

Design Code Guidance Note Landscape Context & Settlement setting

September 2021



This guidance note provides a useful signposting to readily available documentation outlining the historic character of your parish. Why the village exists where it is, how it sits within the landscape and in relation to other settlements. This will help you build a picture of the wider context for your design coding. Your Design Code needs to be based on an analysis of the local areas. Well-designed buildings and places respect their surroundings and context.

Landscape Character setting within Herefordshire

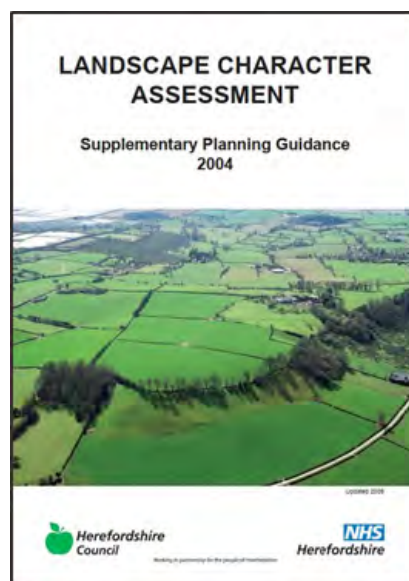
The [Landscape Character Assessment](#) was produced in 2009 but is still relevant to your design coding context. It highlights the inherent landscape character and the opportunities to enhance local distinctiveness within your parish. This together with the cultural heritage will help you to understand how and why the villages and hamlets are located within those settings.

The landscape of Herefordshire has been divided into a 22 types:

- High Hills and slopes;
- High Moors and Commons;
- Enclosed Moors and Commons;
- Enclosed settled Commons;
- Unenclosed Commons;
- Principal Wooded Hills;
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands;
- Wooded Forest;
- Forest Smallholdings and dwellings;
- Principal timbered farmlands;
- Timbered Plateau Farmland;
- Ancient Timbered Farmland;
- Ancient Border Farmland;
- Riverside Meadows;
- Wet Pasture Meadows;
- Estate Farmlands;
- Plateau Estate Farmlands;
- Wooded Estate lands;
- Sandstone Estate lands;
- Sandstone Farmlands;
- Principal Settled Farmlands;
- Settled Farmlands on River Terraces.

These have specific area descriptions, key landscape characteristics, details of settlement patterns, woodland and tree cover and environmental management and enhancements. This will assist giving a wider understanding of the setting of the parish.

On the next page is an example of the landscape type detail:





FORCES FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE

The pattern of small to medium sized hedged fields is vulnerable to change as the tendency towards arable dominance reduces the functional need for hedgerows. In spite of the Hedgerow Regulations, inappropriate maintenance is still resulting in the degradation and loss of the hedgerows which are one of the most significant features of the landscape. Intensification of farming practices is also resulting in a simplistic visual uniformity as landscape character is eroded. Development pressure in many of these areas has resulted in a distinctly nucleated or clustered settlement pattern which is contrary to the landscape character.



SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets is capable of accommodating limited new development if it is in accordance with UDP policy. Low densities of individual dwellings would be acceptable as long as they are not sited close enough to coalesce into a prominent wayside settlement pattern. Additional housing in hamlets and villages should be modest in size in order to preserve the character of the original settlement.

ENCLOSURE PATTERN

The enclosure pattern varies considerably but is generally of a planned sub-regular nature. The small to medium sized fields are vulnerable to amalgamation through hedgerow loss.

WOODLAND OR TREE COVER PATTERN

Tree cover is most notable along stream sides and watercourses, with only scattered tree cover along hedgerows. Groups of trees and orchards are often associated with settlements. Woodland is not a characteristic feature of this Landscape Type.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION

The overall strategy for Principal Settled Farmlands would be to **conserve** and **enhance** the unity of small to medium scale hedged fields. Opportunities

for new tree planting should be concentrated along watercourses where the linear tree cover pattern could be strengthened. Additional tree planting in the vicinity of settlement would also be appropriate and would assist in emphasising the domestic quality of the landscape. New woodland should not be introduced as it is out of place and would compromise the landscape character. The mixed farming land use is becoming increasingly arable and the small permanent pastures are gradually declining. These are often species rich and initiatives to safeguard them should be strongly promoted. New development should remain at a low density with most housing associated with existing hamlets and villages.

CONSERVATION	ENHANCEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance the hedgerow pattern 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance tree cover and wetland habitat along watercourses 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek opportunities to conserve remaining areas of permanent pasture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen patterns of tree cover associated with settlements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to maintain a balance of arable and pastoral land use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek opportunities to maintain and increase traditional standard orchards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the integrity of a dispersed settlement pattern 	



Historic Landscape Characterisation





An historic landscape characterisation map was produced for Herefordshire in 2002 that identifies and maps the age of present day cultural landscape. This will assist parishes understand how the village or hamlets are positioned within the landscape and how they have grown.

