

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

Estate Farmlands

Landscape Type Description

An ordered agricultural landscape characterised by a sub-regular pattern of medium-to-large sized fields, small geometric plantations and groups of ornamental trees associated with large country houses. Settlement is largely restricted to discrete clusters of dwellings and occasional small estate villages.



Key Characteristics

Primary

- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Planned woodland character

Secondary

- Mixed farming land use
- Discrete settlement clusters and small estate villages
- Medium-framed views

Tertiary

- Semi-regular pattern of medium-to-large fields
- Small geometric plantations and belts of trees
- Large country houses set in mature grounds
- Rolling lowland with occasional steep-sided hills and escarpments



Current Concerns

This is a landscape of increasingly dominant arable land uses where the function of hedgerows can accordingly become gradually redundant. Hedgerow loss and deterioration is already apparent and it can only be assumed that this will accelerate. Some localities such as Croome and Pirton contain the relics of extensive parkland plantings, the remnants of which are now often located amidst arable land. Estate villages with distinctive architectural styles and detailing are often associated with such areas but face dilution of their distinctive character by modification and new development. These are landscapes that have restricted opportunities for wildlife.

These are areas that can accommodate considerable new woodland planting which would be of benefit in strengthening the overall landscape structure. The restoration of tree cover associated with parkland and ornamental grounds together with improving the tree cover along watercourses should also be encouraged. The conservation of the hedgerow pattern is desirable but priority should be given initially to the primary hedgerow framework. In order to improve opportunities for wildlife, the development of good field margins is of particular relevance in these landscapes.

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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...

Woodland and Trees

The general guidelines for woodland and trees in Estate Farmlands are to:

- **enhance** tree cover by planting tree belts and small-scale plantations
- **conserve** and **enhance** tree cover along water courses

As stated overleaf, these are areas that can accommodate considerable new woodland planting which would serve to strengthen the overall landscape structure. There is great potential for imaginative landscape design together with a wide range of opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the area. There may be opportunities to reinforce the woodland structure to frame views. The retention and safeguarding of veteran trees should also be a focus of woodland/tree management.

Hedgerows

The general guideline for hedgerows in Estate Farmlands is to:

- **conserve** the pattern of hedged fields, with priority given to primary hedgelines

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 (primary) hedgerows should guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows where appropriate.

Parkland

The general guideline for parkland in Estate Farmlands is to:

- **conserve** and **restore** parkland and the tree cover associated with large ornamental grounds

There may be opportunities to restore – either exactly or in spirit – the wooded pattern of parkland and other designed landscapes. But specialist advice (English Heritage/Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust) should be sought for such restoration work and reference should be made to the original designs for such areas.

Field Margins

The general guideline for field margins in Estate Farmlands is to:

- promote the development of wide field margins for wildlife benefit

In addition, these are landscapes with characteristic mixed farming land-use, though there is an increasing move to arable uses and so opportunities to encourage a return to pasture where appropriate would help redress this important balance.

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