

'The Farm' BESSBOROUGH, CORK

for ESTUARY VIEW ENTERPRISES 2020 Ltd.

December 2025

irla

Project:	BESSBOROUGH 'The Farm' Apartment Development
Location:	Bessborough Cork
Client:	Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Ltd.
Doc Title:	Landscape Design Strategy and Masterplan
Status:	LRD Planning Application
Revision:	P.0

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LRD OPINION 1a – extract from Opinion DESIGN and PLACEMAKING

The applicant is requested to provide further consideration of, and possible amendment to, the documents and/or design proposals in respect of the proposed building design, site layout and of the placemaking of the development, with particular focus on the following:

1a

The development site is within the curtilage of Bessborough House which is characterised by a significant level of parkland/open space areas. The proposal to locate Block C within the Landscape Preservation Zone is noted, with the 'Landscape Assets' for this area stating that development to the North of Bessborough House is accepted in principle, as long as it is 'consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site' (Table 6.9 of CDP). It is considered important to retain a meaningful connection between Bessborough House and the associated grounds. It is noted that 18th-century country houses and their landscapes formed part of an original design concept and are intrinsically linked. The proposed Block C, and its associated roadway and parking area, would be located in the original pleasure gardens of the house, where a band of trees and paths were laid out. It is noted that while some developments have taken place over time, a garden character for this location has always been maintained and its relationship with the protected structure is considered of high importance. In terms of the hierarchy of spaces, the historic function of a driveway was to lead you through the parkland and then reveal the main house. As such, the presence of Block C would also alter and undermine the last vestiges of the approach landscape-setting of the main house. The proposed roadway and car parking would also occupy and be visible from within the parkland, which would have a negative visual impact on the character of the landscape and the setting of the protected structure. It is further noted that it is a long held Council objective that the established woodland/parkland on the site of the former Cork Heritage Park should remain intact to preserve its unique sylvan character and provide passive amenity space rich in biodiversity for residents of any residential development on this site, and for future residents of the South Docklands. Block C, and its access road and car park are situated within part of the established woodland which is not considered acceptable. It is considered that the encroachment would completely change the character of this sylvan setting in a negative manner. Consideration should be given to revising the proposal to omit Block C, and its associated roadway and car-parking area, to preserve the character of the protected structure and its curtilage, and to ensure the character of the sylvan parkland setting is retained

RESPONSE TO Opinion 1a

From the outset , it must be noted that the lands at Bessborough are predominantly in private ownership with some key stakeholders such as the HSE/'Childhood Matters' controlling inner portions of the site around the main historic house. The intention of the masterplan is to release large portions of parkland in a phased manner into public ownership for public enjoyment. Given the challenges, to achieve a threshold of development to offset the cost of infrastructure for this plan such as the bridge connection over the Greenway, bespoke architectural design solutions within the unique setting and high-quality public realm areas; the design team has taken an approach of care and sensitivity to Bessborough house and the wider historic setting while proposing an appropriately scaled design solution.

Each building element proposed has been carefully considered in terms of setting, scale, materials and how best they might interact with the heritage setting .

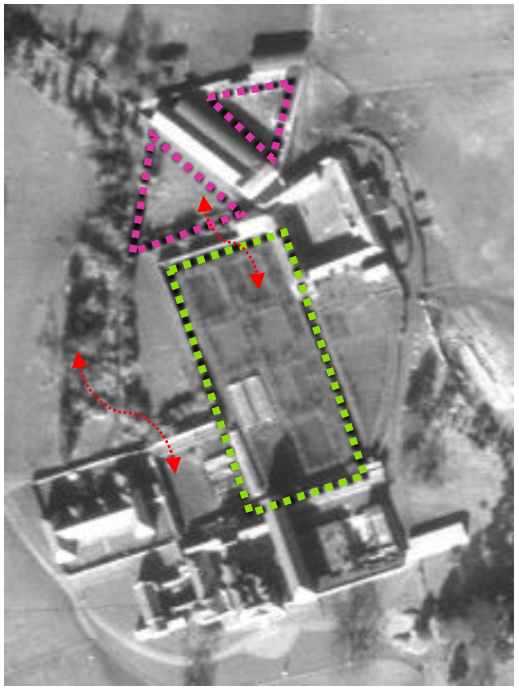
Building C is a low slung, 3-storey building treated in a muted palette of dark metal cladding and timber. The location of Building C has been carefully positioned against the historic wall of the original farm courtyard to the south and parterre garden to the east. Both the historic courtyard and the parterre garden are now used for car parking.

The proposed building forms a new active edge to the park. Its discrete elevational treatment is sympathetic to the sylvan setting while offering passive surveillance of the park which will be converted from a private garden into a public park as part of the proposed development.

The location of Building C complies with the Objectives of the Zoning while still maintaining the connection between the courtyards to the rear of Bessborough House and the park via the original gates.

SE 4 OBJECTIVE – TO ALLOW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS TO THE NORTH OF BESSBORO HOUSE CONSISTENT WITH THE LANDSCAPE AND PROTECTED STRUCTURE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

The geometry of the proposed building holds the edge of the parterre gardens (now a carpark) and defines the southern side of the triangular open space, in keeping with historic patterns as can be seen defined in purple on the adjacent historic photograph and on the proposed layout overleaf.



