

## **Green Infrastructure: Historic Environment statement for SWJCS**

### ***Introduction***

Areas of open space, which are designated for their historic or archaeological importance or interest are currently limited to registered parkland, gardens and battlefields, and some large area scheduled monuments. There may be some changes to the extent of such designations arising from the forthcoming Heritage Protection Bill.

Historic Landscape Characterisation has already created an evidence based assessment of historic attributes within the landscape and is fully inclusive in that it assesses the whole landscape irrespective of current land-use. Historic Landscape Characterisation builds on existing Landscape Characterisation through finer grained mapping, which is informed by greater time-depth. National coverage is approaching completion with the Worcestershire project having commenced in July 2007. The Worcester Growth Point and South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy towns are priority areas for full characterisation, which is planned for completion by early 2009.

Historic Landscape Characterisation offers a key data source towards assessing the Historic Environment contribution towards the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Green Infrastructure through its capacity to deliver an evidence-based assessment of historic landscape significance and sensitivity.

### ***Historic Landscape Character***

A brief outline of Historic Landscape Character for the RSS assessment area around Evesham, Pershore, Droitwich and Malvern was reported in the historic environment assessment produced in 2006 (WHEAS, November 2006). Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells were not part of the study. Only when full Historic Landscape Characterisation is complete can a detailed study be carried out combining Historic Landscape Character, Landscape Character and Historic Environment Record data.

## **Evesham**

### ***Historic Landscape Character summary statement***

The field pattern surrounding Evesham is dominated by 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century planned enclosure and the smaller-scale regular enclosures associated with traditional orchards; many of the latter having now disappeared leaving only the field pattern intact. Field amalgamation and subdivision is evident throughout the area, however, the historic character of the field pattern is still largely intact. Woodland is not a historic characteristic of the Vale of Evesham, with only field parcel scale areas of woodland plantation scattered thinly throughout the landscape. The Evesham hinterland, therefore has a very open aspect, which can

allow an appreciation of the wider landscape character from even low level viewpoints.

### ***Opportunities for conservation and enhancement***

The historic hedgerow pattern offers a key opportunity to link green infrastructure nodes and itself provides a green network across the area. The restoration of existing hedgerows, replanting along the line of former hedgerows, as indicated on historic OS mapping, and the integration of hedgerows with margins into the landscape of new development offers the opportunity to create, or enhance green corridors while also preserving the historic grain of the locally distinctive landscape.

### ***Summary recommendations***

- Retain and resort historic hedgerow network to enhance the historic grain in the landscape
- Woodland creation for amenity should be small-scale: no greater than field parcel scale

## **Pershore**

### ***Historic Landscape Character summary statement***

The field pattern surrounding most of Pershore is similar to that of Evesham, which is dominated by 17th – 19th century planned enclosure of former medieval communally farmed open-fields. Along the River Avon, regular enclosed fields of pasture define the historic landscape character, much of which lies within the Avon flood plain. Tiddesley Woods and Pershore Abbey Park are substantial historic green spaces within the urban landscape and hinterland of Pershore.

### ***Opportunities for conservation and enhancement***

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### ***Summary recommendations***

- Retain and resort historic hedgerow network to enhance the historic grain in the landscape
- Link large-area historic landscapes (Tiddesley Wood, Abbey Park and River Avon meadows to promote appreciation of Pershore's diverse historic greenspace

## **Malvern**

### ***Historic Landscape Character summary statement***

Overall, Malvern is defined by the contrasting pasture and woodland upland and hills of the west and mixed farming lowland with large areas of common. Large irregular shaped fields with curving and sinuous hedgerow boundaries largely represents the historic field pattern east of Malvern. This field pattern is largely the result of a process of piecemeal enclosure having taken place over several generations. To the north and south of Malvern the field pattern is characterised by more regular shaped fields with straight boundaries. This pattern has more in common with planned enclosure carried out by individual landowners, or as a result of an act of Parliamentary Inclosure.

