



Ireland Wood

Management Plan 2017-2022

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
10. Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Ireland Wood
Location:	Horsforth
Grid reference:	SE256391, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 104
Area:	7.60 hectares (18.78 acres)
Designations:	Scheduled Ancient Monument, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This small site is bordered on three sides by houses. The circular route along a well-defined path around the wood could be covered in 20 minutes. Popular with local dog walkers.

2.2 Extended Description

Ireland Wood was acquired by The Woodland Trust in 2 phases with the northern half, extending to 3.85 ha being acquired from Beazer Homes (Yorkshire) Limited in October 1987. The southern half of the wood extending to 3.75 ha was acquired by the Trust in 2005 from Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. The wood, which extends to 7.6 hectares, is located in the northern suburbs of Leeds, between the wards of Horsforth and Ireland Wood (of the same name). The main access to the wood is off Hospital Lane.

Ireland Wood is split into two sections Ireland Wood and East Wood - separated by Hospital Lane. The wood is surrounded by housing development although the wooded grounds of the former Cookridge Hospital provide a habitat linkage to the south. The surrounding area is also reasonably well wooded, and includes the ancient 'Clayton Woods' to the south.

This mixed broadleaved wood of predominately oak was formally the woodland garden of a large Victorian house, which was demolished prior to the new housing development on the northern boundary of the wood, and the new sheltered housing of Ireland Crescent, part of which is confined within the woodland. The old Lodge to the house is still present on Hospital Lane. The wood retains a few features of the former garden including ornamental conifers, a large sunken rockery, dry stone wall boundaries and non-native rhododendron planting. A medieval farmstead covers the majority of the southern half of the wood and this has been listed as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM).

The woodland canopy is dominated by oak (sessile and pedunculate) which probably makes up over half the tree component. Birch is also frequent. Other tree species include: larch, rowan, beech, sycamore, yew, holly, horse chestnut, wild cherry, ash, lime, Norway maple and other ornamental conifers (Japanese Red Cedar, Scots Pine). The under-storey is dominated by rhododendron and holly with some bare open ground, especially where the rhododendron has been recently removed. Some of the beech trees, most particularly along Hospital Lane, are well in excess of a century old and are reaching veteran status.

There are no definitive rights of way within the wood, although a public footpath does run along the northwest boundary next to a concrete wall. However, the site is exceptionally well used with many permissive paths throughout the whole of the site. Litter and fly tipping can be problem, especially alongside Hospital Lane.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

ACCESS TO THE SITE

Ireland wood is located approximately 1 mile to the north of the Leeds city centre, in the Cookridge area of Leeds. The wood is close to the ring road A6120(T) and can be accessed by heading north from the ring road on the A660(T) towards Otley. From the ring road roundabout take the first turning left off the A660(T) sign posted Cookridge Hospital. After a mile turn left into Hospital Lane (also sign posted Cookridge Hospital) and the wood is 300 metres down the lane on the right hand side. Roadside parking is possible reasonably close to the wood although Hospital Lane alongside the wood is narrow and used by local residents.

ENTRANCE AND FOOTPATHS

The wood contains a number of footpaths which are generally flat but are not surfaced. No circular path exists but a number cross the site from 6 entrances. The entrances are mostly open gateways but do include a squeeze stile situated in a boundary wall.

PARKING

Limited roadside parking available around the wood.

PUBLIC TOILETS

None available locally

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Further information about public transport contact Traveline on www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0871 200 22 33

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Ireland Wood will remain a largely broadleaved woodland composed of predominantly native tree species. The main tree species into the future are likely to be oak, birch, beech, yew, holly and rowan, and it is expected that the percentage of sycamore will continue to rise. The composition of the woodland will be diverse with no one tree species dominating and there will be a mixture of age classes including a continual emergence of natural regeneration. Periodic silvicultural management may be required to maintain these conditions. The loss of large trees from the site, through natural collapse or safety felling, will continue to add additional gaps in the canopy for natural regeneration to occur, and will also increase the deadwood habitat as a result. However, the older beech trees will be retained as long as safely possible, with the intention of creating veteran trees in the wood. Non-native invasive species such as rhododendron ponticum will no longer be present in the wood. Relics of former planting, such as pine and larch, will also be retained, with a scattering of specimen trees being retained into over-maturity.

