

Emma Newfield

From: snaddon [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 February 2016 09:57
To: Consult Planning
Subject: Emailing: ALV_A3_compressed.pdf
Attachments: ALV_A3_compressed.pdf

Importance: High

Categories: Blue Category

To the EIP Programme Secretary,
Please find attached the document, Alvechurch Historic Environment Action Plan-Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch Park (ALV_A3), which was produced by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service for **English Heritage** in 2014. It assesses the historic environment of a wide area of the parish of Alvechurch, including the remnant historic features of the medieval Bordesley and Alvechurch Deer Parks.
Kind regards, Dorothy Snaddon.
Larksfield, Rowney Green Lane,
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Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch Park

ALV_A3



Panoramic viewshed from Newbourne Hill, facing west across the historic parkland, past Lodge Farm, towards Alvechurch village

Historic Environment Action Plan Summary

Landscape Setting and Form

(page 3)

Undulating topography, set within the 'bowl' which defines Alvechurch parish. Distinctive low-lying, elongated hills

Loamy, slowly permeable brown and clayey soils with slightly impeded drainage and moderate to high fertility

Sporadic areas of both semi-natural woodland and 20th century plantation

Bisection and truncation of the historic landscape coherence by 20th century transport-infrastructure development

Historic Environment Resource and Historic Landscape Characteristics

(page 4)

Post-medieval agricultural landscape character formed of piecemeal enclosures, 17th to 19th century farmsteads, historic hedgerows, and a particularly high density of disused gravel and marl pits

Remnant historic character and features of the rationalised Alvechurch and Bordesley Deer Parks including earthworks of the park pale, parkland trees, and historic routeways and holloways

Historically and archaeologically significant watercourses and water-management features. This includes a plethora of medieval through 19th century features along the River Arrow and its tributaries including the double-moated enclosure and fishponds at the Alvechurch Bishop's Palace, alongside various sluices, leats, channels and meadows

Extensive 20th century ribbon development along Rowney Green Lane and Redditch Road

Isolated 16th to 19th farmsteads. Predominantly of 18th to 19th century provenance, brick-built, and formed of regular or loose courtyards with surviving barns, cowhouses, stables and granaries.

Clustered hamlets and row-settlements of wayside 17th through 19th century cottages with minimal modern expansion

Prominent and significant 19th century industrial built-form, largely pertaining to the river-side mills and needle factory of Alvechurch village

High archaeological potential suggested by the significant medieval through post-medieval archaeological features, intensive historic land-use pertaining to the historic parkland and river-side industries, possible prehistoric activity indicated by cropmarks and burnt mounds, and the alluvial deposits along the River Arrow floodplain

Locally significant viewsheds of the local historic landscapes and environment afforded by the 'bowl' shaped topography, prominent hills, and relatively low-density of woodland

Statutory Designated Assets, Areas and Landscapes

(page 9)

Low proportions of designated structural assets relative to the surviving built form. Only six of one-hundred-and-ten known historic buildings listed as grade II or II*

Statutory protection for the Bishop's Palace double-moated enclosure and adjacent fishponds; though no designation for associated features further up-or-down stream

No dedicated Conservation Areas Registered Parks or Gardens

Moderate density of Public Rights of Way, encompassing many of the historic routeways and holloways

Blanket 'Greenbelt' designation, but no natural-environmental statutory protected areas

Historic Environment Assessment and Condition

(page 10)

Relatively strong representation of local historic environment assets with the county Historic Environment Record (HER)

Low-to-moderate levels archaeological and historic environmental investigation. Limited knowledge and quantification of below-ground archaeological deposits

Moderate to favourable preservation of the post-medieval piecemeal-enclosure landscape. Low levels of amalgamation of sub-division, but loss of degradation of a notable proportion of hedgerows. Loss of landscape coherence and connectivity to the northern and western slopes of the parish through bisection by 20th century transport-infrastructure development.

Surviving elements of the medieval parkland remain in moderate condition, including the park pale through Peck Wood; however, there is a deficiency of quantitative records of known features

The medieval through post-medieval watercourses are in variable condition. Those within the boundaries of the Scheduled Monument and along Old Rectory Lane appear relatively well-maintained; however those along the less accessible elements of the River and brooks are in poor conditions

The clustered hamlets and isolated farmsteads have retained much of their historic components and character; however, that of the linear settlement of Rowney Green and the site of Bordesley Hall have both been partially eroded by insensitive 'ribbon' and commercial modern developments

Forces for Change

(page 11)

Moderate potential for large scale urban, industrial or infrastructural development. While large areas are likely to be deemed unsuitable for housing development the presence of the major road arteries make further residential development a strong likelihood. Greater risk is posed by small scale, insensitive, piecemeal developments which fragment and erode historic landscape and settlement character.

Moderate to high risk of fluvial flooding within the River Arrow floodplain and associated historic watermeadows. Historic records of local pluvial flooding. While many of the historic water-management features may be of benefit to contemporary alleviation schemes, failure to effectively maintain elements of the historic systems may result in further degradation

Low risk to the historic environment and historic landscape character from current agricultural practices. The predominant land-use of grassland pasture provides optimum conditions for preservation of both surface and sub-surface archaeology. Low risk of soil erosion

Historic Environment Actions

(page 13)

ALVA3_01

Secure greater levels of protection and representation for locally significant historic environment assets and historic landscape character

ALVA3_02

Improve awareness of the distinctiveness and significance of post-medieval rural land-use, landscape character and rural buildings. Promote sensitive and sustainable development and conservation of historic farmsteads

