



Orchard Brae

Management Plan 2019-2024

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Orchard Brae
Location:	Barnard Castle
Grid reference:	NZ047167, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 92
Area:	0.26 hectares (0.64 acres)
Designations:	Conservation Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A very small wood that it is mainly used by local people to access the riverside path. It is very close to the Teesdale Vale long distance path. Although the wood is small it makes an important contribution to the maintenance of the special character of the area.

2.2 Extended Description

Orchard Brae is a small wood (0.26 ha) growing on the valley side overlooking the River Tees at Barnard Castle in Co. Durham (grid ref: NZ 047 167). The upper part of the wood occupies a moderately steep slope, whilst the middle and bottom grows on level ground. Originally, the wood was a Licence Planting Schemes (Grimley LPS) owned by Mr & Mrs Grimley. However, in December 1992 they gave the wood to the Trust as a gift.

Before planting, Orchard Brae appears to have been a garden and remains of terrace walls and other structures, such as concrete bases, still survive in the wood. The site was planted in 1983/84 with a range of native broadleaved species that included oak, ash, rowan, hawthorn, cherry, alder and willow. A row of mature sycamore grow along the northern boundary of the site and the willow that once stood in the middle of the wood has now collapsed, providing some valuable dead wood habitat.

No public rights of way exist on site and the path through the wood is permissive but is reasonably well used by people as a means of getting down to the riverside path. Management access is taken off Raby Avenue and follows the surfaced bridleway, which forms part of the Teesdale Way long-distance footpath, which runs along the northern boundary of the wood. A permissive path also runs along the outside of the southern boundary between the wood and the River Tees. To the east is located the old gas works site that was made into a picnic area in 1997 and consists of scrub woodland, tree planting and a seating area. To the west a private garden still exists, whilst to the north of the wood and bridleway lays allotment gardens.

Because the wood is located in a Conservation Area, maintaining broadleaved woodland on site, in keeping with the surrounding river valley, helps maintain the special character of the area, as well as contributing to the Trust's objective of increasing the area of new native woodland nationally.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Walkers can enter Orchard Brae off the tarmac bridleway that runs down from Raby Avenue at the top of the wood and from the riverside path at the bottom. Both entrances consist of squeeze stiles. The permissive path through the wood is narrow, steep and unsurfaced and provides a short cut down to the riverside.

No parking exists next to the wood and visitors by car will have to find on road parking in Barnard Castle or use the public pay and display car park off Galgate. For visitors wishing to reach the wood by public transport, bus stops are located on Galgate in the town centre from where the wood can be reach within a few minutes walk.

For those needing public conveniences, public toilets can be found off Galgate at the northern end of the town next to the Morrison's supermarket in the Galgate public car park. A RADAR toilet is also located at the public toilets in Galgate car park.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term aim is to maintain native broadleaved high forest woodland across site that will blend in with and compliment other areas of woodland along the river. The permissive path through the wood will be maintained to provide an interesting short cut for walkers down to the riverside. Maintaining native broadleaved woodland at Orchard Brae and encouraging public access is helping the Trust realise its corporate objectives of increasing new native woodland and increasing enjoyment and understanding of woodland.

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 Informal Public Access

Description

Pedestrian stiles at the top and bottom of the wood allow walkers access to the site. A permissive footpath runs between these and allows people to take a short cut down to the riverside from the bridleway (part of the Teesdale Way) leading off Raby Avenue. Improvements to this route were made in 2000 by extending the path across the slope to provide a safer route down through the wood and by installing steps on the terrace bank at the bottom. Although not heavily used, the wood is reasonably well used, particularly by younger people.

Significance

Providing public access to woods is a cornerstone of the Trust's management approach to its properties and is encapsulated in its corporate objective of increasing enjoyment and understanding of woodland. Barnard Castle is an important tourist location, receiving visitors all year round, many of which come to walk along the river and through its woods. By maintaining public access through Orchard Brae, the Trust is helping to facilitate public enjoyment of these woods and riverside, which is one of its four key corporate objectives.