Aerial Photograph 1951 – illustrating historic spatial arrangement

Most of the trees that are impacted by Building C are large non-native Eucalyptus trees and these will be replaced with appropriate native parkland trees to reinforce the existing wooded perimeter.

New native Irish trees including Oak and Scot's Pine are proposed to reinforce the dense wooded edge to the park.

The intended landscape treatment to the remaining park is to have as light a touch as possible. It is proposed that the existing paths built in the 1990's are removed, and this area reseeded as an open meadow with new paths introduced to reinstate the historic routes along the north and eastern edges.

LRD OPINION 7
ARCHITECTURE – extract from Opinion

Consideration of the proposals to address the following Architecture related requirements (as set out in the Architects Report attached in Appendix C):

7a

Outside of conservation and heritage considerations, in terms of urban and architectural design Block C is considered to be an appropriate edge treatment to the parkland in terms of height and architectural expression. However, the triangular form is such that it encroaches to a large extent into the existing parkland, and when combined with the associated vehicular access and parking the impact on the park is significant. Considered in terms of placemaking - an aspiration which is a 'central focus' of the CCC Development Plan (sections 11.6-11.12) - the impact of the loss of mature trees and the introduction of the vehicle infrastructure deep into the parkland is considered as having an undue negative effect. Whilst the quality of the architectural design meets the criteria described, the site strategy is such that it will diminish the character of the space which is established by way of the impressive landscaping. Consideration should be given to a revision of the proposed development to reduce the footprint of Block C, perhaps to a more linear form, in order to retain a greater number of established trees.

RESPONSE TO Opinion 7a

We welcome the commentary on the appropriate edge formed by Building C in terms of height and expression. We propose retaining the site layout route and parking as currently proposed. The site is restricted in terms of basement parking and also the feasibility issues are prohibitive, given the combined cost of infrastructure delivery for the scheme.

The geometry of the proposed building holds the edge of the parterre gardens and defines the edge of the existing triangular open space and creates a new triangular open space to the west of the parterre garden wall.

While many mature trees will be impacted in this location, it should be noted that the vast majority of them are Eucalyptus and Sycamore trees (Refer to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment drawings and report).

A total of 49 No. existing trees are impacted across the entire development, including 4 No. trees to be removed to facilitate the bridge over the Greenway.

Mitigation for this loss, includes the planting of over 110No. new semi-mature trees. A woodland management strategy is also recommended and submitted as part of the planning application to ensure the continual health and renewal of this important landscape and heritage setting.

The site plan as set out, facilitates the opportunity to convert a significant portion of private land into a public park while maintaining the sylvan character of the grounds to the north of Bessborough House.

The proposed new development provides the opportunity to breathe new life into this slightly isolated site by opening connections to the broader urban context and strengthening access to and permeability through the site.

Providing new homes brings a new community, not only to be future custodians of this historic landscape but also to bring energy and life into these empty and in some instances neglected spaces.



Sketch illustrating current spatial arrangement

LRD OPINION 8a – extract from Opinion PARKS and RECREATION

Consideration of the proposals to address the following Parks and Recreation related requirements (as set out in the Parks and Recreation Report attached in Appendix C):

8a

It is a long held Council objective that the established woodland/parkland on the site of the former Cork Heritage Park should remain intact to preserve its unique sylvan character and provide passive amenity space rich in biodiversity for residents of any residential development on this site , and for future residents of the South Docklands.

Block C, and its access road and car park are situated within part of the established woodland and is not considered to be acceptable. It is considered that the encroachment would completely change the character of this sylvan setting in a negative manner. It will involve the felling of many established trees as identified on the landscape drawings and, many more will have to be removed as they will be seriously impacted by construction works, changes in ground levels and water table. The level of high-quality tree loss is significant and not appropriate from an arboricultural perspective. It is considered that the footprint for Block C and its associated carpark should be incorporated into the proposed Public Park.

RESPONSE TO Opinion 8a

Despite the tremendous care taken to reduce the impact of buildings on existing trees, a total of 49 existing trees will have to be removed. It should, however, be noted that the majority of the trees impacted are non-native and some of the trees noted for removal are Cat- U trees and are recommended for removal regardless of the development as they are diseased or dying. (Refer to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment drawings and report.

A total of 49 No existing trees including 16No. native and 33 non-native trees are impacted across the entire development. This also includes 4 No. trees to be removed to facilitate the bridge over the Greenway.

Of the 49 No. trees to be removed due to this development,
16 No. Native trees include
3 No. Cat A
9 No. Cat B
4 No. Cat U (diseased Ash and Elm)

33 No. Non-Native trees include
6 No. Cat A
26 No. Cat B
1 No. Cat U (diseased Cherry)

116No. New trees are proposed as part of the Development

Mitigation for this loss, includes the planting of 116 No. new semi-mature trees. A greater diversity of mainly native but some naturalized and non-native tree species has also been selected and will ensure that the tree population is less vulnerable to the risks posed by climate change, pests and diseases in the future.

A woodland management strategy is also recommended and submitted as part of the planning application to ensure the continual health and renewal of this important landscape and heritage setting.

LRD OPINION 8b – extract from Opinion PARKS and RECREATION

8b

The Landscape Design Strategy and Masterplan is broadly conceptual, and consideration should be given to detailed submissions on the following landscape areas:

- Bioretention areas
- Tree Pits
- Green roofs
- Planting buffers
- Play Equipment /Play Zones to be submitted for review
- The Size and Quantities of all plant material will be required
- Landscape Management and Maintenance Schedules will be required.

