

Appendix 1

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT IN SHROPSHIRE

Project Design. May 2001

Summary

This provisional project design describes a historic landscape characterisation (HLC) project in the former County of Shropshire, to be carried out with English Heritage (EH) support by the County Council's Natural and Historic Environment Team (NHET). The project will fit into EH's national programme of county-based HLC; locally it will also be an extension of Shropshire County Council's current Countryside Agency-inspired Landscape Character Assessment programme, and is designed to develop the historic element previously only touched upon.

HLC will involve the analysis and interpretation of the present-day landscape as shown by current maps and air photos, supported where appropriate by study of published and unpublished information on present land use, land cover and landscape archaeology. It will aim to define the main aspects of the county's landscape character that derive from historic processes. It will also identify specific landscape components, elements or attributes, which, when occurring in specific combinations, create distinct Landscape Character types. The distribution of these types will be mapped at an initial scale of 1:25,000 and stored on the corporate GIS, supported by written descriptions of each type and of the principal processes creating them.

As part of the County Environmental Record (which incorporates the former County Sites and Monuments Record), the results will form part of a permanent and renewable database, available for a wide range of planning, land management, interpretative and educational purposes.

1. Introduction

1.1 The National Context

Historic Landscape Characterisation became an issue in 1990, when the White Paper "This Common Inheritance" suggested that EH consider the desirability of a national register of landscapes of historic importance. Such a concept has been realised in Wales, but has been refined in England into a more comprehensive approach (Fairclough 1991; Fairclough *et al* 2000) with direct links to the Countryside Agency's mainstream Landscape Assessment work.

This refinement led to the first EH / local authority Historic Landscape Characterisation project, undertaken by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit. Since 1995 eleven broadly similar projects have been completed, with a further five in progress. As the programme has expanded, theory and methodology have developed, with GIS becoming the fundamental platform for structuring, displaying and disseminating the results of the characterisation process.

As well as providing the first ever countywide assessments of today's historic landscape, the programme creates a powerful and fundamental foundation platform for Sites and Monuments Records, useable for a wide variety of planning and land management work. It is this potential which makes the exercise so important in

Shropshire, where the former Sites and Monuments Record is now part of an integrated Environmental Record.

1.2 The local background to the project

In recent years, Shropshire County Council (SCC) has moved towards a more holistic treatment of environmental issues, through the amalgamation of the former Countryside and Historic Environment Teams into the current Natural and Historic Environment Team and through the integration of the County Sites and Monuments Record and Environmental Record.

The NHET delivers services on archaeology, historic buildings, landscape and nature conservation, land reclamation and records management to SCC itself, Districts and Boroughs, Telford and Wrekin Unitary Authority, organisations such as the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA), Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT), and to community groups, researchers, utility companies and the general public.

The demand for an "in the round" provision of information, expertise and advice is growing, particularly in relation to landscape conservation work, and Landscape Character Assessment is seen as providing a unifying framework for information and analysis on the broad range of landscape issues.

Some work has been undertaken on an area by area basis - the Ironbridge Gorge, the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Vale of Montgomery - but with very different objectives and methodologies. In order to standardise, update and disseminate the LCA approach, the NHET is undertaking a County-wide exercise, based on the Countryside Commission / Agency (COAG) methodology and particularly on the advanced Midland Region approach.

To date, the work has been progressed by NHET staff working in partnership with COAG and specialist consultants. Funding has come from Europe, COAG and directly from the County Council.

Characterisation has focused on the physiographic aspects of the landscape, together with some initial work on land use post-1880. The key output has been to divide the County into Provisional Landscape Description Units (PLDUs), which are now being assessed in the field. This will lead to the production of written descriptions of all of Shropshire's various landscape types and will identify key characteristics requiring protection and enhancement through planning guidance, management projects and so on.

Spatial data is being stored in SCC's ArcView GIS, supported by a database recording principal features, their contribution to landscape character and the overall condition of the landscape. This information will become an integral part of the County Environmental Record and will be maintained, enhanced and disseminated in the usual way. It will also be used for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance, Guidance for Woodland Creation and similar material.