### ***Opportunities for conservation and enhancement***

Despite the overall large size of fields around Malvern, the lowland landscape has wooded enclosed feel in many places where mature historic hedgerows, traditional orchards and enclosed woodlands co-exist. Existing Public Rights of Way, lanes and roads encounter this throughout the lowland areas. These already form an important green network throughout the Malvern hinterland and should be integrated into future green infrastructure design.

### ***Summary recommendations***

- Retain the enclosed wooded setting in development plans
- Integrate hedgerows and lanes into the green infrastructure network

## **Droitwich**

### ***Historic Landscape Character summary statement***

Droitwich is surrounded by a diverse landscape of contrasting field patterns ranging from regular Parliamentary Inclosure east of Droitwich to older, irregular, piecemeal enclosure fields around the hamlet of Salwarpe. The River Salwarpe and Droitwich Canal corridors run parallel together through the core of Droitwich and to the south. Three distinctive areas of historic designed landscape complement the hinterland of Droitwich (Westwood House, Hadzor Hall and Chateau Impney).

### ***Opportunities for conservation and enhancement***

The existing Public Rights of Way network provides good links to all of the above landscape areas. The provision of permissive access links between new development and existing Public Rights of Way will improve integration of development into the green historic network and landscape of Droitwich. The hedgerow pattern around Salwarpe creates a wooded and enclosed space, feeling remote from the nearby townscape of Droitwich. Green infrastructure design should attempt to capture this in order to retain the key value of the landscape.

### *Summary recommendations*

- Enhance access links to existing green network and locally distinctive historic landscapes
- Integrate housing and greenspace design into the historic grain of the landscape, particularly around the Salwarpe and Copcut area

## **Tenbury Wells**

### *Historic Landscape Character summary statement*

The Tenbury landscape is characterised by regular enclosed riverside meadows in the Teme valley contrasted with mixed field enclosure patterns on the undulating high land that rises to the north and south of the town. Sinuous and high-hedged lanes and tracks weave amongst the small irregular fields creating a feeling of an unplanned landscape. While this is not the case overall, the historic landscape character has underlying ancient origins that have been altered through a process of smaller-scale change and adaptation in land management creating a patchwork of differing patterns in the modern landscape.

### *Opportunities for conservation and enhancement*

Retaining the diversity present in the Tenbury landscape should be a key objective of green infrastructure design. The integration of public amenity space and green links within housing development should ideally take their reference from, and integrate with, existing field boundaries and retain a scale of development based on existing field parcel scale.

### *Summary recommendations*

- New design should respect the existing unit scale in landscape division
- Respect the sinuous character of historic land division and access in new design

## **Upton upon Severn**

### *Historic Landscape Character summary statement*

Upton is juxtaposed with Holly Green: both settlements separated by the tract of the River Severn and its extensive flood plains. The historic flood meadows create a very open character in this wide corridor with a few field boundaries breaking the expanse. The rising terraces to the east and west of the river see a shift towards a distinctive piecemeal enclosure field pattern to the west of Upton: in part defined by the presence of a once extensive post-medieval managed water meadow system.

### *Opportunities for conservation and enhancement*

Retaining the open 'prairie' feel of the wide river corridor is crucial not only for flood management, but also to retain the historic open character east of Upton. The small-scale field boundary patterns should be respected when designing both built and green space elements in future development.

*Summary recommendations*

- Maintain the predominantly unenclosed character of the flood plain
- New design should respect the existing unit scale in landscape division

## **Green Infrastructure: Historic Environment statement.**

### *Introduction*

This theme covers the contribution of the historic environment to the green infrastructure of the principle town in the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Area. Land-use history and other past events and activities have a profound influence on present landscape character. Historic environment assets, including sites, linked groups or complexes of sites, and areas of landscape, parkland, gardens and battlefields, all have the potential to form part of a green infrastructure network. In many cases, the provision of green infrastructure can help to protect below ground archaeological remains and the settings of historic features from the pressures of development.