ALVA3_03

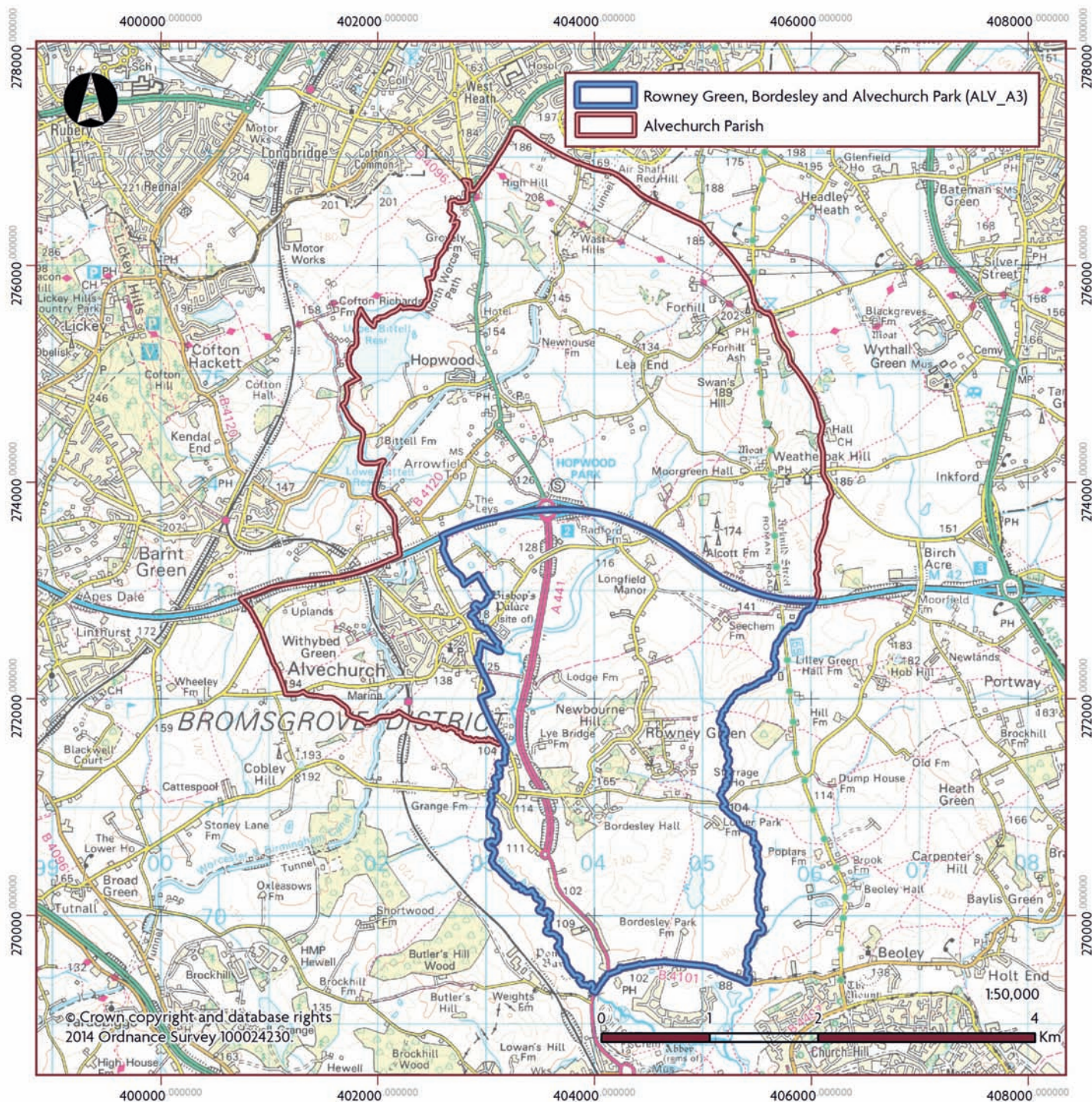
Improve awareness, understanding and conservation of the distinctiveness and significance of the medieval parkland landscape

ALVA3_04

Promote holistic approaches to local landscape and environmental management, highlighting opportunities presented by historic environmental features

ALVA3_05

Gain a greater understanding and knowledge of the presence, provenance, and condition of below-ground archaeological deposits



Area location and extent

Landscape Setting and Form

The area is situated within an undulating topographic 'bowl' formed of Triassic Mercian Mudstone which defines the parish's enclosed topography in conjunction with the surrounding escarpments or synclines. The area is however distinctive from the northern parish through the presence and prominence of several low lying and elongated hills which emerge within the landscape, formed by mid-Pleistocene, glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel. Newbourne Hill is most prominent of these, rising fifty metres above the plain with the row settlement of Rowney Green transecting its peak. Anthropogenic modification of the landscape's topography is highly tangible, with numerous earthworks pertaining to medieval and post-medieval industries along the River Arrow and its tributaries, alongside dense pockmarking by historic gravel, marl and clay extraction-pits, both of which now contribute significantly to the contemporary landscape character and form.

A small number of mid-Pleistocene diamicton till deposits are located northwest of Bordesley, while alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel deposits align the River Arrow and brooks which define the southern parish boundaries. The loamy soils move from predominantly clayey to brown soils between the lower-lying landscape and hills respectively. The soils are slowly permeable, with slightly impeded drainage, and with a moderate to high fertility.

Woodland is a prominent component of the landscape, with areas of both broadleaved and coniferous plantation evident across the area, the most prominent of which lies across the north-western crest of Newbourne Hill, forming a distinctive visual landmark. Woodland is not however a historically characteristic component of the landscape, with Peck Wood (southeast of Rowney Green) representing the singular area of semi-natural ancient woodland. Numerous historic trees and hedgerows do provide an extant, tangible and distinctive component of the area's



View across the post-medieval enclosures of the rationalised Alvechurch Deer Park towards Newbourne Hill

vegetation, pertaining to the boundaries of both the medieval and post-medieval subdivision of the landscape through the construction of the Alvechurch Deer Park and subsequent rationalisation of the park into agricultural enclosures respectively. A small number of traditional orchards are dispersed across the area; however, they are not of significant contribution to either historic or contemporary landscape character.

Watercourses are a historically significant component of the landscape, and continue to have a strong influence over the area's form and character. The River Arrow with associated site of the medieval Alvechurch Bishop's Palace, and the adjacent medieval-through-19th century industry forms the foci of local hydrology, with both the river and north-eastern brook heavily modified and managed to produce a wide variety of culverts, fishponds, channels, leats, and sluices. These culminate in the prominent double-moated enclosure of the medieval Bishop's Palace, which along with the associated earthworks is among the most significant archaeological monuments within the parish. Many of the historic clay, gravel and marl pits have also become ponds through conversion or gradual inundation, contributing significantly to both historic and natural environmental character, and forming foci for local biodiversity and habitat.

Communications within the area contrast markedly between the historic lanes of the medieval and post-medieval parkland and agricultural landscapes, and the large transportation-infrastructure of the 20th century. The M42 motorway and the Alvechurch Bypass (A441) bisect the area, aligning with the cardinal directions, and rapidly channelling traffic through and beyond the parish. These regional and national infrastructural features have had a notable impact on local accessibility, truncating historic routeways through the division of the historically coherent landscape of post-medieval enclosure to the north and west. Many of the locally significant roads have however evolved from historic routes. The most notable of these are Redditch Road, Radford Road, and Rowney Green Lane which historically formed a circuit of lanes around the late-medieval Alvechurch Deer Park. Although modern road widening and ribbon developments have largely re-landscaped these roads, a number of their arterial lanes have retained much of their historic provenance, including the sunken 'The Holloway' and Gravel Pit Lane. While a number of footpaths and tracks permit access through the post-medieval enclosures, conjoining the settlements, farmsteads and aforementioned roads, there is a relatively low density in relation to other areas of the parish. This is likely resultant of the medieval Deer Park land-use, with the exclusivity of landscape access restricting access; and therefore, the prevalence of modern public access along historic rights of way.

