

LCA 6: Castlemartin/Merrion Ranges



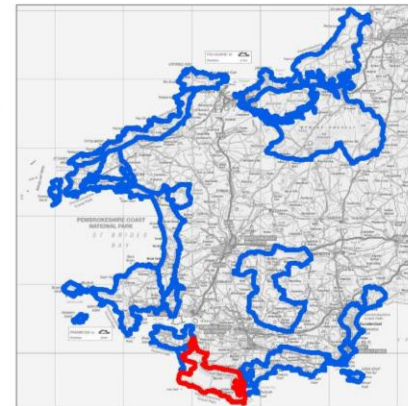
Trees and Woodland Siting and Design Guidance
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



LCA 6 location and existing woodland coverage

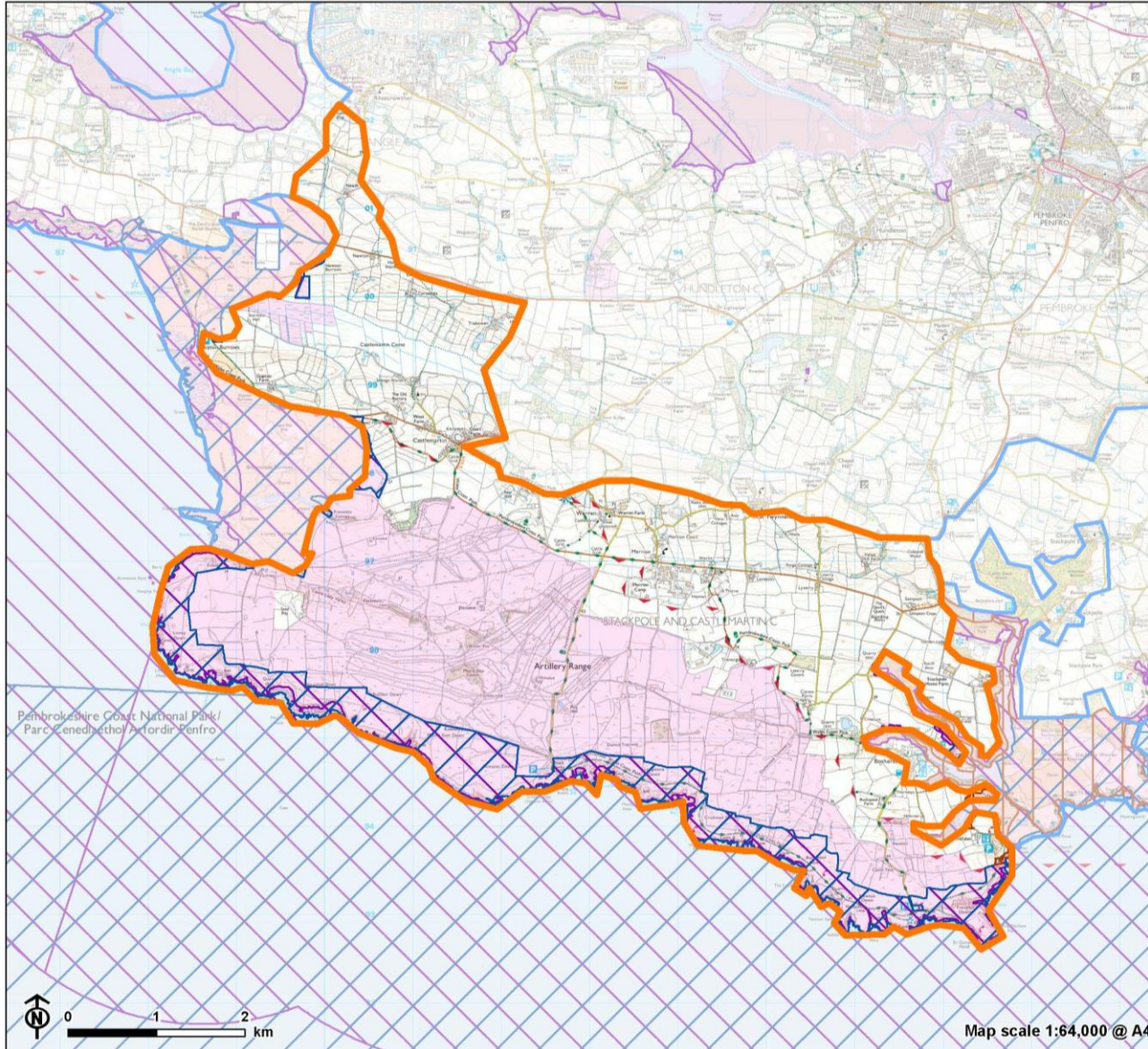
- LCA 6: Castlemartin/Merrion Ranges
 - Neighbouring LCA
- Existing Woodland**
- Ancient woodland
 - National Forest Inventory woodland*

