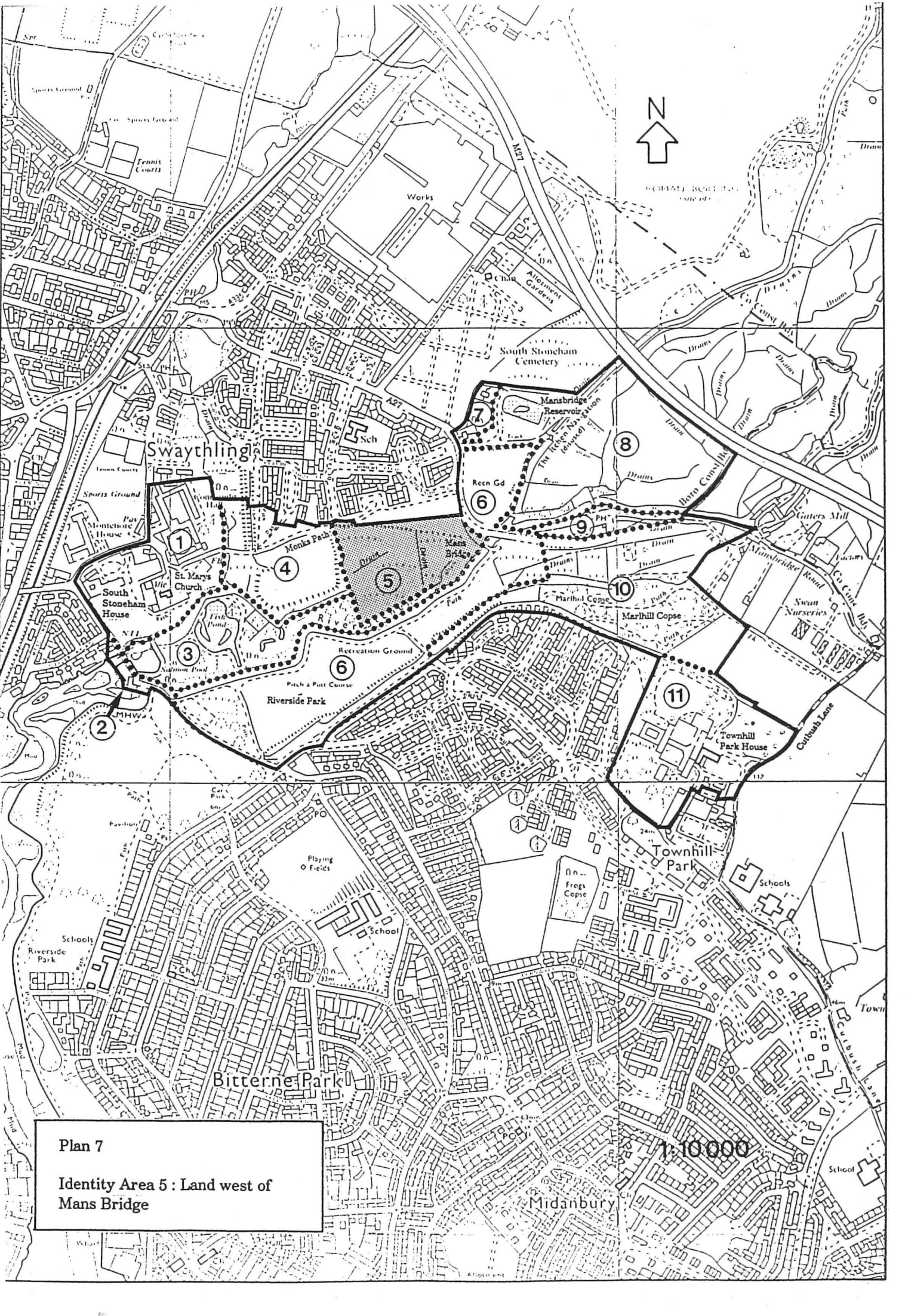
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12. IDENTITY AREA 5: LAND WEST OF MANS BRIDGE

