

Knolle Park Liverpool

Landscape Statement
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Landscape Architecture & Design

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l a n d s c a p e p r o j e c t s

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1.0 Introduction

Overview : The landscape plan for the Knolle Park site at Woolton Hill, Liverpool, has been developed by Landscape Projects in close collaboration with Bridge Architects. The scheme proposals in this document develop from the initial feasibility study, which examined the potential to redevelop the existing estate at Knolle Park to make an improved setting for a residential development in what is a sensitive and historic location.

1.1 Landscape Statement

This statement describes the overall landscape proposals and provides a more detailed description of subsidiary gardens and landscape features.

The landscape at Knolle Park : Knolle Park, a Grade 2 listed house and grounds provide a tranquil green setting with a range of landscape spaces and the extensive tree planting.

The proposals to redevelop the Mansion, and its estate, will result in the provision of residential buildings and associated car parking, while at the same time allowing a sensitive renewal of the landscape and gardens which will retain its current character, and provide it with a sustainable future.

The redevelopment is a challenge which will involve demolition and refurbishment of existing buildings, as well as new constructions, all of which must be carried out in a sensitive landscape setting, in which protected landscapes and trees pose a constraint to the location of construction areas.

At the same time, the redevelopment provides an opportunity to renew and upgrade the Knolle Park landscape to provide a “memorable and welcoming” place.

The following pages outline the landscape proposals which will support Knolle Park and its grounds into the future.



2.0 Landscape Context

Knolle Park is located at the junction of Church Road and Beaconsfield Road in Woolton, Liverpool, L25 6EL. The site is approximately 2.74 ha in extent.

2.1 Landscape Setting.

The site is in the Woolton Hill area of south Liverpool, which is a residential suburban setting, comprising houses set in parks and gardens, bounded by tall red sandstone walls and substantial trees.

Woolton Hill is the highest point in South Liverpool, situated on a sandstone ridge extending north - south from Childwall in the north, through Woolton to Gateacre in the south. The Knolle Park site is some 80-88m AOD.

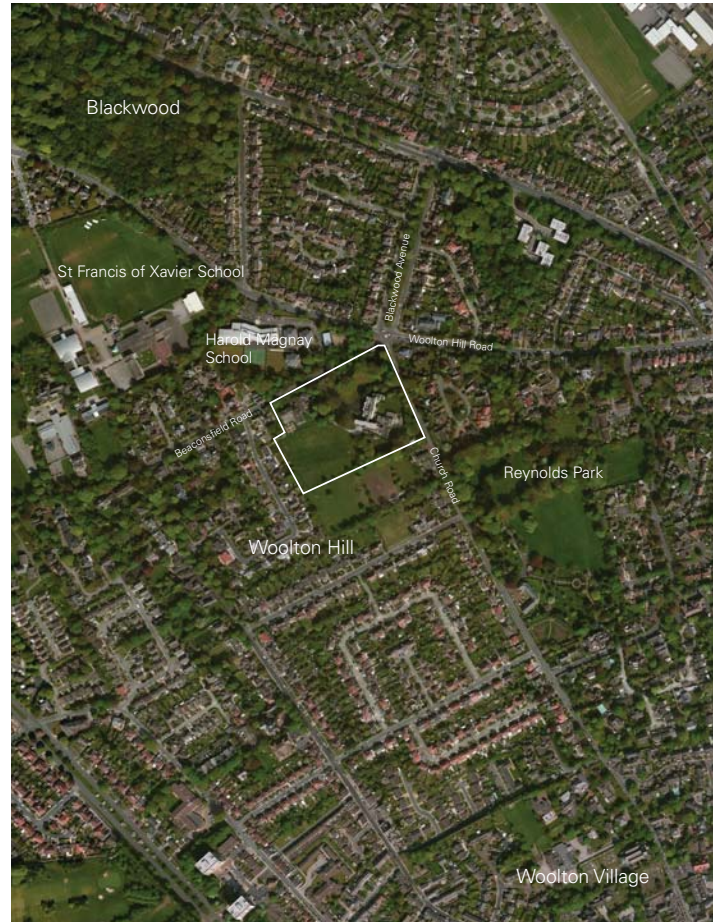
The Woolton Hill area has mature trees set in parks, gardens and avenues. There are remnant woods at Woolton and Childwall. In the Liverpool UDP, the site is located partially within an area of Open Space which extends across Woolton Hill.