The above approach involves a robust and proven methodology for undertaking the fundamental assessment exercise, but also creates a framework for collating and disseminating more detailed information. We are contemplating extending the exercise in various ways, but development of a fuller historic perspective is our highest priority, for several reasons:

- we provide planning-related advice on archaeology (and other matters) to all Shropshire Districts, the new Telford and Wrekin Unitary Authority and others. There are opportunities to strengthen the protection of Shropshire's landscape and its archaeological components through the development of new policies and strategies, but these will require a better understanding of the subject than we have at present:
- similarly, new landscape management programmes and mechanisms are being developed, such as English Nature's Meres and Mosses Strategy and 'Back to Purple' projects, and further developments are likely through the Rural Development Plan, Lottery funding for AONBs, etc. Like the existing Clun and Shropshire Hills ESA Programmes, these are likely to require an holistic view of 'landscape', and the archaeological dimension needs to be properly understood if it is to be protected;
- our development programme for the County Environmental Record (currently focusing on the Sites and Monuments Record element) is running in parallel with the Landscape Characterisation programme, which will help to place individual archaeological sites, features and areas into their broader landscape context. Detailed historic characterisation will strengthen this contextualisation and help to integrate the various elements of the Environmental Record;
- The Record development programme will include the processing of data generated by several English Heritage funded surveys - the Marches Uplands Survey, the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, the Shrewsbury Urban Archaeological Project, the North-West Wetlands Survey and the Wroxeter Hinterland Survey. Much of this information is directly relevant to the Characterisation programme and a single exercise will be most efficient and productive.

There is an obvious danger that Provisional Landscape Description Units (PLDUs), being based largely on physiographic study, will not accurately or adequately reflect the "surface" variations and modifications produced by human management and development over many centuries. PLDUs inevitably operate at a relatively superficial and generalising level, which is too coarse to allow for any significant identification of smaller areas where particular interventions or processes have created distinctive cells or units.

Without further and more detailed study of the results of human activity, PLDU descriptive text will lack historical depth and colour, and possibly even defensibility, limiting their effectiveness as a tool for the formulation and implementation of policy and strategy. Equally importantly, the value of Landscape Assessment generally will be diminished unless it can be applied at a more local level, reflecting the mosaic of settlement and field patterns, heathland and hill commons, ornamental and military developments, etc., that create true local distinctiveness. It is at this level that many planning applications, land management decisions, enhancement projects, etc. need information and guidance. While it is reasonable to expect that this fine-grained mosaic will have a close relationship to the underlying "natural" or physiographic pattern, it is vital that the two levels of Assessment are cross-referenced and integrated. Thus the proposed phase of Historic Landscape Characterisation will add detail, colour and clarity to the current programme of work and will provide a more powerful tool for landscape management at the local level.

2. Outline of the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project.

2.1 Area of proposed characterisation

The area to be covered is 3488 sq km. This comprises the whole of the historic County of Shropshire, Le. including the newly-created Telford and Wrekin Unitary Authority (291 sq km) and therefore the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

2.2 Management arrangements

The project will be undertaken by the NHET, overseen by a Steering Group (SCC Project Manager, SCC Project Officer, Graham Fairclough [EH MPP] and Paul Stamper [EH WM Region]), in close liaison with Michael Watson of the County Council's Archaeology Service. A wider advisory working-party of local and regional experts and future users of the HLC will also be convened to support the project.

2.3 Aims and objectives

Summary of aims: to improve understanding of the historic and archaeological character of the whole landscape of Shropshire, with particular regard to the visibility of time-depth in the landscape and to the historic processes that have created the landscape. The project will contribute to methodological developments in the HLC technique and to future regional and national overviews, as the EH programme develops.

