

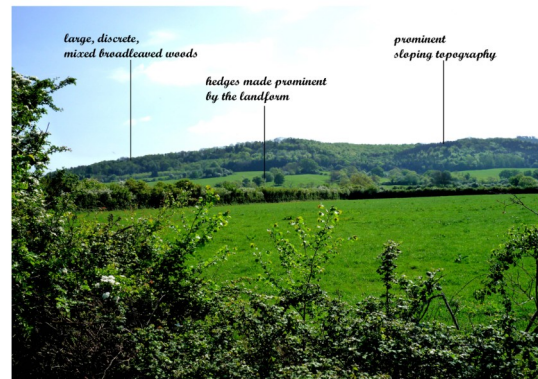
Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*

Wooded Hills and Farmlands

Landscape Type Description

These landscapes are similar to the Principal Wooded Hills, but have more of an emphasis on farmland 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 less extreme than the related type of the Principal Wooded Hills.



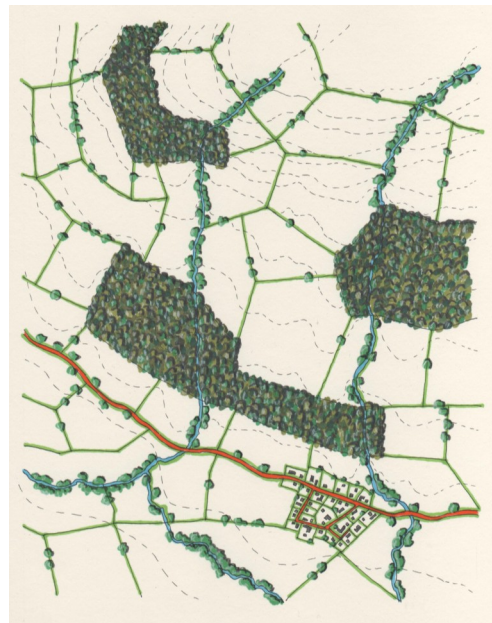
Key Characteristics

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



Current Concerns

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, though 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.

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Opportunities for Landscape Gain

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.

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. The woodland blocks may have been reduced in size in this landscape or inappropriate recent planting may have linked previously discrete woods. Opportunities should be sought to redress this either through extending the size of individual woodlands or taking the decision not to replant linking woodland after it has been cropped. Landscape gain could be achieved by additional planting along watercourses and ditches and an increase in hedgerow trees either by new planting or by altering the management of existing hedges to allow individual specimens to grow up. Some landowners are already tagging hedgerow trees to prevent them being inadvertently cut. Inappropriate small woodlands could be removed (no replanting after cropping) 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.

Medium-scale, Framed Views The scale of this Landscape Type could be damaged by the introduction of small scale features, particularly new woodlands and the reduction in size of existing woodlands. The characteristic framing of views would be diluted by loss of woodlands cover. There may be opportunities to create new woodland (by planting or natural regeneration) and this, and any landscaping associated with new development, should reflect the particular scale of these landscapes. Opportunities may arise to restore woodland and hedgerows in poor condition. There may be opportunities to reinforce the woodland structure to frame views through new planting.

Settlement Pattern - Clustered Opportunities for additional housing should be in accordance with policies and should respect the settlement pattern and be concentrated on the existing clustered communities in order to maintain the low settlement density.

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.

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