- 12.1 This area lies west of Mans Bridge and north of the River Itchen. Bounded by the recent housing development to the north and a natural drain to the west, the land slopes downwards towards the River Itchen and is a mixture of open space and dense vegetation. The northern part of the identity area is a reclaimed refuse tip.
- 12.2 The majority of this area is owned by Hampshire County Council for educational purposes. Within the area part is laid out as a play field for Mansbridge First and Middle School and part fenced off for grazing. The area between the playing field and the river is used by the school, informally, for environmental studies. This area is abundant in vegetation, mainly woodland and sedge, but interspersed with a wide variety of wild flowers and shrubs.
- 12.3 Studies of the area have shown that linked with Monks Brook (Identity Area 4) this part of the Conservation Area represents a valuable resource and supports a wide range of wild flowers, shrubs and trees. In addition many insects breed in this area, particularly butterflies, which in turn attract many woodland and river valley birds. The wet woodland, in particular, supports a variety of plant species. There are also excellent examples of nature river banks by the stream which provide a habitat for small mammals including water voles.
- 12.4 The site is fenced, and consequently public access to this part of the Conservation Area is limited to a hard-surfaced path running east-west along the northern boundary of the site separating the Conservation Area from the new housing, Itchen View. Planting has been carried out along this boundary, to the south of the path, which will in time soften the urban/rural edge.
- 12.5 Fortunately the area does not suffer badly from mis-use. Dumping is currently not a major problem and probably relates to the restricted access. In addition suitable nearby areas for casual recreation such as Riverside Park reduce the pressure on this area.
- ### **12.6 THE APPROACH**
- 12.6.1 In recognition of the great importance of the area in ecological and in landscape terms no development will be permitted within the identity area.
- 12.6.2 Generally only quiet activities are considered appropriate in this identity area, however childrens play facilities will be permitted in the north of the area as long as these accord with the other policies outlined in Section 7.
- 12.6.3 Consideration will be given to the possibility of introducing further paths through the area - perhaps as a nature trail - but activities which could damage the high nature conservation value of the area will be restricted.



OS DATA SOURCE
1985

Swaythling

South Stoneham Cemetery

Mansbridge Reservoir

South Stoneham House

St. Marys Church

Riverside Park

Townhill Park

Bitterne Park

Midanbury

Plan 7

Identity Area 5 : Land west of
Mans Bridge

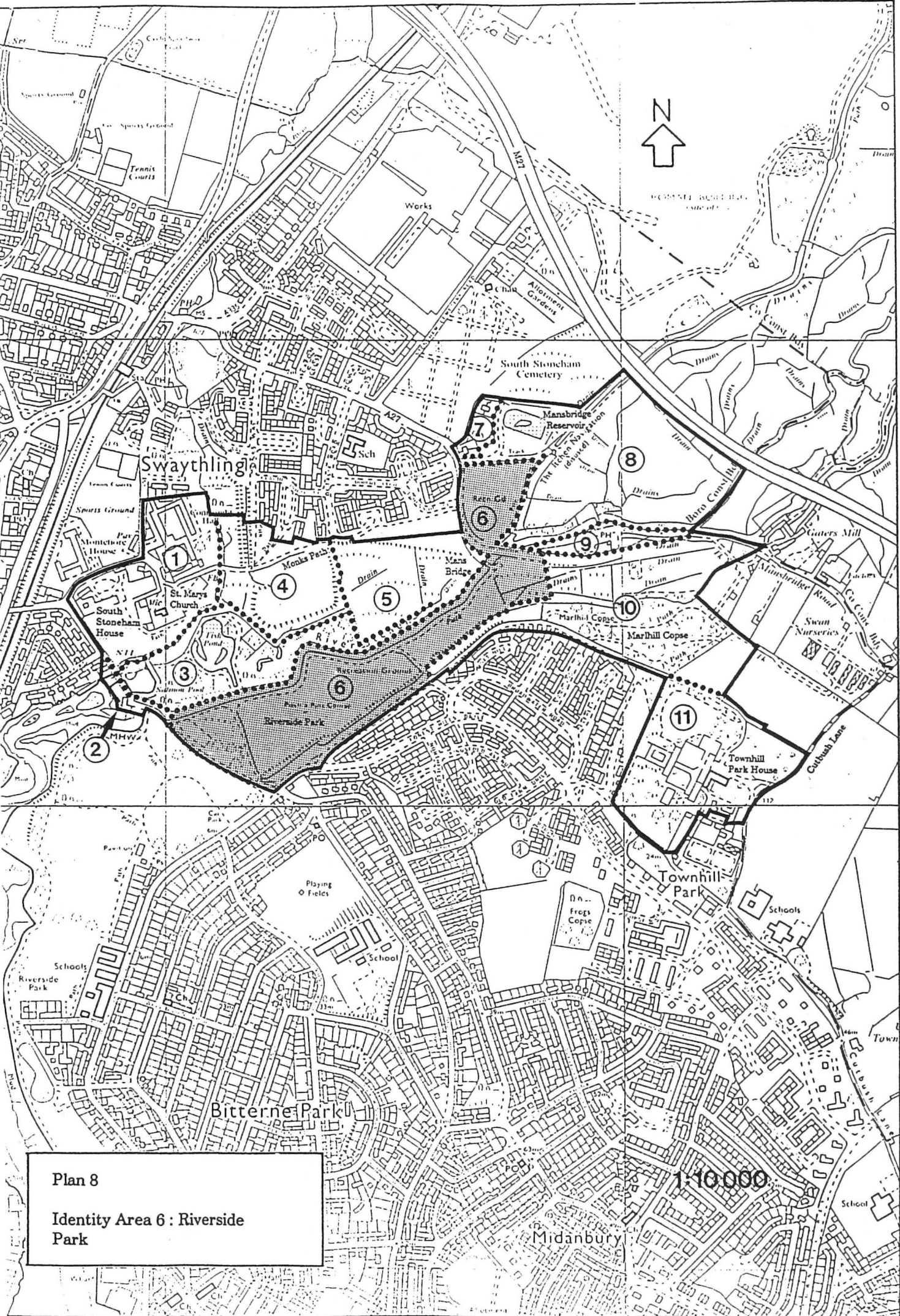
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13. IDENTITY AREA 6: RIVERSIDE PARK