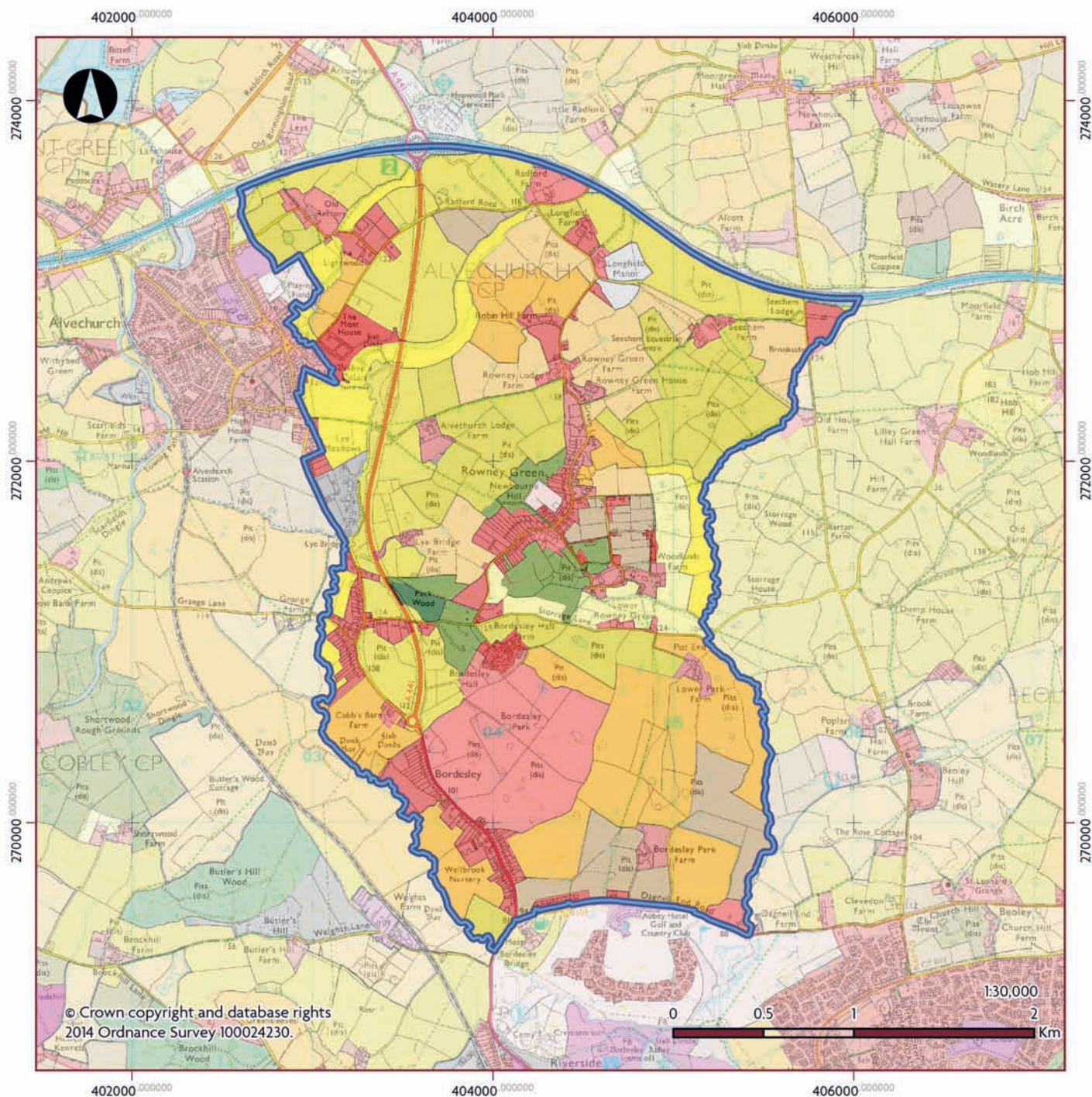
The 'bowl' shaped topography, prominent hills, and relative low-density of woodland afford significant viewsheds both from and towards the area. As with many of the hillsides which border the parish to the north, east and south, views of the area are not defined by the prominence of particular landmark features, rather the collective character of the piecemeal enclosures interspersed by isolated farmsteads, extraction pits, and small areas of both historic and modern woodland plantation. The prominence of Newbourne Hill relative to the surrounding landscape further compounds the visibility of the medieval parkland and post-medieval field-systems towards Alvechurch village and the northern parish.

Historic Environment Resource and Historic Landscape Character

Historic Landscape Character

The dominant historic landscape character of the area is that of 18th through 19th century enclosures formed through the sub-division and subsequent cultivation of medieval parkland. The rationalisation of the medieval Alvechurch and Bordesley Deer Parks resulted in the creation of a high density of moderately sized piecemeal enclosures across the eastern and southern slopes of Newbourne Hill. This, along with contemporary field reorganisation to the north, east and west forged a relatively coherent landscape of distinctive rural character within the topographic 'bowl' by which Alvechurch parish is loosely defined; however, the mid-20th century construction of the M42 motorway has resulted in the partial fragmentation of the sense of continuity of the historic landscape. The piecemeal enclosures have been retained with subsequent amalgamation

Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation Data



	Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch Park		Railways/Stations/Sidings		New Town
	Parkland		Piecemeal Enclosure		Modern Expansion
	Public Open Space		Parliamentary Enclosure		Interrupted Row
	Golf Course		Field Amalgamation		Isolated Farmstead
	Sports Ground		Meadow		Clustered Settlement
	Educational Establishment		Paddock		Waste/Common/Green-edge Sett
	Utilities		Modern Sub-division		Country House
	Artificial Lake/Pond		Field Reorganisation		Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
	Motorway		Historic Town		Recent Woodland (Secondary)

or reorganisation at a moderately low level. Numerous hedgerow boundaries and mature hedgerow-trees have therefore survived, if not all in optimal condition, and continue to form key characteristics of the area.

Within this landscape, the extant post-medieval interrupted row settlement of Rowney Green has experienced considerable 20th century linear expansion along Rowney Green Lane to the north and south atop Newbourne Hill. The modern settlement lies immediately northwest of the predominantly 17th through 19th century clustered settlement of Lower Rowney Green, which sits in relative isolation akin to the numerous

isolated farmsteads and homesteads which are distributed throughout the enclosures. Bordesley, towards the south of the area has also witnessed extensive early-20th century ribbon development, with linear expansion evident along the Redditch Road.

