

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*

Wooded Estatelands

Landscape Type Description

A large-scale, wooded agricultural landscape of isolated brick farmsteads, clusters of way-side dwellings and occasional small estate villages. Key visual elements in this landscape are the many large, irregularly shaped ancient woodlands, often prominently situated on low crests. It is a landscape that, due to its scale, lacks intimacy and can appear rather functional.



Key Characteristics

Primary

- Large discrete blocks of irregularly-shaped woodland
- Mixed farming land use

Secondary

- Rolling topography with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments
- Semi-regular pattern of large, hedged fields
- Woodland of ancient character
- Discrete settlement clusters often in the form of small estate villages
- Medium distance framed views
- Large country houses set in parkland and ornamental grounds



Current Concerns

The large woodland blocks tend to be discrete units but rely on the presence of hedgerows to achieve a sense of visual cohesion within the landscape. Hedgerow loss and deterioration is evident, particularly in areas where intensive arable farming is dominant, resulting in isolation of the woodlands. Some dilution of the ancient character of the woodlands has taken place, largely through coniferisation. The extent of many of the parklands has been severely reduced, with former parkland trees now standing amidst arable cropping.

There is a need to conserve and restore the hedgerow fabric as well as the mixed broadleaf composition of the existing woodlands. New woodland planting would also strengthen and enhance the character. Parkland restoration initiatives should be promoted widely, particularly to reunite the original scale and conceptual framework of parkland by encouraging the conversion of arable land back to permanent pasture.

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Opportunities for Landscape Gain

Woodland Pattern - Large, Discrete Blocks

There may be opportunities to strengthen the pattern of discrete woodland blocks by planting new large woodland blocks and by replanting and restoring appropriate management to existing neglected woodland. Inappropriate small woodlands could be removed or enlarged as appropriate to best effect.

Woodland Character - Ancient

There may be opportunities to create new woodlands. Whilst ancient woodland itself cannot simply be created, from the landscape perspective new woodland can at least reflect ancient characteristics in terms of shape/outline and species composition.

There may be opportunities to restore areas of ancient woodland through the introduction of appropriate management, or the removal of alien species and appropriate replanting.

Development sites themselves may not always offer the best location to accommodate new woodland planting and to achieve its full potential. These opportunities cited above may be best realised on land elsewhere in the vicinity, by private agreement between the developer and landowner.

Land Use - Mixed Farming

Opportunities may arise, to promote Stewardship and other agri-environment funding incentives to encourage a more mixed land use, particularly if arable land uses appear to be dominating. The retention/restoration of permanent pasture in areas of parkland should be considered a priority.

Hedgerows

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 guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows.

Settlement Pattern

In order to perpetuate the characteristic clustered settlement pattern, new development should avoid dispersal away from existing clusters. Design details of existing estate buildings should be reflected in new design.

Medium-distance Framed Views

Opportunities may arise to remove subdivisions of formerly larger fields or parcels of land. There may be opportunities for new woodland planting, and this, and any new landscaping associated with new development should reflect the particular scale of these landscapes. There may be opportunities to reinforce the woodland structure to frame views.

Parkland

Opportunities may arise to restore areas of parkland, particularly those that have been ploughed for arable land uses. New generations of tree planting can be encouraged together with the restoration of other ornamental plantings, garden buildings and water features – specialist advice should be sought for such restoration work and reference should be made to the original designs. The status of any historic park or garden must be established – significant parks and gardens may be registered. Contact English Heritage for advice/approval for any proposed works. The Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust will also provide a useful source of contact for advice. The preparation and implementation of long-term management plans should be sought for all parkland areas.

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