Objectives

- ◆ to analyse and describe the historic characteristics of the contemporary landscape through map-based research
- ◆ to interpret the historic processes producing these characteristics, through archaeological analysis and where possible associated documentary research
- ◆ to compile a GIS-centred database for land management and other purposes
- ◆ to contribute to the methodological and analytical development of HLC
- ◆ to produce a framework within which site-specific data can be contextualised and inter-related
- ◆ to identify areas where there is scope / need for more detailed characterisation
- ◆ to identify historic features, areas or patterns requiring / capable of conservation, reinforcement or re-creation
- ◆ to challenge, modify and add detail to existing PLDUs
- ◆ to add historical depth and colour to the resulting LDUs by expanding textual descriptions.

3. Presentation of Results

The results of the HLC phase will form part of SCC's overall Characterisation project, but will also be distinctly available in three different ways:

- a) as part of SCC's GIS
- b) through a project report in
- c) a project archive

a) GIS

The principal product of the HLC project will be a fully interactive GIS with associated database. It will sit within the SCC's corporate GIS, and be widely available online in read-only format to SCC staff, District / Unitary and other users, as indicated in 1.2, above. A master copy will be kept centrally in NHET, to be updated and revised as necessary, along with archive copies. Copyright will be jointly held by SCC and EH. The GIS will also be made available more widely (if necessary non-interactively) on the Web or on CD, for example in public libraries and school networks, as part of SCC's developing Internet use.

b) Project report

The report on the HLC project will be produced as a bound monograph compatible with reportage on the earlier Assessment phase. Its provisional content is:

- ◆ Background and introduction to the project
- ◆ Aims and objectives
- ◆ Methodology - development and sources
- ◆ Historic Landscape Character Types (HLCTs)
 - written descriptions with some map illustration
 - discussion of occurrence, significance, interaction
- ◆ Comparisons
 - brief discussion of correlation between HLCTs, singly or grouped, with LDUs, identifying areas requiring modification or further study
 - brief study of interrelationship between HLCTs and historic, civil and political administrative areas
 - brief discussion of the possible relationships between HLCTs and SMR data
- ◆ Applications
 - need / potential for further research
 - analysis of degree, pace and trends of landscape change
 - implications for future policy and strategy formulation, development control, project initiation, etc.
 - identification of management issues at strategic and local levels
 - dissemination for education / interpretation / awareness raising

- ◆ Illustrations
 - will consist of maps generated from the GIS to show the nature, distribution and interrelationships of HLCTs, together with limited APs and diagrammatic representation. Consideration will be given to the inclusion of map data on CD ROM
- ◆ Critique
 - of achievement of aims and objectives, methodology, etc.

c) Archive

The archive, to be held within the Environmental Record and structured according to English Heritage guidelines, will include:

- ◆ copies of correspondence
- ◆ textual, map-based and photographic material obtained during the project
- ◆ copies of the project report and any subsequent productions
- ◆ film copies of the definitive Landscape Character Type maps as overlays to the OS 1:25000 series.

4. Dissemination of results

The results of the exercise will be incorporated into the County Environmental Record as a fundamental and unifying platform providing context and cohesion for other elements. Consequently, it will be accessible at Shirehall, via the Environmental Records Officer.

Through the current arrangements with the County Library Service, the ER is already available at several libraries and information points, and we hope to extend this access to Museums, Interpretation Centres and other venues through an "outreach" project currently under discussion with the Heritage Lottery Fund and due to begin in October 2001.

In order to ensure that the results are used as extensively as possible for study, protection and enhancement of the Shropshire landscape, full copies will be made available to relevant colleagues in Districts and Boroughs, the Unitary Authority, the Forestry Authority, MAFF / AD AS / FRCA, the Council for the Protection of Rural England and other bodies active in landscape management.

5. Programme and costings

It is anticipated that the project will commence during the financial year 2001/2, preferably in August/September.

A full-time Project Officer, suitably qualified in landscape archaeology and with extensive experience of G.I.S-based data management, will be appointed on an 18-month contract.

Phase I: Start-up and pilot (Sept. - Dec. 2001)

This phase will include familiarisation of the Project Officer with Shropshire's landscape (if needed), review of current HLC methodologies, assessment of available data-sets, pilot study to produce the project's HLC classification, and preparation of a definitive programme for the project.