The enclosures, linear settlements, and isolated farmsteads are interspersed by small areas of woodland pertaining to ancient or modern plantation, or that pertaining to historic land-usage, including that situated around the earthworks of historic ponds or extraction pits.

Despite the prevalence of a post-medieval agricultural landscape character, elements of the historic medieval parkland remain highly significant within the modern environment. Alongside the well-preserved and prominent archaeological monuments, most notably the double-moated enclosure and fishponds of the Bishop's Palace and the extant earthworks of the Alvechurch Park pale within Peck Wood, various facets of the medieval parkland remains tangible including remnants of the parkland lodges in structural or placename form, riverside meadows, and several historic parkland trees. The open nature of the medieval parkland remains more evident within the former deer park south and east of Bordesley Hall, where the creation of larger enclosures in conjunction with modern field amalgamation has reduced the intensity of parkland reorganisation evident within the modern landscape, in contrast to still densely enclosed the Alvechurch Park. The medieval landscape of the Bishop's Palace and deer park has been bisected by the later-20th century construction of the A441, fragmenting the moated site, the earthwork-monuments, and the primary channels of the River Arrow from the historic parkland to the east. While this has created a physical disconnection between the historic core of Alvechurch and the now enclosed parkland across the slopes of Newbourne Hill, the sunken setting of the road ensures a visual connectivity is maintained through relatively uninterrupted viewsheds.

Historic Built Form

A majority of the area's historic buildings are associated to the numerous 16th through 19th century farmsteads, outlined below, which feature a range of agricultural buildings from the farmhouses, to barns, cowhouses, stables, and granaries. Many of these are highly distinctive of their respective period, and contribute significantly to the landscape's historic character. Although the 18th and 19th century brick-built structures are the dominant agricultural built-form, there are several farmhouses and outbuildings with timber-framing of late-medieval provenance including Seechem Manor to the northeast.

While extensive 20th century ribbon development has resulted in the built form of Rowney Green being dominated by inter-and-post war detached housing, a notable assortment of historic buildings have been retained. These are largely formed of 17th through 19th century agricultural worker's cottages, focussed towards the northern extent of the village, and along Gravel Pit Lane in Lower Rowney Green. The latter collection of cottages has retained much of their historic setting, with relatively low density 20th century development in comparison to the linear expansion along Rowney Green lane.

Although the buildings of Old Rectory Lane and Radford Road are more closely linked to Alvechurch village, their proximity and historic utilisation of the managed watercourses which fed the medieval Bishop's Palace has facilitated their inclusion with this area. The built form of Old Rectory Lane is comprised of low-density interrupted-row settlement incorporating post-medieval through early-20th century large housing and wayside cottages. The extant structures and built features largely pertain to, or are influenced by, the 19th century industrial utilisation of the watercourse. A modicum of early-20th century development has occurred along the lane the low-density, however the wayside character of the urban form has been retained. The built form of Radford Road is comprised of three distinctive wayside dwellings of early through mid-20th century origin.



'The Homestead' cottage, Gravel Pit Lane, Lower Rowney Green



Jasmine Cottage, Gravel Pit Lane, Lower Rowney Green



Historic routeway across Alvechurch Deer Park, with both extant and removed historic hedgerow boundaries

The largest historic structure within the area is the 19th century Bordesley Hall. The building is extant, along with its associated farmstead and a number of outbuildings; however, extensive development of modern office space in the immediate vicinity has eroded its historic setting within the area.

There are fifteen farmsteads distributed relatively evenly throughout the area, ten of which have retained much of their historic form, four have seen significant loss of traditional buildings, and a single farmstead has undergone wholesale redevelopment. The dominant character is derived from nine well-preserved, 19th century farmsteads, with two 17th century farmsteads surviving at Radford Farm and Lower Park Farm. There is some variation in farmstead form and location. Those located atop and along the slopes of hills, and within the vicinity of the hamlets are often of a linear arrangement; while the farmsteads pertaining to the piecemeal enclosures of the rationalised medieval parkland in the west and north is most commonly arranged into regular or loose courtyards.

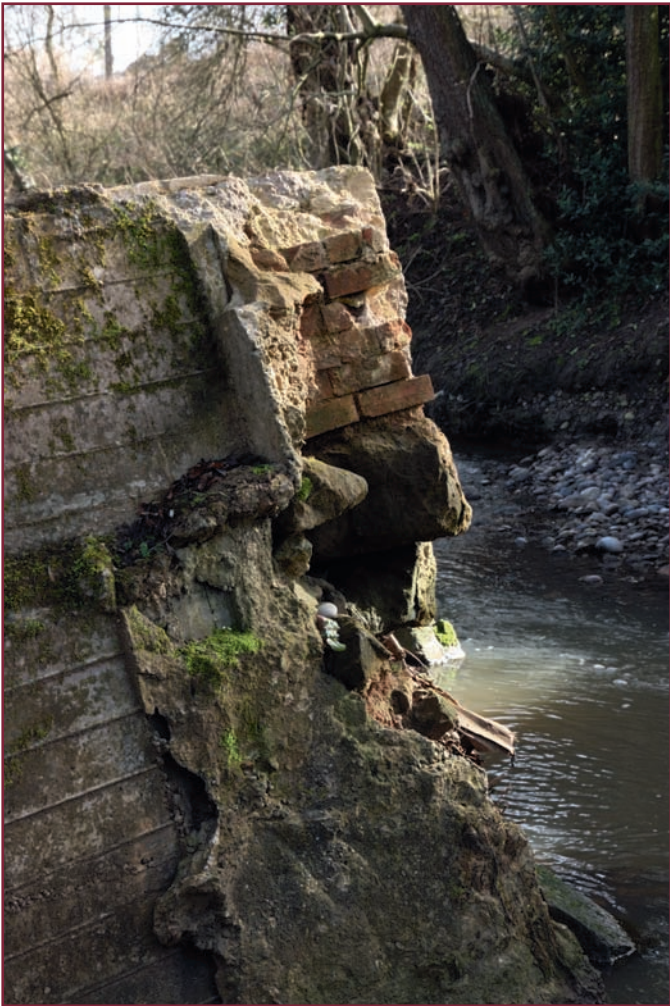
Archaeology

The Bishop's Palace is formed of a medieval, double-moated enclosure believed to originate from the 12th century. The moat is in exceptional condition, with only a portion of the north-eastern channel now silted and devoid of water. The moated enclosure is situated atop a steep northern bank of the River Arrow valley, with both active and silted leats and overflow channels connecting the two watercourses. The medieval earthworks and watercourses remain in notable condition, though the interior enclosure has been landscaped and redeveloped, with late-19th/early-20th century development, plantation and gardens redefining the character of the north-western enclosure from that of the medieval and post-medieval occupation. A small collection of trees survive from the orchard once cultivated within the south-eastern enclosure, with subtle ridge and furrow earthworks still discernible.