- 13.1 Riverside Park runs along the banks of the River Itchen through Bitterne and Swaythling. Within the Conservation Area it lies between the housing development at Townhill Park and the southern bank of the River Itchen. This area is divided into two parts by Mansbridge Road with Riverside Park itself to the south and a meadow to the north. Immediately to the south of Mansbridge Road is a footbridge spanning the River Itchen known as Mans Bridge, which is a listed structure, Grade II. Mans Bridge Road is a footbridge spanning the River Itchen known as Mans Bridge, which is a listed structure, Grade II. Mans Bridge is a single span tooled stone arch bridge erected in the late 18th century.
- 13.2 Riverside Park is mainly formal parkland used for sports (pitch and putt) and casual recreation and is owned by the City Council. Although most of the land is mown grass and is not very valuable for nature conservation there is a wide belt of trees and shrubs along the watercourse running parallel to the south-eastern boundary of the site.
- 13.3 The meadow to the north of Mansbridge Road has benefited from a recent planting scheme and a management regime designed to encourage wild flowers. To the north of the identity area, near Mansbridge reservoir (identity area 8) is a small car park. A muddy footpath runs beside the Itchen Navigation which forms the eastern boundary of this part of the identity area. This footpath allows the Itchen Valley to Winchester, 12 miles away.
- 13.4 The major attractions of this area are the access to the riverside, and the pitch and putt course. It is a very popular area attracting many visitors throughout the year.

13.5 THE APPROACH

- 13.5.1 The Riverside Park identity area can be used to absorb most of the casual visitors to the Itchen Valley Conservation Area. There is a need to provide more facilities for these visitors - seats, litter bins, picnic areas, circular walks and interpretation. The provision of interpretation within the Conservation Area is an important issue. Whilst it would be preferable to provide an interpretation centre to include a toilet block, light refreshments, exhibitions, information etc this may not be financially feasible. Should this become a feasible scheme in the future, Riverside Park, both within and adjacent to the Conservation Area, could be a suitable location.
- 13.5.2 It is intended that the mixed recreational uses - informal recreation and active pursuits - should continue with this identity area. In the meadow to the north the muddy footpath requires surfacing using an appropriate material such as hoggin, since this will increase access for those with prams, pushchairs or wheelchairs. It is also proposed to use this area as a picnic site in conjunction with the existing tables to the south of Mansbridge Reservoir to replace the one at the White Swan (identity area 9).
- 13.5.3 If funding becomes available it will be appropriate to resurface the car park at Riverside Park since it is currently in a poor state of repair.