LRD OPINION 8c & d – extract from Opinion PARKS and RECREATION

8c

The size and quantities of all plant material will be required.

8d

Landscape Management and Maintenance schedules will also be required.

RESPONSE TO Opinion 8b

- Bioretention areas

The location of bioretention areas, attenuation tanks, and permeable paving within parking bays are indicated on the landscape drawings (Landscape Masterplan Drawing No. 2000 and Hard Landscaping and Street Furniture Drawing No. 2400). The surface water drainage strategy and capacity calculations are given In the Engineer's drawings and reports. Refer to Egis Consultant Engineer's Drawing 4005.

- Tree Pits

The location of tree pits are indicated on the Landscape Masterplan Drawing No. 2000, as well as on Egis Consultant Engineer's Drawing 4005.

- Green roofs

A green roof system is proposed on Block C and the small Sun Lounge building within the courtyard. This typically includes a growing medium, drainage layers and planting (most commonly a variety of sedum or other succulent species as these can sustain short periods of drought). The construction details and specific plant mix are typically agreed with the selected specialist contractor and will be uploaded to BCAR.

- Planting buffers

A selection of planting buffers have been specified against building edges to offer privacy to ground floor apartments. The planting mix varies according to the application and orientation of the planter. Refer to the Secondary Planting Plan - Landscape Drawing No. 2505).

- Play Equipment /Play Zones to be submitted for review

The plan layout of the proposed playground within the park is shown on the Landscape Masterplan Drawing No. 2000 and Hard Landscaping and Street Furniture Drawing No. 2400.

The proposed play safety surface is engineered wood fibre to comply with EN 1177 and the equipment will be made of natural Robinia timber. The unpainted, untreated timber equipment and wood fibre surfacing is considered sympathetic to the natural setting within the park.
The playground equipment includes a slide, springers and wobble bridge. Timber balance beams are proposed on the lawn within the park and communal spaces. All equipment to comply with EN 1176.
Final details of playground equipment will be agreed with Cork City Council.

RESPONSE TO Opinion 8c

Details of all planting is given on the Primary and Secondary Planting Plans (Landscape Drawing No. 2500 and 2505).
The species, height, girth size and quantity of all trees is provided on the Primary Planting Plan (Drawing No. 2500).

A breakdown of the proposed mix of perennial plants for planters and well as the proposed seed mix for meadows and grass areas is provided on the Secondary Planting Plan. Drawing No. 2505.

RESPONSE TO Opinion 8d

A detailed Woodland Management Plan is provided at the end of the Landscape Design Report. This document looks at the maintenance and management of each precinct within the grounds over a short to medium term period.

Maintenance contract scope and commitments are typically included in the tender and construction information and will be agreed with Cork City Council, prior to uploading all documentation to BCAR, prior to commencement of the works.

LRD OPINION 14 – extract from Opinion BIODIVERSITY

14b

The applicant is requested to ensure that any wildflower seeds should be of local provenance and to follow the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan..

14c

The applicant should submit details on the Root Protection Zones for the trees that are remaining close to the car parking spaces for the proposed apartment blocks C & D, including details on how these trees will be protected as per British standard BS5837:2012.

RESPONSE TO Opinion 14b

Details of all planting is given on the Primary and Secondary Planting Plans (Landscape Drawing No. 2500 and 2505).

A breakdown of the proposed mix of perennial plants for planters and well as the proposed seed mix for meadows and grass areas is provided on the Secondary Planting Plan. Drawing No. 2505.

The proposed wildflower mix as noted on Drawing No. 2505, is a Traditional Irish Wildflower Mix of local provenance.

Mixture Specifications
Perfect for pollinators, creating habitats and food for a wide range of bees, butterflies and other pollinators.
Species lifecycle: perennial and annual native Species
Sowing rate: 1.5-3g per square meter
Access to light: Requires good access to light
Optimal sowing period: March to June or August to October
Flowering Period: May to September
Species List: Birdsfoot Trefoil, Bush Vetch. Corn Marigold, Corn Poppy, Corncockle, Cowslip, Meadow Buttercup, Field Scabious, Kidney Vetch, Lady's Bedstraw, Lesser Knapweed, Marjoram, Eyebright, Mullein, Ox-eye Daisy, Hawksbit, Red Bartsia, Red Campion, Red Clover, St Johnswort, Wild Carrot, Yarrow, Yellow Rattle, Species in small quantities: White Campion, Feverfew, Cornflower, Scentless Mayweed, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Purple Loosestrife, White Bedstraw, Ragged Robin, Selfheal, Agrimony,

The wildflowers included in this mixture support the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and are recommended by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) as 'Perfect for Pollinators'.

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RESPONSE TO Opinion 14c

The root protection zones are shown on Arborcare's Arboricultural Impact Assessment drawings and reports.

Protective fencing will be constructed and installed using fencing in accordance with BS5837:2012. The exact detail and location of fencing will be agreed with Cork City Council and the Arboricultural Consultant prior to any commencement of works.