The wood will remain open to free public access and will be as welcoming and as safe as possible for visitors. A good standard of access will be provided including a network of well-managed paths and entrances. However, visitor infrastructure and signage will be kept to a minimum requirement.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Secondary Woodland

Description

Ireland Wood is a mixed secondary woodland, which was formerly the woodland garden of a large Victorian house. Oak is the most dominant species making up over 50% of the canopy, with birch making up a further 20%. Other common tree species include: beech, rowan, sycamore, and yew. A scattering of other tree species which have been introduced are also present including European larch, Scots pine, horse chestnut, wild cherry, ash, lime, and Norway maple. The under-storey is dominated by holly, patches of rhododendron regrowth, and bramble, with some bare ground especially due to recent rhododendron clearance. The bulk of the rhododendron is now confined to the edges of the wood, next to the sheltered housing. Small patches of other invasive species are located in East Wood, and these include laurel, Japanese knotweed and Aucuba. There are also patches of natural regeneration (especially rowan, birch and beech). Some of the beech trees, most particularly along Hospital Lane, are well in excess of a century old and are reaching veteran status. A number of these have collapsed though but this has added bulk and quality to the deadwood habitat.

The wood retains features of the former garden including a large sunken rockery. A medieval farmstead covers the majority of the southern half of the wood and this has been listed as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM). Ireland Wood sits on generally flat land, with fairly sandy soil over millstone grit/sandstone and thus has good drainage. A number of grit stone boulders are present in the wood. The ground flora is fairly limited due to the age and history of the wood, but occasional patches of bluebell add some floral interest to the wood.

Significance

The wood is important as a resource for local wildlife, in a part of the country where the percentage of woodland cover is low (2.7% for Yorkshire). The wood is also an important natural habitat within a largely built-up environment and helps to soften and enhance the landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Holly control and the removal of rhododendron and other invasives from the wood will create the opportunity for a more natural shrub layer to develop and for a greater degree of natural regeneration to take place.

Factors Causing Change

The continued spread and dominance of holly through the under-storey of the wood. Without intervention the holly could largely replace areas cleared of rhododendron.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term intention is to maintain a largely broadleaved woodland composed of predominantly native tree species. The main tree species are likely to remain as oak, birch, beech, yew, holly and rowan. It is also expected that the percentage of sycamore will continue to rise, and this will be allowed to occur. However, the composition of the woodland will remain diverse with no one tree species dominating and there will be a mixture of age classes, including the continual promotion of natural regeneration. Periodic silvicultural management may be required to maintain these conditions. The older beech trees will be retained for as long as safely possible, with the intention of creating veteran trees in the wood. But it is expected that some of these will collapse, or have to be felled for safety reasons. This in turn will create additional canopy gaps for natural regeneration to occur and will also greatly enhance the deadwood habitat.

Non-native invasive species such as rhododendron ponticum, and Japanese knotweed will be eradicated. Relics of former planting, such as pine and larch, will continue to be present, with a scattering of specimen trees being retained into over-maturity.

The wood will exhibit a diverse understory with a mixture of native shrub species and young trees. Holly will continue to be a strong component of the understorey but the species will not be allowed to cover more than 10% of the woodland area. Additional planting may be required to add sufficient diversity to the understorey, if this cannot be achieved by natural means.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

During this plan period the short term objective is to control invasive species, to add diversity to the age structure and create conditions for natural regeneration to occur. This will be achieved by:

- Eradication of rhododendron ponticum from the wood. An annual operation will be carried out to cut and treat with herbicide any remaining re-growth from previously cut stumps across compartments 1a and 1b. It will also involve the cutting and subsequent treatment of all the residual rhododendron plants on the northern boundary of 1a in 2018, which are in scattered clumps over approx 500m on the boundary with the sheltered housing.
- Cutting and removal of all the scattered invasive exotic species in compartment 1c (East Wood) in 2018. This will specifically involve removing: rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, laurel, aucuba and snowberry which are all regenerating and spreading. Follow up herbicidal control will be undertaken until eradication is complete
- Cutting and removal of approximately 25% of the holly from the understorey in 2020. The approach will be to reduce the size of large holly thickets and to lessen the spread of holly throughout the whole wood.
- Carrying out a group felling operation in 2020 in compartment 1a in an area of oak dominated woodland. A felling coupe of approximately 0.1 Ha will be created (30 X 30m) with the majority of mature trees within it being felled to create an area for natural regeneration to occur. The majority of the holly within the coupe will also be cut.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Being in the suburbs of Leeds and being adjacent to residential housing, the wood is exceptionally popular all year round. There are 7 main entrance points, with the main entrance being towards the end of Hospital Lane where there is a noticeboard and more visible signage. Approximately 600m of footpaths are contained within the wood, but the open nature of parts of the site allows people to wander at will. The majority of people using the site are local dog-walkers. The Trust has given Ireland Wood an access category A designation which is the highest rating, and this equates to a wood which is 'regularly used at all times of year, with more than 15 - 20 people using one entrance every day'.

