

DH Lawrence Copse First Stage Tree Management 25.10.2013

Background

This is the largest copse at the site. All of the originally planted site tree species are represented in this copse. Nursery errors or substitutions exist. Some Yew whips were added in January 2011.

The copse is divided by four, roughly parallel, open drainage ditches.

Previous maintenance work undertaken in this copse mostly consists of the removal of tree material adjacent to the ditches to allow machine access for re-grading of ditch inverts and the annual strimming of ditch profiles to control vegetation growth. Some shallow link drainage ditches were also formed.

Aim

The long term aim is to retain samples of all native species that are present. Growth of retained major trees is to be encouraged. A robust copse structure is to be developed to allow, at some future time, public access through; using pre-determined unpaved tracks. Small open space clearings may also be introduced.

As a first stage in management of the tree growth, samples of the key major trees are to be identified for promotion to form a structural framework basis for all of the other retained tree species. Nutrient and sunlight competition with these key trees will be reduced by halo pruning around them.

The remaining trees will be stage thinned with the emphasis on achieving the long term aim and promoting some age diversity to develop.

Work Plan

The ditches create five distinct areas of the copse plan. Two, the north and south sections, have long perimeters adjacent walking routes. These areas will be tackled last. Between are three areas with less problematic public access boundaries. Work will commence in the 2013-14 winter on the most southerly of these- marked area 1- with the other two following in the 2014-15 winter. The north and south sections will commence in the third year.

It is anticipated that the key major trees for promotion will be identified, marked and halo pruned in the first year of work within each section. First stage thinning of the other trees will follow on after all halo work is completed.

At intervals to be established, these halos may require expanding. This may be an individual tree requirement so periodic inspection is necessary.

The second stage thinning will commence after a ten to fifteen years interval. It will follow the same sequence but will also identify particular medium status trees for retention and encouragement. Selection will be aimed at retaining the full species mix across the copse.

Species for the Structural Framework

Choosing those species that have significant presence in shape, texture and durability we identified the major species for the framework of the copse as European Larch (*Larix deciduas*), Scott's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*). Some of the Scott's Pine may in fact be Austrian Pine (*Pinus nigra* subsp. *Salzmanii* var. *Corsicana*), samples of which can be retained.

Oak must not over dominate the structural framework to avoid excessive barren areas when eventually the copse matures.

Pines tend to have been planted in small clumps. If they are sufficiently spread apart, clump growth would be more natural in appearance. Fragility of mature branches must be considered when position is considered.

Larch is only present in one other copse and there in limited numbers only. If convenient, a retained sample close to the perimeter of area 1 would be welcomed.

Details

The desired width of halo clearance will depend on the species. The following distances are envisaged:

Species	Minimum clearance from perimeter of present growth	Projected +50yr spread	Notes
European Larch	1.5m	6m	Max spread at low level
Scott's Pine	1.2m	7m	Tendency for max spread to be at height on mature trees
Sessile Oak	2.5m	13m	Broad rounded canopy

The projected spread must be considered when determining which of the trees to be identified for permanent retention as framework trees and thus halo cleared.

Chosen trees to be marked using fluorescent tape, well secured around tree branches and easily spotted. Only one colour tape to be used for this task.

If any marking is carried out to identify specific medium status trees that should be retained at first stage thinning, a different coloured tape must be used.

All arisings are to be densely stacked as habitat piles. Branches should be cut to max 2m lengths to help achieve density required. Stack height can be improved by inserting some thicker branches vertically.