Plan 8

Identity Area 6 : Riverside
Park

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Bitterne Park

Midanbury

Townhill Park

Swaythling

South Stoneham Cemetery

Mansbridge Reservoir

St. Mary's Church

Townhill Park House

South Stoneham House

Swan Nurseries

Monks Park

Gutters Mill

Sports Ground

Monks Park

Sports Ground

Sports Ground

Sports Ground

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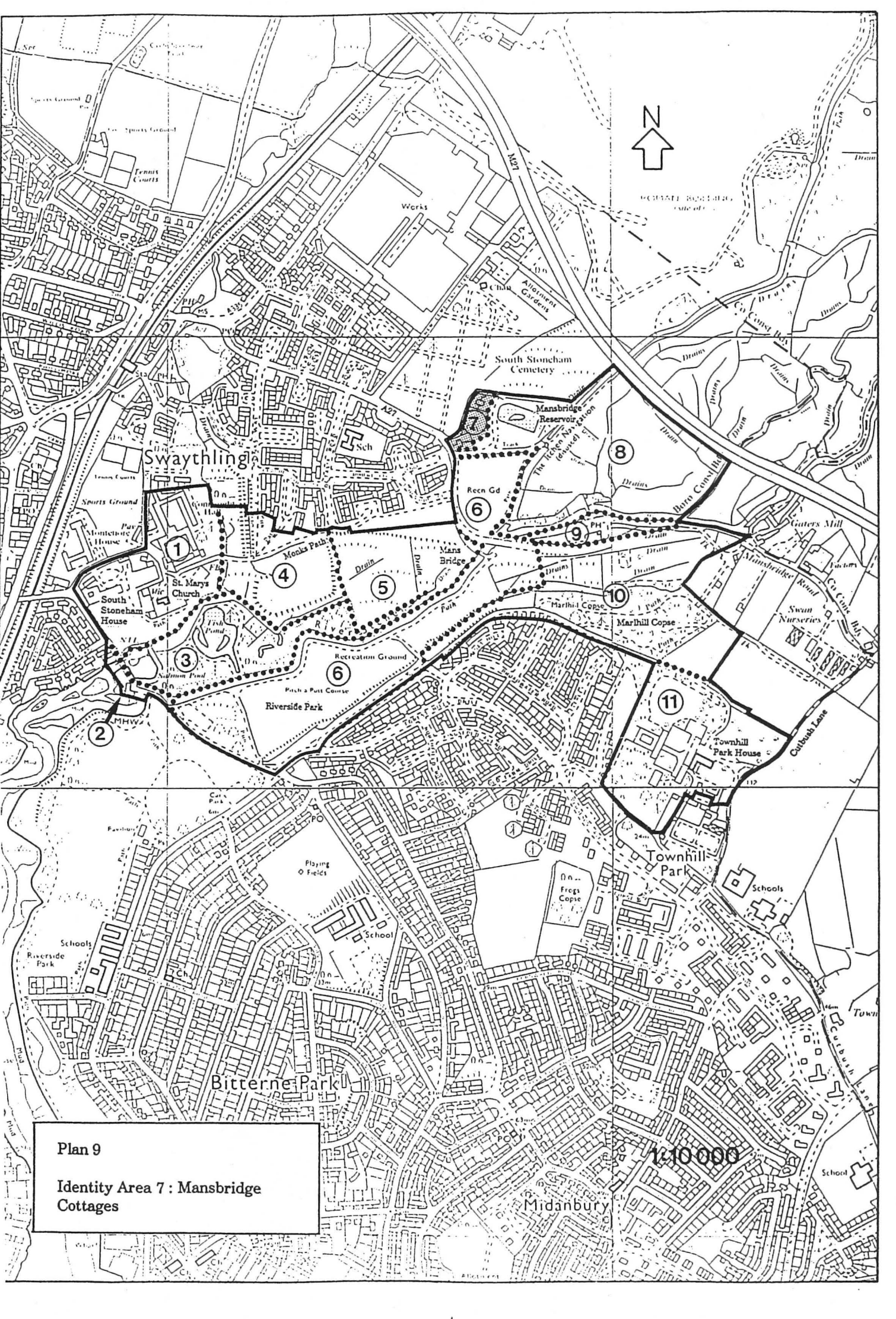
14. IDENTITY AREA 7: MANSBRIDGE COTTAGES

14.1 These four brick-built cottages occupy the north-west corner of the Conservation Area and are all in private ownership. Built as part of the Mansbridge Water Works 1851 they are sandwiched between South Stoneham Cemetery to the west and the disused reservoir and its environs to the east. Access to the Cottages is from Mansbridge Road with an unmade up track owned by the City Council leading to nos.3 and 4 to the north. The land between the Cottages is owned by the City Council and currently let on a yearly grazing licence.

14.2 THE APPROACH

14.2.1 Possible uses for the vacant land within the identity area are: grazing; other forms of low intensity agricultural use; and informal recreation and quiet activities. Due to the proximity of housing the vacant land is not considered suitable for active pursuits.

14.2.2 Extensions and alterations to the existing dwellings must respect the rural character of this part of the Conservation Area.



SCALE 1:10 000
1:10 000

Swaythling

South Stoneham Cemetery

Mansbridge Reservoir

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Bitterne Park

1:10 000

Midanbury

Plan 9
Identity Area 7: Mansbridge Cottages

15. **IDENTITY AREA 8: RESERVOIR AND MEADOWS**

15.1 Identity Area 8 includes the reservoir and its associated public open space and an extensive area of grazed wet meadows to the east from Mansbridge Road up to the M27 motorway. Access to the reservoir by car is along a track adjacent to Mansbridge Cottages (Identity Area 7) which leads to a small car park catering for approximately 12-15 cars. From here several footpaths lead to the Mansbridge, northwards to Eastleigh and to the reservoir itself.

15.2 Until 1851 Southampton obtained its water supply from Southampton Common and its surrounding area. This proved inadequate and in 1855 the Pumping Station at Mansbridge was commissioned. This water works extracted water from the Itchen (Itchen Navigation) which was stored in the brick lined reservoir some 20ft deep. It was then pumped to service the reservoirs on the Common by four steam pumps. The Mansbridge pumping station was replaced in 1888 by the 'New Works' at Otterbourne and the old works were abandoned. All that survives today is the derelict remains of the settling reservoir, a screening chamber, various brick footings of the engine houses and the cottages in Mansbridge Road.