2.2 Landscape Planning Context

The Liverpool UDP designates almost all of the the Knolle Park site (excluding Taylor and Nugent House) as "Green Space", part of a contiguous network which links with Reynolds Park to the east, and the Harold Magnay School / St Francis Xavier School sites to the west. (see extract of plan adjacent). In 8.138 the UDP specifically recognises the importance of green spaces including church grounds, cemeteries and institutions set in landscaped grounds.

The UDP places specific restrictions on the development of "Green Space" which are explained in policies OE11 and OE12.

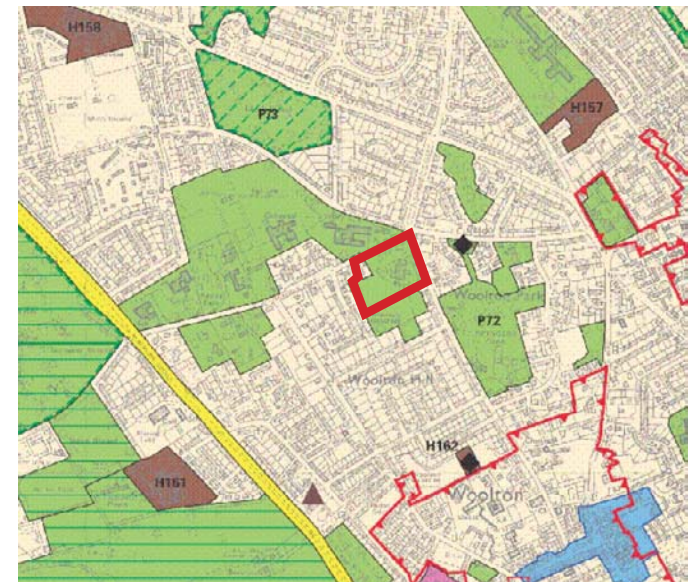
For a commentary on the implications of development within the Open Space, see report by Roman Summer.



Knolle Park in context (Bing Maps)



Birds eye view of Knolle Park in context (Bing Maps)



Extract from Liverpool UDP Map, showing Knolle Park within designated Green Space.



Birds eye view showing indicative contours and Knolle Park in its hilltop location

2.3 Topography

Knolle Park is situated at one of the highest points in South Liverpool, situated on a sandstone ridge extending north - south from Childwall in the north, through Woolton to Gateacre in the south. The Knolle Park site is some 80-88m AOD.

2.4 Receptors

The Woolton Hill area was assessed for potential receptors which might be affected by development of the Knolle Park site; potential receptors include:

- local beauty spots.
- historic sites
- public parks and other amenity space.

District-wide receptors

The site is located on a hilltop and therefore potentially visible from receptors in the surrounding district, including Blackwoods, Reynolds Park, Childwall Church and Woolton Church. However, due to the extensive mature trees which surround the site and the walls and buildings in the foreground, Knolle Park is effectively screened from most viewpoints.

Local receptors

The Knolle Park site is also screened from most views from receptors in the immediate vicinity and surrounding streets. Three locations have been identified as having sensitivity :

- i) View from top Blackwood Avenue looking towards Entrance gate and Lodge
- ii) view from rear of houses on Baroncroft Road
- iii) view from roof garden terrace of Cedarwood (Grade 2* listed building on Beaconsfield Road.

A commentary on the impact on these views, and the proposed mitigation measures, are discussed in the section XX "Visual Impact Assessment" of this document.