*The NFI definition of woodland is a minimum area of 0.5 hectares



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CB:AHB EB:Collins_N LUC FIGX_11664_r0_LocationAndWoodland_A4L_09/11/2021
Source: OS, FC, NRW

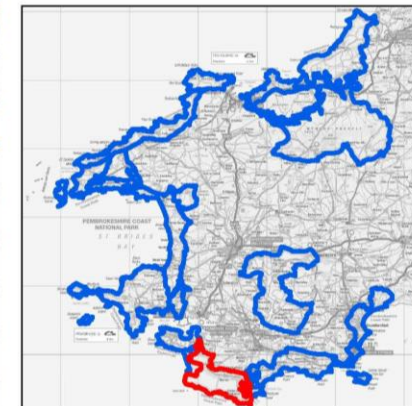


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LCA 6 nature conservation designations

- LCA 6: Castlemartin/Merrion Ranges
- Neighbouring LCA
- National Nature Reserve
- Special Protection Area
- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest

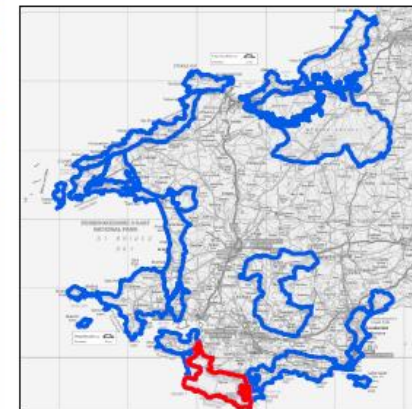
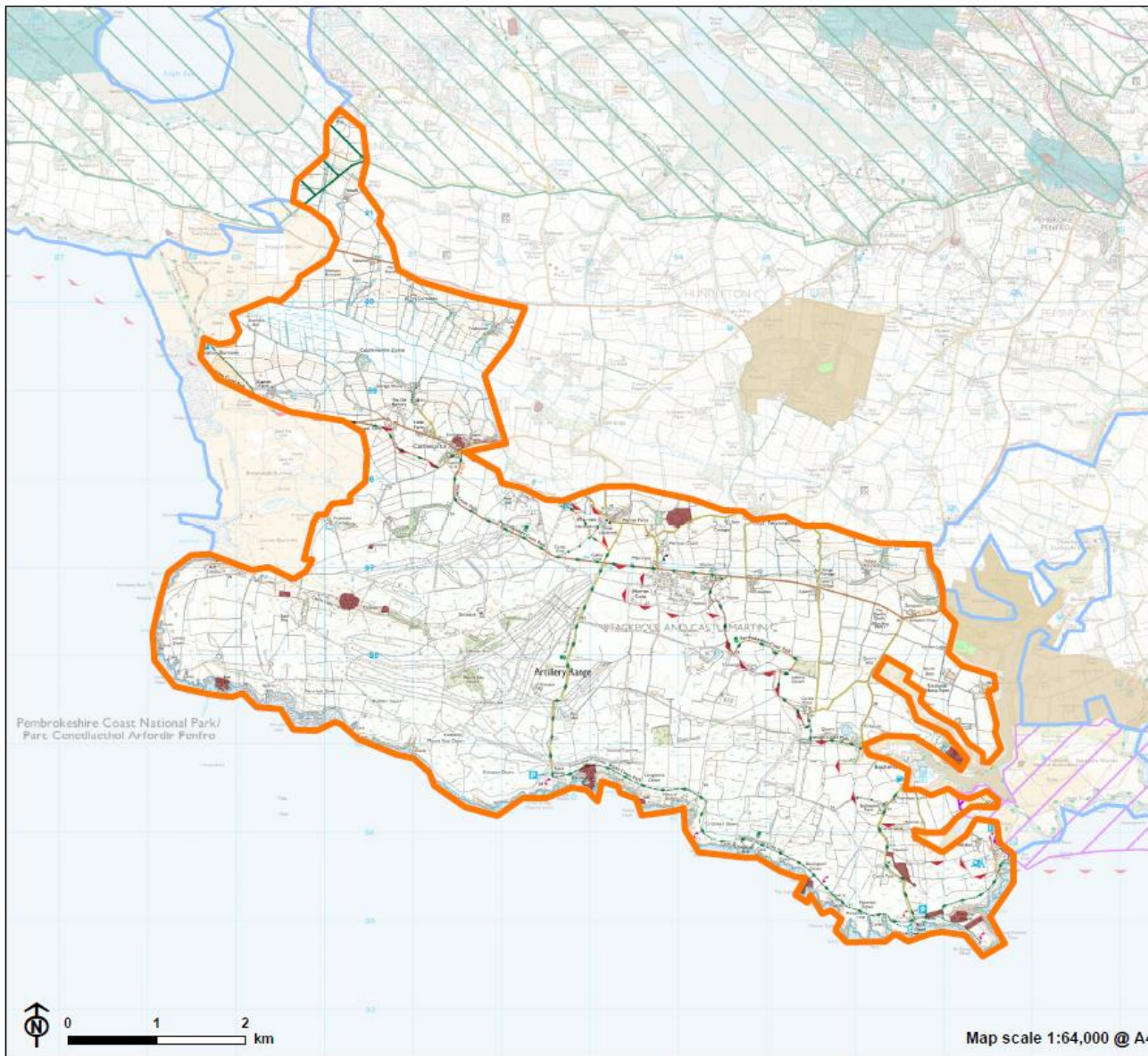