### *Key Data Sources*

- English Heritage
- MAGIC
- Worcestershire Historic Environment Record
- Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council

### *Historic Environment Record data – commentary*

The term ‘historic environment’ as used here is inclusive, acknowledging that all aspects of the environment have a historic component. It therefore includes all assets, whether designated (scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and battlefields), locally listed or registered (conservation areas, locally listed buildings and other assets), or undesignated (all other archaeological sites, historic structures etc). Under the provisions of the Heritage Protection Bill (to be presented to Parliament in 2008-09 and due to come into force during 2010) all of the current designations will be replaced by Heritage Structures (scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings) and Heritage Open Spaces (parks and gardens and battlefields). Extending out from ‘site-based’ assets, the historic environment also includes the historic character of the wider landscape (historic landscape characterisation; see below).

# Droitwich

The Historic Environment Record for Droitwich is concentrated upon the Roman to post medieval urban core, which has been studied as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey. However records exist for a wide range of monument types across the whole study area ranging from prehistoric settlement to WWII defensive structures.

## *Key features*

- *Brine springs.*

The town's origins lie with the extraction of salt from brine springs. Since prehistoric times salt has been evaporated from the brine and exported around the country. From Roman times this has been on an industrial scale, and the economic importance of salt production is reflected in the presence of two Roman forts and a villa or administrative centre. The historic core of the town, established in Roman times, is one of the most important archaeological sites in the county. The significance of these remains is reflected by their protection as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. While the salt production area is now predominantly urban in character, one of the two Scheduled forts provides well-protected green space adjacent to Dodderhill School.

- *River Salwarpe and Canal corridors*

By their very nature, the linear corridors provided by the River Salwarpe and the Droitwich Canal provide significant components of the town's green infrastructure. Early settlement would have concentrated along this corridor, however episodic flooding will have masked these sites and forced later settlement out of the flood plane.

- *Roman Roads network*

As typical of Roman towns, Droitwich is a nodal point regarding the Roman road networks, many of which are still used as principle highways to this day. These roads therefore provide an enhancement opportunity to link other sites, acting as green and historic corridors.

- ***Historic Parklands (Château Impne, Westwood Park & Hadzor Hall)***

This relatively recent parkland and country house contributes to the diverse historic landscape of Droitwich and its hinterland. It contrasts with the more historic parks of Westwood and Hadzor. These parklands, although degraded present opportunities for restoration and enhancement.

- ***Preservation of significant below ground sites within green space***

Many archaeological sites remain to be discovered and can occur almost anywhere. While few of these sites remain visible above ground, their presence, when identified through archaeological investigation, can provide focus for green space within development area, should the remains be deemed worth of preservation in situ. Where quality natural habitat is lacking these sites can provide valuable contributions to green infrastructure if consideration is made to linking such sites into the broader network of hedge boundaries, roadside verges and gardens.

- ***Historic Building Stock***

Historic buildings (both listed and unlisted) represent the most visible component of the Historic Environment and vary greatly in date, function and rarity. Older buildings and structures can provide a haven for wildlife and most restoration schemes now include provision for biodiversity enhancement.

# Evesham

The Historic Environment Record for Evesham is concentrated upon the medieval to post medieval urban core, which has been studied as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey. However records exist for a wide range of monument types across the whole study area ranging from prehistoric settlement to WWII defensive structures.

Situated on the banks of the river Avon, Evesham and its hinterland is rich in prehistoric and Romano British settlement sites, principally farmsteads.

## *Key features*

- *Avon and Isbourne River corridor and meadows*

Acting as both boundary and communication route, the rivers and their immediate environment are one of the most significant features of the landscape. Bearing little resemblance to their natural origin, the rivers have been altered through the introduction of weirs, locks, and mills, fish traps and crossing points. Many of the meadows have been modified to hold floodwater in order to extract silts to increase the fertility of the fields. The significance of watercourses as sources of food and power means that even relatively minor tributaries were utilised, managed and altered until relatively recent times. All these features, where they survive, provide enhanced habitats along significant interlinked linear routes.

The restoration of flood and water meadows not only provide improved habitat, but also helps mitigate flooding issues.

- *Evesham Abbey and Precinct*

The protected site of Evesham Abbey provides Evesham with one of its principle green open spaces, linked as it is to the riverside walks along the Avon. The Abbey precinct, historically an open space survives, but is under increasing pressure from new development.