View of Knolle Park from Beaconsfield Road, showing screening effect of walls and perimeter planting



View of Knolle Park from Church Road, showing screening effect of walls and perimeter planting

3.0 Historic development

The Historic development of Knolle Park is described in the Heritage Report of Oct 2015 by Andrew Brown of Woodhall Planning and Conservation. The key features which relate to the landscape of the site are as follows:

- Until the 19th century, Woolton was a village, renowned for its quarries which produced a fine red sandstone, used to construct many local buildings and walls. The surrounding fields and woodlands would have been farmed.
- The expansion of Liverpool as a trading city led to wealthy families building substantial mansions set within landscaped grounds. One such property is Knolle Park, probably built in the 1829, probably by Thomas Foster, the Town Clerk of Liverpool.
- Knolle Park was laid out as a neo-classical mansion at the head of a sweeping drive, with lodge gates at the entrance off Beaconsfield Road and Church Road.
- The estate was bounded by a substantial sandstone wall, and included an Orangery (now demolished), a Gardeners Cottage and walled garden in the western part of the site. A Stables building is located on Church Road, although this is no longer part of the estate.
- The estate landscape was designed in four parts :
 - sweeping driveway landscape designed to provide an impressive arrival sequence and setting for the grand front of the mansion; this included groups of Beech and other trees arranged around the site perimeter and at the crest of the ridge at the centre of the site.
 - a south-facing terrace garden with perimeter pathway.
 - a west facing paddock, presumably used for grazing.
 - the walled kitchen garden, together with an Orangery and Gardeners Cottage and ancillary buildings.
- In 1906, Archbishop Whiteside bought the estate to create a Convent to house poor children. In 1910 he extended the main building southwards to form the brick "German wing", named after the German nuns brought in to manage the house.

- additional buildings were added incrementally close to the Main building, culminating in a nursery (1961-3)
- Two residential buildings were built in the Walled Garden in the 1970's, and new entrances from Beaconsfield Road were constructed around this time.
- The site continued to function as a Childrens home until its closure in 2010. In November 2012 planning consent was given for the creation of a care village for the elderly; this consent has not been implemented.

3.1 Listed Buildings

The house, lodge and railings and gates are listed Grade 2. The trees within the site are subject to a blanket Tree Preservation Order. The walls and steps within and around the site are deemed to form part of the curtilage of the House.

3.2 Significance

The Heritage Report refers to the following significant aspects relating to the landscape of Knolle Park:

- "The general layout of the grounds around the house, together with the various original structures, boundary walls, historic trees and other planting, contribute to the significance of the house as they are key attributes of its setting." (2.40)
- "The grotto .. and the lawn to the north of the house... are key attributes of its setting" (2.41)
- "The stone boundary walls ...are a key feature...and define the hisoric grounds of Knolle Park" (2.44)
- "Other elements of the grounds, include the flight of steps on the east side of the knoll and the low retaining wall around the garden to the south-east of the house. The two religious shrines are of some interest as part of the later development of the grounds and its use as a Convent, although their statues have been removed. However, many of the more recent elements are considered to detract from the significance of Knolle Park." (2.45)



Main House 1829



Lodge (possibly constructed after completion of main house)



German Wing 1910 (l) Nursery 1961-63 (r)



Nugent House : residential childrens home 1970's

Key landscape heritage assests



1. Lodge
2. Lodge gates
3. Knolle Park House
4. Gardeners House
5. Garden wall & fruit trees
6. Orangery wall/ grotto
7. Sandstone perimeter wall
8. Grotto / Fernery
9. Landscape sequence from lodge to front door
10. Shrine

3.0 Site appraisal

Landscape Garden Description

The Knolle Park estate provides the setting for the House and its ancillary buildings.

3.1 Description

Within the framework of the mature woodland planting to its north, west and east boundaries, the garden itself comprises the following distinctive areas:

Perimeter Tree planting : three separate areas are identified, all subject to blanket Tree Preservation Orders. These comprise mixed species including Holly, Sycamore, Maple, Beech, Horse Chestnut, Oak, Lime and Yew. These woodland areas typically have an intermediate canopy of regenerating saplings, over a woodland floor typically of ground elder and bramble.

