


1	 2000	WOODLAND SURVEY SHEET. GENERAL SITE DESCRIPTION		County / Local Authority <i>West Midlands</i>
		WGS REF. No. <i>NWP/015/207</i>	Site Name <i>Alcott Wood</i>	District/Parish <i>Solihull</i>
Owner/tenant/agent <i>Solihull MBC</i>	Contact <i>David Lowe</i> <i>Solihull MBC, Ecologist</i> <i>Landscapes Section</i> <i>PO BOX 19, Council House,</i> <i>Solihull, West Midlands, B91, 3QT</i>	Nature Conservation Status / Designation <i>EcoSite. SINC</i>	Total area (of included woodland) <i>6.25 ha</i>	
		Other Designations / Protections <i>Midlands Plateau Natural Area (43)</i>	Grid ref (access) <i>SP 173862</i>	
		Ancient / Recent Semi-Natural / Plantation <i>ASNW</i>	Surveyor <i>Helen S Miller</i> <i>Middlemarch Environmental Ltd</i>	
		Biodiversity Action Plan <i>Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull BAP</i> <i>See Appendix A</i>	Date of survey <i>8 July 2004</i>	

Woodland vegetation types (**mark on map**).
SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND TYPE (HAPS):
Lowland mixed broadleaved (Forest Practice Guide 3)

NVC COMMUNITIES:
W10 with a suggestion of a transition towards W16 in the south

PLANTATIONS:
Not available

Adjacent land (**mark on map**)
The woodland is surrounded by amenity grassland and urbanisation

Threats
Over use from recreation.
The invasion of exotic species from neighbouring gardens.
Vandalism, including fires
Complaints about snow damage and fallen trees.

Aspect <i>N/A</i>	Slope <i>More or less flat</i>	Altitude <i>83-90 m</i>
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Soil – from Soilscape on www.magic.gov.uk

Location	Ref/class	Name	Main surface texture class	Natural drainage type	Natural fertility
East	18	Slowly permeable seasonally wet acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils	Loamy	Impeded drainage	Moderate
West	20	Loamy and clayey floodplain soils with high natural groundwater	Loamy	Naturally wet	Moderate

Geology
Keuper marl and alluvium

Climatic Factors
From Met Office web-site for Stratford-Upon-Avon weather station, approximately 15 miles south of the Solihull Woodlands:

- Average annual rainfall 622.3 mm with 115.7 days experiencing less than 1 mm.
- Average annual days experiencing air frost and ground frost: 62.2 and 95-110 respectively
- Minimal risk from wind exposure.



Site name Alcott Wood

 Surveyor
 Helen S Miller
 Middlemarch Environmental Ltd

 Date of survey
 8 July 2004

HABITATS, FEATURES & COMMUNITIES (MARK ON MAP)

Habitats

The NVC community is W10 with a suggestion of a transition towards W16 in the south. The wood has a varied structure and moderate habitat and species diversity. These are detailed below (Target notes) and marked on the map.

The field layer is relatively species-poor, with vigorous bramble dominating and locally frequent bracken and abundant bluebell. There was minimal diversity of woodland vascular species. The most frequent included Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, with other species being rare or occasional e.g. various grasses, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, herb-robert *Geranium robertianum* and nettle *Urtica dioica*. Ivy *Hedera helix* is locally abundant.

Wetland features

There are two dry ponds/hollows in the north and centre of the wood. The former includes willow. (see Target notes 2 and 4.)

Veteran trees and deadwood

Deadwood habitats are rare throughout the wood. There are some oaks that have the potential to become future veteran trees.

Notable species

Bluebells occur throughout the wood – UK BAP species.

The wood is likely to support a good bird population, although weather conditions were poor at the time of survey.

There are a few young Norway maple trees within the wood.

Other features

There is a slight bank and ditch (more ditch than bank) along the north-western edge.

Adjacent landuse

The adjacent land is urbanisation and amenity grassland with small woodland blocks.

Target notes for map

1. Potential for oak standards with hazel coppice.
2. Dry pond/hollow with fallen willow.
3. Increase in birch and fine grasses and decrease in vigor of bramble.
4. Dry pond/hollow.
5. Clearings with bracken dominating the ground flora.
6. Occasional aspen and regeneration.
7. Clearing with hard standing ground cover.

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2000****WOODLAND SURVEY SHEET
OTHER VALUES OF THE WOOD**

REF No. NWP/015/207

SITE NAME: ALCOTT WOOD

COMPILED BY: HELEN S MILLER MIDDLEMARCH
ENVIRONMENTAL LTD
DATE: JULY 2004**ARCHAEOLOGY & CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Alcott Wood is identified on English Nature's Ancient Woodland Inventory as ASNW.

There are no scheduled or nationally designated historic features within the woodland.

There is the suggestion of a bank and ditch along the western edge. However it is more of a ditch than old woodland bank.

LANDSCAPE

Alcott Wood lies in the Countryside Commission/English Nature's Character Area "Arden (97)". This Character Area has a "wide variation of landscape character" and includes the "undulating wooded landscape and small hedges of the main plateau". This Character Area has a long history of wood-pasture with "deer parks and estate woodlands once widespread". Some remnant features, such as veteran trees, provide reminders of the past. "Broad-leaved woodland and hedgerow trees lend a well wooded character to the area". The "woodlands themselves vary in type from twentieth century plantations to species rich ancient woodland.....oak and ash woods with bracken, bramble or dog's mercury are particularly distinctive". The mosaic of urban areas and woodland are characteristics of the Character Area.

Although the Character Area suggests the landscape has reasonable woodland, the Natural Area (Midlands Plateau, 43) is characterised by lowland heathland with woodland, grassland, freshwater and farmland with woodlands being under represented at just 4%. 40% of the land area of Natural Area 43 is urban. Woodlands are therefore an important feature of the landscape. Many of the woodlands within the Natural Area are less than 5 ha and are typically uncoppiced, even-aged stands regenerated from clear fells. However, about half are semi-natural in character. The woods cover a range of NVC communities, although they tend to be more acidic.

The land surrounding Alcott Wood is relatively flat and is dominated by urbanisation with very few woodland areas. A river and stream flow along the western and southern edges respectively. The wood is small at 6.25 ha. The wood, its locality and situation are therefore fairly typical for the urban areas of the Character Area in which it occurs.

RECREATION / PUBLIC ACCESS

Alcott Wood is primarily used for informal recreation and walking. There are two main access points (with interpretation boards); one in the north-east and one in the north-west. At these two points there are also car parks adjacent to the wood. There are footpaths around the west, north and east of the wood. Within the wood itself there are several formal and informal footpaths. The footpath between the two car parks and continues around the east edge of the wood is tar-maced/multi-access and lit.

WOOD PRODUCTION, GAME / LIVESTOCK & OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There does not appear to be any formal wood production taking place within the wood at present. The interpretation board indicates that the following are some of the management aims for the wood:

- allowing wildflowers to flower and seed prior to cutting the glades,
- pollarding of willows,
- encouraging natural regeneration,
- re-instating coppice and managing the spread of bracken.

Alcott Wood is a proposed Local Nature Reserve.

Alcott Wood was covered by Woodland Grant Scheme 7338 which ended 20/08/02.

4**FC
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PHOTO No. 1 (mark location and direction on map)
Area of W16/W10 transition community. 17⁰

DATE:
8 July 2004

NVC TYPE:
W16 transition



PHOTO No. 2 (mark location and direction on map)
Typical view of wood. 34⁰

DATE:
8 JULY 2004

NVC TYPE:
W10



6	FC 2000	WOODLAND SURVEY SHEET ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS		REF No. NWP/015/207
SITE NAME: ALCOTT WOOD		SURVEYOR: HELEN S MILLER MIDDLEMARCH ENVIRONMENTAL LTD		DATE OF SURVEY: 8 JULY 2004
<p>ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION of the main features of interest (include an assessment of naturalness, representativeness, size, rarity, fragility, position in an ecological unit, diversity, recorded history, potential value, intrinsic appeal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conservation significance of Alcott Wood lies in the ASNW status and the potential to improve its condition through future management. The wood has a high degree of native species and naturalising character. • Alcott Wood is an Ecosite, a SINC and proposed Local nature Reserve. • The woodland forms a valuable woodland island within an area dominated by urbanisation; providing aesthetic as well as ecological value. However it has poor connectivity to other woodlands and habitats. • The floral diversity is relatively poor with a few species dominating. The main NVC community is W10, although the ground flora suggests a transition towards W16 in south of the wood. Therefore one HAP type is represented. The greatest species richness and diversity occurred around the area of the transitional community. There is some diversity in habitat with the presence of at least some deadwood habitats, two damp/pond areas with potential for enhancement and some clearings. The latter were often dominated by bracken or had sparse ground flora. The wood is likely to have a good woodland bird population and be suitable for invertebrates, notably butterflies in the more open areas. • There is the potential for woodland improvement through re-introducing and establishing a hazel coppice with oak standards and favouring/encouraging the native species that are regenerating. There is also potential for improving the diversity through encouraging a native ground flora to establish. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to increase the quality and quantity of the deadwood habitats within the wood. Some of the older oaks which occur sporadically throughout the wood have the potential for future veteran trees. There is potential for wetland/pond re-creation/enhancement in the north and centre of the wood (Target notes 2 and 4). There is potential to increase the habitat diversity through management of the woodlands, re-introduction/continuation of re-established coppice management and management/creation of rides. The latter options would be of particular value for woodland butterflies and dormice. Selective and sensitive thinning would encourage more age diversity within the canopy species. Deer, rabbits and squirrels do not appear to be a major problem at the present. • Bluebells are locally abundant and are likely to be a major aesthetic asset to many of the woodlands in the spring. 				
<p style="text-align: center;">ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS (based on conservation objectives and above evaluation)</p> <p>The management of this wood should be viewed in conjunction with the other woodlands managed by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC). For example some woodlands may lend themselves better to coppice; while in others may be more suited to minimal intervention. A range of habitats should be created across the district. Wildlife and public access are the key focus points for the management of woodlands within the SMBC District.</p> <p>The following management considerations should be considered to improve the future nature conservation values of the woodland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any current and future native shrubs, including hazel, holly, elder and hawthorn should be protected and/or encouraged and avoided during any forestry operations. • Opening up and allowing the oaks to mature with some being retained as future veteran trees. Bracken/bramble control may be necessary to aid increasing the ground flora diversity. • Re-creation/creation of rides with an irregular scalloped edge would allow greater light penetration and vary the habitat diversity and structure. This variation in habitat diversity and structure may encourage greater flora diversity and therefore be beneficial for birds and invertebrates. • Continuation/re-establishment of coppice management. • Encourage wet woodland species, such as alder and willow, in the damper areas, such as at Target notes 2 and 4. <p>The following guidelines should be followed to ensure continued/improved conservation and aesthetic appeal of the woodlands and landscape and that impacts are minimised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish/re-establish management coups/compartments. This will aid in the maintenance of a species and structurally diverse woodland. • Protect any native shrubs during forestry operations. • Forestry operations, particularly felling, should not be carried out during the bird breeding season (1 March until 31 August). • Care should be taken not to damage any of the old banks. • Bramble may become overwhelmingly dominant where significant light is allowed to reach the woodland floor, therefore it may be appropriate to develop an understorey prior to opening up the canopy. • Management should favour native species in the canopy and understorey. • Existing deadwood, both fallen and standing should be retained and protected. Some native trees should be retained to provide for future veteran trees and deadwood habitats. Some felled material should be left on site to create deadwood piles of value to invertebrates. • Natural regeneration is the preferred option if restocking is required although planting may be necessary. If the later is the case it should be after attempts to encourage natural regeneration, and local provenance is preferred. • Standard forestry practices for nature conservation/enhancement should be followed. 				

SITE NAME: ALCOTT WOOD	COMPILED BY: HELEN MILLER
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OWNERS OBJECTIVES

For full details of the owners objectives please refer to ‘Woodland Strategy for Solihull’. The key objectives are summarised below.

1. ‘Protect, manage and enhance Solihull MBC woodlands with, and for the benefit of Solihull residents, recreation, nature conservation and visual amenity.’
 - a) Public safety – ensure it is not neglected
 - b) Recreation and public access – maintain or improve where appropriate
 - c) Wildlife conservation – maintain and wherever suitable restore natural ecological diversity
 - d) Landscape enhancement – maintain and where appropriate improve aesthetic value
 - e) Sustainable management of woodlands – taking opportunities to produce utilisable products such as woodchips for fuel, charcoal, fence materials and interpretation signs.

MISSION STATEMENT / LONG TERM VISION

The aim is to develop woodlands, which balances visual amenity, recreation and nature conservation while maintaining the landscape character of the Borough.

The ecological assessment clearly identified that the Solihull woodlands have high current and future ecological value. Several of the woodlands also have archaeological features. The assessments and desk study also indicated the value that these woodlands have for the local residents of Solihull.

LONG TERM MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS / OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Further details and generic long term management proposals and operational objectives can be found in the ‘Woodland Strategy for Solihull’. A summary of the key points is provided below.

Public safety

Maintain public safety at all times in relation to trees
Monitor tree health. Undertake tree surgery only where necessary.

Maintain access for a range of users
Monitor access for all uses. Maintain multi-access paths in good conditions. Create new multi-access paths where appropriate.

Maintain safety in relation to dangerous plants
Control/remove plants known to be dangerous i.e. giant hogweed.

Maintain safety in relation to non-woodland product e.g. fly tipping
Monitor the woodlands for fly-tipping incidences. Clear up reported fly-tipping as soon as possible.

Recreation

Provide access
Create new multi access paths where appropriate. Create and maintain path networks through the wood.

Wildlife

Maintain a structurally diverse woodland.
Implement appropriate management e.g. selective felling, coppicing, group felling etc

Enhance structural diversity within the woodland
Selectively thinning areas of dense growth or introduce coppice management

Maintain ecological and historical character of ancient woodland
Implement sensitive and appropriate management

Protect trees and woodlands from development
Use additional statutory protection where appropriate e.g. TPOs, SINCS, LNRs, SSSIs etc

Enhance wetland features
Clear out rubbish/pollution. Introduce some native marginal plants

Enhance/create wetland habitat
Favour appropriate species. Plant if necessary in wet/damp areas

Increase habitat diversity - wetlands
Create pond and associated habitat

Enhance habitat for roosting bats
Erect a variety of bat boxes. Retain standing deadwood. Identify future veteran trees

Increase habitat diversity - veteran trees
Identify future veteran trees

Increase habitat diversity - deadwood
Create deadwood habitat through ring barking selected trees and leaving some cut trees on site.

Protect the woodlands and wildlife from unnecessary disturbance
Educate the public through interpretation boards etc. Create and maintain footpath networks within the wood and encourage people to stay on them.

Increase habitat diversity - glades
Create rides/glades. Manage those already present.

Landscape

Protect trees and woodlands from development
Use additional statutory protection where appropriate e.g. TPOs, Conservations Areas

Maintain current landscape value
Avoid large areas of clearfell.

Products

Identify products and local outlets
Introduce a range of management systems to provide a range of woodland products suitable for local use. E.g. a range of coppice rotation lengths across the Borough

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LONG TERM PROPOSALS (Silvicultural systems, broad management strategies)

A) Management system: Mixed High forest and Coppice.**1. Thin stands to open up woodland canopy**

- a. Excessive thinning will encourage fast-colonising, non-woodland plants.
- b. In very dense, neglected stands, thinning must be very gradual or wind-throw may result.
- c. Normally a maximum 15-25% of trees are renewed in a thinning when trees are young to semi-mature. This declines to 10-15% later in the rotation.
- d. Target final densities of stands when fully mature are:
 - i. Oak 60-90 stems/Ha.
 - ii. Ash 120-150 stems/Ha.
 (Forestry Commission Bulletin 62 (1984))

2. Enrichment planting

This is to be used to encourage wet woodland species in wetter areas as specified on Sheet 6.

- a. This measure is to be used as site is too small for group regenerative fellings. Also, there are insufficient parent trees of the correct species in these areas.
 - If selectively felling to make space for new planting: select i) non-native trees, preferably of bad form ii) poorly formed, diseased or sub-dominant native trees.
 - Fence and/or sign the planting area, to deter public from disturbing the planting area.
 - Where planting into grass or ex-arable land, advance herbicide spraying (and possibly mulch mats) are essential before planting.
 - Planting stock must be of local (midlands) provenance.
 - As a minimum, newly planted whips (up to 75cm) will need rabbit guards and caning. Tree shelters are better as they protect against muntjac and other deer and can be sprayed round for weed control, but are vulnerable to vandalism.
 - Larger standards will also need staking for first 2 years or so.
 - Weed control after planting: Spot or band spraying every year (in spring and optional late summer) for 3 years after planting, if trees are in shelters. If not in shelters, manual or mechanical weeding is the only option.

3. Establish, or re-establish coppice management

- a. Check whether the Wood was previously or is currently coppiced (a strong factor in favour of coppicing).
- b. Check sufficient labour resources will be available to continue coppicing long-term.
- c. Are existing coppice stools still viable? (e.g. for hazel, coppiced under 40 years ago) If not, a new coppice area must be established by planting. Over-mature coppice stools must be removed or grown-on as 'stored coppice' (standards).
- d. Choose management method i.e. pure coppice or coppice with standards; rotation length; size of coupes etc.

4. Coppicing

Establish 'mini' hazel coppice under oak standards. Suggested total area 0.5ha.

- a. Hazel Coppice (10 year rotation): Divide coppiced area into two 0.25 ha coupes and coppice in Years 0 and 5. Then recommence rotation sequence with the coupe last cut in year 0 of the rotation.
- b. If planting new hazel stools, plant at 1.5-2.5m. spacings.
- c. Coppice with standards: Density of standards between 30 and 50 per ha., preferably at the lower end for coppice to grow effectively.

5. Maintain a dead-wood resource

- a. Check availability of dead wood in woodland, both standing and lying
- b. If shortage of dead wood:
 - i. Select suitable areas away from main paths
 - ii. Use trees felled for thinning or group fellings for lying dead-wood.
 - iii. If no standing dead wood, select diseased or poorly formed trees for ring-barking. Treat birch in preference to oak or ash. Min. dia. 20cm.
 - iv. Do not ring-bark well-formed or healthy mature trees.
 - v. Ring-bark approx. 3-5 trees per hectare

6. Introduce Rides or Glades (secondary habitats)

- b. Rides: At least 10m width is desirable; introduce bends to avoid 'wind tunnelling' effect.
 - i. Check feasibility of rides in small woods: scallops (semi-natural circular glades) alongside existing

- narrow tracks may be more practical. Scallops should be min. 5m deep.
- ii. Ride management is important: more diverse habitats are maintained if different sections of the ride are cut down or strimmed in rotation on a 2-3 year cycle (in autumn). Ride centres to be mown annually to provide areas of short grass.
- c. Glades: density of glades: one glade, dimensioned as below, per 3-4 ha of woodland.
 - i. Size of glades: One and a half canopy tree lengths across, for full daylight effect, and preferably rounded in shape.
 - ii. Existing glades: expand existing glades to the dimensions shown above.
 - iii. Location: Glades should be a 'stop-off' on clear ride(s) or path (s) as they will be used by the public. Glades adjoining ponds are beneficial to both habitats. Glades can also be formed by removing corners from ride junctions.
 - iv. Options: Consider planting native shrubs around edge of glade. Leave some felled trunks and short wood to minimise destruction of stands by some young adults.
 - v. Maintenance: As for rides, above.

7. Protect and select existing regeneration

- b. Protect area from public by fencing or signage (in busy areas only).
- c. Select best saplings at 3-4 years old, apply shelters and cut back or spray/weed-wipe competitors.
- d. If weed or grass competition is a problem, spray each year for 3 years in spring and, if required, late summer.
- e. If regenerated trees are going to suffer from shading, gradually open the canopy by felling some of the immediately surrounding parent trees as the young trees develop. This needs careful monitoring each year and a measured approach.

FIVE YEAR PLAN OF OPERATIONS (S.M.A.R.T.)

Years 1-5

- A. Thinning**
 - i. Thin all areas shown on Plan i.a.w. protocol above.
- B. Thinning in coppice areas**
 - i. Thin all standards i.a.w. above protocol, favouring Oak, & Ash for retention.
- C. Coppicing**
 - Commence coppicing, in area shown on 'Compartments' Plan, i.a.w. above protocol.
- F. Selection and protection of natural regeneration**
 - i. Carry out in all test areas and other areas where regeneration of desired species has occurred; in accordance with protocol above.
- G. Enrichment planting in wetter areas**
 - i. Carry out where shown on Plan i.a.w. above protocol.. Planting at spacing of 1.8-2.0m.
- I. Control invasive species**
 - i. Control invasive species i.a.w. 'Weed Control' protocol above.
- J. Extraction of timber**
 - i. Extract all timber arising from thinning and group fellings, using either forwarder or, in wet/sensitive areas, horse or forwarder with low impact tyres. Or retain as dead-wood resource.
- K. Dead wood resource**
 - i. Leave sufficient felled trees as dead wood resource. Standing dead trees to be left, if necessary using ring barking i.a.w. protocol above.
- L. Introduce new rides and/or glades**
 - i. Carry out felling as required to create new rides or glades, as identified on Plan, i.a.w. protocol above.

Years 6-10

- R. Coppicing**
 - i. Continue coppicing in rotation, one coupe per 5 years.
- T. Natural regeneration – protection and selection**
 - i. Carry out i.a.w. protocol above. This includes natural regeneration which is not in the areas of group fellings.
- V. Control invasive species**
 - i. Control invasive species i.a.w. 'Weed Control' protocol above, in areas shown on Ecological Assessment Plan.

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2000**

WOODLAND LONG TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN

REF No. NWP015/207

MONITORING & REFERENCES

SITE NAME: ALCOTT WOOD

COMPILED BY: ALAN GUY. MIDDLEMARCH
ENVIRONMENTAL LTD**MONITORING**

Survey Wood once per year for the following:

- successful regeneration anywhere on site, particularly in trial areas.
- general health of canopy and understorey
- dangerous trees near well-used paths
- damage to trees or ground layer: deliberate or accidental
- damage to paths or forest floor from pedestrians, cyclists etc
- disease
- squirrel or deer damage in trees
- rabbit or deer damage to regeneration areas, coppice areas or newly planted trees/shrubs
- invasive species
- dumping of inert matter or other waste NB do not try to inspect suspicious substances, bags or containers: contact Environmental Health

REFERENCES

Woodland Strategy for Solihull. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Environment Services July 2000