

SWDP 6: Historic Environment



- A. Development proposals should conserve and enhance heritage assets, including assets of potential archaeological interest, subject to the provisions of SWDP 24. Their contribution to the character of the landscape or townscape should be protected in order to sustain the historic quality, sense of place, environmental quality and economic vibrancy of south Worcestershire.**
- B. Development proposals will be supported where they conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their setting. In particular this applies to:**
- i. Designated heritage assets; i.e. listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and registered battlefields, as well as undesignated heritage assets ⁽²⁵⁾.**
 - ii. The historic landscape, including locally distinctive settlement patterns, field systems, woodlands and commons and historic farmsteads and smallholdings.**

25 As identified in extant local lists and heritage assets recorded in Historic Environment Records

- iii. Designed landscapes, including parkland, gardens, cemeteries, churchyards, public parks, urban open spaces and industrial, military or institutional landscapes.**
- iv. Archaeological remains of all periods.**
- v. Historic transportation networks and infrastructure including roads and trackways, canals, river navigations, railways and their associated industries.**
- vi. The historic core of the cathedral city of Worcester, with its complex heritage of street and plot patterns, buildings, open spaces and archaeological remains, along with their settings and views of the city.**
- vii. The civic, religious and market cores of south Worcestershire's city, town and village fabric with their wide variety of building styles, materials and street and plot patterns.**

Reasoned Justification

1. When considering development proposals Policy SWDP 6 should be read in conjunction with Policy SWDP 24.
2. South Worcestershire's historic environment is a valuable, finite and irreplaceable resource, which is central to the character and identity of the area. It has a crucial role in supporting sustainable development through enhancing the quality of life of those currently living in and visiting the area and for generations to come, as well as delivering wider economic benefits through tourism and uplift in related development benefits. In addition to designated assets, south Worcestershire possesses a wealth of heritage assets from various periods that are locally significant for their historic, archaeological, architectural, or artistic interest and a variety of building styles and materials. The informed management of this resource will benefit current and future generations, with its importance being recognised in legislation and policy.
3. Prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and ceremonial remains are widely distributed and often extensive in the Severn, Avon and Teme valleys, which also contain important palaeoenvironmental deposits. These are juxtaposed with prehistoric hill forts on the higher ground of the Malvern Hills and Bredon Hill. Some earlier settlements, including the major urban centre of Worcester, continued to develop through the medieval and post-medieval periods. The medieval period saw the development of the main market towns, followed by Malvern during the 19th century. Varying influences and uses include market functions, monastic and Church ownership and the later development of spas.
4. The villages and hamlets are mostly of medieval or earlier origin. Many of them have surviving medieval assets, such as the parish church, moats, ponds and extensive earthworks. All are set within a landscape that is characterised by diverse and important historic field systems, punctuated by ancient and semi-natural woodlands, commons and historic parklands. Dispersed settlements and farmsteads dominate the west of the

area, with nucleated villages and clustered farmsteads characteristic of the south-east. The rivers formed important transportation networks, linking with roads and tracks, 18th and 19th century canals and latterly the railways.

5. Designed landscapes include parks, both private (e.g. Croome Park) and public (e.g. Priory Park in Malvern, or Lido Park in Droitwich Spa). The Policies Map specifically identifies conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and Scheduled Monuments. Others are identified in local lists (where they are in use) and Historic Environment Records. As well as landscape interest, these heritage assets have significant architectural and archaeological interest and often contain other monuments and memorials.
6. Proposals for development should have regard to the locally distinctive character of south Worcestershire and appropriate weight will be given to those characteristics identified when determining proposals. Historic Landscape Characterisation studies⁽²⁶⁾ have been produced for Worcestershire. These provide an evidence base that can be used to inform assessments of local distinctiveness and the heritage value of historic landscapes and their associated heritage assets.

26 See Worcestershire County Council website:
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/archaeology/information-and-advice/rural-historic-environment/hlc.aspx>;
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/Historic%20Landscape%20Characterisation.pdf>;