

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*

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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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 long established hedgerows should 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 landowners

Land Use - Mixed Farming

Whilst there is little potential to influence land use at the landscape scale, with current trends suggesting a move towards increased arabilisation, it may be possible to encourage the incorporation of pastoral land uses on land associated with, or adjacent to, new development. This may be particularly appropriate if an element of public access is to be accommodated.

Woodland Character - Planned

These are landscapes that can generally accommodate new small woodlands, including commercial plantations. 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 restore – either exactly or in spirit – the woodland pattern of parkland and other designed landscapes.

There may be opportunities to reinforce the woodland structure to frame views. Golf courses are often proposed in Estate Farmlands and, if sensitively handled, can comfortably accommodate and complement their characteristic woodland patterns and occasionally successfully associate with the restoration of designed landscapes. The retention and safeguarding of veteran trees will provide significant landscape gain.

Medium-scale Landscape with Framed Views

Opportunities may arise to remove sub-divisions of formerly larger fields or parcels of land.

There may be opportunities for new woodland planting, and this, and any new landscaping associated with new development should reflect the particular scale of these landscapes.

Settlement Pattern - Clustered

Opportunities may arise to achieve some degree of coalescence of existing scattered development by enabling infill development to bring about a degree of spatial unity. However, the siting of new development should be undertaken with extreme care in order to avoid compromising the visual integrity of distinctive estate villages. Design details of existing estate buildings should be reflected in new design. Efforts should be made to avoid individual new development of a dispersed nature.

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