A provisional list of Character Types has been drawn up based on the Lancashire model (Appendix 1). This model is felt to provide an adequate range of Types, broadly relevant to Shropshire, but capable of revision, and more importantly subdivision, to create an agreed, enduring and routinely applicable framework. This will be tested on a pilot area or areas in Phase 1 of the project, and modified accordingly, with input from the Herefordshire Archaeology Service. Some modification might also be required to reflect differences in the particular range of documentation, survey results, assessment exercises, etc. available in Shropshire, and any differences in aims and objectives.

The interaction between the by-then-completed phase of characterisation following COAG methodology and the more detailed phase of historical characterisation will need particular thought. The first phase has used OS maps dating back to the 1870s editions, and these editions might be seen as the starting point for the second phase of work. Preliminary study has shown that Shropshire has a very substantial record of earlier maps and there are also several surveys that may deserve study (see above, 1.2).

Having established the degree of consistency and comprehensiveness of map and supporting data at a County-wide level, it will be possible to devise a sampling strategy, testing the provisional classification on a number of km squares providing a representative sample of the County's variety. This will refine definitions of character types and subdivisions, streamline methods of data capture and manipulation, encourage participation of specialists and users, and enable the production of a robust and viable final project design.

Phase 11: Landscape interpretation, mapping and digitisation (Jan - October 2002)

This, the core stage, will attempt to allocate all land in the County to one of a series of Character Types. A provisional list of Character Types has been drawn up (Appendix I) but will be thoroughly refined and expanded in the first phase of the project. Current 1:25000 OS maps will be used for an archaeological analysis of the contemporary landscape, focusing on "shape" - e.g. form (S-shaped field boundaries, relict woodland-edges), pattern (e.g. assarting, geometrical enclosure), and predominance (e.g. airfields, parks). A combination of 1870s and later OS maps and aerial photographs will be available, with scrutiny of enclosure awards, tithe maps and estate maps being used where necessary to define or clarify the historic processes which have produced the characteristics of the land in question.

The results of this exercise will be mapped initially at a 1:25,000 scale and transferred to (or may be input direct to) the County's GIS at 1:50,000 scale, not necessarily by the Project Officer him/herself.

This will allow the results to be compared with the Landscape Description Units delineated in the previous, more generalised assessment exercise and will lead to a reconciliation of boundaries, thus integrating the two exercises and providing coherent results suitable for strategic land use planning and for more localised application.

The main body of the project report will be produced at this stage (see 3.b, above, for format and contents), but will be added to in the next.

Phase III: review of results, identification of potential for extension, development of practical applications. (Nov - Dec 2002, Jan 2003)

It is anticipated that the results of the exercise will form part of a clearly-layered assessment of the Shropshire landscape within a broader context. This will need confirmation and explanation through the study of Countryside Agency and English Nature-defined Areas, examination of the interaction of LDUs and HL Ts, and of potential links with other data-sets in the Environmental Record.

Areas may well be identified in the County where specific pressures or opportunities create a case for further, more detailed assessment or interpretation. One such area might be the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, where the preparation of a management plan is already demonstrating the need for a very full characterisation of the site, in its wider context.

As indicated in the Project aims and objectives (2.3, above), use of the results for management and enhancement of the Shropshire landscape is the main reason for undertaking the exercise. Identifying, developing and explaining these uses will require inputs from the Natural and Historic Environment Team and beyond, and will need a 'sales drive' going well beyond the life of this particular project.

Phase IV: archive preparation and publication of final report (Feb 2003)

The form of the Project Archive is predicted in 3, above, but its relationship with that of the earlier Landscape Assessment exercise will need to be considered carefully, as well as its position within the Environment Record generally. Similarly, the format and content of the Project Report have been outlined, but some modification may be needed in the light of comments and suggestions gained from the feedback process.

Programme

The work programme lays out the sequence and direction of the proposed project. It is difficult to predict exactly how long the exercise will take, but comparisons in terms of size with broadly similar counties, particularly Herefordshire (2,173 sq. km), have suggested the need for an eighteen-month programme. Allowance has been made for annual leave, induction and familiarisation, etc.