15.3 The area to the east (Gater's Mill Meadow) is owned by Eastleigh Borough Council and is included within the Lower Itchen Valley Nature Reserve designated in 1987 by Eastleigh Borough Council. This area is also part of the Itchen Valley Country Park, the majority of which lies to the north of the M27 within Eastleigh Borough.

15.4 The identity area includes rich wildlife habitats associated with this major river valley. The dominant species is Alder Carr, and there is an area of virtually unspoilt water meadow rich in flora. This identity area contains a wide range of plant and animal life including in some cases, rare species. A rich bird and mammal population occurs in this area including three species of shrew. The City Council commissioned an Entomological survey by a Consultant Entomologist and it is clear that this is a remarkably rich site entomologically, which is both rare and vulnerable. For insects alone it is of the standard required for Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Its possible designation as an SSSI is the subject of discussions with English Nature.

15.5 The major part of the identity area comprising the richest old grazing meadow on the lower Itchen is not accessible to the public due to the need to manage the area to protect its high ecological value. It is used for grazing. A public footpath runs from the car park, around the edge of the meadowland into Eastleigh Borough. To the south the footpath links into those in Riverside Park.

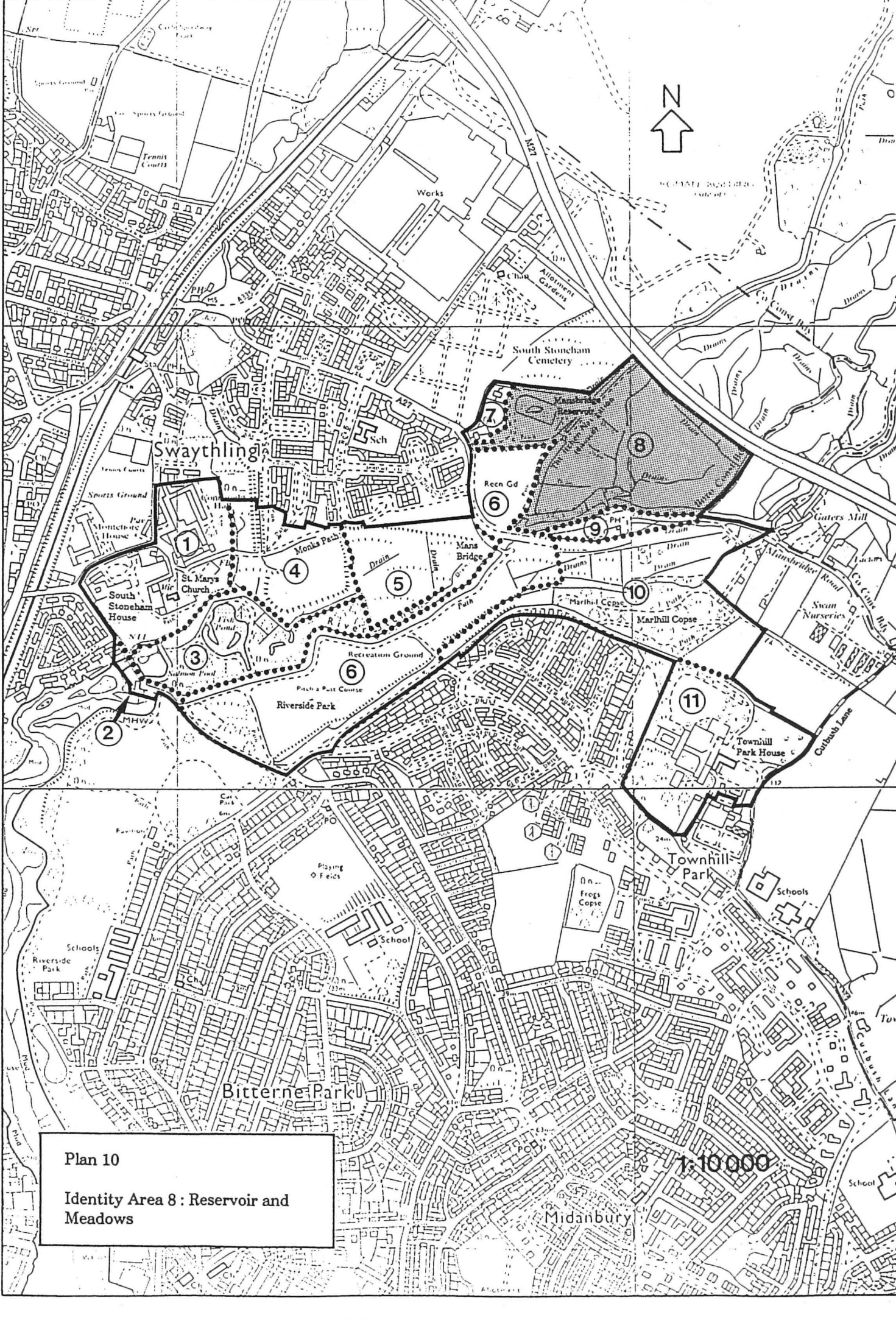
15.6 **THE APPROACH**

15.6.1 The area lies within the urban edge of the City and, as such, policies G28 and G29 of the Local Plan apply. Improvement. Protection of the high nature conservation value of the meadowland is the greatest priority in this area. Its value has been recognised through its inclusion in the Lower Itchen Valley Nature Reserve. Thus only uses compatible with the protection of its nature conservation value will be appropriate.

15.6.2 Work is due to commence in 1993 on the clearance and restoration of the Itchen Navigation. This will be carried out jointly by Southampton City Council and Hampshire County Council.

15.6.3 In the area to the west of the Itchen Navigation, around Mansbridge Reservoir, quiet activities and informal recreation are appropriate provided that they do not detract from the landscape and nature conservation value of the area. Thus there are no proposals to increase access into the area, however, some of the existing paths could benefit from resurfacing, and it might be appropriate to introduce more seats, litter bins and picnic tables into the area around Mansbridge Reservoir.