LRD OPINION 14 – extract from Opinion BIODIVERSITY

14d

In respect of tree retention, land development and ecological corridors, the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 includes the following:
An objective to support the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees as part of new developments (Objective 6.5d);
An objective to discourage development proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees or hedgerows (Objective 6.9);

The text of the plan further establishes that mature trees and hedgerows shall be identified at the initial stages of the planning process and used to guide site layout and design (Para. 11.212) 'To help protect the city's character, all existing green and blue infrastructure (e.g. mature trees, hedgerows, watercourses, etc.) shall be identified at the initial stages of the planning process and used to guide the site layout and design.' and that all development proposals are expected to avoid adverse impacts on mature trees (Para 11.224);
Objective 10.98 Protection of Natural Landscape notes that the City Council will endeavour to discourage proposals necessitating the removal of extensive amounts of trees, hedgerows and historic walls or other distinctive boundary treatments.

The text of the plan conveys that 'Protecting areas in isolation from each other is neither appropriate nor effective. It is important that significant wildlife habitat areas and ecological corridors including rivers and their banks, trees and hedgerows which allow migration of flora and fauna between conservation areas which is essential for the dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species, are protected from inappropriate development and enhanced where possible, working with local stakeholders'. (Para. 4.204)
In this regard it is noted that there is a significant number of trees being removed to accommodate both apartment blocks C & D.
This is not considered to be in line with our Cork City Councils strategic objectives on retention of green infrastructure. The objectives and section above need to be met with the emphasis of landscape design on tree retention and keeping ecological corridors for the fauna on site who utilise the site.

RESPONSE TO Opinion 14d

A total of 49 No. existing trees are impacted across the entire development, including 4 No. trees to be removed to facilitate the bridge over the Greenway.

Of the 49 No. trees to be removed due to this development, 16 are native and 33 non-native trees

16 No. Native trees include
3 No. Cat A
9 No. Cat B
4 No. Cat U (diseased Ash and Elm)

33 No. Non-Native trees include
6 No. Cat A
26 No. Cat B
1 No. Cat U (diseased Cherry)

116No. New trees are proposed as part of the Development

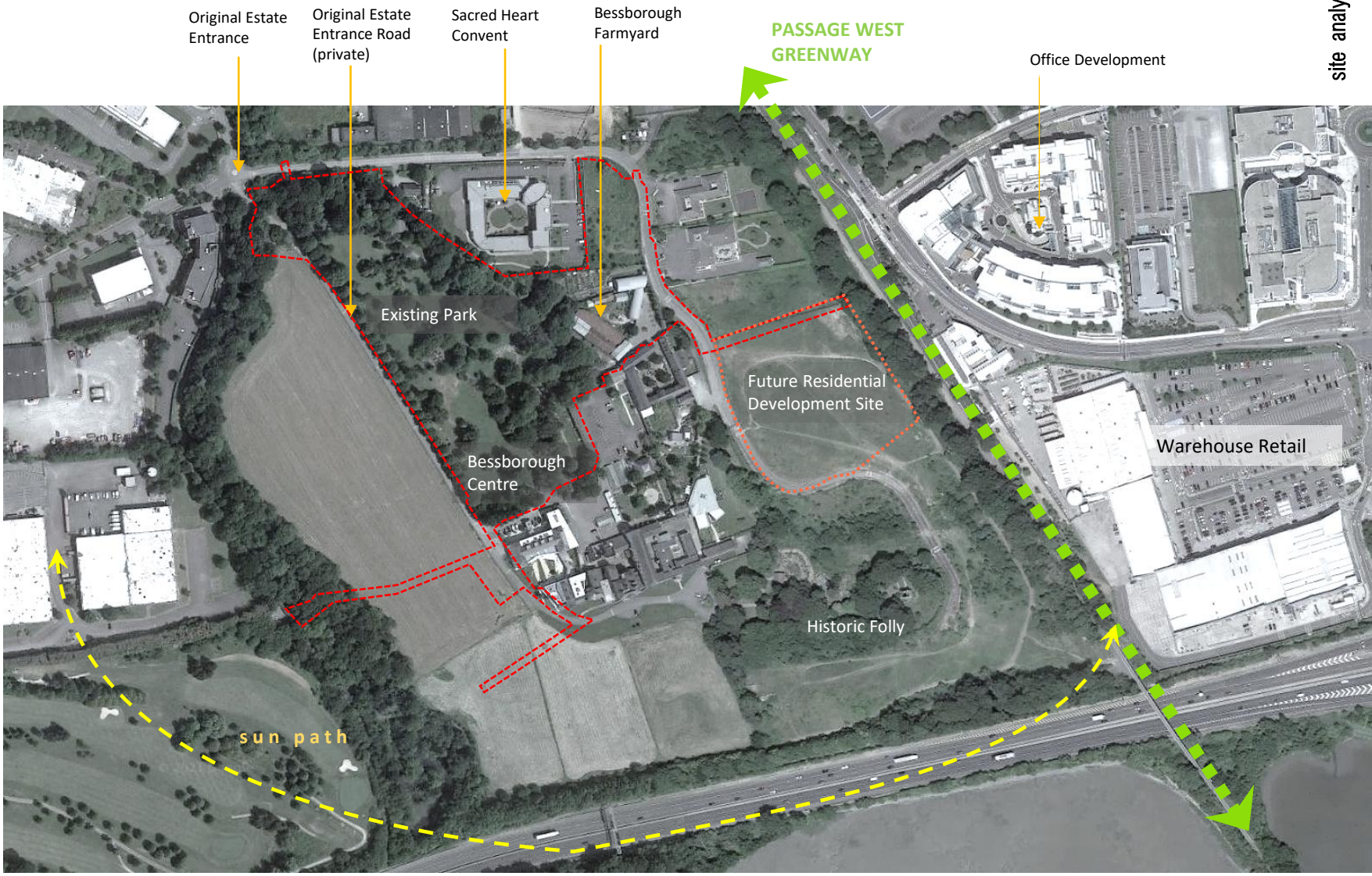
Mitigation for the loss of these trees, includes the planting of 116No. new semi-mature trees.