Central Tree clump : group of tall forest trees (Beech and Oak) located on crest of ridge, forming a compositional balance with the house.

Frontage garden : gently rising lawn with sweeping driveway forming the frontage to the House, framed by bank, surmounted by tall beech trees on ridge. Grotto and shrine set into bank.

Paddock : gently rising grazing land to the west of the house.

Terrace Garden : South east facing lawns and terrace, now partly built on. Perimeter planting and double wall to south screens views from Church Road.

Walled Garden, Orangery and Garders Cottage : located to south west of estate, alongside Beaconsfield Road boundary. Walls partly demolished and garden partly built on.



Driveway, house and tree clump to top of ridge



Paddock looking west to tree clump (German Wing partly visible through trees).



Shrine and grotto



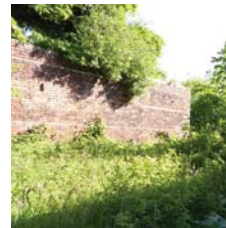
Terrace Garden



Grotto / Fernery



Gardeners cottage



walled garden



Frontage Gdrden seen from ridge



3.2 Topography

The Mansion House at Knolle Park is set into the northern side of a ridge which extends N-S through the middle of the site; the contours indicate that the ground on which the building stands may have been excavated and regraded to create a "landscape bowl"



3.3 Driveway and mansion

The arrival sequence from the Gatehouse and Lodge along the drive to the front of the main house appears to have been carefully designed to enhance the sense of anticipation and reveal.

The driveway sweeps round the edge of the lawn, cutting close to the edge of the ridge, before widening to form the forecourt to the house.



3.4 Tree groups/ open space

The tree screens, together with the carefully modelled topography, creates the setting for the front of the house.

Tree group 1 screens the house from view until the driveway turns at 2, while tree clump 3 forms a backdrop against the sky on the ridge.

Particular trees seem to have been chosen to enhance the frontage including a Purple Beech (A) and a Yew (B), both of which contribute to the special character of the frontage.



3.5 Trees

The estate trees have been surveyed by ROAVR. See their report for details of tree species and condition. The following is of note:

- Many of the trees date from the establishment of the grounds in the early 19th century.
- Tree species seem to have been selected from a range of forest scale species, including Beech, Sweet Chestnut, Oak, Turkey Oak and Sycamore.
- Particular specimens have been placed carefully for their landscape effect, including Yew and Purple Beech.

Overall the trees make a significant contribution to the character of the estate, and to the wider suburban setting of Beaconsfield Road and Church Road.

3.6 Significance

The estate landscape retains many of its early 19th century features; of particular significance is the sweeping driveway, shaped topography and carefully placed tree groups and clumps.

The well treed perimeter provides an attractive backdrop for the landscape of the estate as well as contributing to the character of the streetscape beyond the site.

However, to the south eastern and western sides of the estate, many original elements of the landscape have been built over or otherwise significantly altered; these include :

- the terrace garden to the south east of the house.
- the walled garden and orangery to the western boundary.

3.7 Constraints & opportunities

The plan adjacent outlines the key constraints and opportunities which informed the landscape design of the Knolle Park estate.



3.6 Landscape brief

The landscape brief set out the requirements to :

- create an attractive setting for the House and new residential buildings
- respect, restore and enhance the key features of the historic landscape, including the driveway and frontage garden, the southern terrace garden and the tree clumps and perimeter tree screens.
- integrate new buildings and car parking into the landscape so that it retains its green, pleasant character.
- create new private garden spaces to the rear of new buildings, while creating open frontages which overlook a central meadow area.
- develop long term strategies for tree planting replacement and low maintenance landscape.
- which would ensure the long term survival of the house and its setting

The key elements of the landscape brief are outlined on the adjacent diagram.

