

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Information Sheet

Wooded Hills and Farmlands

Landscape Type Description

Similar to the Principal Wooded Hills, but with more of an emphasis on farmland rather than woodland. The woods tend to occur as discrete blocks framing larger areas of enclosed fields. The latter are often associated with a small village or hamlet. There is a sense of balance, with a character that is more subdued than the related type of the Principal Wooded Hills.



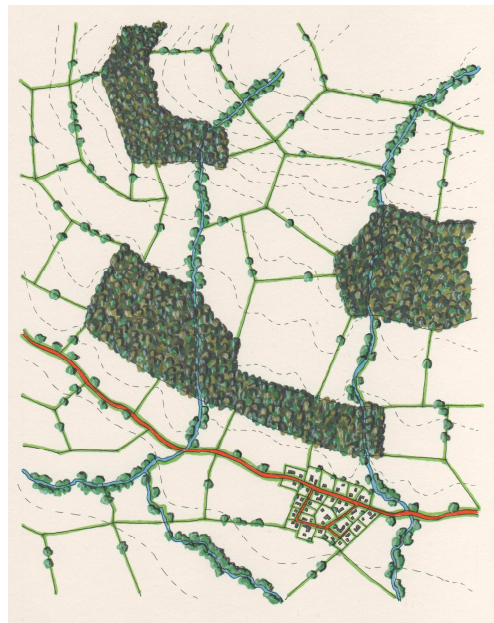
Key Characteristics

Primary

- Prominent sloping topography
- Hedgerow field boundaries are an important element in defining landscape scale
- Tree cover pattern of large, discrete woodland blocks

Secondary

- Woodland of ancient character
- Mixed farming land use
- Medium-framed views
- Sparse, clustered settlement—occasional settlement clusters associated with areas of former open fields



These are landscapes with an inherently large scale and strength due to their patterns of substantial woodland blocks and large hedged fields. The steepness of slope is generally less severe than the type area, and therefore has been less of a constraint for agriculture. They contain a significant proportion of farmland, considered to be derived from former areas of open field, and which is usually associated with settlement clusters. The historic origins of these areas should be recognised and their visual cohesion conserved. Farmland tends to be the dominant land use, with large blocks of woodland, of ancient semi-natural character, farming, or providing significant punctuation to, the areas of agricultural land. The hedgerow structure and streamside tree cover is particularly important in providing visual unity to the area, linking the woodland blocks and integrating them with the areas of farmland.

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These are landscapes that often lack a strong sense of visual cohesion today, due to the variable amount of woodland cover and the decline in both hedgerow pattern and fabric. The mixed broadleaf composition may also have been diluted by the presence of conifer planting. The strength and scale of the landscape becomes diluted if the large woodland blocks become fragmented if the structure of hedgerow and streamlines broken, or if features of an inappropriate small scale are introduced.

There are considerable opportunities for planting new large woodland blocks in these landscapes, particularly the replanting of areas of recent clearance, whereas the importance of the patterns of historical land clearance should be recognised and conserved. Emphasis should also be placed on perpetuating the corridors that link the woodlands together. Given the difficulties in encouraging new hedgerow tree planting, priority could be given to strengthening the patterns of streamside tree cover and dingles. Within the farmed areas, the upper slopes may include areas of permanent pasture of botanical interest.

The strategy for the Wooded Hills and Farmlands should be one of conservation, with elements of enhancement, seeking to conserve the scale and historical patterns of woodland and enclosed farmland, whilst seeking opportunities to strengthen and emphasise the patterns of linkage.

Landscape Guidelines

- conserve existing blocks of woodland
- seek opportunities to restore the balance of woodland cover throughout these landscapes
- conserve and restore the ancient woodland character of all woodlands
- conserve the historic pattern of large hedged fields, with priority being given to strengthening and restoring primary hedgelines
- enhance tree cover along watercourses and dingles
- conserve all remaining areas of permanent pasture

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