Opportunities & Constraints

In isolation, the small size of Orchard Brae limits the scope of public access that can be facilitated on site to basically providing a short cut down to the riverside. However, the development of the old gas works site to the east into a public amenity area does offer the potential opportunity for increasing the access provision from Orchard Brae by creating a link into this facility. The opportunity of doing this was investigated by the previous woodland officer back in 1997 and initial correspondence on the matter with Teesdale District Council was favourable.

Factors Causing Change

None identified at this time.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure public access to the wood for walkers continues to be available in the future by maintaining the two pedestrian entrances and keeping the path free of obstruction by cutting back encroaching vegetation and removing obstacles as necessary to ensure safe, unobstructed access for walkers is maintained. To extend public access from site by creating a link into the amenity area to the east.

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

Both pedestrian entrances, the path and steps will be inspected at least once a year to ensure they are maintained in a safe and serviceable condition for walkers. The path will be kept open for walkers by cutting back encroaching vegetation and collecting litter at least once a year. Public safety will be protected by carrying out regular tree safety surveys on the trees along the northern boundary and alongside the path and by maintaining a site risk assessment of all hazards on site and carrying out any necessary work identified in order to minimise the dangers these present to visitors to the wood.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Orchard Brae covers a gross area of 0.26 ha on what was formerly the site of a garden. In 1983/84, approximately 0.2 ha was planted with native broadleaved trees and shrubs including oak, ash, rowan, hawthorn, cherry, alder and willow.

Significance

Native broadleaved woodland is a vital habitat for many plants and animals found in the UK. Over the centuries, our countryside has lost most of its natural tree cover, with a consequent loss of biodiversity. By planting new native woodland we are helping to reverse this depletion and fragmentation of the countryside. Planting trees on this old garden site provides a net gain in biodiversity that will increase as the wood develops. Its planting also helps to restore continuity of woodland along the eastern bank of the River Tees, thus its importance is greater than its small size might first suggest. Increasing the area of new native woodland is also one of the Trust's four key corporate objectives that the creation of Orchard Brae helps to fulfil.

Opportunities & Constraints

The trees and shrubs planted at Orchard Brae are now fully established and have already created young broadleaved high forest woodland across the site. The small size of the site and its remoteness from any other Trust property makes it expensive to manage and limits management options. Being located within a Conservation Area is also likely to impose constraints on any operations that would significantly change the character of the wood (e.g. felling the mature sycamore along the northern boundary). However, because Orchard Brae is within the river valley of the Tees and links into the extensive body of surrounding woodland, including the semi-natural oak woodland of Flatts Wood to the northwest, its biodiversity stands to benefit greatly as the wood matures.

Factors Causing Change

None identified at this time.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure that predominantly native high forest broadleaved woodland is successfully established on this site and to ensure this remains healthy and vigorous so that, over the long-term, the wood becomes self-perpetuating through natural regeneration, ensuring its existence in perpetuity. Ultimately, the resulting woodland structure will be similar to Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland as described in the Forestry Commission's Forestry Practice Guide 3.

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

Following selective thinning in early 2010, the wood will now be left to develop naturally as native broadleaved high forest woodland without further intervention, except in the interests of public safety. Woodland condition assessments will be made on at least one occasion per 5 year plan period

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	0.26	Mixed native broadleaves	1984	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Conservation Area

Because Orchard Brae is only 0.26 ha in size the wood consists of only one compartment located on the valley side overlooking the River Tees. The site consists of a steep upper slope and level areas at the bottom created by a terrace. The soil is best described as a clayey brown earth though has been cultivated in the past when the site was a garden. Woodland was planted here in 1983/84 and consists of oak, ash, rowan, hawthorn, cherry, alder and willow. Several mature sycamores already existed on the site and form a row along the northern boundary. Hawthorn and other shrub species forms a sparse understorey whilst the field layer is generally poor consisting of nettles and other weeds of disturbed ground.

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 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.