



Winterbourne Fields

Woodland Buffer

Principal Guidance

The 'Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal' (Jacobs, 2011) locates the site within the Blean Woods West landscape character area (LCA),

The Woodland Landscape Type is described as: "As a whole this area represents a mosaic of ancient seminatural woodland with mixed coppice with oak standards, sweet chestnut coppice and conifer plantation. The unusual close proximity of these large woodlands to the sea creates a distinctive sense of place, unique within the context of the Kent landscape."

The woodland landscape guidelines include:

- This land is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops - the yields of which are variable.
- Conserve the landscape character and biodiversity through continued sensitive woodland management practice,
- Important woodland and trees within the landscape, especially ancient semi-natural woodland should be protected, appropriately managed and, where possible, expanded at their margins. Veteran trees should be protected and appropriately managed,
- Areas of conifer plantation and the extensive areas of sweet chestnut re-planting should be sensitively replaced by native broadleaf woodland planting,
- Conserve the woodland fringe which provides the unique interface between open and wooded areas.

The Blean Woods West LCA key characteristics include; gently to steeply sloping landscape supporting ancient woodland, heavy clay soils, ancient woodland designated as SSSI, SAC and NNR, part of the most extensive seminatural woodlands in the south east of England, areas of woodland cleared for grazing with extensive views, fragmented mature hedgerows along lanes, A and B roads and narrow winding lanes with few passing places, linear village, scattered isolated cottages and farms, 20th century residential dwellings, flint church, Victorian red brick cottages and farm buildings.

The guidelines for the Blean Woods West LCA are aimed at conserving and reinforcing the character. The landscape related guidelines include:

- Conserve the largely undeveloped and heavily wooded character of the landscape which forms part of the wider Blean Woods complex,
- Resist further woodland clearance,
- Create stronger ecological networks by linking Ancient Woodlands with new woodland planting and hedgerow restoration,
- Conserve the distinct, tranquil landscape character of ancient and semi-ancient woodland complex, together with its setting of wood pasture, open slopes (inc. views) and the rural character of the area's network of narrow winding lanes, enclosed by mature hedgerows.

For new hedges and hedgerow trees- hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, field maple and dogwood, for mixed-woodland or other planting- pedunculate oak, alder, holly, beech, sweet chestnut, hornbeam, beech, hazel, ash and birch. Mature oak across open farmland. Additionally, within developed areas - beech for hedging. Other - isolated orchards.

Other Important Guidance

• Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: protecting them from development

From: Forestry Commission (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission>) and Natural England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/naturalengland>)
Published: 13 October 2014
Last updated: 5 November 2018,

• Planning for Ancient Woodland Planners' Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

From: Woodland Trust
Published: July 2019

Recent Case Law

APPEAL MADE BY BLOOR HOMES AND SANDLEFORD FARM PARTNERSHIP LAND AT SANDLEFORD PARK, NEWTOWN ROAD, NEWBURY
Application Reference: 20/01238/OUTMAJ
Appeal Reference: APP/W0340/W/20/3265460 Decision date: 6 May 2022

This was an outline application for:

Outline planning permission for up to 1,000 new homes; an 80 extra care housing units (Use Class C3) as part of the affordable housing provision; a new 2 form entry primary school (D1); expansion land for Park House Academy School; a local centre to comprise flexible commercial floorspace (A1-A5 up to 2,150 sq m, B1a up to 200 sq m) and D1 use (up to 500sq m); the formation of new means of access onto Monks Lane; new open space including the laying out of a new country park; drainage infrastructure; walking and cycling infrastructure and other associated infrastructure works. Matters to be considered: Access.

In the appeal, the Secretary of State and Inspector both agreed that the proposed 15 metre buffer will be sufficient to safeguard the rooting areas of the trees within the ancient woodland.

In relation to the increase in public access to the woodland, both agreed that any adverse impacts could be managed through the Strategic Landscape and Green Infrastructure Plan without leading to a loss or deterioration of ancient woodland - Confirming the impacts are still manageable even if the buffer is linked to existing footprints.

In terms of the impacts on the veteran trees, both Secretary of State and Inspector agreed this could be addressed in the Reserved Matters.