

THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE

Estate Standards Manual

Design, appearance and stewardship code

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Document control

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1.0	17 July 2026	First public consultation release	Initial controlled release

Review Process

This Manual shall be reviewed periodically to ensure that Estate standards remain consistent with the Founding Charter, Estate Constitution, applicable legislation and practical operational experience.

Improvements identified through practical Estate management shall be incorporated through the controlled publication process.

Document execution and plans

Every agreement, declaration, transfer, lease or other document requiring signature must also be dated. Every plan requiring agreement must be signed and dated by all relevant parties and must identify its drawing number, revision, date, status and associated legal document. Superseded plans and documents are archived rather than deleted.

1. Status of the standards

This Manual distinguishes Mandatory Standards, Preferred Standards and Recommendations. A standard becomes legally binding only where it is incorporated into a transfer, lease, restrictive covenant, licence or other executed document.

2. Estate character

The Estate should resemble a wealthy historic countryside estate that has evolved naturally over generations. Infrastructure should be understated, coherent, durable and sympathetic to the landscape.

- Established and timeless
- Productive and biodiverse
- Orderly and well maintained
- Natural rather than suburban or industrial
- Designed to improve with age
- Mature trees should be retained wherever reasonably practicable and incorporated into the long-term character of the Estate.

3. Estate Stewardship

Every improvement should seek to leave the Estate more productive, more attractive and better managed than before. Short-term convenience should not compromise the long-term character of the Estate. Standards should encourage stewardship rather than unnecessary regulation.

4. Main Estate entrances

Mandatory where legally and physically practicable:

- Principal gates set back at least 25 metres from the public highway.
- Entrance widened where possible for agricultural and emergency access.
- Traditional gate design secured by combination lock.
- Dry stone wall treatment preferred at principal entrances.
- Safe visibility, waiting and turning space designed with professional advice and required permissions.

5. Main Estate Ways

- Main Estate Ways should be kept as wide as reasonably practicable and must not be unnecessarily narrowed or obstructed.
- Preferred appearance: compacted country track, grass centre strip and grassed verges where practical.
- Passing places must be provided at all reasonable locations.
- Curved plot entrances should also serve as passing places where practical.
- Drainage and rut repair should be dealt with early through preventative maintenance.
- Future underground utility corridors should be considered before construction.
- No parking, storage or works may block an Main Estate Way or emergency access.

6. Main Estate Way maintenance and costs

Estate Ways are shared infrastructure. The Estate will seek suitable donated or surplus aggregate and will fill ruts as they form to minimise or avoid costs. Where significant expenditure cannot reasonably be avoided, costs may be shared only under the applicable legal documents and following transparent communication.

Main Estate ways are shared infrastructure intended for the long-term benefit of all participants.

Preventative maintenance should be undertaken wherever reasonably practicable in preference to major repairs.

The Estate encourages the voluntary donation of suitable aggregate, reclaimed materials and practical assistance in order to minimize unnecessary expenditure.

No participant shall be liable for any contribution towards the construction, improvement, repair or maintenance of a Main Estate Way unless they have first agreed, in writing, both:

- the specification of the proposed works; and
- the estimated cost or method by which that cost will be calculated.

Ownership of land alone shall not create any liability to contribute.

Nothing in this Manual shall be interpreted as creating an implied obligation to contribute towards shared infrastructure.

7. Plot entrances, gates and parking

- Minimum clear gate opening: 4.9 metres.
- Minimum setback from Estate Way: 6.5 metres, unless a written estate-specific exception is approved.
- Curved entrance geometry should allow a vehicle to leave the Estate Way before stopping and should form a passing place where practical.

- The plot owner pays for and maintains their fencing and gates.
- Shared parking must be used where allocated. Visitors must be informed before arrival.
- Owners should park on their own land when visiting and must never obstruct Estate Ways.

8. Fencing and boundaries

Mandatory or preferred treatments will be identified in the transfer and Approved Materials Guide.

- Retain and repair existing historic walls, banks, hedges and mature trees where practical.
- Dry stone walls are preferred at principal entrances and other suitable focal points.
- Main Estate Ways should normally be enclosed using heavy-duty timber post-and-three-rail fencing where appropriate to the character of the Estate.
- Woodland boundaries should normally use agricultural post-and-wire fencing, native hedgerows or natural boundary treatments.
- Open agricultural land should normally use agricultural post-and-wire fencing or other unobtrusive agricultural fencing.
- Dry stone walls should normally be reserved for principal entrances and other significant landscape features.
- Existing mature hedgerows, banks, walls and trees should be retained wherever reasonably practicable.
- Visually intrusive suburban or industrial fencing should normally be avoided.