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 Source: OS, NRW

LCA 6 Historic Environment Designations

- LCA 6: Castlemartin/Merrion Ranges
- Neighbouring LCA
- Outstanding Historic Landscape
- Special Historic Landscape
- Gardens and Kitchen Gardens
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area



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CB:AHB EB:Hardie-Brown_A LUC FIGX_11664_r0_CulturalHeritageDesignations_A4L 30/06/2022
Source: OS, Cadw

Existing woodland coverage within the LCA



View south from near Warren across large-scale pasture fields bound by hedges and extending to the open sand dunes.

This Landscape Character Area (LCA) is characterised by an expanse of rolling lowland adjacent to the coast, with a large area used as an artillery range by the Ministry of Defence. Woodland is sparse and comprises less than 1.5% of the total land cover. The majority of woodland (74%) is broadleaved (including oak, ash and sycamore) which occur in occasional small (less than 5 hectares) copses within the farmed landscape. Scrub is located on the artillery range which occupies the western part of the LCA. Within the agricultural landscape field boundaries are varied; most are low hedgerows (containing hawthorn, blackthorn and ash) supplemented by post and wire fencing without trees however some lengths (e.g. around Merrion Camp) are overgrown and contain occasional windswept hedgerow trees (predominantly ash).

Natural and cultural heritage designations and records		
<p><i>The focus of this Guide is on the sensitivity and opportunities for woodland creation in relation to landscape character. It can only play an advisory role in the weighing of potential benefits of woodland creation against likely impacts on non-woodland habitats and cultural heritage assets, which should be considered in more detail at site level. Please refer to the main report for more detail.</i></p>		
Natural heritage	SAC, SPA, SSSI NNR, LNR (including Wildlife Trust/ RSPB reserves) Ancient woodland RIGS	<p>The Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire SPA covers 51.9ha (1.4% of the LCA).</p> <p>There are four SACs which collectively cover 544ha (14.9%) of the LCA.</p> <p>There are four SSSI in the LCA which cover 1864.4ha (51.0%) of the LCA.</p> <p>Stackpole is a NNR and covers 6.4ha (0.2%) of the LCA.</p> <p>Ancient woodland amounts to 16.4ha.</p> <p>There are four RIGS, covering 47.8ha (1.3%).</p>
Cultural heritage	National Park Register of Historic Landscapes	Milford Haven Waterway and Stackpole Warren are Landscapes of Special Historic Interest in Wales, which cover 4.5ha (1.2%) of the LCA.

	Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and HER data	<p>There are 30 listed buildings in the LCA. The 19 Scheduled Monuments collectively cover 29.4ha (0.8% of the LCA).</p> <p>Stackpole Court is a Registered Park and Garden, covering 0.5ha of the LCA.</p> <p>The LCA includes 654 HER records, which cover a range of archaeological and historical features, including scheduled and undesignated monuments, listed and non-listed historical buildings and locations of finds. These features date from prehistory up to recent times.</p>
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Landscape sensitivity to new woodland planting

<p>Key sensitivities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The distinctive open ridge which forms the northern boundary of the LCA. ■ The rugged coastline punctuated by cliffs and bays. ■ Habitats of international/national importance including coastal grassland, heathland and cliff habitats designated as SAC/SSSI. Most of the artillery range is designated as SSSI which is the most extensive area of species-rich neutral grassland in Wales. ■ The varied field pattern across the landscape, particularly the small intricate fields along the Castlemartin Corse valley in the north-west. Some fields are of medieval origin. ■ The presence of nationally important historic and archaeological sites including numerous medieval forts, enclosures and tumuli. ■ The open and exposed character with long views across the farmland to and along the coast due to the limited trees and woodland. ■ Large, open skylines punctuated by occasional church towers and spires and military observation towers. ■ The largely undeveloped and remote character; a tranquil and wild landscape with little human disturbance (excepting during military exercises).
<p>Overview</p>	<p>The artillery range area of the LCA has high sensitivity to woodland creation of any scale due to the extensive tracts of designated semi-natural habitats and wealth of intact archaeological features (resulting from the lack of intensive farming on military land). Land immediately adjacent to the coastline also has high sensitivity to woodland creation as these parts of the landscape are valued for their open, exposed quality with expansive views of the sea.</p> <p>The ridgeline which forms the northern boundary of the LCA and the Castlemartin Corse valley are distinct landform features which are more sensitive to any scale of woodland planting.</p> <p>Sensitivity to woodland creation is lower within the enclosed agricultural landscape in the northern and eastern parts of the LCA and there are opportunities for the creation of small and small-medium scale woodlands, particularly along minor watercourses and adjacent to existing areas of woodland within the farmed landscape. However, care should be taken to ensure woodland planting here does not screen views to distinctive built features on the ridgeline including St. Twynnell's Church and St. Mary's Church (both grade II* listed).</p> <p>Medium-scale woodlands could be accommodated as an extension of existing woodland in LCA 5: Stackpole, although disruption of valued open habitats (such as unimproved, flower-rich grasslands) should be avoided.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to all scales of mixed woodland for this LCA is high.</p>

Landscape Sensitivity Scores

Small-scale broadleaved woodlands (≤5ha)		Low-moderate			
Small-medium scale broadleaved woodlands (>5- 15ha)		Low-moderate			
Medium-scale broadleaved woodlands (>15-30ha)			Moderate		
Large-scale broadleaved woodlands (>30ha)				Moderate-high	

Opportunities for future tree and woodland coverage within the LCA

- Seek opportunities for planting to screen military buildings at Castlemartin Artillery Range, including filling in gaps in hedgerows along Merrion Cross Road and supplementing existing hedgerows with mature trees. Hedgerows on the western side of the Artillery Range building complex could be allowed to grow out mirroring those to the east of the development and providing greater screening from the west.
- Up to medium-scale woodland creation could be used to link to existing woodland, with that in adjacent LCA 5: Stackpole, to provide greater habitat connectivity, visual links to the adjacent landscape and to benefit water quality downstream.
- Consider the potential for natural regeneration of semi-natural woodland and scrub extending along watercourses to enhance flood management, water quality, biodiversity and to help prevent soil erosion.
- Plant new woodland along the small-scale stream valleys in the east of the LCA, such as the streams draining into Castlemartin Corse to prevent agricultural run-off further downstream.
- Site new small-scale woodland to screen farm-based development or small-scale tourism developments/infrastructure (such as car parks) and integrate within the existing pattern of woodland distribution and land-use.
- There are opportunities for the creation of wood pasture to integrate more trees into the agricultural landscape.
- Explore opportunities to extend existing woodlands and link to the hedgerow network to improve habitat connectivity.
- Explore opportunities to reinforce hedgerow boundaries where they have become gappy or degraded and recreate lost lengths of hedgerow or areas of post and wire fencing (e.g. around Warren).
- Consider the opportunities for the regeneration and extension of traditional orchards using heritage varieties.
- Plant new hedgerow trees where this would be in keeping with landscape character, choosing disease resilient species (e.g. replacing ash with oak).
- Any new planting should follow principles of good design as set out in the UK Forestry Standard.
- Choose appropriate native species suited to local conditions (e.g. climate, soil, hydrology, existing vegetation) to achieve a diverse woodland mosaic character.