The scheme consists of the following:

- 7No converted apartments within the existing main house, 5No 2-bed and 2No 3-bed
- 28No apartments within the new build apartment block, 24No 2-bed and 4No 3-bed
- 11No attached villas - 4 bed, 2 storey
- 4No detached house, 5 bed, 3 storey
- 1 No bespoke Orangery house, single storey, 4 bed
- 1 No bespoke Greek Lodge house, single storey, 4 bed

In summary - 35No apartments, 17No houses.



4.0 Landscape proposals

Landscape Concept

The landscape proposals set out to create an attractive setting for the development of Knolle Park. The Mansion house, the replacement apartment building and the proposed new housing will be integrated sensitively with the key landscape elements of the historic estate to create a landscape which will support the life of the residents, visitors and staff who will use the site.

Conceptually, the landscape of the grounds can be understood as a sequence of landscaped gardens, which link the sweeping frontage garden extending through the House to the formal terrace and garden to the south, and incorporate the open paddock and tree groups to the west of the house. New housing will frame the edges of the open meadow situated on the paddock, in part replacing existing housing along Beaconsfield Road. This framework already exists, and this project will enhance and accentuate its existing character, to reinforce the sense of "place". It does this by:

- creating a hierarchy of spaces which are appropriately scaled to link the large scale central landscape, through the intermediate scaled gardens, to more intimate spaces related to garden thresholds and entrances.
- enhancing the woodland belts and tree clumps to "embed" housing groups in the landscape
- respecting and enhancing the character of the existing landscape, through continuity in the use of planting and materials

The landscape is designed to support the House and its grounds as a safe and sociable place by:

- providing clearly defined boundaries and connections between the buildings across the estate so that all users feel comfortable and safe to enjoy the landscape.
- encouraging a sense of "belonging" by providing a clearly defined thresholds between private, semi-public and communal space (meadow) to connect into the wider landscape.
- creating open "frontage gardens" to the new houses which will contrast with the more private rear gardens.
- providing a network of walking routes which will be shared by residents of the estate.
- creating communal spaces and gardens which will be shared by residents..





4.1 Entrance landscape

Description

The proposals set out to retain and enhance the distinctive entrance sequence to the Mansion (13) in the following ways:

- **Gate and Lodge:** The historic link between the Gates and Lodge (1) via the sweeping driveway to the Mansion will be enhanced through repaving and management of the woodland belt (4). New tree planting, as well as shrub underplanting, will ensure a long term future for this important landscape feature. The entrance gates and piers at the Church Road junction will be refurbished and new hedges and estate fencing will be installed to define the private garden in this area.
- **Gated access :** Day to day access to the front of the Mansion, and the 15 new houses, will be from the existing road access from Beaconsfield Road (15). Pedestrian and vehicular gates will be installed. Hedging will provide a secure boundary.
- **Driveway :** the existing drive (2) will be resurfaced in high quality paving with natural stone edging details. and will include low level bollard lighting.
- **Tree Clump and bank:** this important feature (10 including the grotto) will be retained and enhanced through careful underplanting of Beech trees. Steps adjacent to the new apartment wing will be integrated into the landscape bank.
- **Orangery :** the new house will incorporate the existing walls of the former Orangery; the formal garden to the front (5) makes use of the axial pathways and planting beds, and will be framed by a low hedge.
- **Lawn and frontage :** the wide driveway to the front of the house, the sweeping lawn and the yew tree (12) to the north of the house will be retained.
- **The fernery (11)** will be restored as a special feature of the Victorian Mansion House.