Provisional Project Work Programme

(assuming Sept start date for Project Officer)

MONTH (1	Sept	STEERING GROUP. PO familiarisation. Assessment of data sets. Review of methodologies, with Herefordshire.
	(2 Oct	Identification of pilot area(s) and trialling of approaches, with Herefordshire.
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Ph I	(3 Nov	Trialling and interim report.
	(4 Dec	STEERING GROUP. Refine and agree definitive approach. Revise pilot results.
	(5 Jan	Full interpretation, mapping and digitisation phase.
	(Interim report
Ph II	(9 May	STEERING GROUP. Confirm approach, plan User Group, exit strategy.
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	14 Oct	Field checking and production of draft report.
	(16 Dec (STEERING GROUP. Review of results, correlation with other data, revision of LDV text.
	(17 Jan (
Ph III		USER GROUP. Prepare exit strategy. Integrate results into Environmental Record. Archive preparation.
PhIV	(18 Feb (Publication of final report. Dissemination. Implementation of exit strategy.

Costings

PROJECT OFFICER	<u>COST £</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
Appointment costs (national advertising and interview expenses}	2000	EH
Salary, NI, superannuation :Scale 5 for 18 months	29000	EH
Training (one course @ £300 including travel and subsistence)	300	EH
Travel for meetings, fieldwork, data capture, etc, (estimated at 400m @ 36p p.m. - say	150	EH
Miscellaneous - say	50	EH
TOTAL	31500	EH
EQUIPMENT FACILITIES AND SUPPORT		
PC and Access, ArcView licences	1300	SCC
Purchase of map and AP cover	5000	SCC
Digitisation (estimated at 10 days @ 100 p.d.)	1000	SCC
Accommodation (estimate)	500	SCC
Telephone, postage, stationery, etc (estimate)	500	SCC
Project administration - personnel, finance, etc, (notional - normally 15%)	1000	SCC
NHET support (notional - data, advice, supervision, etc)	1000	SCC
Consultancy (eg Herefordshire Archaeology)	1000	SCC
Miscellaneous - say	700	SCC
	12000	SCC

Appendix 1

DRAFT HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

Considerable research, analysis and discussion will be needed to produce a definitive typology of historic character types, but it is anticipated that this will be developed from the Lancashire model in the first phase of the project. The Herefordshire approach will be used in the development of more closely defined categories or subdivisions, particularly of the "Enclosed Farmland" Character Type.

We will be seeking to identify events and processes which have stamped dominant and enduring characteristics on the landscape. Dominant themes rather than exhaustive subdivisions will reflect the essential continuity of the Shropshire landscape, and will not preclude further detailed assessment when triggered by village design statements, environmental impact assessments or other requirements.

We will undertake a pilot study [Phase 1] in order to test the provisional categorisation and refine approaches. Particular attention will need to be given to pre-Norman periods, as preliminary discussions within Shropshire County Council have concluded that there are very few landscapes, as distinct from individual sites, surviving from these earlier periods.

For the purposes of this outline project design, the following broad categories have been identified, but it is anticipated that further categories may be added and existing ones altered. The broad categories will provide a frame for sub-divided types, whether fixed or capable of being created by analysis of the GIS database. Sub-divisions will need to be created in terms of period, identifiable processes or interventions, etc.

Rough or Unenclosed Ground

This type includes the South Shropshire hills - Wrekin, Clee, Long Mynd, Stiperstones, etc, but also the larger northern "Meres and Mosses" - Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield.

Areas such as Black Knoll and Stapeley Hill contain extensive prehistoric and later complexes of earthworks, which are probably the only examples surviving in the County.

The northern "Mosses" may contain historic features or buried land surfaces, under their current peat or wetland blankets, which demonstrate post-medieval peat extraction.

Parts of the Stiperstones and Clee Hills are largely industrial in character, with mines and quarries, waste tips, processing plants, squatter settlements, etc.