Significance

Ireland Wood provides a 'natural' amenity in a fairly built up area, and offers a different experience than an intensively managed public park. The wood also softens the built up landscape, creating a 'green lung' on the outskirts of Leeds.

Opportunities & Constraints

Anti-social problems will limit the scale and investment of visitor infrastructure at the wood. Any new infrastructure will need to be fairly low cost, easily maintained and easily replaceable.

Factors Causing Change

Anti-social problems such as fly tipping and vandalism, could dissuade certain visitors from wishing to visit the wood. The spread of holly (and rhododendron) thickets could start to make the wood feel more oppressive and discourage some visitors.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The wood should offer a good quality visitor experience in line with the category A Access designation, but also acknowledging the constraints for this peri-urban location. Pedestrian only access will be retained at the wood in perpetuity. There will be a well-managed network of paths around the wood which are easy and obvious to follow. Welcome signage will be made available at all main entrances, to a standard which is easy and cost effective to maintain and replace. Views through the wood will be maintained and the wood should feel light, airy and safe to walk through (with evergreen thickets kept small and in check). Regular monitoring and maintenance will also be carried out to ensure anti-social problems such as littering and vandalism are kept to a minimum. The wood will be made as safe as practicable through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones, with corresponding safety works. Regular monitoring and appropriate maintenance of any man-made structures on the site will take place to ensure they do not pose a risk to visitors or neighbours.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

During this plan period the short term objective is to maintain a welcoming and safe accessible wood. This will be achieved by:

- Annual management of approximately 600m of paths and all 7 main entrances to ensure they are kept open for use. All signage will remain clean and visible, and replaced if they deteriorate.
- Undertaking multiple contractor visits over the year to ensure litter is kept to a minimum and infrastructure maintenance is kept on top of.
- Carrying out annual safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (eg. the roadsides, property boundaries), to ensure the wood is as safe as possible for visitors, neighbours and road users.
- Undertaking monitoring during this plan period to assess any threats occurring as a result of public access, such as vandalism.
- Removing the entire length (approx 175m) of the concrete wall alongside the footpath in 2018 to remove the risk to the public from this deteriorating structure.
- Undertaking an operation in 2020 to reduce the holly in selected zones by 25% across the site, with the intention of improving light levels and increasing the feeling of safety in the wood, as well as to add diversity to the understorey. All the rhododendron ponticum bushes along the boundaries will also be removed in 2018 (see woodland key feature objectives).

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.00	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Mature woodland dominated by oak (over 50%). Other species include birch, rowan, yew and sycamore. Beech is also present and there are some old specimen trees (approaching veteran status) along Hospital Lane. There are many other planted non-native species scattered throughout the compartment including horse chestnut, Norway maple, larch, Japanese Red Cedar and Scots Pine. Holly dominates the understorey. Rhododendron has been largely removed from the area but persists on the boundary with the sheltered housing.							
1b	2.00	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Scheduled Ancient Monument, Tree Preservation Order
Mature stand of oak dominated woodland with other species including sycamore, birch and rowan. A scheduled ancient monument (medieval farmstead) covers the majority of the compartment area, as well as a TPO. There is gas station compound in the southeast corner.							
1c	2.00	Sycamore	1900	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Area known as East Wood. The compartment is dominated by sycamore, with a greater proportion of oak towards the south on the slightly higher sandier ground. There is a small stand of Scots pine to the north. The compartment contains a mixture of exotic shrubs including laurel, rhododendron and Japanese knotweed which may have been introduced when the area was used for garden tipping by Leeds City Council.							
1d	0.50	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
A small outlying area of woodland to the north. Dominated by oak with a thick holly understorey.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Selective Fell	0.10	300	30

GLOSSARY

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland on all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

Windblow/Windthrow

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.