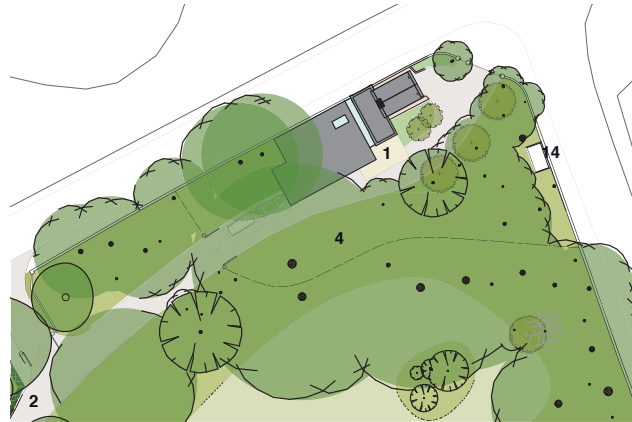
4.2 Lodge & Orangery

The Lodge is the single storey neo-classical building located at the north entrance gates to the site off Church Road. This building will be sensitively restored and extended to the western side to create a single storey bespoke house (see DAS). The landscape setting of this building and the associated railings and gateposts is particularly significant and prominent, and the landscape proposals set out to:

- restore the gateposts, low walls and railings, and reinstate the hard surfaced driveway.
- retain the open view through the existing gates to the line of the driveway beyond.
- define a private garden area using hedging and estate-type railings.
- minimise impact on existing trees.

A new single storey bespoke house will be built on the footprint of the former Orangery which is located west of the entrance off Beaconsfield Road; the existing curved garden walls will be incorporated into the design, which will extend to conjoin with the Beaconsfield Road boundary wall (see DAS). The landscape setting of this building, and its relationship to the main house is significant; the landscape proposals set out to:

- create a clearly defined front garden using hedges and clipped planting, retaining the existing axial pathway to the front door.
- incorporate stone edgings to emphasise former terraces and steps
- provide discreetly screened areas to the side of the house for private garden use
- provide two in-curtilage car park spaces.
- minimise impact on existing trees.

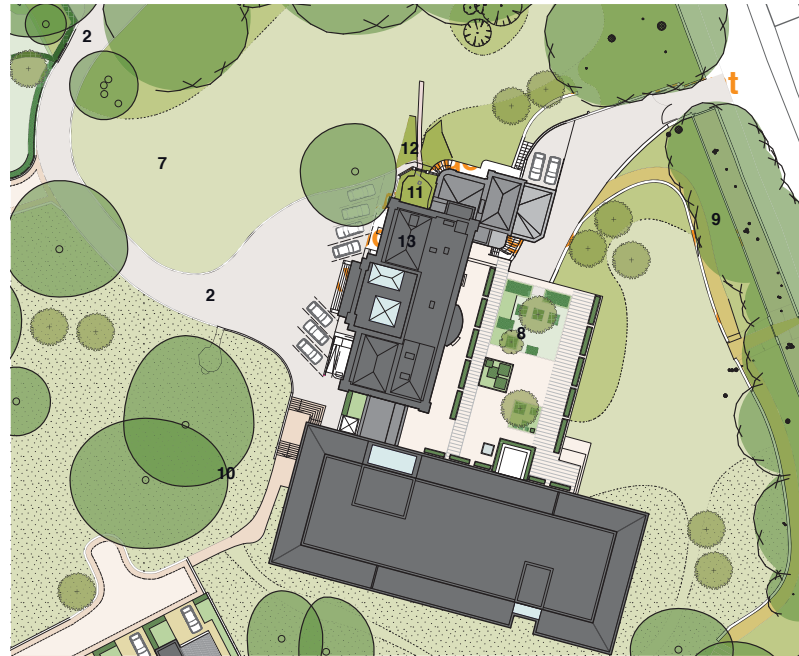


Lodge



Orangery





4.3 Knolle Park house

Knolle Park house is the focal point of the estate, and as part of its sensitive restoration and conversion to private apartments, the clutter of surrounding buildings will be removed, and the adjoining German Wing will be replaced by a new apartment building (see DAS). The landscape setting of the house will be restored and enhanced. The landscape proposals will:

- resurface the sweeping driveway with a light toned bound gravel surface with natural stone trims;
- restore the flowing lawns to the front of the house, defined by clipped low groundcover.
- create an attractive and accessible terraced garden on the roof deck over the car park, for use by all residents.
- the garden will comprise a contemporary composition of squares which evoke a modern interpretation of a parterre, with water, topiary and seating areas.
- make use of high quality paving materials, lighting and hedges;
- restore and supplement perimeter woodland planting to create a sustainable screen to Church Road.
- introduce bio-diverse shady groundcover and ferns in woodland areas.