The River Arrow features numerous culverts, sluices and managed watercourses. It flows from the north and northwest with man-made channels diverting the water along the landscape's contours for further exploitation by the industries of Old Rectory Lane, the Alvechurch Town Mill, and within the meadows and fish ponds adjacent the Bishop's Palace. The steep, prominent earthworks of both the Bishop's Palace moat and the



Environment Agency LiDAR data, processed to represent degrees of slope. Double-moated enclosure of the Alvechurch Bishop's Palace (403100,272500) with associated fishponds, sluices, leats and watermeadow



Eroding remnants of a 19th century sluice, northwest of the Bishop's Palace along the River Arrow



'The Old Rectory', Old Rectory Lane, Alvechurch



The expansive disused gravel pit, south of the eponymous Gravel Pit Lane, Rowney Green

managed watercourses remain influential towards both Alvechurch and Rowney Green landscapes. The prominence of the earthworks is compounded by the dense, mixed broadleaved woodland which defines the moated site and the river banks. The brick and stone-lined watercourses which channels the River Arrow adjacent Old Rectory Lane includes further sluices, weirs and mill-ponds of varying forms. While the diversion of the watercourse is likely to have been initiated during the medieval period, the extant structural form is largely of 19th century provenance. The brick-lined channel is particularly prominent within the grounds of Rectory Cottage. Here, sluice gates framed within engineering-brick tunnels with header-orientated segmental archways divide and subsequently reconnect the river in the west and east respectively over prominent stone weirs adjacent weir ponds. The channel deepens to the west, lined with brick and stone revetments and retaining-earthwork banks of earlier origin. The 19th century industrial architecture of the watercourse has strongly influenced more modern construction in the immediate area, with adjacent walling, paving and structures designed to both maintain and reference the aesthetic of the monument through, for instance, the use of engineering-brick detail.

Numerous riverside meadows remain extant, within which are situated earthworks pertaining to disused medieval fish ponds once managed in association to the Bishop's Palace. The most prominent of these are situated immediately east and southeast of the moated site, set below the Bishop's Palace in the River Arrow valley, and historically supplied by leats and sluices conjoining the moat, ponds and watercourses. Further fishponds can be identified downstream towards Bordesley. The ponds, leats and an associated holloway remain clearly discernible within the landscape as earthworks, with details including the ponds' islands tangible.

The plethora of earthworks and ponds pertaining to the clay, marl and gravel extraction pits densely pockmark the landscape, with the pit adjacent the eponymous Gravel Pit Lane the most extensive. These earthworks and ponds contribute significantly to the local archaeological-landscape character, and are particularly tangible along the slopes of Newbourne Hill with the historic parkland. The pits contribute significantly to the area's biodiversity and hydrological-profile and should therefore be considered as significant Green Infrastructural assets. Several areas of subtle ridge and furrow pertaining to the post-medieval rationalisation and cultivation of the parkland are recorded by the Historic Environment Record, with many remaining clearly visible within aerial photography and remote sensing datasets.

Cropmark enclosures have been identified with the field parcel immediately northeast of the Bishop Palace. Archaeological excavation has indicated a likely early-medieval provenance, with the foundations of an aisle tithe barn of circa 13 - 14th century origin identified in the vicinity. The enclosures appear to have been abandoned around the 14th to 15th century, and are therefore likely to pertain to the earliest iterations of the Bishop's Palace.

The paths and holloways should be considered significant archaeological monuments of the landscape. Many of these tracks and routeways are sunken, with the adjacent earthwork banks and hedgerows of varying scale and extent. These features contribute to a particularly strong sense of rural connectivity, intersecting the historic parkland and conjoining the settlements and farmsteads which emerged with the area's post-medieval enclosure. Among the most significant of these is the aptly named 'The Holloway' south of Rowney Green, the associated features within Peck Wood, and those which transect the eastern and western slopes of Newbourne Hill.

While there are no confirmed prehistoric deposits within the area, a number of potential burnt mounds have been noted south of Rowney Green,

tentatively indicative of Bronze Age activity. The River Arrow terraces are however highly likely to contain palaeoenvironmental deposits of archaeological potential, and the sighting of the Bishop's Palace and management of the river's watercourse is likely to have been informed by earlier human activity.

Designed Landscapes

The historic Alvechurch Deer Park extended north, east and south of the Bishop's Palace. While the parkland was converted into farmland before the end of the 18th century, many archaeological features pertaining to the medieval land-use and character remain tangible. The line of the park pale has been preserved in a number of contexts including: earthworks evident south of Alvechurch village, particularly so within Peck Wood where the bank and ditch are particularly well preserved; through subsequent residential development with the Rowney Green and Alvechurch ribbon developments respecting the park boundary within plot boundaries; and finally the boundary is clearly reflected within the alignments of Rowney Green Lane and Radford Road. Additional reference to the parkland can be found within placenames such as 'Lodge Farm', and a number of mature, parkland trees which do not allude to former field boundaries.

To the southeast, over Newbourne Hill, lies the site of another medieval deer park associated to the now demolished medieval iteration of Bordesley Hall. As with Alvechurch Deer Park, the area has seen post-medieval rationalisation and reorganisation resulting in the introduction of piecemeal and subsequently parliamentary enclosures with hedgerow boundaries. Numerous elements of the parkland do however remain tangible, including a number of subtle sunken tracks, tree-alignments, and areas of woodland plantation. A generally 'open' environment has also been somewhat restored by later-20th century field amalgamation.

Statutory Designated Assets, Areas and Landscapes

There is a relatively low density of statutory designation of heritage assets relative to the numbers of historic buildings, archaeological monuments, and historic landscapes. Only six buildings are listed, with the majority in association to the historic farmsteads. The 15th through 19th century Seechem Manor (formerly 'Rowney Green House') holds the highest level of statutory protection with grade II* listing, with two farm buildings and the gateposts at Longfield Manor along with the farmhouses of Lower Park Farm and Rowney Green House Farm hold grade II designation. Finally, the 15th through 19th century Old Rectory of Old Rectory Lane hold grade II designation.

While the historic landscapes of the Alvechurch, Bordesley, and possible Longfield Manor deer parks do not possess statutory designation, the site of the Alvechurch Bishop's Palace of which the former served has received Scheduled Monument status. The Scheduled area encompasses the double-moated enclosure and the earthworks of the historic fishponds immediately to the southeast. The Scheduled area does not however encompass much of the archaeology pertaining to the management and exploitation of the river and brooks to the northeast, northwest and south, or the field parcel to the north where the aforementioned medieval enclosures and tithe barn have been identified. The Alvechurch Conservation Area's eastern extent crosses into the area, encompassing the double-moated enclosure of the Bishop's Palace, elements of the managed River Arrow watercourse immediately north, but not the earthworks of the medieval fishponds to the east of the site.

