Forest design principles

UKFS Guidelines: Forests and Landscape

The forest design principles in the Guidelines are:

• Shape
• Landform
• Pattern of enclosure
• Scale, proportion
• Visual diversity
• Unity
• Spirit of place.
We have already seen how shape influences landscape character, through landform and patterns of vegetation, for example.

We have discussed the relationship between shape and three dimensional form, especially landform.

The shapes are often what you notice first when looking at a landscape, including when looking at forests and woodlands.
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Where do you find shapes in the forest?
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Shape

Shape of the forest edges should relate to the dominant characteristics of the landscape character.

These could be:

- Landform - rugged or smooth
- Field pattern - often geometric
- Natural vegetation pattern - irregular or geometric.
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Shape
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**Shape**

In upland landscapes:

- Landform dominates
- The broad shapes of the hills, ridges and gullies will be influential
- Landform shape can be boldly rounded or rugged
- Vegetation pattern is generally irregular
- Shapes are generally organic and naturalistic.
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Shape
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Shape

In lowland landscapes:

- Enclosure and field vegetation pattern may dominate - especially where relief is low and topography subdued
- Landform is often smooth, but can be irregular, with more complex tiers and rocky outcrops
- Vegetation pattern is frequently geometric and regular
- Shapes can be regular and ordered.
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Shape
Shape

When designing forests, we frequently work between plans and perspectives.

We can pick up clues about the shape of the landform from contours on plans.

These can be particularly useful when designing the shape of woodlands in upland landscapes.
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Shape - avoid edges which sit along a contour
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Shape - avoid edges which sit along a contour
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Shape - avoid edges at right angles to contours
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Shape - avoid edges at right angles to contours
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Shape - edges should cross contours diagonally
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Shape - edges should cross contours diagonally
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Shape - parallel lines
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Shape - parallel lines
Shape - Fencelines

It is not just the shape of the outer edge of the forest you need to design.

You also need to think about the shape of the fenceline, especially where it is likely that woodland will regenerate against the fence.
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Shape - Fencelines
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Shape - Fencelines
Shape - Exercise 3: Crossing contours

Individually...

Identify potential shape problems in this fenceline

Analyse the shape of the fenceline against the contours.
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Shape - Exercise 3: Tutor’s response
Using shape - Summary

Identify dominant shape characteristics - it will normally be landform or enclosure pattern.

Where enclosure patterns dominate and landform is subdued or relief is low, geometric shapes may be best.

Elsewhere, it is likely irregular shapes are going to work better - but they may be smooth and flowing.

Think about the way all shapes relate to contours - what are the consequences in perspective?