15.6.4 This identity area provides a wealth of archaeological and nature conservation interest. Selective clearance, excavation and restoration coupled with the interpretation of aspects of the area's wildlife and historical significance would realise the potential of the area for recreation and education.



Plan 10
Identity Area 8 : Reservoir and
Meadows

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16. IDENTITY AREA 9: WHITE SWAN

16.1 This small identity area lies between the River Itchen to its north and the A27, Mansbridge Road, to its south. It contains the White Swan public house/carvery, its car park, and a petrol filling station. The original public house was ideally located on the old Mansbridge Road with its gardens running down to the River Itchen. The replacement of this road with the realigned A27 in the early 70's and the more recent M27 has now created a rather isolated spot. As well as having the attraction of the White Swan parts of this area popular with local residents for recreation eg fishing.

16.2 There is a picnic area signed from the A27 but the location of the picnic tables - on the old road, very close to passing traffic on the new road - makes it an unattractive area to stop. The picnic tables have also been vandalised and/or removed.

16.3 There is a small area of fen, alderwood and a small pond surviving in the west of the identity area. This should be retained because of its nature conservation value.

16.4 APPROACH

16.4.1 The City Council has consistently maintained a policy of wishing to retain the open character of the river valley. The area lies within the urban edge of the City and, as such, policies G28 and G29 of the Local Plan apply. These basically oppose development, encourage the use of urban edge land for recreation (where appropriate) and encourage the enhancement of the appearance of the area with the retention of its open character. New development will be limited to alteration or extension of the existing buildings. Proposals to change the use of the existing buildings will be assessed against the policies of protection and enhancement contained in the Local Plan

16.4.2 It is proposed to relocate the picnic area to the meadow area just to the south of the car park at Mansbridge Reservoir in Identity Area 6. The provision of additional seats and perhaps one or two picnic tables to the west of the White Swan should be investigated.