- *Battlefield area*

While lacking focus or sense of place, the battle of Evesham site has the potential for improvement, contributing to informed green open space.

- *Preservation of significant below ground sites within green space*

The land surrounding the town, in particular the river gravel terraces are a focus for early settlement; indeed much of knowledge of prehistoric occupation of the area comes from sites located on the 1<sup>st</sup> terrace. While none of these sites remain visible above ground, their presence, when identified through archaeological investigation, can provide focus for green space within development area, should the remains be deemed worth of preservation in situ. Where quality natural habitat is lacking these sites can provide valuable contributions to green infrastructure if consideration is made to linking such sites into the broader network of hedge boundaries, roadside verges and gardens.

Sites are not limited to the gravel terraces though, as illustrated by the significant discoveries made during the construction of the Wyre Piddle Bypass.

- *Hinton Cross Roman Settlement*

The Scheduled remains of a large complex of enclosures, lands and probable villa immediately south of the southern bypass. The protected nature of the site puts significant restrictions on development, and while in wholly agricultural use, could present future enhancement opportunities.

- *Historic Building Stock*

Historic buildings (both listed and unlisted) represent the most visible component of the Historic Environment and vary greatly in date, function and rarity. Being an agricultural county, farmsteads represent a significant element of this building stock.

Older buildings and structures can provide a haven for wildlife and most restoration schemes now include provision for biodiversity enhancement.

# Pershore

The Historic Environment Record for Pershore is broadly similar to Evesham and concentrates upon the medieval to post medieval urban core, which has also been studied as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey. Records exist for a wide range of monument types across the whole study area ranging from prehistoric settlement to WWII defensive structures.

Situated on the banks of the river Avon, Pershore and its hinterland contains prehistoric and Romano British settlement sites, although the limiting nature of the topography has meant that much of this is probably buried beneath the town itself.

## *Key features*

- *Pershore Abbey*

Within the town, the grounds of Pershore Abbey provide the principle green open space. The archaeological significance of the site and its protected status as a scheduled ancient monument provides enhancement opportunities while limiting inappropriate development.

- *Tiddesley Woods*

This fragment of Ancient woodland has been managed since at least medieval times, and is now a shadow of its former self. Now managed as an important reserve, this is a key part of the areas green infrastructure.

- *River Avon, tributaries, flood meadow enclosures and adjacent Gravel Terraces*

Acting as both boundary and communication route, the river and its immediate environment has been one of the most significant features of the landscape. Bearing little resemblance to its natural origin, the river has been altered through the introduction of weirs, locks, and mills, fish traps and crossing points. Many of the meadows have been modified to hold floodwater in order to extract silts to increase the fertility of the fields. The significance of watercourses as sources of food and power means that even relatively minor tributaries were utilised, managed and altered until relatively recent times. All these features, where they survive, provide enhanced habitats along significant interlinked linear routes.

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- ***Wick hinterland: parkland and Pershore Bridge***

The former parkland and open landscape of Wick has been settled since prehistoric times and contains a number of Nationally Important Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Pershore Bridge, which is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument, provides an important modern focus, as can be seen by its use as a community and tourist attraction, acting as a gateway to walks along the river.

- ***Preservation of significant below ground sites within or as green space.***

The land surrounding the town, in particular the river gravel terraces are a focus for early settlement; indeed much of knowledge of prehistoric occupation of the area comes from sites located on the 1<sup>st</sup> terrace. While none of these sites remain visible above ground, their presence, when identified through archaeological investigation, can provide focus for green space within development area, should the remains be deemed worth of preservation in situ. Where quality natural habitat is lacking these sites can provide valuable contributions to green infrastructure if consideration is made to linking such sites into the broader network of hedge boundaries, roadside verges and gardens.

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- ***Allotments***

While a relatively recent addition to the environment, Allotment plots have a distinctive cultural, ecological and landscape character that should be encouraged and enhanced, proving a significant contribution urban green open space.

