

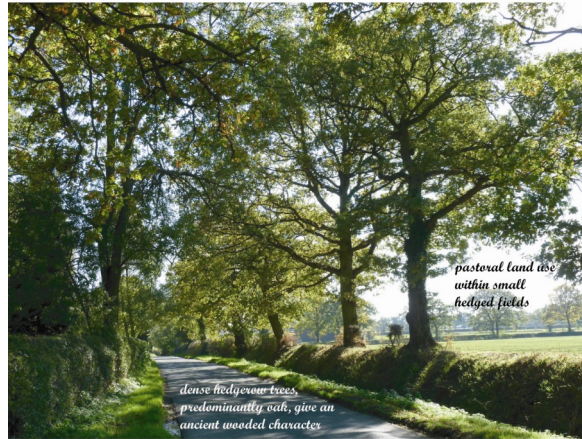
# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - Planning and Development

# Timbered Pastures

### Landscape Type Description

A small-scale, settled, pastoral landscape characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. The oak trees convey a sense of scale and stature combined with a feeling of maturity and history. This is a complex landscape of relic commons and former wood pasture, reflected today by an intermixed pattern of irregular fields and scattered farms occurring next to areas of geometric enclosure, straight roads and strings of wayside dwellings.



### Key Characteristics

#### Primary

- Notable tree cover pattern of mature hedgerow oaks
- Ancient wooded character
- Small-scale landscape with well-defined pattern of small, hedged fields

#### Secondary

- Pastoral land use
- Dense network of minor lanes

#### Tertiary

- Impoverished, poorly draining soils with wet heathy vegetation
- Variable enclosure pattern
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and strings of wayside dwellings



### Current Concerns

The key feature, providing the character and structure of this landscape, is the dominant presence of dense lines of mature hedgerow oaks. However, the age structure of these trees is unbalanced, with the majority being mature or veteran. Changes in land use are evident, with a change to arable farming and also an increase in the grazing of horses becoming evident, both of which can have a detrimental effect upon the hedgerow structure, and in turn on the perpetuation of hedgerow trees. Significant numbers of field ponds are being lost due to infilling.

This landscape is also subject to many pressures due to proximity of the conurbation of Birmingham, not least through the modification of the characteristic wayside dwellings as a result of modernisation and enlargement. Pressures to modify the narrow winding complex of lanes could become a priority as traffic volumes increase.

Emphasis needs to be placed upon promoting the importance of hedgerow oaks to this landscape and the conservation of the hedgerow pattern is fundamental in order to facilitate the structure for such trees. Opportunities to conserve and restore permanent pasture would strengthen the unity of this landscape.

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### Opportunities for Landscape Gain

#### Hedgerow Trees

There may be opportunities to plant new hedgerow trees, especially oak, and 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 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

#### 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 primary (long established) hedgerows should be noted and used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting.

Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows. Funding support for such works should be promoted to land-owners.

#### 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.

#### 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, and the incorporation of hedgerows can contribute to the small scale character 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.

#### Land Use - Pastoral

Opportunities may arise, to promote Stewardship and other agri-environment funding incentives to encourage a predominantly pastoral land use, particularly if arable land uses appear to be dominating. Also, this is a landscape which formerly included a distinctive concentration of unenclosed commons, the essential character of which could be integrated into any new development proposals for the area, in order to facilitate opportunities for recreation

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