

9. Cannon Hill, Uddens & Whitesheet NEW 207 & NEW 208

9.1 Location *(See Location Map)*

This group of woodlands cover a total area of 386 ha, located to the north of Ferndown and Stapehill and adjacent to Colehill Village. Holt Heath National Nature Reserve lies immediately to the north of Whitesheet. The A31 trunk road bisects Cannon Hill and Uddens plantation and the southern portions of the woodland exist as isolated units. Park Copse and Stable Copse are separated from Whitesheet by the gravel road that provides access to Clayford cottages and Clayford Farm. Bedborough Plantation and Daffodil Copse lie to the north of Uddens plantation separated from it by the minor country road that leads to Broomhill. Redhill Plantation occupies a central position adjacent to the road that provides access to the forest and Clayford from the Broomhill road.

9.2 Landscape Context

The main landscape feature is the prominent ridge on the southern side of Cannon Hill, which provides a backdrop to Canford Bottom and Colehill and is highly visible from the A31 Wimborne bypass and the northern edge of Merley. The ridge will be managed as a single unit and racks have been created within the woodland that are oriented east west so as not to break the skyline.

Sections of the forest are highly visible where the A31 trunk road passes through and the design of felling coupes and retentions aim to maintain and build upon previous management to enhance the landscape character. The Ferndown Industrial Estate lies to the south of Uddens Plantation and the plan includes proposals for elements of continuous cover to screen this development from the north of the forest.

Due to the heavy use of the forest for informal recreation, internal views are important and the plan aims to produce an overall increase in visual diversity.

9.3 Current Woodland Structure *(See Habitat Structure and Age Structure Charts)*

This group of woodlands is very diverse in structure, ranging from conifer plantation and elements of mixed woodland in Cannon Hill and Uddens Plantation through to an Ancient Woodland Site in the north of the block at Park Copse and open heath and wooded heath at Whitesheet. The age structure throughout has become increasingly diverse as phased felling and replanting in Cannon Hill and Uddens has progressed as part of the previous Forest Design Plan. The relatively small proportion of large physically mature trees should increase as a consequence of the inclusion of areas managed by continuous cover within the current plan.

A large proportion of Whitesheet is open heathland with a further significant proportion existing as a scrub / open space matrix. The plan proposes further removal of trees in this area and restoration to lowland heath habitat. Open space throughout the remainder of the plan area

exists principally along the road and ride corridors where ride widening has been carried out as standard forest management practice over the past decade.

9.4 Conservation *(See Site Designation Map)*

A large proportion of Whitesheet is SSSI as part of Holt and West Moors Heaths SSSI, which is designated for its heathland plant communities and the rare species which are associated with these habitats. The plan depicts further removal of trees and restoration of heathland in this area to extend and consolidate the habitat. A grazing unit is in place encompassing the heathland at Whitesheet and its location is shown on the design concept map.

Part of Park Copse is designated as a Planted Ancient Woodland Site and both Daffodil Copse and Stable Copse contain elements of native woodland. The plan proposes management in these areas to maintain and expand the native woodland interest.

9.5 Recreation

The eastern part of Cannon Hill lies adjacent to residential areas of Colehill village and public access for informal recreation is high at this point. Cannon Hill is also accessed from the Broom Hill road to the east as the main gateway is frequently used as an informal car parking area. The southern part of Cannon Hill, south of the Ferndown Bypass, is heavily used by residents of Stapehill for dog walking. The Castleman Trailway runs through the southern part of Cannon Hill and western part of Uddens Plantation. Many local people regularly use other parts of Uddens Plantation for informal recreation.

A car park is located at the north western part of Whitesheet and this is well used by local dog walkers who generally follow a circular route through the northern section of Whitesheet or venture onto Holt Heath to the north. Bridle paths run through Cannon Hill, Uddens and Whitesheet.

9.6 Archaeology *(See Site Designation Map)*

There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the plan area which are located on the ridge near the southern boundary of Cannon Hill Plantation. All are Bronze Age Barrows (Funerary Monuments). All three Scheduled Ancient Monuments have current management plans approved by English Heritage.