

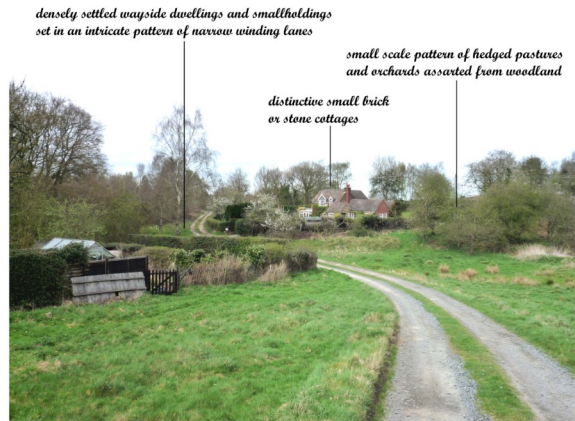
# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

### Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings

#### Landscape Type Description

An intimate, densely settled landscape characterised by strings of wayside cottages and associated smallholdings. These nestle within a small-scale matrix of pastoral fields and narrow interlocking lanes, usually defined by prominent dense hedges with hedgerow trees. The consistency of human activity in these distinctive, small scale landscapes has resulted in a unified, palpably domestic character.



#### Key Characteristics

##### Primary

- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Scattered hedgerow and garden trees
- Intimate spatial character
- Intricate network of narrow, interlocking lanes
- Densely settled pattern of wayside dwellings
- Distinctive building style—small cottages of brick or stone

##### Secondary

- Pastoral land use
- Variable enclosure pattern of small fields
- Heathy/acid grassland ground vegetation—widespread bracken and gorse



#### Current Concerns

The pattern and character of the individual dwellings are vulnerable to expansion, amalgamation and modification to an urban character. The potential of the small scale plots and pastures provide considerable scope for infilling, adding further pressures to these landscapes. The pastures possess further attraction as suitable paddocks for ponies and horses, a change of use that can be accompanied by degradation and loss of hedgerows. The pastures themselves can often be of considerable nature conservation interest yet this can be easily lost through inappropriate management. These landscapes possess a unique element of rustic charm which is destroyed by excessive 'tidiness'.

The conservation of the character, particularly the scale and detailing, of the cottages and smallholdings, and their pattern and setting should be a priority, through the enforcement of appropriate planning controls and design guidance. The retention and appropriate management of open spaces within the settlement matrix should be encouraged, paying particular attention to the areas of permanent pasture and hedgerow structure.

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### Guidelines for Land Management

How to use this sheet

The aim of this information sheet is to provide *general guidelines* about the priorities for land management activities - focusing on relevant landscape features - within this Landscape Type. However, Landscape Types are generic descriptions of landscape character and any advice **must** be interpreted within the context of the site in question. Please also visit the Landscapes of Worcestershire mapping pages <http://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/home/wcc-lca-maps> to click on your area and read the more specific ecological and landscape descriptions.

In the case of any habitat work, specialist advice should be sought from the County Ecologists and/or the appropriate agency (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Defra) to ensure that the work is appropriate, is carried out at the right time of year, in the correct manner and in the best possible location. Surveys may need to be carried out to assess the sites for presence of protected species or existing habitat. With this in mind, please read on for opportunities for land/habitat management activities appropriate to this Landscape Type...

Hedgerows

The general guideline for hedgerows in Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings is to:

- **conserve** the small-scale enclosure pattern of hedged fields through appropriate management

There may be opportunities to plant new hedgerows, restore, strengthen or protect existing hedgerows and their patterns, and promote appropriate management – in terms of maintenance regimes and protection from stock. The species composition of existing long established hedgerows should be used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows. Hedgerow pattern is also an important contributor to the intimate spatial character of these landscapes.

Trees

The general guideline for trees in Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings is to:

- **conserve** and **enhance** the tree cover within the landscape, giving particular attention to hedgerow and field trees

There may be opportunities to plant new hedgerow and field trees (native trees and/or fruit trees where the latter is appropriate), retain and extend the life of existing hedgerow and field trees through such means as tree surgery, protective measures, or protection of the setting (i.e. the hedgerow). The use of protective designations such as TPOs might be relevant. Retain existing garden trees and encourage the new planting of appropriate garden trees. The removal of inappropriate trees – such as belts of poplar may on occasion be appropriate, combined with new planting of a more appropriate nature in terms of species and location.

Grassland

The general guideline for grassland in Forest Smallholdings and Dwellings is to:

- seek opportunities to **conserve** and manage all remaining areas of permanent pasture

The small-scale fields of permanent pasture found within these landscapes can often be of significant nature conservation interest, the increasing change in land use in favour of arable farming can threaten such sites and initiatives to safeguard remaining areas of permanent pasture should be strongly promoted in these areas.

For more information visit our website [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca) or contact the Worcestershire County Council Environmental Policy Team on 01905 766038