

EXPANDED SYMBOLS GUIDE

OS MasterMap area colours

22 named area styles from OS's published Standard stylesheet. Identical colours can be shared by different features.

	Building The mapped area of a building.		Structure An area classified as a structure.
	Glasshouse An area classified as glasshouse.		Archway An area mapped as an archway.
	Road or track Mapped road and track surfaces.		Path A path represented as an area.
	Road bridge A mapped road-bridge area.		Rail bridge A mapped railway-bridge area.
	Footbridge A mapped footbridge area.		Steps Steps represented as an area.
	Pylon A pylon represented as an area.		Manmade surface Other manmade surface detail.
	Natural surface Other natural surface detail.		Multiple surfaces A mix of surface types.
	Agricultural land Land classified as agricultural.		Inland water River, lake and other water areas.
	Tidal water An area of tidal water.		Canal A canal represented as an area.
	Foreshore Land mapped as foreshore.		Sand An area mapped as sand.
	Mud An area mapped as mud.		Shingle An area mapped as shingle.

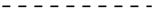
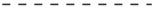
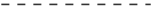
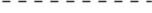
Use the feature detail as well as the colour

These are OS-published style examples, not a universal colour key. Styling varies by product, software and export. The full guide contains 81 OS symbol and style entries, plus separate planning annotations.

OS MASTERMAP TOPOGRAPHY LAYER

Buildings, roads and rail

13 named line features from OS's published Standard stylesheet. Line samples are enlarged and are not to scale.

	Building outline A mapped building edge.		Building division A division within building detail.
	Building overhead Building detail above ground level.		Overhead construction An overhead structure or feature.
	Path line Path detail shown as linework.		Road or track line Road or track detail shown as a line.
	Edge line An edge within mapped detail.		Steps Mapped step detail.
	Traffic calming Edge of a traffic-calming feature.		Standard-gauge rail Standard-gauge track detail.
	Narrow-gauge railway Narrow-gauge railway alignment.		Railway buffer Mapped railway buffer detail.
	Tunnel edge The edge of mapped tunnel detail.		

A line is not a legal boundary

An OS building division or feature edge does not prove ownership, a party wall or a public right of way. The same stroke can serve several feature classes; check the label and surrounding detail.

OS MASTERMAP TOPOGRAPHY LAYER

Water, landforms and boundaries

18 further Topography Layer line examples. Administrative boundaries are distinct from your red and blue planning annotations.

Inland water line

Water edge or linear water detail.

Drain

A mapped drain.

Mean low water

The mapped low-water limit.

Top of slope

The upper edge of a slope.

Top of cliff

The upper edge of a cliff.

Natural landform

A natural landform edge or detail.

Property closing line

OS closing detail, not a planning boundary.

District boundary

An administrative district boundary.

County boundary

An administrative county boundary.

Culvert line

Mapped culvert linework.

Mean high water

The mapped high-water limit.

Bottom of slope

The lower edge of a slope.

Bottom of cliff

The lower edge of a cliff.

Ridge or rock line

Mapped ridge or rock detail.

Manmade landform

A manmade landform edge or detail.

Parish boundary

An administrative parish boundary.

Electoral boundary

A mapped electoral-area boundary.

Parliamentary boundary

A parliamentary-area boundary.

Appearance depends on the chosen OS style

The water and landform samples follow the published GeoServer Standard SLD, which can differ from other OS style specifications. A closing line does not establish a legal property boundary.

OS MASTERMAP TOPOGRAPHY LAYER

Trees, water and survey points

Official point and cartographic symbols. Some rotate with the mapped feature; labels and surrounding detail matter.



Nonconiferous tree

A tree recorded as an individual point feature.



Coniferous tree

A conifer recorded as an individual point feature.



Boulder

A boulder recorded as a positioned feature.



42.7

Spot height

A recorded height relative to Ordnance Datum. The number is in metres.



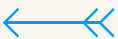
Bench mark

A recorded height-control point. This information is historic; do not assume survey accuracy.



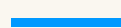
Triangulation station

A mapped survey-control station, not a source of precise control coordinates.



Water-flow direction

Recorded flow direction in a water feature, not its speed or capacity.



Culvert marker

A marker for a covered water channel, not its full underground route.

Height information is not a current site survey

The spot-height number is an example only. Topography Layer records height points; contours require a separate dataset. Not every output displays every symbol.

OS MASTERMAP TOPOGRAPHY LAYER

More point and cartographic symbols

Official point and cartographic symbols. Some rotate with the mapped feature; labels and surrounding detail matter.



Boundary post or stone

A marker associated with an administrative boundary, not proof of ownership.



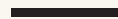
Boundary half-mereing change

A change in how an administrative boundary relates to the mapped detail beside it.



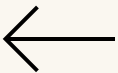
Site of heritage

The mapped site of a historic feature. It is not a tourist-attraction icon.



Railway switch

A recorded railway switch or set of points.



Road-related flow

A directional annotation associated with a road or track.



Disused landform point

A natural landform point classified as disused; shown as a hollow grey circle.



General point feature

A small point feature. Its precise meaning depends on labels and feature attributes.



Water point feature

A point associated with inland or tidal water. This is not a drinking-water tap icon.

A small symbol needs its context

These categories are mapped in the OS Topography Layer styling tables. Their size and rotation can vary, and the same basic circle can be reused for several feature types.