For additional details see the Cultural Heritage Guidance Note

Settlement Context

It is important to consider the context in which any development within your parish sits. Within Herefordshire there are broadly 6 character areas within settlements and parishes. It is worth considering whether your Design Code will require different grains of coding for the different elements of your place.

Type	Characteristics	Herefordshire Example
Rural isolated dwellings and hamlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated dwellings; • Farmsteads; • Estates such as Foxley, Whitfield, Stoke Edith; • Small groups of dwellings; • Hamlet; • Landscape setting is the dominate feature. 	 <p data-bbox="826 999 1174 1025">Golden Valley, Herefordshire.</p> <p data-bbox="826 1061 1394 1151">Cluster of buildings forming a hamlet set within a high sided valley and the Black Mountains the dominant feature.</p>
Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings clustered in a settlement type and pattern; • Focal points - schools, halls, bridge crossings; • Recognised social hub for rural hinterland; • Usually a historic core with a variety of older buildings and listed assets. 	 <p data-bbox="826 1541 1114 1568">Weobley, Herefordshire.</p> <p data-bbox="826 1603 1417 1664">Main street with key services such as shops, pubs and central meeting places.</p>

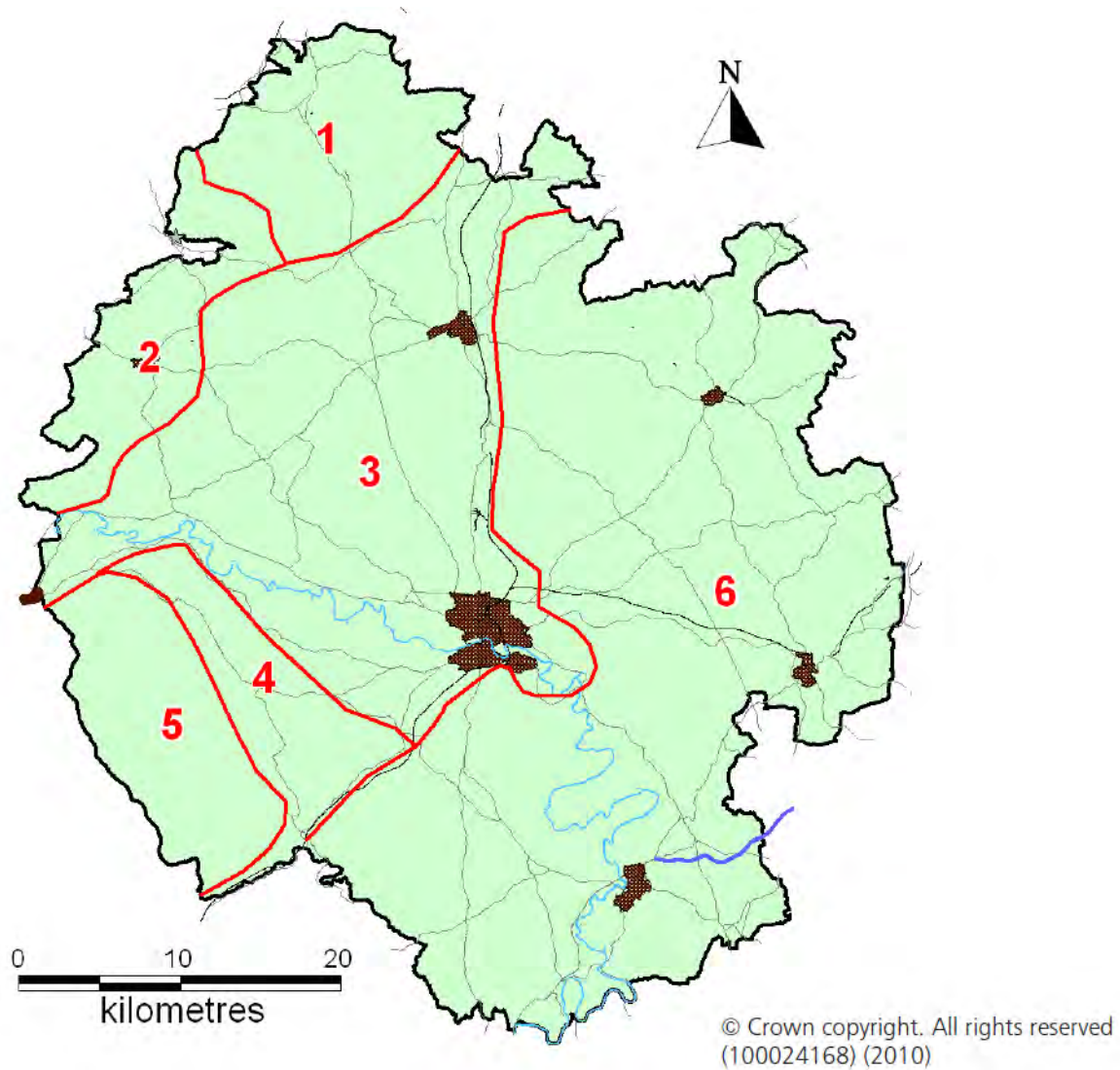
Type	Characteristics	Herefordshire Example
Village residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually residential area at the edge of villages; • Predominately C20th/C21st buildings; • Modern estates on single access roads or cul-de-sacs; • Including parking, play areas, greenspace. 	 <p data-bbox="826 517 1114 551">Weobley, Herefordshire.</p> <p data-bbox="826 580 1406 645">Modern housing development with greenspaces and parking on the edge of the village.</p>
Urban fringe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural edge of a market town or Hereford; • How parish interacts with urban edge; • Often higher density residential development. 	 <p data-bbox="826 1059 1350 1124">Urban fringe of Hereford – Hampton Bishop parish boundary.</p>
Suburban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas within city and market town. • Residential buildings usually front the streets. • Can be demonstrated by car parking. 	 <p data-bbox="826 1379 1038 1413">Tupsley, Hereford.</p> <p data-bbox="826 1442 1193 1476">Modern housing development.</p>
Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market towns and larger villages and Hereford; • Mixture of uses; • Series of streets, roads and lanes; • Buildings are the dominate feature. 	 <p data-bbox="826 1861 1361 1921">Church Lane in Hereford city centre from the Cathedral to High Town.</p> <p data-bbox="826 1951 1209 1984">Mixed used of shops, pubs, flats</p>