Strategic guidance for new woodland / tree planting

Landform and scale

- Avoid masking distinctive landform features including the rugged cliffs and bays.
- Design woodland to align along existing contours and undulations of the landscape, such as the minor stream valleys extending down to the coast from the ridgeline to the north

Landcover (including semi-natural habitats)

- Avoid adversely affecting existing areas of non-woodland semi-natural habitats, directly or indirectly, and encourage diversity of habitat networks. This includes open habitats of value including dry heathland, sea cliff grassland, neutral grassland, fen grasslands, lowland heathland, as well as cliffs, rocky and sandy shores, with large tracts of the landscape internationally/nationally designated as SAC/SSSI.

Field pattern

- Avoid siting woodland across multiple fields which may mask the remnant medieval/post medieval field patterns. Restore traditional field boundary hedgebanks where they are degraded or lost.
- Consider allowing hedgerows to grow out (where not obscuring public highways/rights of way) through reduced coppicing/flailing cycles, to enhance biodiversity and to screen features such as buildings at the Castlemartin Range.
- Conserve existing hedgerow trees and consider planting new ones where it would not detract from the distinctive open character of the landscape.
- Tree planting should be considered to address the potential loss of diseased mature ash trees in hedgerows, replacing the mature trees with other locally distinctive species such as oak.
- Protect, and where appropriate, extend the existing woodland along the minor watercourses connecting to the existing woodlands in the adjacent LCA 5: Stackpole located to the east.

Existing tree and woodland character

- Conserve and restore existing semi-natural broadleaved woodlands and trees in the landscape, including field boundaries,

to improve connectivity and strengthen the landscape framework.

- Protect the areas of ancient woodland which form occasional features within the open agricultural landscape. Buffer ancient woodland by establishing fringing areas and encourage natural regeneration.
- Encourage a diverse range of native species to build resilience to the impact of pathogens, pests and diseases, e.g. *Phytophthora*, *Chalara* (ash dieback) and leaf miner beetles in sweet chestnut trees.

Historic character

- Avoid adversely affecting, directly or indirectly, the rich cultural heritage of the area, particularly the numerous archaeological remains, including prehistoric monuments, Iron Age hill forts, medieval and post-medieval buildings and sites. These include Scheduled Monuments at Brownslade Round Barrow, Flimston Bay Camp and Pricaston Farmhouse.

Visual character

- Ensure that new woodland does not obscure the distinctive coastal views from the Wales Coast Path/Pembrokeshire Coast Path, including the viewpoint from the ridgetop close to Warren.
- Preserve the views to the prominent ridgeline in the north of the LCA, including the distinctive church towers visible on the skyline.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- Conserve the open and remote character, particularly along the coastline. Locate new woodland so that it does not detract from the enjoyment of the exposed and remote quality of the landscape.
- Explore opportunities to improve or create new access opportunities as part of woodland planting.
- Have regard to the cumulative impact of woodland creation and tree planting, ensuring it does not lead to a change of landscape character, particularly in the more open and exposed parts in the south of the LCA.



View south-west from St Mary's Church at Warren to Merrion Camp.



View south-east from near Castlemartin showing low scrubby hedgerows.



View north from near Castlemartin across regular hedgerow-bound pasture fields. The industrial chimneys of the Pembroke Refinery are visible on the skyline.



View north-west from near Bosherton, showing large scale field patterns and the tower of St. Twynnell's Church situated on the ridge enclosing the LCA to the north.