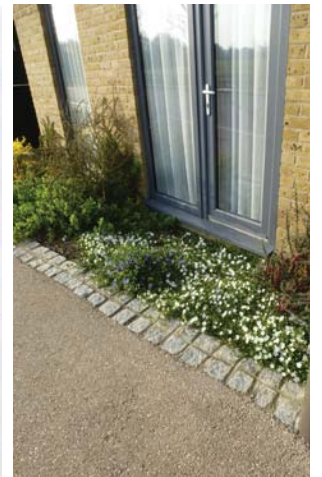
4.4 Private gardens

The new housing (Attached and Detached Villas) to be built in the location of Nugent and Taylor Houses, and around the edge of the Green, are carefully designed to integrate with the wider landscape setting through careful massing and use of materials (see DAS). Their plan arrangement creates clearly defined front and back garden spaces. Front gardens will:

- incorporate in curtilage car parking, discreetly screened by low hedging and groundcover planting.
- designed to link visually across the informal driveway to the open meadow landscape
- while using light-canopied tree species such as Birch to define private territory and soften the visual line of the housing groups.
- incorporate low level lighting which will illuminate the driveway.

Rear Gardens will :

- incorporate decks and terraces close to the house to provide places for outdoor living which complement the terrace space provided at first floor level.
- be defined by close-boarded timber fencing to neighbouring boundaries, and by a range of boundary treatments, including sandstone walls, hedges and railings.

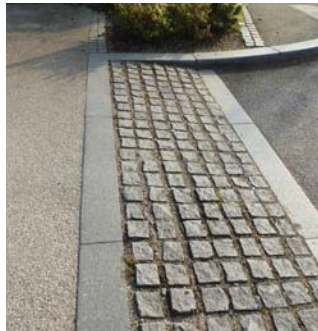


4.5 Wildflower Green

The existing paddock to the west of the House is visible through the mature tree group as an open meadow sloping gently to the west, and framed by the existing housing on Baroncroft Road, and Nugent and Taylor Houses to the north. The proposals retain this open character by arranging the new buildings to the edge of this space, and ensuring visual separation is retained between buildings.

The landscape proposals will:

- create a wildflower meadow, which will incorporate areas of increased bio-diversity by plug planting native wildflower species into the grass sward, and carrying out season mowing.
- define the open space by a perimeter driveway which will relate to flowing landscape topography, while incorporating passing places and turning heads for vehicle access.
- incorporate a “swale” edge to the meadow, designed to provide surface water attenuation, while at the same time preventing vehicle access onto the meadow.
- planting additional trees to supplement the existing tree clump, and ensure successional growth into the future.



4.6 Woodland & boundaries

The landscape proposals will improve the woodland planting to the site perimeter and the clumps and groups within the site. Woodland management operations, including pruning, removal of dead wood and replacement planting, will be carried. In addition, new tree planting will be carried out to supplement the existing and ensure that successional planting is in place for the future. This will ensure the long term sustainability of the woodland planting at Knolle Park.

The proposals also include renovation works to the perimeter boundaries; the existing sandstone walls will be repaired where necessary, and existing redundant entrances will be repaired with new walling to match. The timber fencing to the wall top on Beaconsfield Road will be removed.

New sandstone walling will be constructed along the boundary with properties on Baronscroft Road and Cedarwood.

New hedgerow and railings will be constructed along the boundary with the adjacent paddock to the south of the site.

New steel and timber gates will be installed at the entrance off Beaconsfield Road; these will have automated opening for vehicles, with a separate pedestrian gate.