As can be seen from the adjacent legend of proposed trees, the majority are native but with some naturalized and non-native tree species selected. A broader mix will ensure that the tree population is less vulnerable to the risks posed by climate change, pests and diseases in the future.

A woodland management strategy is also recommended and submitted as part of the planning application to ensure the continual health and renewal of this important landscape and heritage setting.

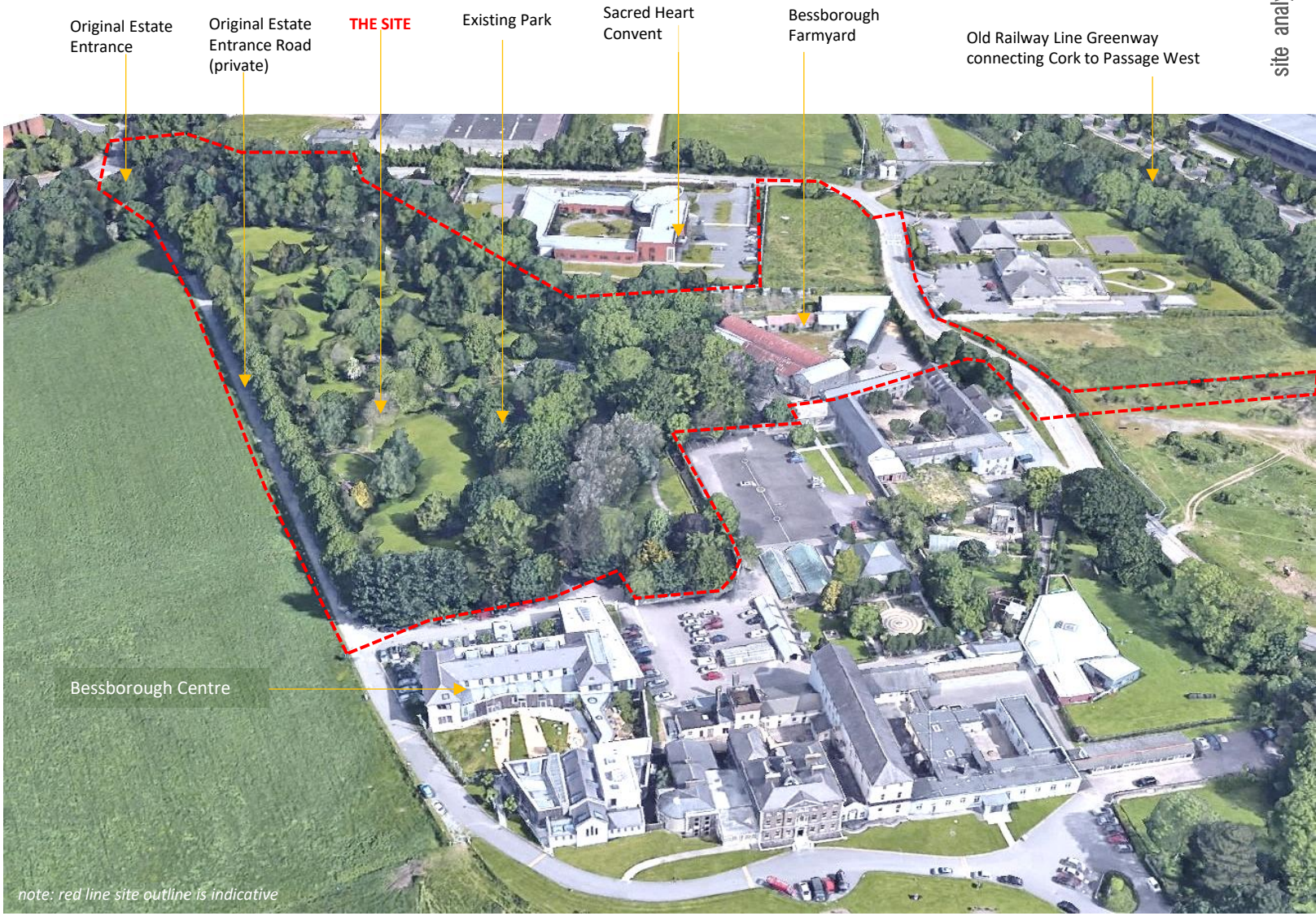
TREE LEGEND

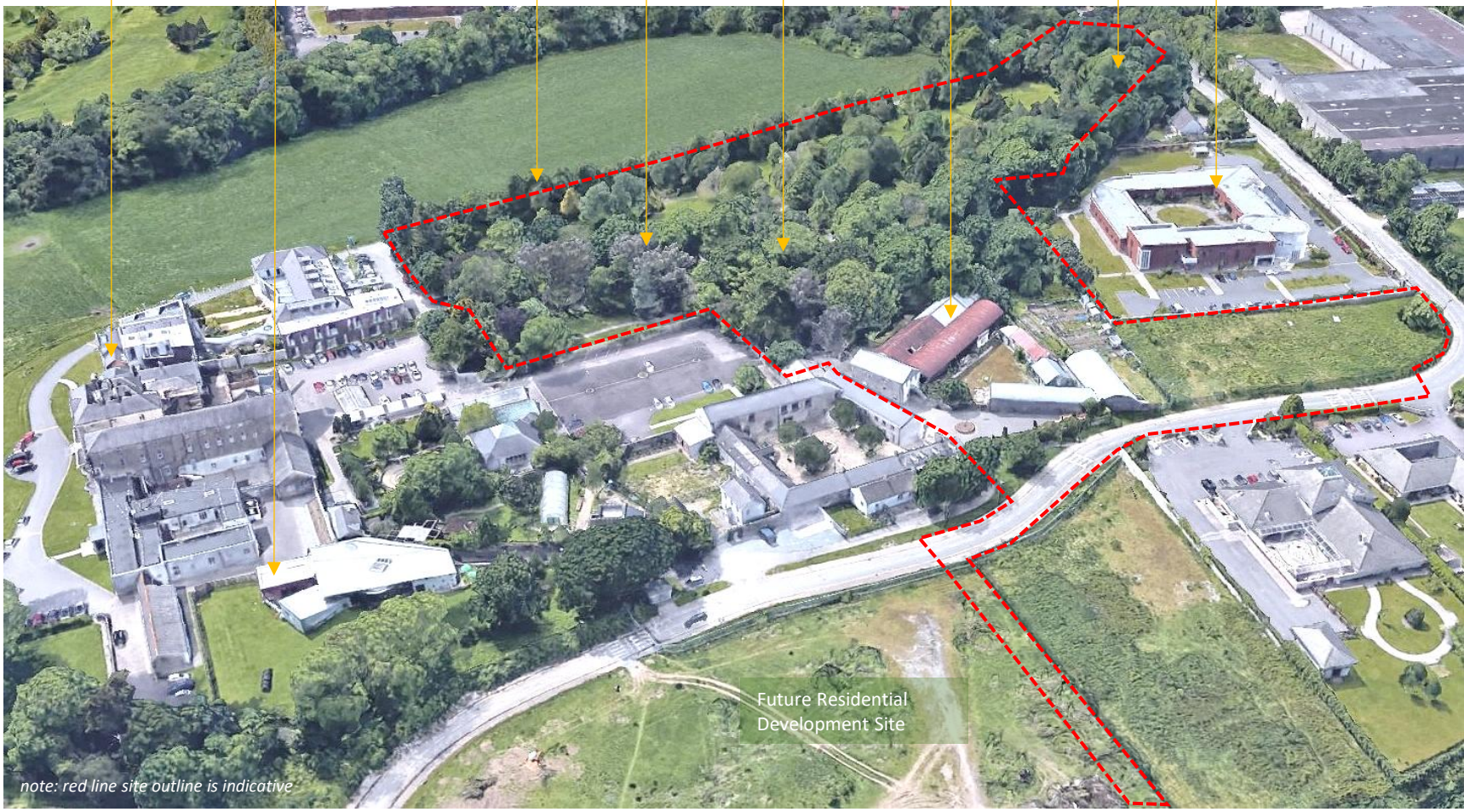
Symbol	Species and size	within park	urban context
Qr	*Quercus robur* Dair ghallda / Common Oak 20-22 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, rootball	19	
Qp	*Quercus petraea* Dair ghaelach/ Sessile Oak 20-22 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, rootball	9	
Ps	*Pinus sylvestris* Péine albanach / Scot's Pine 16-18 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 3-4m tall, rootball	15	
Bpen	*Betua pendula* Beith gheal / Silver Birch 16-18 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5 m tall, rootball		4
Bpub	*Betua pubescens* Beith chlúmhach / Downy Birch 16-18 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5 m tall, rootball		4
Au	*Arbutus unedo* Caitʰne / Strawberry tree 12-14 cm girth, multistemmed, rootball, 2.5-3m tall	2	
Fs	*Fagus sylvatica* Beech 18-20 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, rootball	6	
Qi	*Quercus ilex* Holm Oak (evergreen) 18 -22 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, rootball	3	
Tbf	*Taxus baccata 'fastigiata'* Irish Yew (evergreen) 16 -18 cm girth, 3-4m tall, container	8	
Qpn	*Quercus palustris* Pin Oak 18-20 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, rootball		13
Cb	*Carpinus betulus* European Hornbeam 18-20 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, rootball		4
Sa	*Sorbus aucuparia* Mountain Ash 18-20 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, rootball		13
Pa	*Pyrus avium* Native wild cherry 16-18 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 3-4m tall, container		15
Ms	*Magnolia x soulangeana 'Alba Superba'* Evergreen Magnolia 20-24 cm girth, 2m clear stem, 4-5m tall, container	1	