# Malvern

Unlike all the other towns in the study area, Malvern has not been investigated as part of the Central Marches Historic Town Survey. This is because unlike the others, Malvern was never a medieval market town. While it has medieval origins in the form of the Priory, Malvern's growth is post medieval and born of the 'discovery' of Malvern Waters.

The hills and their hinterland were important in prehistoric and Roman times, with the Bronze Age Shire Ditch running along the spine of the hills and the impressive British Camp at the southern end of the range. Malvern's history is also intrinsically linked to military technology development from WWII to the present day.

- *Malvern Hills prehistoric landscape*

The granite ridge of the Malvern Hills dominates the landscape around Malvern, and to some extent, has shaped the development of modern settlement along its slopes. Two millennia ago the focus of settlement was on the Hills themselves. The substantial and nationally designated Iron Age hillforts of British Camp and Midsummer Hill were once thriving communities of settlement, trade and culture. Today, the earthwork remains stand as monuments to later prehistory along the Worcestershire and Herefordshire border. They are at the heart of local amenity, which along with the view from the Hills, define a distinctive sense of place at the heart of the Malvern Hills AONB. The nationally designated Shire Ditch has Bronze Age origins, but was maintained well into the medieval period as a boundary in the landscape. It has retained its visual prominence to the present day.

- *Madresfield and Sherrards Green*

Madresfield Court and its associated parkland is an important part of the Malvern landscape, although most of the site lies just outside the study area.

The Scheduled remains of the medieval moated site at Sherrards Green is an important green hub on the outskirts of modern Malvern. The site presents enhancement opportunities as a green open space with any areas of future urban expansion.

- *Preservation of significant below ground sites within green space*

The land to the north and east the town, are a focus for early settlement and industrial activity in the form of the Severn Valley Ware pottery production sites.

While none of these sites remain visible above ground, their presence, when identified through archaeological investigation, can provide focus for green space within development area, should the remains be deemed worth of preservation in situ. Where quality natural habitat is lacking these sites can provide valuable contributions to green infrastructure if consideration is made to linking such sites into the broader network of hedge boundaries, roadside verges and gardens.

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# Upton upon Severn

The Historic Environment Record for Upton upon Severn is concentrated upon the medieval urban core of the town, which has been studied as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey. However records exist for a wide range of monument types across the whole study area ranging from prehistoric settlement to WWII defensive structures.

- *River Severn terraces*

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# Tenbury Wells

The town lies on the county boundary with Shropshire and as such Historic Environment records for the northern area of the study are lacking. Later stages of study will address this. The intrinsically rural nature of the area and its subsequent lack of major development have limited recent archaeological investigations to the core of the historic town. Little has been recorded beyond the town itself, largely due to the predominant pastoral landscape around the town. Evidence of earthwork features are visible on aerial photographs, but no assessment of their significance has yet been carried out.

## *Key features*

- *River Teme and Riverside meadows*

Acting as both boundary and communication route, the river and its immediate environment has been one of the most significant features of the landscape. Bearing little resemblance to its natural origin, the river has been altered through the introduction of weirs, locks, and mills, fish traps and crossing points. Many of the meadows have been modified to hold floodwater in order to extract silts to increase the fertility of the fields. The significance of watercourses as sources of food and power means that even relatively minor tributaries were utilised, managed and altered until relatively recent times. All these features, where they survive, provide enhanced habitats along significant interlinked linear routes.

The restoration of flood and water meadows not only provide improved habitat, but also helps mitigate flooding issues.

- *Tenbury historic town core*

Situated on a strategic crossing point on the River Teme, the town developed as a market town in the medieval period. With varying prosperity the town flourished in the post medieval period with improvements to the road network and bridge.

- *Dispersed historic farmsteads*

The area is characterised by its dispersed historic farmsteads, each providing a focus within the broader pattern of fields and lanes.

- *Preservation of significant below ground sites within green space*

While none of these sites remain visible above ground, their presence, when identified through archaeological investigation, can provide focus for green space within development area, should the remains be deemed worth of preservation in situ. Where quality natural habitat is lacking these sites can provide valuable contributions to green infrastructure if consideration is made to linking such sites into the broader network of hedge boundaries, roadside verges and gardens