There is a moderately-low density of Public Rights of Way within the area, with the most predominant transecting the historic Alvechurch and Bordesley parkland. Lower Rowney Green is particularly well serviced, with numerous sunken lanes designated as public assets.

While the entire area is designated as 'Greenbelt', there are minimal natural environmental designations within the area. There are no areas designated as Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. There are however a single area



Earthworks pertaining to the Alvechurch Deer Park park-pale within Peck Wood, Rowney Green



Hedgerows of varying condition pertaining to the post-medieval piecemeal enclosures across Newbourne Hill

designated as Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland, Peck Wood southwest of Rowney Green, a Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Reserve at Newbourne Wood, and six sites registered on the Worcestershire Grassland Inventory: two at Rowney Green Roughs; two at Rose Cottage Meadows; the earthworks of the medieval fish ponds, and the meadows in around the Bishop's Palace moated enclosure.

Archaeological and Historic Environment Assessments

There has been a low-to-moderate level of professional archaeological and historic environmental investigation within the area. A significant proportion of the archaeological assessments have pertained to evaluations and desk based assessments to mitigate for the impacts of large-scale infrastructural development; however, minimal insights into the area's anthropogenic sub-surface deposits were derived from these exercises. Where evaluation has occurred in advance of smaller scale development, including the site of the modern Alvechurch School, the majority of the sub-surface deposits have related to medieval and post-medieval cultivation. A mid-20th century excavation by Birmingham museum north of the Bishop's Palace moat has provided the most significant discoveries, identifying a circa 13th through 17th century tithe barn and deposits associated to the located through cropmarks.

The current perspectives on the sub-surface archaeological environment of the landscape are therefore limited. However, the many known and significant medieval through post-medieval archaeological features, the continuous and intensive historic land-use pertaining to the historic parkland and river-side industries, the possible prehistoric activity indicated by cropmarks and burnt mounds, and the alluvial deposits along the River Arrow floodplain suggest a considerably high potential for multi-phased, below-ground archaeological deposits across the area, with more targeted investigation required for its identification and quantification.

Two photographic surveys of historic farm buildings occurred in 2003 examining Rowney Lodge Farm and Bordesley Hall Farm. However, the material and photographic record of the area's historic built form is again limited.

Two historic landscape and townscape assessments have preceded the HEAP, and while both have focussed on the settlement of Alvechurch and its immediate environ, they have incorporated elements to the west of the area. The 'Central Marches Historic Towns Survey,' completed in 1996, undertook a rapid urban survey, identifying areas of historic environment significance, archaeological potential, and mapped the medieval and post-medieval components of the village. The 2012/13 'Worcestershire Villages Historic Environment Resource Assessment' completed a highly detailed urban and landscape characterisation of Alvechurch village and its surrounding components, including the Bishop's Palace, the historic water-management systems along the River Arrow and its tributaries, and the landscape along and adjacent to Radford Road and Old Rectory Lane. The project also examined the broader context of the settlement within the parish; thus, incorporating consideration of the medieval parkland and post-medieval rural landscapes to the east towards Bordesley and Rowney Green.

Historic Environmental Condition

The post-medieval field systems of the area have been moderately well-preserved, with notable but not significant levels of amalgamation or subdivision across the southern parish. To the north of the area, beyond the River Arrow, the former meadows and piecemeal enclosures have undergone a modicum of modern reorganisation, largely resultant of the construction of the A441 Alvechurch Bypass in the later-20th century. To the south, around Bordesley Park large modern enclosures have emerged through amalgamation of the 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosures, which themselves were products of the amalgamation and reorganisation of an earlier piecemeal enclosure system. The landscape



Lodge Farm, Newbourne Hill with Alvechurch village in the background

across the slopes of Newbourne Hill, within the former Alvechurch Deer Park has however undergone minimal modern transformation, with much of the post-medieval piecemeal enclosures remaining extant with exception of small areas of modern reorganisation and paddocks. Significantly in spite of the moderate levels of field amalgamation, sub-division, or reorganisation a large proportion of the historic hedgerows remains extant and in moderate condition. Further, where field-boundaries have been lost mature hedgerow trees pertaining to the historic alignments are commonly preserved. Thus, the post-medieval enclosure landscape remains a key component of local historic environment and character.

While numerous features pertaining to the medieval parkland remain extant there is some risk presented by the under-representation of their relative significance to the local historic landscape character and environment. As aforementioned, the earthworks within Peck Wood survive in relatively good condition, and further features including mature trees, boundaries, archaeological monuments, and small areas of woodland plantation remain tangible. However, while the Historic Environment Record identifies the extent of the parkland, alongside the most prominent parkland features, there is a need to record the numerous extant parkland features in greater detail to ensure they are adequately represented in future local, regional, and strategic planning and management.

The most significant degradation of the historic environment and historic landscape character has emerged from the mid-to-later 20th century construction of the M42 motorway and A441 Alvechurch Bypass. The impact of the A441 has been to bisect the Alvechurch Deer Park, fragmenting the Bishop's Palace and associated monument from its historic parkland landscape to the east. In contrast to the historic landscape, clear points of transition have been created between the Alvechurch-village and Rowney Green areas of the parish, with distinctive 'gateways' formed by the road underpasses and bridges under and over which the historic routeways have been diverted. The road is however sunken into the landscape; thus the visual impact on landscape connectivity, coherence and historic viewsheds is greatly reduced. The M42 has however had a relatively significant impact, fragmenting the historically coherent undulating, post-medieval rural landscape of piecemeal enclosures and isolated courtyard farmsteads which historically stretched from the north of the parish, south-eastwards along the eastern escarpment of the Alvechurch 'bowl', and beyond the historic extent of the town of Redditch.

Modern settlement development has had a varying impact on the area. The extensive ribbon developments along Rowney Green Lane and Redditch Road have considerably modified the character of the settlements, with large scale early-20th through 21st century urban forms now dominant over the post-medieval settlements. There has also been degradation of the Alvechurch and Bordesley estate homesteads, with the redevelopment of many historic buildings for commercial or modern, residential properties. In contrast many of the isolated, clustered hamlets and the historic farmsteads have retained a significant level of historic integrity despite high levels of conversion from original functionalities.