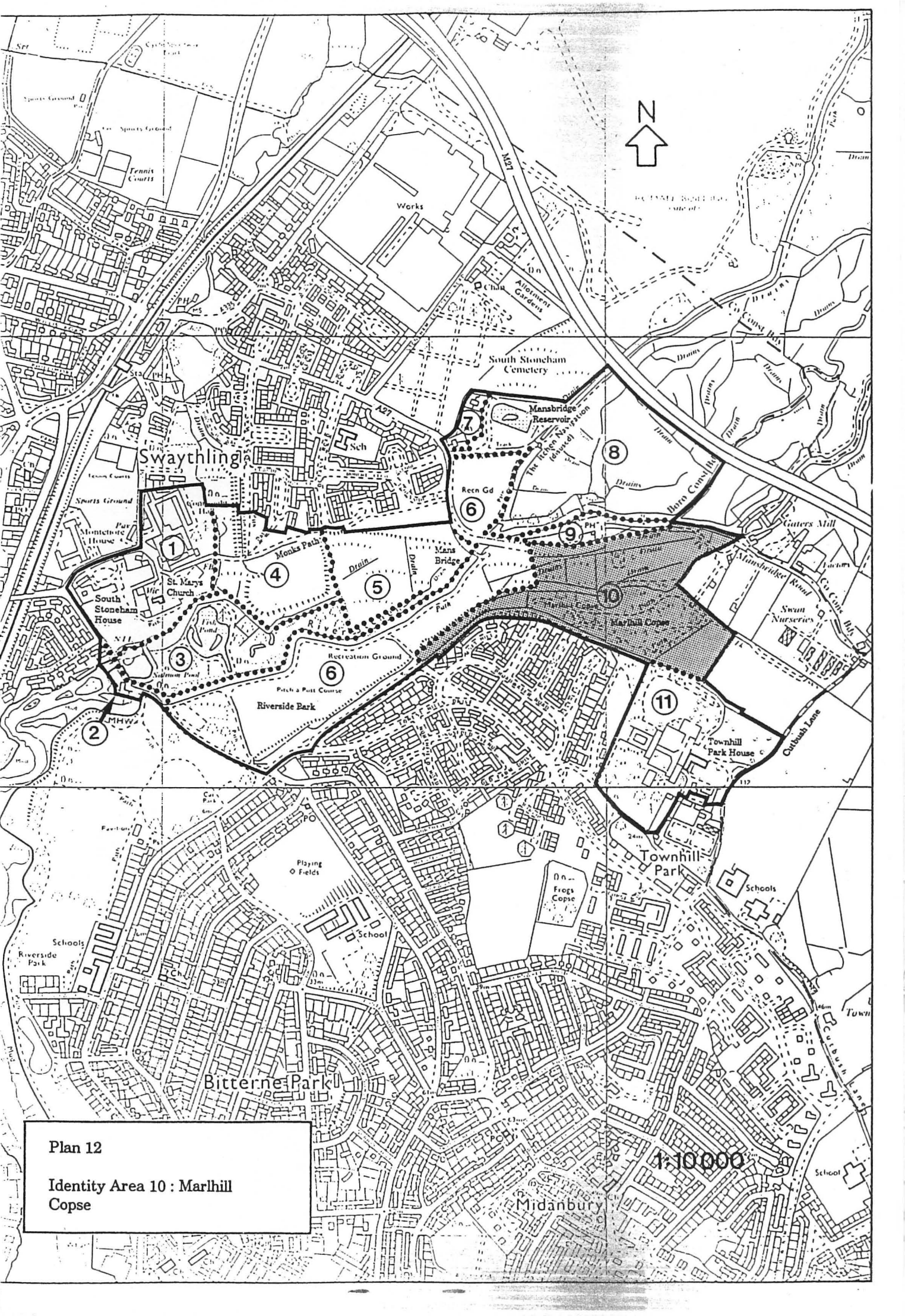
16.4.3 There is potential for considerable improvements to the landscaping of the area and special consideration will be given to the creation of riverside walk along the old road and the River Itchen. Additional screening of the site is also desirable and will be investigated.

17. IDENTITY AREA 10: MARLHILL COPSE

- 17.1 This identity area lies to the south of the A27, Mansbridge Road, and to the north of the housing area of Townhill Park. It includes Marlhill Copse itself, a small pocket of open grassland to the east of Marlhill Copse, and the water meadows between the A27 and Marlhill Copse. Marlhill Copse and the water meadows to the north are in private ownership and the pocket of open grassland is owned by the City Council.
- 17.2 Marlhill Copse itself originally formed part of the Townhill Park Estate and is shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Plan dated 1871, as a woodland block running along the Itchen Escarpment. The size of the trees suggest that they were planted around 1800 and the woodland is now a fine example of mature Oak trees grown as standards. During the 1920's and 30's these were thinned and the glades were planted up with many unusual trees and shrubs, in particular Rhododendrons, Magnolia and Northogagus, some of which remain today. The trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 17.3 The Copse itself lies on an escarpment and its mature trees form a very important element in the landscape of this part of the City, providing a very effective transition in visual terms between the City and its surrounding countryside.
- 17.4 The water meadow to the north of Marlhill Copse form part of the southern section of the flood plains of the River Itchen. It is an area of fen and reedbed which has high nature conservation interest due to its variety of habitats within such a small site and because together they provide a range of wildlife habitats and are of considerable historical ecology value.
- 17.5 The small pocket of grassland in the south east of the identity area is unused. It has a significant slope down to the north and west. There is a small area of acid grassland in the south east of the identity area which is an important wildlife source, being used by woodland fauna for feeding and nesting.
- 17.6 The identity area possesses a range of flora and fauna which is extraordinary, both for the size of site, and for its location within the City of Southampton. The range of habitats within the site include wet fenland, ancient woodland and an interesting collection of exotic trees and shrubs. The development of these habitats has been encouraged by the lack of management over the past 40-50 years, and has allowed the natural succession of the vegetation to proceed. The whole identity area is seriously in need of management to protect both its ecological and visual value.