OS MASTERMAP TOPOGRAPHY LAYER

Vegetation and ground patterns

12 official pattern examples. Repeated symbols describe an area; they do not locate every individual tree, plant or rock.



Nonconiferous trees

Broadleaved tree cover.



Coniferous trees

Conifer tree cover.



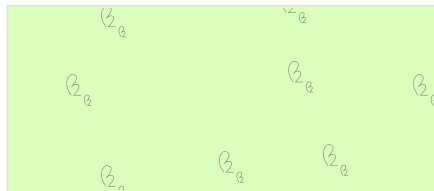
Mixed woodland

A mix of tree types.



Orchard

Land mapped as orchard.



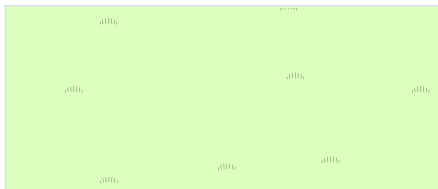
Scrub

Scrubby vegetation.



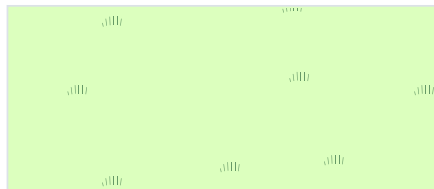
Coppice or osiers

Coppiced trees or willow.



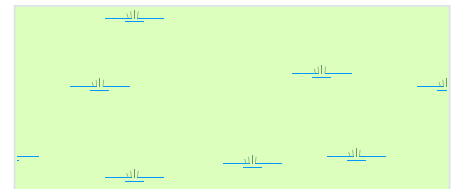
Rough grassland

Rough grass cover.



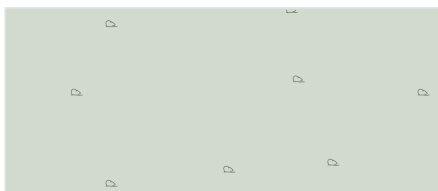
Heath

Land mapped as heath.



Marsh

Marsh vegetation.



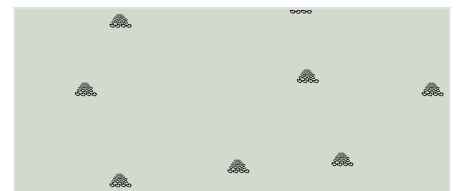
Boulders

An area of boulders.



Rock

An area of rock.



Scree

An area of loose stones.

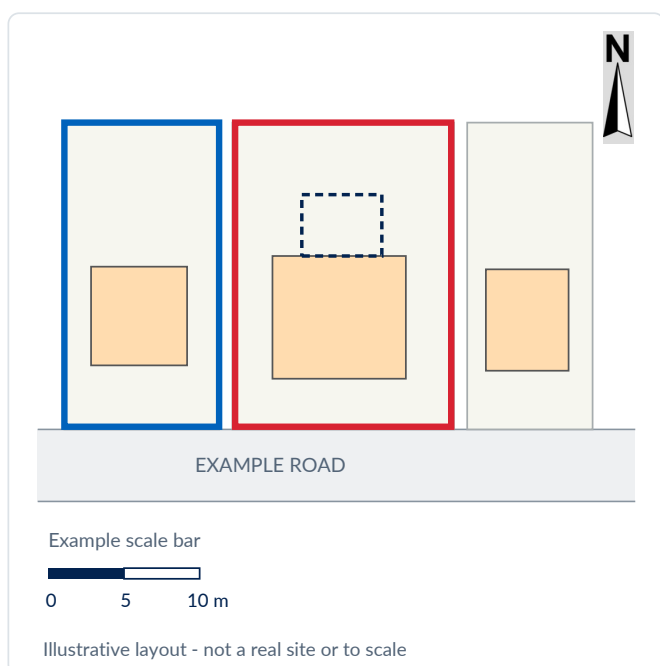
A pattern is not a site survey

These samples use the official OS pattern artwork, enlarged for reading. Their colour can differ between OS-published styles. Check the map's key and arrange a survey when exact positions matter.

PLANNING ANNOTATIONS - NOT OS FEATURE SYMBOLS

Marking up your planning map

These are application and drawing annotations added to the OS base map. Keep them distinct from its underlying feature detail.



Red application boundary

Land needed for the application, including the necessary access.

Blue ownership boundary

Other nearby or adjoining land owned by the applicant.

Proposed work (dashed)

Distinguish proposed work and explain your chosen line style.

North arrow (UK Planning Maps)

The UK Planning Maps north arrow. Keep it clearly visible.

Scale bar

Shows distance on the plan. Keep it and the stated scale visible.

Do not confuse application lines with OS detail

OS property closing lines can also appear as red dashes. Administrative boundaries and mapped feature edges do not establish legal ownership. Check your planning boundary separately.

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

Check that the whole site is included, labels remain readable and all required drawing information is present. Confirm the requirements with your planning authority; these vary across the UK.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

[OS MasterMap product and styling guidance](#)

[OS point-symbol specification](#)

[OS cartographic feature-to-style tables](#)

[OS symbol artwork and GeoServer stylesheets](#)

[Planning application guidance \(England\)](#)

[UK Planning Maps sample: north-arrow artwork](#)

81 named OS symbol and style entries, not 81 unique shapes. Shared appearances are intentional. Examples relate to Great Britain and use OS-published standard styles; this is a selected guide, not the full specification. The north arrow is reproduced from our published sample plan. Sources checked 6 September 2026.

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