Fragments of heath and common exist throughout Shropshire, but some may be too small to be mapped in the proposed exercise and might best be viewed as associated with adjacent or surrounding enclosure activities.

Woodland

Shropshire's current woodland cover is much below the national average, while Forestry Commission-led coniferisation has affected character, quality and Historic interest dramatically.

Ancient semi-natural woodland (Le. pre-1600 in origin) has recently been mapped by the Forestry Authority. Where identified, internal earthwork subdivisions and other features such as ridge and furrow may indicate processes of formation, but most deciduous woodland is on steep, poorly drained or otherwise unattractive land. The "shape" of woodland / field boundaries may indicate processes of woodland clearance, particularly in conjunction with documentary evidence.

Enclosed Farmland

The historic characterisation of enclosed land (of field pattern and size, likely date and origins, previous land-use) is the most challenging aspect of HLC projects. Apart from characterising on broad date (as e.g. in Cornwall), two broad models exist: characterising using a pre-defined set of morphological, historical and land-use criteria (e.g. Lancashire, Somerset, Eastern England, and using patterning and stratigraphic approaches without predefined types (e.g. Herefordshire). Phase 1 of the project will need to decide on the appropriate method for Shropshire.

It can be argued that in agricultural terms Shropshire can be divided into the northern plain, with a predominance of large, uniform, intensively arable fields, and the western and southern hills, which, because of the preponderance of livestock and the more varied terrain, is more fine-grained.

Such generalisations have many weaknesses. Settlements in northern Shropshire often retain some paddocks, closes, meadows, etc., while late enclosures in the Clun Forest area, for example, produced large, uniform fields, with drainage and cultivation destroying earlier characteristics.

In some areas, agricultural recessions in the 1870s and 1930s led to the abandonment of field boundaries in favour of more extensive livestock husbandry. In all areas, intensification from the 1940s onwards led to the neglect, abandonment or removal of earlier boundaries in favour of denser stocking patterns and larger machinery. As a result, the contemporary character and presentation identified in the earlier Assessment work bears limited resemblance to the high point of landscape quality and detail at - say - 1900, but the proposed study will identify and catalogue the process of attrition and to a lesser extent (because of inadequacies in "mapping" coverage) the earlier process of enclosure. This provisional category is the most widely applicable and has the most potential for subdivision (vineyards, orchards, horticulture, allotments, etc).

Industry

Although Shropshire is usually seen as a rural area dominated by agriculture, extraction and processing have been important, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and perhaps most notably in the Ironbridge / Coalbrookdale area.

The "Industrial Survey" undertaken by the Natural and Historic Environment Team in the late 1990s identified a large number of "industrial" sites, but many are individual mills, kilns, etc., which do not impose themselves upon the landscape.

However, there are substantial areas where the marks of past activity are dominant, including coal- and lead-mining, quarrying for hard rock or sand and gravel, and even peat-cutting.

Some areas have been disguised by landfill and reclamation operations, while the New Town of Telford exists largely because of the availability of reclaimable land, which is now often covered with mid-to-late twentieth century development.

Sewage works, scrap yards, industrial estates, highways depots, etc. will often be components of suburban development, but, when in open country, may be sufficiently distinct and dominant, to justify a specific category. The redevelopment of World War II military bases as areas of industrial activity will pose interesting questions here.

Military

As a border county, Shropshire has an impressive accretion of military sites and features, ranging in date from hill forts to Cold War tracking stations. Some, such as Offa's Dyke or Bury Ditches, are large, prominent and impressive, but it is difficult to argue that they form landscapes in themselves.

Twentieth century installations are much more clearly definable in area and distinctiveness and have dramatically altered pre-existing character. The Ditton Priors ordnance depot, the Nesscliffe and Park Hall barracks and the Cosford and Ternhill airfields all stamped a new and very distinctive character on previously agricultural land.

In Shropshire at least, any attempted distinction between active and inactive military sites would seem artificial, as few sites have been abandoned - most have found new uses compatible with the military design and layout.