Forces for Change

Areas identified within flood risk modelling are largely restricted to the meadows and field parcels immediately adjacent to the River Arrow and its tributaries which flow loosely north to south through the area. Many of the historic environment features within this catchment pertain to the historic utilisation of the river's hydrology; and therefore, may not be adversely impacted by future flooding events, and conversely may offer opportunities for sustainable water-management through Green and Blue Infrastructure. A number of locations for historic surface water flooding have been recorded, with several again pertaining to the historic water-management features, and several in association to the historic farmsteads within and at the periphery of Rowney Green.

A large majority of the area has been deemed of 'Very Low' or 'Low' risk for soil erosion, with only the peak of Newbourne Hill, encompassing the southern extent of Rowney Green, determined to be of 'Moderate' risk.

The area's historic environment is generally at low risk from farming and agriculture. The predominant land-use is that of grassland pasture, providing optimum conditions for preservation for both surface and sub-surface archaeology and reducing the impact of ploughing. Around half of the field parcels are within Environmental Stewardship agreements, with many of the significant archaeological features protected under appropriate management options. This includes the allocation of options to ensure permanent grassland is maintained over both the riverside medieval earthworks along the river arrow alongside the fields immediately northwest of the Bishop's Palace where deposits associated to a medieval settlement are believed to be located. While a number of the parkland features of Bordesley Park are under stewardship, the same cannot be said for the landscape of Alvechurch Deer Park, presenting a modicum of risk. Further, there are few options ensuring the maintenance of the historic hedgerows, heightening potential for further degradation of the post-medieval landscape.

The area is at moderate risk from large scale urban, industrial or infrastructural development. While large areas are likely to be deemed unsuitable for housing development due to a combination of topography, historic or natural environmental assets and proximity to the River Arrow, the presence of the major road arteries of the motorway, bypass, and the Redditch Road make further residential expansion a strong likelihood. The landscape immediately northwest of Alvechurch, along Radford Road and adjacent Old Rectory Lane are archaeologically sensitive areas which may be targeted for future development. This also applies to the relatively flat, open landscape of the historic Bordesley Deer Park, and the land adjacent the Redditch Road. Greater risk is posed by small scale, piecemeal developments which fragment and erode historic landscape character.



The Holloway, Rowney Green



Historic routeway across the former Alvechurch parkland landscape between Lodge Farm and Rowney Lodge Farm



Rowney Green Methodist Church



20th century ribbon development along Rowney Green Lane, Rowney Green

Historic Environment Actions

ALVA3_01	Secure greater levels of protection and representation for locally significant historic environment assets and historic landscape character
<p>The key component of the area's historic environment is the collective significance of both the designated and undesignated environmental and landscape features including the farmsteads, enclosure systems, extraction-monuments, views towards and from Newbourne Hill, and the medieval parkland. Failure to adequately represent and consider these locally significant assets within future development control may therefore prove highly detrimental to the area's historic-environmental and archaeological form.</p> <p>The relatively low proportion of historic buildings afforded English Heritage designation is a cause for concern. While there are numerous locally significant buildings within the area, the criteria for statutory protection are rarely fulfilled. This is compounded by the absence of a Conservation Area, resulting in significant linear expansion along Rowney Green Lane. The areas of Old Rectory Lane and Lower Rowney Green are particularly sensitive, with well preserved and significant post-medieval settlement character, but little recognition within national listings. The moated enclosure and fishponds immediately adjacent the Alvechurch Bishop's Palace are protected as Scheduled Monuments; however many of the associated features pertaining to the medieval through post-medieval riverside industries along the River Arrow and its tributaries remain unprotected. While the HEAP appraisal has improved representation of local historic environment assets within the HER including those of the medieval parkland and post-medieval enclosure landscapes, there is no local list at present.</p> <p><u>Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Loss of locally significant historic buildings through insensitive modification or demolition. o Erosion of local historic landscape and settlement character. o Erosion of the landscape setting of, and monuments associated to, both nationally and locally significant archaeological monuments. o Underrepresentation of locally significant historic environment assets within strategic and local planning, resulting in the justification of insensitive or unsustainable development. <p><u>Objectives & Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure the county Historic Environment Record provides a comprehensive representation of local historic environment assets and landscape character. o Support and engage with the creation of a local list of historic environment assets through insights derived from the HEAP assessment, and promoting advocacy and nomination of local assets through contacts with community advocates and societies. o Support district Conservation Officers in Conservation Area and Listed Building appraisals to identify opportunities and deficiencies of existing statutory designation. o Ensure the local community is equipped with adequate evidence-bases and expertise to promote the locally significant historic environmental assets within initiatives including the production of Neighbourhood Plans and Design Statements. 	



View from Rowney Green Lane, northeast towards Rowney Green Court



A441 Alvechurch Bypass, bisecting the medieval parkland landscape

ALVA3_02

Improve awareness of the distinctiveness and significance of post-medieval rural land-use, landscape character and rural buildings. Promote sensitive and sustainable development and conservation of historic farmsteads

Despite the construction of the M42 and Alvechurch bypass partially fragmenting the area from the northern and western parish, the surviving post-medieval rural buildings, features and monuments continue to forge a strong coherence of landscape character around the slopes of the parish's topographic 'bowl'. The numerous 17th through 19th century farmsteads contribute significantly to the architectural and landscape character of the area, with their significance further enhanced through their visual prominence within the undulating landscape. Although the majority of these farmsteads have already been converted from agricultural use, their historic character has largely been retained, and therefore is at risk from future development undertaken without due consideration for the local vernacular and their historic landscape setting. The relatively low-levels of field amalgamation or reorganisation has ensured the broad character of the piecemeal enclosure has been preserved, with hedgerows and mature trees largely in favourable, if not always optimal, condition. The large numbers of earthworks and ponds pertaining to post-medieval marl extraction also remain highly significant, but largely unrecorded assets of the area's historic environment and character. Further, while the post-medieval landscape has been bisected by the 20th century road-bypass, the sunken construction of the road has not diminished the influence, significance or aesthetic of the rural-viewsheds Newbourne Hill grants to many areas within the area and broader parish.

There is an element of potential conflict between the prospective enhancements of the key characteristics of the two prevailing forms of historic land-use within the area: that of the highly rationalised post-medieval piecemeal enclosures; and that of the open, and unenclosed pastoral environments of the medieval parkland. There is therefore need to establish the relative significance of both the parkland and enclosure landscapes to the local community, and within the broader environmental systems and dynamics to ensure appropriate prioritisation of Historic Environment Actions.

Risk

- o Loss of distinctive post-medieval landscape character through further amalgamation, sub-division or reorganisation of piecemeal enclosures, with consequent loss of historic hedgerows and mature trees.
- o Insensitive modification or redevelopment of locally distinctive and significant historic farmsteads and rural buildings.
- o Erosion of historic environmental feature pertaining to post-medieval land-use with existing or potential significance to the contemporary environment (see Action ALVA3_04).