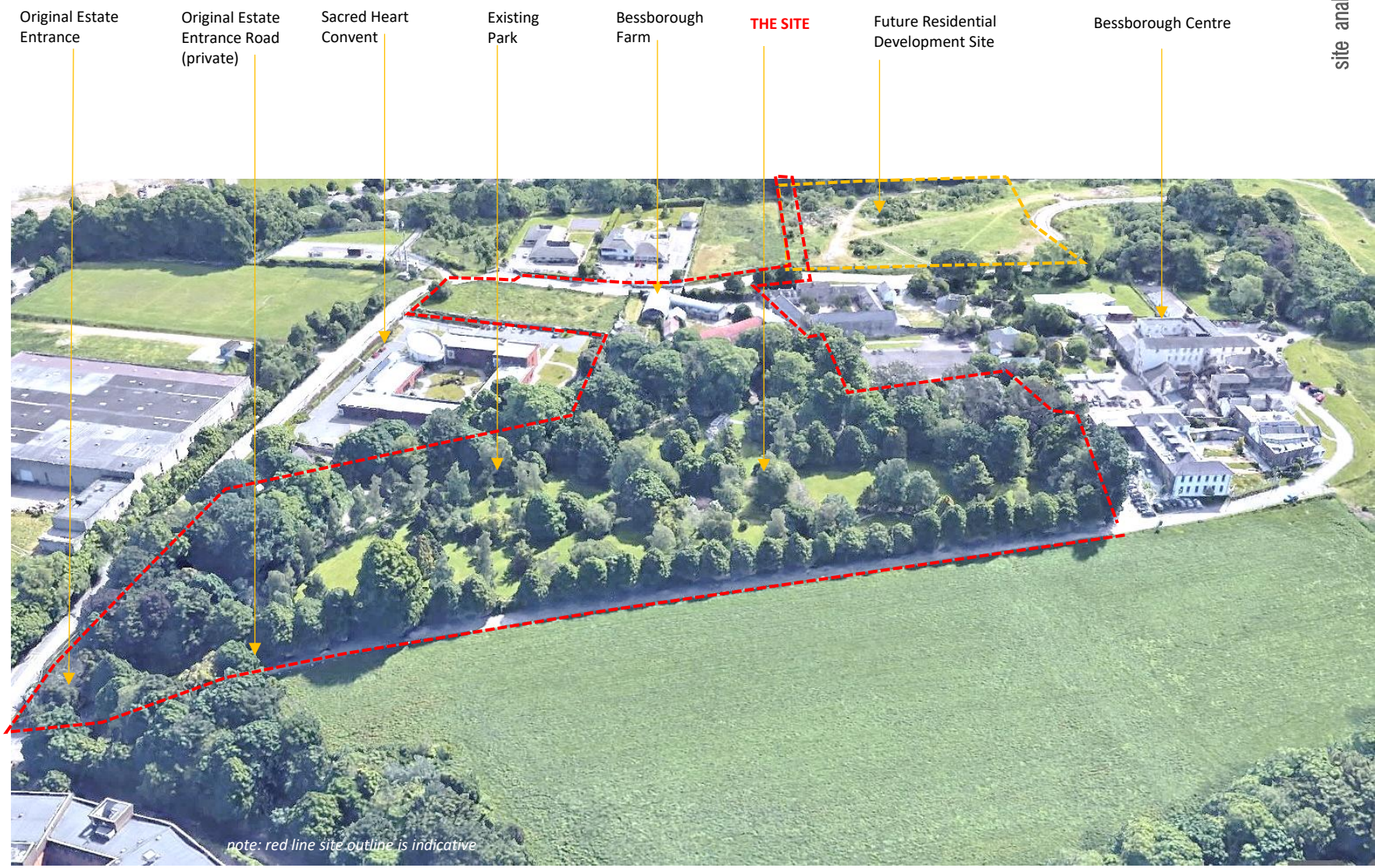


note: red line site outline is indicative

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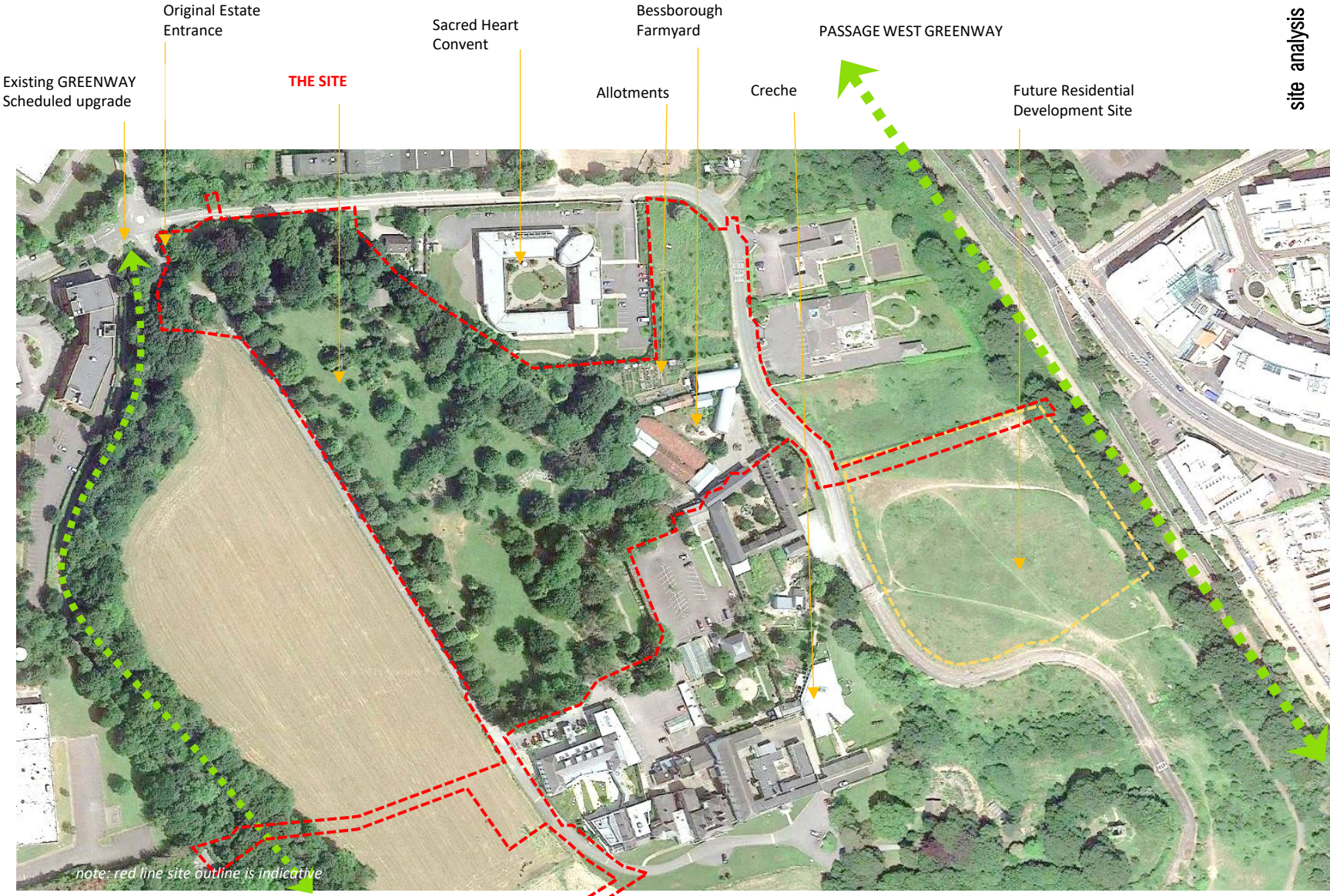

Original Estate Entrance
Original Estate Entrance Road (private)
THE SITE
Existing Park
Sacred Heart Convent
Bessborough Farmyard
Old Railway Line Greenway connecting Cork to Passage West
Bessborough Centre
note: red line site outline is indicative


Bessborough Centre
Bessborough Creche
Original Estate Entrance Road (private)
THE SITE
Existing Park