"Designed", "Ornamental" or "Cultural" Landscapes

The English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and the Natural and Historic Environment Team's Parks and Gardens Survey 1992-94 identify some four hundred examples in the County, of varying extent, quality and survival.

If it can be accepted that such modifications of existing landscapes were made primarily for leisure and recreation purposes, then it might be appropriate to include urban parks (eg The Quarry, Shrewsbury, and included in the Register as a Gr. " entry) and even golf courses, in this category. The internationally renowned Hawkstone Park courses have been introduced into a Registered C18 parkland, where the equally famous Follies are still available for public enjoyment.

Lilleshall Hall, a Gr. I1 Register entry, now houses the National Sports Centre and its array of pitches, courses, courts, etc. Such a large complex may deserve discrete identification, but most sports and recreation areas will be too small for such treatment or will be part of urban areas outside the scope of the proposed exercise.

Similarly, most graveyards and cemeteries will be elements of a wider urban landscape, but some - such as Bridgnorth and Shifnal - may be large, segregated and distinct enough to deserve categorisation in their own right.

The case of Alberbury Deerpark - part of a wider Register entry - is interesting, since, while recognisably an eighteenth century (?) enclosure of an earlier park, it contains a very strong imprint of World War 11 military use.

Towns and Villages

The largest towns in the proposed area of study are Shrewsbury and Telford, but there are several other significant market towns and a large number of sizeable villages. Smaller villages and hamlets tend to be less densely developed and with fewer modern estates, as a result of planning policies, lack of employment in rural areas, etc., etc.

It is proposed to exclude the major towns and villages from the study, for various reasons. The resources likely to be available are probably inadequate to study urban areas in meaningful detail. The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey and the Shrewsbury Urban Archaeological Project ("extensive" and "intensive" studies, respectively) have delineated the extent of urban development in the settlements studied. Increasing numbers of Conservation Areas Assessments are being produced by the District and Borough Councils and the Telford and Wrekin Unitary Authority, and are describing historic character in some detail, if with differing perspectives, methodologies and language. The growing emphasis on the regeneration of market towns through enhancement, reestablishment of local character and distinctiveness, etc., will require detailed studies of each townscape in the near future.

There are cases where inclusion in the Central Marches Survey' does not justify exclusion from the current proposal. In the case of settlements like Caus and Redhill, the "urban intention" was never realised and their current status and character resembles that of many hamlets. Generally, however, the boundaries defined by the Survey will be used to create, in effect, an Urban category.

Discussion

As suggested above, some "landscapes" can be entered into more than one category. Some installations, such as motorways, are linear features rather than landscapes, although creating dominant "corridors". A lot of thought and discussion will be required to develop this provisional list of Historic Landscape Character Types into a working list and finally into the definitive characterisation. Two enduring principles will guide this work.

Landscapes are not static, but subject to processes of varying speed and intensity. Over-elaborate categorisation will often be arbitrary and occasionally spurious and will emphasise division rather than reflect essential continuity. Some literature on the subject appears to dwell on distinctions, such as "active" and "inactive" sites, which can only be meaningful if sensory impressions such as aircraft noise or the smell of lime-burning can be taken into account. The Shropshire approach is designed to create a framework for practical use rather than a museum type classification.

Fitness for purpose is the other guiding principle. The entire Landscape Characterisation exercise, including the proposed LCA phase, is seen as a way of creating a framework for better management of the Shropshire landscape. It will need to be accepted and understood by a range of professional specialisms and will need to function as part of the general Environmental Record. Information on the creation of particular field-patterns will inform responses to Hedgerow Notification consultations. A better understanding of the process of attrition will help to design proposals for strengthening landscape character through agri-environment schemes. The addition of LCA layers to the Environmental Record's GIS will provide context ("stitch together") disparate information on archaeological sites, historic buildings, settlement history, etc., as well as on common land, individual habitats, transport routes, etc. None of the uses envisaged require an elaborate approach, which could easily be developed in the future in response to specific questions about specific areas. Rather, a bold, vigorous and pragmatic approach is required, one which can be completed within the time and resources available and which can be communicated to and understood by a largely non-archaeological audience.