



7 - Amenity

The Pentlands Hills are a cherished resource, with Harlaw being a major gateway into the core of the Park. The locality around the car park and reservoirs is characterised by a framework of mature mixed and coniferous woodlands.

The woodland design will seek to build on the existing framework by establishing mixed and Scots pine woodlands on the northern and southern margins, reflecting the nature of the existing woodlands.

6 - Recreation

The site is crossed by and visible from very-well used core paths, and numerous informal preference paths, including routes around the reservoir.

The main paths will be set in open ground corridors, with a varied woodland edge. Sections may be upgraded to facilitate timber extraction in the long term. The waterside routes will remain outwith the woodland enclosures, and informal access routes will be retained across the site.

3 - Landscape

Being situated on a plateau, and screened by a shelterbelt on its northern margins, much of the site is of moderate visual sensitivity in the wider landscape, but the slopes of Bell's Hill are visible from a wide area to the north.

Keep the main hill slopes open, and provide a diverse woodland edge on the more visible margins. Utilise Scots pine to reflect the local woodland character.

KEY

- ★ Grid reference point
- Site boundary

Paths

- Core path
- Major footpath

Woodland design

- Sitka spruce
- Diverse conifer
- Mixed woodland
- Scots pine
- Productive native broadleaves
- Native broadleaves
- Designed open ground
- Existing Woodland
- Retained in grazing

1 - Silviculture

Much of the eastern section of the site lies on fertile gley soils, overlain with semi-improved pasture. While potentially productive, farming the site has become more difficult due to recreational pressures.

The site is capable of growing good-quality timber from a broad range of coniferous species, and a narrower selection of broadleaved species. Which will allow for a diverse woodland design.

2 - Cultural Heritage

A Historic Environment Assessment has been undertaken to inform the design. The site hosts good examples of a medieval/later agricultural landscape.

These features, held to be of regional value, will be retained, and managed, as open ground.

5 - Biodiversity (habitats)

The habitat assessment identified areas of high ecological sensitivity- notably species rich acid grasslands on Bells Hill, and fringing the eastern arm of Threipmuir Reservoir.

Retain high sensitivity as open ground and examine options for continued grazing. Establish native riparian woodlands around the minor watercourses and the banks of the reservoirs.

4 - Biodiversity (birds)

A breeding bird survey was undertaken. A single curlew and a few snipe were recorded, along with a range of other moorland and farmland species.

Significant areas of open ground will be retained, which will provide some mitigation for habitat loss; similarly, gorse scrub will be retained. Woodland expansion, notably adjoining long-established woodland, will increase habitat availability for woodland birds.

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