

# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - Planning and Development

### Principal Timbered Farmlands

#### Landscape Type Description

A small scale wooded, agricultural landscape characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. This is a complex, in places intimate, landscape of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings. Its mosaic of agricultural land was cleared directly from woodland, on a piecemeal basis, and from former localised areas of open fields, resulting in a lack of strong settlement nuclei



#### Key Characteristics

##### Primary

- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Ancient wooded character
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees, predominantly oak

##### Secondary

- Organic enclosure pattern
- Small-scale landscape, hedgerow trees creating filtered views
- Brick and timber building style of old properties
- Rolling lowland with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments

##### Tertiary

- Mixed farming land use
- Dispersed settlement pattern



#### Current Concerns

The basic concern for the retention of the character of this landscape is the loss of scale and structure due to the decline and fragmentation of the elements of tree cover, most notably of hedgerow trees. The majority of hedgerow oaks are classed as mature or veteran, with little evidence of new stock being planted or natural regeneration being encouraged. The distribution of woodlands is generally uneven and the streamside cover is also fragmented in places. Though traditionally a landscape of mixed farming, a gradual increase in arable land uses is evident locally, which can be associated with loss of function of hedgerow structure. Once this happens, the tree cover structure becomes fragmented, the scope for hedgerow trees become restricted and the sense of scale and enclosure is lost.

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### Opportunities for Landscape Gain

#### Ancient Woodland

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.

#### 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.

#### Hedgerow Trees

There may be opportunities to plant new hedgerow trees, extend the life of existing hedgerow trees through such means as tree surgery, protective measures, or protection of the setting (i.e. the hedgerow). The planting of new generations of hedgerow and field oak trees would be particularly beneficial. The use of protective designations such as TPOs might be relevant. 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.

#### Enclosure Pattern

Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.

#### Small-scale, Filtered Views

Opportunities may arise to sub-divide large fields or parcels of land. Open plan schemes may be afforded some semblance of structure in order to create sub-division of area. The location and orientation of new buildings can create intimate areas, particularly if regular patterns are avoided. The planting of trees of appropriate scale can filter views, the incorporation of hedgerows can contribute to the small scale of an area. The incorporation of such features as chimneys, and other roof structures to reduce the uniformity of the roofscape can also contribute to creating an intimacy of scale and filtering of views.

#### Brick and Timber Building Style

Specialist advice should be sought from the District Council with regard to the specific details relating to this. It is not intended that new buildings should necessarily copy such characteristic styles although there may be opportunities to pick up certain details of scale, orientation, or finer detailing associated with doors, windows or other structures which could be reflected in new buildings. Care should be taken to avoid adverse affects to those buildings which exhibit such characteristics. Buildings which strongly reflect traditional styles may well be listed or situated in locations of Conservation Area status.

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