Farmstead Character Areas for Herefordshire

Herefordshire is predominately rural in nature and its historic landscape and settlement patterns characterise the areas local distinctiveness. Many of these historic patterns can still be seen in today and will help you understand the context in which your design coding will be formed.

The West Midlands Farmstead and Landscapes Project was undertaken in 2010 and divides the county into 6 character areas.

For further details please see the [West Midlands Farmstead and Landscape Project 2010](#)



Area 1: Wigmore Basin and the surrounding hills

- This area covers the River Teme, Downton Estate and Harley Mountain;
- Comprises of regular fields in floodplains and hilltops with partly enclosed watermeadows and rough grazing land;
- Large farmsteads are characteristic with multi-yard complexes along the sides of valley floors;
- Some outfarms on higher land and small scale farmsteads on hillsides.

Area 2: The North West Herefordshire Hills

- This area covers the upland and upland fringe of area of the north west;
- Consists of well preserved ancient field patterns and small scale farmsteads;
- Characterised by loose courtyard plans, dispersed cluster plans and regular L-shaped plans;
- Concentrated around Kington and Presteigne.

Area 3: The Herefordshire Lowlands from Wigmore Basin to the Golden Valley

- Area of large mixed middle sized and large farmsteads;
- Concentrated along the side of valley floors;
- Villages and hamlets a strong element of the settlement pattern;
- Strong survival of ancient commons and smaller farmsteads and small holdings to the south of Madley;
- Evidence of settlement desertion and the development of isolated farmsteads with the enclosure of farmland from C14th.

Area 4: Golden Valley

- Large courtyard farmsteads and fields set around watermeadows;
- Prominence of small holdings on the fringes of the valley (Vowchurch Common);
- Small scale farmsteads common adjacent to the Black Mountains.