Objectives & Opportunities

- o Strongly advocate for application of assessment and design principles outlined in the Worcestershire Farmsteads Assessment Framework and relevant Worcestershire Farmsteads Character Statement.
- o Encourage the preservation and management of rural-enclosure features through Environment Stewardship schemes, ensuring optimum outcomes for conservation are either maintained or allocated to locally significant assets.
- o Ensure the multi-phased landscape character of the area's historic environment is adequately and appropriately represented within local initiatives including Neighbourhood Planning and the production of the local list of historic environment assets. Promote the use of existing Historic Landscape Characterisation resources within these contexts.

ALVA3_03	Improve awareness, understanding and conservation of the distinctiveness and significance of the medieval parkland landscape
<p>Although the double-moated enclosure and adjacent earthworks of the medieval Alvechurch Bishop's Palace are recognised as of national historic environment significance, awareness of the associated deer park landscape is relatively low. Numerous archaeological monuments and features remain tangible across the now largely rationalised western slopes of Newbourne Hill. This is largely a result of the post-medieval rationalisation of the landscape, and the bisection of the historic parkland from the Bishop's Palace and the River Arrow by the 20th century road-bypass. Further, the parkland east of Bordesley has retained many discernable elements of its historic land-use. Prior to the HEAP there was a deficiency in recorded parkland features within the Historic Environment Record, alongside under-representation of the condition and tangibility of the parkland within environmental assessments.</p> <p>There is an element of potential conflict between the prospective enhancements of the key characteristics of the two prevailing forms of historic land-use within the area: that of the highly rationalised post-medieval piecemeal enclosures; and that of the open, and unenclosed pastoral environments of the medieval parkland. There is therefore need to establish the relative significance of both the parkland and enclosure landscapes to the local community, and within the broader environmental systems and dynamics to ensure appropriate prioritisation of Historic Environment Actions.</p> <p>Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Further erosion of parkland character by misrepresentation of the condition and tangibility of extant parkland features. o Missed opportunities for historic environment enhancement or restoration through a lack of awareness of surviving parkland features and landscape character. <p>Objectives & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Promote the preservation and management of parkland features through Environment Stewardship schemes, ensuring optimum outcomes for conservation are either maintained or allocated to locally significant assets. o Ensure the multi-phased landscape character of the area's historic environment is adequately represented within local initiatives including Neighbourhood Planning and the production of the local list of historic environment assets. o Promote existing evidence-bases to local advocates of the medieval parkland and provide guidance on engaging with historic environment with local and strategic planning. o Explore opportunities and the degree of local aspiration for restoration of the medieval landscape-character through field amalgamation to reinstate the historic open-pastoral environment. o Increase awareness of the historic parkland and its connectivity to the Alvechurch Bishop's Palace through programmes of community engagement, including a 'walkpast' event. o Record historic trackways, routeways and holloways associated to the medieval parkland, and advocate their continued preservation as Public Rights of Way. 	



Gravel Pit Lane, Rowney Green



Newbourne Wood, 20th century plantation atop Newbourne Hill, immediately west of Rowney Green Lane



Historic hedgerow boundaries with mature hedgerow-trees. Old Rectory Lane, Alvechurch

ALVA3_04	Promote holistic approaches to local landscape and environmental management, highlighting opportunities presented by historic environmental features
<p>Local hydrology is strongly influenced by historic environmental assets, ranging from: the extensively managed courses of the River Arrow and its tributaries with medieval through 19th century sluices, leats, watermeadows, and moat; to the plethora of ponds pertaining to former marl and gravel extraction which pockmark the landscape. These water-features, along with the hedgerows, grassland, and meadows of the post-medieval piecemeal enclosure systems, and the semi-natural ancient woodland, contribute significantly to the natural environment and biodiversity of the area. The significance of the historic landscape and archaeological monuments to the local environment is therefore considerable, and presents numerous opportunities for sustainable and effective management in a range of contexts including the mitigation of fluvial and pluvial flooding, and the management of locally significant habitats. This is likely achievable through a combination of Green Infrastructure and Environmental Stewardship schemes.</p> <p><u>Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Loss of locally significant habitats and biodiversity through mismanagement or underrepresentation of historic environmental systems. o Erosion of historic landscape character through loss of key 'natural' environmental characteristics and features of the area. <p><u>Objectives & Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Promote the application of sustainable landscape management through Green Infrastructure frameworks within local planning and policies through both community and professional stakeholder engagement. o Ensure the significance of historic environment features towards a broad array of environmental agendas is understood, and the numerous opportunities presented by it are adequately represented within local planning and community advocacy. o Encourage the continued and expanded application of Environmental Stewardship options which deliver cross-disciplinary benefits to the local environment, including: the preservation and best-practice management of the historic watermeadow and water-management systems; the conservation of locally significant grasslands habitats; the management and preservation of historic hedgerows, woodlands, and mature trees. 	

ALVA3_05	Gain a greater understanding and knowledge of the presence, provenance, and condition of below-ground archaeological deposits
<p>The current perspectives on the area's below-ground archaeological environment are limited due to relatively low levels of investigation. Such hindrances are replicated in association to many of Worcestershire's small villages and hamlets; and therefore the potential effectiveness of professional archaeological advice and the justification for mitigation from development.</p> <p>The many known and significant medieval through post-medieval archaeological features, the continuous and intensive historic land-use pertaining to the historic parkland and river-side industries, the possible prehistoric activity indicated by cropmarks and burnt mounds, and the alluvial deposits along the River Arrow floodplain do however suggest a high potential for multi-phased, below-ground archaeological deposits across the area. Further investigation is therefore required for the identification and quantification of potential archaeological deposits pertaining to the area's historic land-use, including both that in association to the nationally significant monuments of the medieval Bishop's Palace, and the more locally valued historic parkland. This will ensure more effective archaeological mitigation during potential development within the landscape.</p> <p><u>Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Lack of knowledge pertaining to the area's below-ground archaeology resulting in the loss of potentially nationally significant deposits through inadequate mitigation within development control. o Diminished representation of significant sub-surface archaeology within local planning and policy. <p><u>Objectives & Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Explore funding opportunities to develop a bespoke project to examine means of readdressing deficiencies in our knowledge of below-ground archaeology in association to Worcestershire's small, rural settlements. o Promote the relatively high archaeological potential for multi-phased and significant below-ground archaeology within the area; ensuring due representation is secured within local planning initiatives including the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan. 	



Extant and well maintained 19th century sluice and leat system, north of Old Rectory Lane, Alvechurch



Earthworks pertaining to historic leats along the River Arrow, Alvechurch