9. Estate landscape corridors

Planting alongside Estate Ways is reserved to or controlled by THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE LIMITED through restrictive covenants and estate-specific plans. Owners must not remove, replace or materially alter corridor planting without written approval.

Tree hierarchy

- Primary signature tree: Walnut.
- Secondary tree: Sweet Chestnut.
- Supporting productive and flowering trees: Hazel, and Cherry varieties.
- Additional locally appropriate native and productive species may be used for resilience, biodiversity and landscape fit.

Owners may seek assistance through Woodland Trust or other schemes where available, but funding and eligibility are not guaranteed.

10. Plot numbering

Temporary plot references are used during design and selection. Final numbering is applied only after every plot has been allocated. A field-based system may preserve the historic field identity, for example Plot 4 becoming Plots 4A, 4B and 4C.

11. Storage, clutter and shared agricultural storage

- Plots must not be used as junk yards.

- Derelict vehicles, waste, scrap, unsuitable containers and visually intrusive non-agricultural storage are prohibited where addressed by covenant.
- Temporary agricultural materials must be orderly and removed when no longer reasonably required.
- Where shared agricultural storage exists, owners are encouraged to use it to protect the appearance of their plots.
- Shared storage is strictly for approved agricultural, horticultural or Estate-related purposes and is not guaranteed.

12. Water stewardship

Owners are encouraged to install approximately 30,000 litres of covered rainwater storage, irrespective of access to mains water, streams or rivers. Covered or otherwise protected storage is recommended to minimise evaporation, algae and contamination. This is guidance, not a compulsory plot-development obligation.

13. Organic and regenerative management

The Estate is intended to be kept organic in practice without requiring certification. Routine synthetic herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and fertilisers are inconsistent with the Estate standard. Lawful exceptions may be approved for safety, invasive species or protection of the wider Estate. No produce may be represented as certified organic without certification.

14. Growing philosophy

Owners who choose to grow plant food are encouraged to research local performance, use historic and heritage seed varieties where practical, and select crops for growth, yield, flavour and resilience. There is no obligation to cultivate or develop the non-Food-Forest parts of a plot.

15. Food Forest Area

Exactly one-third of an acre on every plot is subject to the Food Forest Management Lease. The location is identified by the owner after plot selection, reviewed by the Nursery and recorded on a signed and dated plan. The lease applies irrespective of whether the remaining land is actively used or whether a future lawful change of use is approved for the remainder.

Where a participant owns more than one plot or holds more than one share (or an equivalent aggregate landholding), the total Food Forest Area required under the Food Forest Management Lease may be allocated as a single contiguous area or in such other configuration as approved by THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE LIMITED. The allocation is based on the participant's total entitlement rather than requiring approximately one third of each individual plot to be designated separately.

16. Reserved founding trees

The first thirty-three planting locations are reserved for commemorative, ceremonial or historically significant planting selected by the Estate. The Estate may permanently record the location and purpose of each tree as part of the Estate archive.

17. Communications

Owners should be courteous but reserved. They need not disclose private future intentions or unsubmitted applications. Current use should be described accurately.

Where asked what they are doing, or intend to do, it is normally sufficient to state simply that they are **farming or managing their land**, unless further disclosure is required by law or voluntarily chosen.

Important communications concerning governance, permissions, shared infrastructure, ownership, legal matters or participant obligations should be made in writing. Matters not confirmed in writing should not ordinarily be relied upon as constituting an agreed Estate position.

Where significant matters are discussed verbally, they should be confirmed in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

Written communications provide clarity, reduce misunderstanding and preserve the institutional memory of the Estate.

Participants need not disclose private future intentions or unsubmitted applications. Current use should be described accurately. No participant may represent the Estate publicly without proper authority.

18. Review and approvals

Applications for visible fencing, gates, signs, landscape-corridor changes and other controlled features should include a sketch, photograph or product specification. Approvals must be written and dated. The Estate may update guidance through controlled versions, but contractual obligations can be changed only through the relevant legal process.

Where approval relates to shared infrastructure or shared expenditure, the written approval should also record the agreed specification and any agreed financial contribution.