Area 5: The Black Mountains

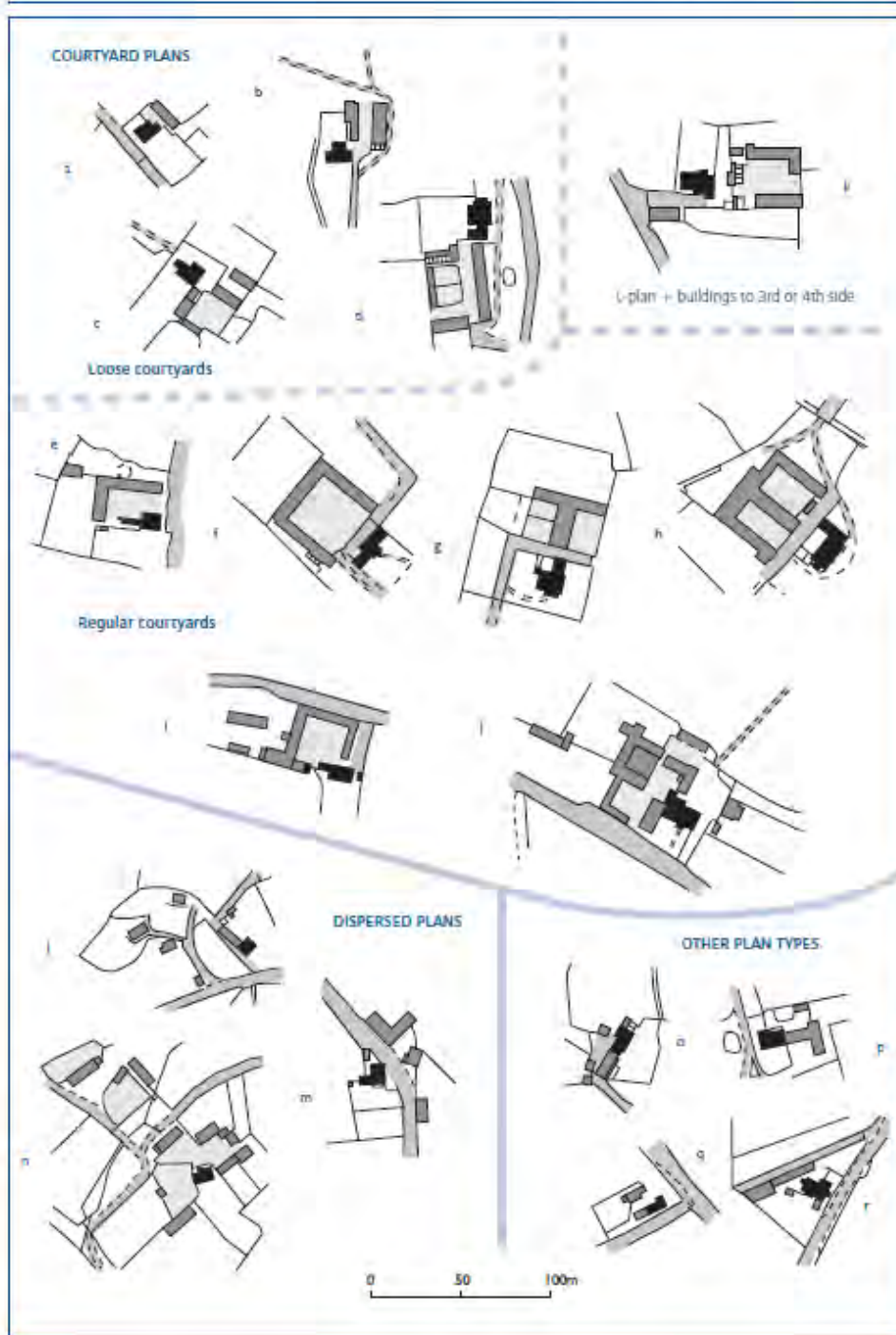
- Area of well preserved ancient field patterns and small scale farmsteads;
- Characterised by loose courtyard plan, dispersed cluster plans and regular L-shaped plans;
- Concentrated south of Kington and around Brilley;
- Large scale farms and yards have had a hard level of loss.

Area 6: The Herefordshire Plateau, the Eastern Herefordshire Lowlands and South Herefordshire

- Similar farmstead character to the Herefordshire Lowlands but with a higher number of loose courtyard plans;
- Small farmsteads on hilly landscapes have retained pattern of small scale enclosure;
- Widespread evidence of settlement desertions and development of isolated farmsteads from C14th;
- Hamlets and villages remain in the lowlands east of Hereford, Along Hereford to Bromyard road; Ledbury to Worcester Road, and Roman Road A417 (Trumpet- Ashperton –Burley Gate – Ullingwick –Pencombe.)

Farmstead courtyard patterns

On the next page there are some examples of farmstead courtyard patterns in Herefordshire.



Settlement patterns

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) includes references to ‘area types’ many of these are urban in nature and the rural area falls into two area types - ‘rural’ and ‘villages’.

In order to define the rural areas in a more local context and to undertake historic built form exercises, settlements within the county can be classed into a number of settlement pattern types.

Obviously, settlements will change and evolve over time but identifying the historical form and characteristics will assist in producing a locally distinctive code. The Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) can assist with this analysis

The examples given on the next few pages are of Herefordshire villages for each of the settlement patterns.

Which settlement pattern best describes your village? How would this pattern of development influence your design coding?

Nucleated:



Linear:



Crossroads:



Dispersed:



Estate:



Isolated:

