

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



TRULEIGH HILL LOCAL LANDSCAPE PLAN

Landscape
Design and Land
Management
Advice

For businesses, farms, land owners, local residents, local authorities, planning authorities, parish councils, community groups, developers, architects and planners, Highway engineers, public utilities, countryside managers, etc

Landscape Design and Land Management guidance for Truleigh Hill

How to use this guide

This simple guide is to provide practical landscape design and land management advice to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the character of the Truleigh Hill area. Simple descriptions are given of the characteristic features of the landscape and ways in which to apply these features to new changes and development. This is not intended to inhibit innovative design or sustainable solutions based on specific site investigations.

The guide could be used by;

- Residents and community groups
- Local businesses farmers and landowners
- Developers, architects, planners and designers
- Local planning authorities
- Highway engineers
- Elected members and officer of local and parish councils
- Public utilities
- Telecommunication and public service providers
- Countryside management organisations

Truleigh Hill Character

Truleigh Hill at 216m is one of the high points on the South Downs chalk ridge. It has an extensive rights of way network including the South Downs Way and is in close proximity to large urban areas of population. The high downland where Truleigh hill sits is generally an undeveloped landscape of agricultural fields, tracks and isolated barns within a rolling and extensive wide open landscape. Lowland Chalk grassland, scrub and deciduous woodland are the main priority habitat types in this landscape with occasional dew ponds providing important wetland habitat in this dry chalk landscape. The agricultural land can also be important habitat for farmland birds and invertebrates.

Further information on the open downland landscape character type and the Landscape character area in which Truleigh hill is located is available on the SDNPA website ([link to the South Downs Character Assessment](#)) and in the [Truleigh Hill Local Landscape Plan](#). For more information about Design in the SDNP please refer to this document: [Adopted Design Guide SPD - South Downs National Park Authority](#)

Landscape guidance for Truleigh Hill

Features of the landscape



Figure 1 Photo of Truleigh Hill showing the scattered hedge along an historic routeway and the typical post and wire fencing within agricultural land

Hedges

The open downland has few hedgerows and the large scale field patterns are generally bounded with post and wire fencing. This gives the landscape it's wide unenclosed character. The hedgerows that do exist often occur along historic routes and tracks. Some have also occurred along fence lines where birds perch and the ensuing self-seeded shrubs and trees have not been removed. Typically these hedgerows appear more like lines of scattered windblown shrubs and scrub. Typical native hedge species are Hawthorn, Field Maple, Elder, , blackthorn, Viburnum with occasional trees of Wild Cherry, Crab apple, Ash, Beech, Oak

Recommendations New native hedgerow plantings should copy the scattered hedge character of the downland. Dense continuous hedge lines are not characteristic here. Plant hedge plants in random clumps along a line and don't replace the plants that fail. Follow the lines of existing features like tracks, boundaries and contours for example. Avoid straight lines and follow the sinuous and rolling form of the landscape. Where possible connect plantings to other hedges, wooded, scrub or wildflower areas.



Figure 2 The scarp slope at Truleigh Hill showing the opportunities for connecting chalk downland habitats into the adjacent areas

The Scarp slope

The steep scarp slope which drops away to the north of Truleigh Hill has the highest proportion of scrub and tree cover within the project area. Landcover is typically a mosaic of woodland, scrub and chalk grassland which is used for grazing by sheep, (also deer and rabbits). The steep topography makes land management difficult & the scarp has generally never been ploughed.

Most of the scarp is within the Beeding Hill to Newtimber Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) & is nationally important for the assemblages of biodiversity it contains. It has a vulnerable wild and remote character which is important to conserve. The SSSI condition is monitored by Natural England (NE) and any land management actions must be approved by NE in advance.

Recommendations for land adjacent to the scarp

Land management and planting adjacent to the scarp and SSSI should extend the existing habitats and wildlife corridors of the scarp into the surrounding landscape. Scrub and chalk downland with scattered tree plantings rather than woodland would generally be appropriate at the top of the scarp slope whilst a woodland mosaic could be appropriate along the foot slopes where the land is more wooded around the field patterns. Avoid straight lines and abrupt changes in habitats and planting types.



Figure 3 Photo showing the classic curving linear areas of trees, woodland and scrub at Waterhall , south-east of Truleigh hill.

Trees, woodland and scrub on the Open Downland

The Open downland character area contains relatively small areas of trees, woodland and scrub due to the main use of the land for agriculture. Woodland trees and scrub are most commonly found along confined, linear areas of mini scarps or dry valleys which are too inaccessible or steep for cultivation. As a result this pattern of woodland and scrub within the overall agricultural landscape helps to reinforce the curving and rolling topography of the downland, by accentuating the steep contours, ridgelines and valleys within the landscape

Recommendations:

Improve habitat connectivity through the farmed landscape by extending the existing ‘sweeps’ of scrub and woodland along the natural contours of the landscape. Link these areas to other scattered hedgerows and scrubby areas. Create new meadow headlands and field corner plots which help connectivity for wildlife. A really good example of how to design this type of planting is included on page 68 of the Brighton Downland Estate Plan [follow this link to the document](#) .



Figure 4 Aerial photo of Truleigh Hill showing the 5 clusters of buildings

Land around the Truleigh Hill buildings

A collection of buildings have developed in 5 clusters on Truleigh hill mostly since the 1950's. The South Downs Way runs through Truleigh Hill and the setting of the National trail is affected by the extent and variation in the built form which surrounds it. Practical and simple measures at Truleigh Hill could create a landscape around the National Trail which conveys a strong sense of place and connection with the surrounding downland.

Recommendations

The following sections set out simple and practical measures to help integrate areas of land around the buildings of Truleigh Hill so that they can enhance downland character at and contribute towards a sense of place



Figure 5: Track at Truleigh hill made of limestone and chalk with soft verges and no edges.

Surfaces and edges – Recommendations

Manufactured products like block and clay paving, tarmac and other manufactured paving products can appear very urban in the predominantly rural and agricultural landscape in and around Truleigh hill. Where possible it is best to keep these types of paving away from publicly accessible and visible areas. Where practical, tracks and surfaced areas should have no edges or kerbs and be designed informally to follow the contours of the landscape. Unbound surfaces like gravel, limestone chippings (DOT type 1) are ideal for this landscape and help to limit surface water run off by being permeable. Simple rumble strips can be used to contain loose surfaces on slopes. Where run off does happen, soft verges allow surface water to drain into the surrounding land. Surface water run should be directed on to verges away from surfaces using Informal grips and bunds. Where possible allow natural vegetation to grow where it is not suppressed by wear and tear.

Where a solid surface like tarmac is needed for practical reasons, keep this to a minimum and try to restrict it to areas immediately next to buildings, walls and other structures so that it doesn't extend into the wider landscape.

Please see the South Downs Way report for further information on different surfacing options on the Truleigh Hill Landscape project webpage here : [Truleigh Hill Landscape Project - South Downs National Park Authority](#)


 <p data-bbox="203 855 1070 922"><i>Figure 6 Security fencing around one of the telecommunications compounds at Truleigh hill, next to the South Downs Way</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1093 373 1684 400">Fences and boundaries- Recommendations</p> <p data-bbox="1093 408 2119 549">There are lots of different boundary treatments around Truleigh hill. Examples are security fencing around the telecommunications tower locations, through to livestock and agricultural fencing, permanent and temporary horse fencing and many different garden fences and walls.</p> <p data-bbox="1093 595 2107 767">This advice is about working towards a unified approach for those boundaries <i>in particular</i> which face onto the open landscape or to public facing areas of Truleigh Hill. The following are examples of local materials and types of boundaries which are typical of the downland and could be used when existing boundaries are replaced or new ones created.</p>



Figure 7 Combined fence and hedge in the SDNP



Figure 8 Brick and flint wall in the SDNP



Figure 9 Chestnut pale fence in the SDNP



Figure 10 Picket fencing around a front garden in the SDNP

Gardens and residential properties - Recommendations -

In the open downland garden fencing should be very simple post and wire fencing with scattered hedge planting which reflects downland character.

There may be locations where increased privacy or security is required and the following are suggested boundary types which may be appropriate in these situations. Solid boundaries can also screen domestic 'clutter' from the open downland and from publicly accessible places but care must be taken to ensure that the design and layout of boundaries will protect and enhance the open downland landscape.

Close boarded fencing should be used with caution in the open downland as it can appear too urban and generic in character. Using a 'false' fence in front of it and planting up the gap with a native hedge can help to assimilate this effect— see figure 7 which shows a recently installed fence and hedge in the SDNP. As the hedge grows it will hide the close boarded fence. The style of the secondary false fence is important & in this location a cleft chestnut post and rail fencing has been used.

Walls are expensive and traditionally their use would be limited to entrances and courtyard areas. Flint would have been the traditional material used in the downland; Figure 8 shows a combined new brick and flint wall in the SDNP which is built in situ using local materials.

Where privacy and screening is less important an open informal chestnut fence made from chestnut pales is a good alternative. Figure 9 shows an example of this type of fencing which can be made on site to fit requirements and also planted in combination with hedging if required. Where possible this should be of native species, particularly where boundaries are facing onto the open downland.

Picket fencing in a variety of heights can be used in combination with native hedging Figure 10 shows a front garden laid to wildflower meadows surrounded by picket fencing which shows additionally how a simple front garden can contribute to local character.

Figure 11 Post and wire fencing in the open downland



Boundaries in the Open Downland

Post and wire fencing is typically used in the downland for livestock fencing, and because it is 'see through' and agricultural it helps to maintain the open and rural character of the downland see Figure 11.

Recommendations

Post and rail fencing can be intrusive in the open downland and where possible should only be used around yard areas within the curtilage of buildings, or along important and external boundaries where it would not obscure or intrude on public downland views.

Cleft chestnut post and rail fencing is the traditional post and rail type for the downland, generally with 3 rails in Sussex.

Any other forms of enclosure in the open downland should be considered with great care so as not to impact on the extensive open and uncluttered character of views.



Figure 12 Limited grazing for horses using a temporary track fenced with green electric fencing tape in the SDNP. The temporary fence runs parallel to the outer post and wire fence with a headland on the other side of the main fence.

Horse Fencing Recommendations

Keeping and grazing horses on the downland may mean that fields need to be managed by subdividing them with temporary fencing. This can often be referred to as 'horsiculture' and can be detrimental to the landscape, particularly when these internal paddocks are very small, become overgrazed or are kept bare for the benefit of horse health. In order to minimise this visual effect the use of green or brown electric rope or tape held neatly on secure brown or green fence posts is recommended. Temporary fences should be well set out to avoid a 'cats cradle' appearance. See Figure 12 which shows an example of limited grazing on a temporary track system. If possible lines of temporary fencing should be moved periodically to maintain even wear of the grass sward in the field. The outer boundary of fields, particularly along public routes could be double fenced to create a habitat zone for pollinators and wildflowers. This can be done with an outer line of post and wire fencing or cleft chestnut post and rail and a second internal electric line. Scattered native hedge plants within the double fence or just allowing the grass and wildflowers to grow along this line will enhance the boundary and also provide habitat for birds and insects. See Figure 12

Please refer to the SDNP Equestrian Technical guidance note (link tbc) for further planning advice about keeping horses in the South Downs National Park.



Figure 13 Informal road sign with SDNP 'Shared Identity' along the bottom



Figure 14 A Waymarker for the South Downs Way with additional information on the post



Figure 15 An occasional sign

Signage recommendations

It is unusual to have a lot of signs in the open downland areas of the SDNP as it is rural and generally remote. Truleigh hill is unusual in this respect as it is close to large centres of population and it is also accessible by car. Truleigh hill has a high number of visitors who may need signs to let them know what is available, and where to go, but also letting them know non-aggressively what they shouldn't do.

Where signs are needed they should be in keeping with the rural character and where possible made of natural materials – eg wood.

Figure 13 shows a road sign which has the SDNP 'shared identity' along the bottom of the sign. Many signs within the SDNP now include this image to communicate that the information on the sign is about and for the SDNP and it's visitors, residents and businesses. Some other examples of rural signs are given on the left. Information about using the shared identity is available on the SDNPA website here:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-communities/business-communities/south-downs-national-park-shared-identity/>

Other guidance about signs;

Signs should be clustered where possible and use one post instead of several different ones (Figure 14)

Integrate signs on existing features – eg walls, fences, gates, rather than put in new poles;

If the sign is giving information about an event or services which aren't open all the time they could be removable/occasional (Figure 15), or integrated within another feature (Figure 18);

Road signs may have to conform to Department of Transport regulations but it may be possible to mount them on wooden poles, reduce their height and cluster them or as shown on figure xxx integrate them with an existing fixture.



Figure 16 Road sign mounted on a wooden board and fixed to an existing fence post



Figure 17 Simple visitor information sign in wood



Figure 18 Sign for Chanctonbury Ring Dewpond which is incorporated into the fieldgate



Figure 19 Knapweed and Scabious flowers as part of a chalk downland verge in the SDNP

Verges

Huge areas of chalk downland have been lost over the past 150yrs, much of it since the 1950's. Maintaining road and track verges and other areas of grass for chalk downland will enhance the character and natural beauty of Truleigh Hill's landscape whilst also providing important habitat and connecting routes for wildlife.

Where possible the areas of grass verges should be kept very simple and managed as for chalk grassland/ downland. This involves allowing the verges to grow naturally through spring and summer and then cut once in late summer after the plants have set seed and the cuttings removed. This management helps to keep a wide range of chalk downland plants growing healthily.

Where new areas of grass are being created, whether in gardens or restoring areas in the countryside, use the appropriate native seed mix for chalk downland/grassland. Contact the SDNPA for advice about seed suppliers or it may be possible to use some green hay as seed from a local downland site.



Figure 20 Volunteers maintaining an area of wildflower verge at Truleigh Hill

Some people think that long grass looks messy and it can help with appearances to regularly mow a narrow strip of lawn along the front of verge areas to stop long grass flopping over the adjoining surfaces. This will neaten up the edges of wildflower verge areas and also make them look intentional, not just abandoned.

Simple signs can be placed in the verge to raise awareness about the intentions of managing verges in this way and may also help to deter car parking on them. – [Plantlife](#) have a lot of information about verge management and how to raise awareness about the value of managing them for wildlife.

West Sussex County Council also have a ‘Community Road Verge Scheme’ –please click on this link to go to the web page:
[Nature-friendly road verges - West Sussex County Council](#)