17.7 THE APPROACH

- 17.7.1 In policy terms the identity area lies within the urban edge of the City where policies G28 and G29 of the Local Plan apply. These safeguard the area for nature conservation purposes, states the intention to produce management plans and advocates the importance of improving the provision of open space.
- 17.7.2 The priority within this identity area is its protection from destruction either by neglect or by development. This necessitates the preparation and implementation of a management plan for the area. Protection of the area can be justified on visual and nature conservation grounds and is supported by Hampshire County Council (through its Countryside Heritage Policy) and English Nature. Evidence suggests that the owner is not managing the area in nature conservation terms and it is proposed that negotiations be commenced to rectify this. The options available are: (i) a management agreed; or (ii) purchase by agreement; or (iii) compulsory purchase. The initial priority includes preparation of a management plan, which amongst other things will consider the possible use of the area for environmental education and increased public access.



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Plan 12
Identity Area 10 : Marlhill
Copse

Swaythling

South Stoneham
Cemetery

Mansbridge
Reservoir

South
Stoneham
House

St. Mary's
Church

Riverside Park

Townhill
Park

Bitterne Park

Midanbury

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Mansbridge
Reservoir

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18. **IDENTITY AREA 11: TOWNHILL PARK HOUSE**

- 18.1 Townhill Park House is listed Grade II and along with its environs formed part of the previous Townhill Park Estate which until 1948 extended to about 324 acres. Up until this time the house had passed through a number of owners and was finally acquired by Lord Swaythling in the late 19th century.
- 18.2 In September 1948 the estate was sold by auction, with the house and the immediate land subsequently acquired by Middlesex County Council who transferred it to Hounslow Borough Council in 1965. Southampton City Council acquired the land and house in 1970 and upon local government reorganisation in 1974 the house and formal gardens transferred to Hampshire County Council.
- 18.3 The Outline Development Control Brief "Townhill Park House and Grounds" was adopted by the Strategy and Development Committee in October 1992. This sets out the development control principles which should be adopted for the house and adjoining land and is considered necessary because of the decision by the City and County Councils to dispose of their freehold interests in the site.
- 18.4 The main access from the east is from Cutbush Lane and there is a small car park immediately to the south of the entrance. A driveway then continues to the forecourt of the house. There is a secondary access from the west to the forecourt via a tree lined driveway from River Walk (adjacent to Riverside Park) which is currently blocked.
- 18.5 The gardens and grounds were designed and laid out by L Rome Guthrie at the beginning of the 20th century during the re-modelling of the house, and are of special significance. Taking eleven years to complete they were subsequently care for by Mr F J Rose, the estate gardener. The gardens importance is further increased by the fact that the planting of the gardens is based on schemes drawn up in 1912 by Gertrude Jekyll, a prominent horticulturist.
- 18.6 The formal gardens to the west of the house slope down 200 yards from the house. The upper part of the grounds comprise formal lawns and herbaceous borders enclosed by clipped Yew hedges. A central turf walk leads to the sunken garden, laid out with brick paths covering on a goldfish pond surrounded by dwarf stone walls supporting herbaceous and rose borders and encompassed by a Pergola Walk. Constructed of concrete double columns supporting massive timbered beaming, the pergola is covered by mature vines, wisteria, clematis, honeysuckle and other climbing plants. In recognition of the special interest of the garden it has been included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (December 1984). However, years of neglect have severely damaged the gardens and their future conservation will be of major importance. The Pergola Walk is unsafe and therefore closed to the public. Restoration work by Hampshire County Council is currently in progress.
- 18.7 To the south east of the house are a number of outbuildings worthy of retention which were previously used for a variety of purposes including stables and a dairy. The stable block was listed Grade II in 1984.
- 18.8 Parts of the original Townhill Park Estate have gradually been eroded over the years and much of the surrounding land has already been developed for housing. Despite this the house has substantially retained its parkland setting which is an essential feature of its character. Townhill Park House and the estate are unique in that they provide probably the best surviving example of a country house in the city.

18.9 THE APPROACH

- 18.9.1** The identity area lies within the urban edge of the City where policies G28 and G29 of the Local Plan app produce management plans and advocates the importance of improving the provision of open space. The priority for this identity area is long-term protection and enhancement of Townhill Park House, its grounds and outbuildings. Urban edge policies and the need to protect the parkland setting of the listed building generate the presumption against the introduction of new buildings within the identity area. This stipulation may be waived where it can be shown that only the introduction of new buildings will secure the long term preservation and enhancement of the listed building and its setting.

Any proposals for new development, alterations or extension to Townhill Park House or any other building must respect the character of the listed building. Any proposals to change the use of buildings within the identity area will be required to respect the rural character of the conservation area as well as the listed building and its setting.

- 18.9.2** Much restoration work is required to halt the deterioration of the formal gardens, and the grounds as a whole could benefit from additional planting, especially on the north west boundary.