Bessborough Farm
Original Estate Entrance
Sacred Heart Convent
Future Residential Development Site
note: red line site outline is indicative


Original Estate Entrance
Original Estate Entrance Road (private)
Sacred Heart Convent
Existing Park
Bessborough Farm
THE SITE
Future Residential Development Site
Bessborough Centre
note: red line site outline is indicative

SITE ANALYSIS

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY

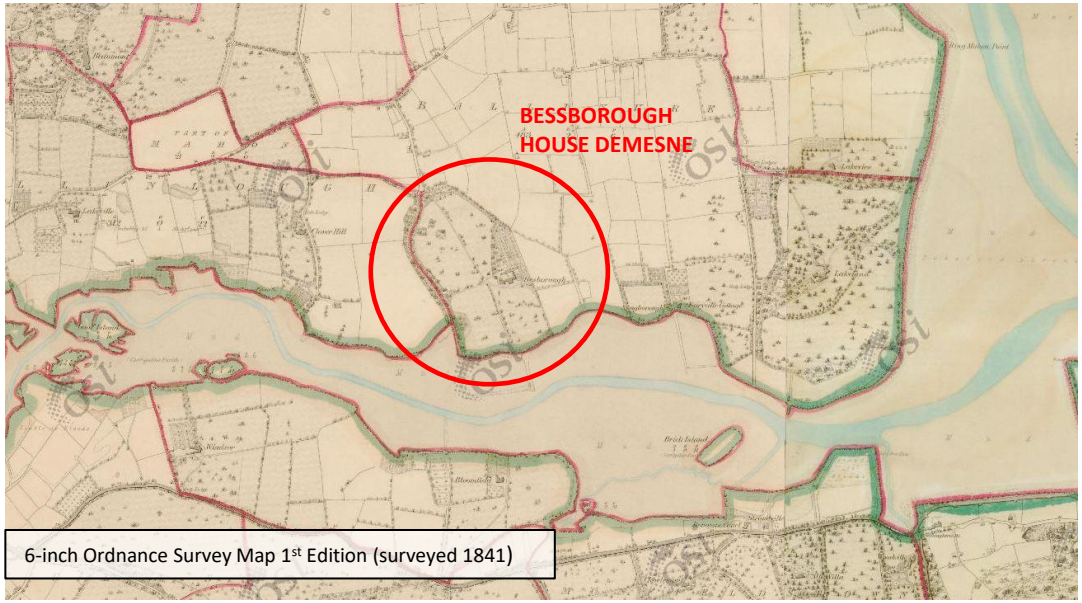


THE FARM ~ Bessborough
Large Residential Development

irla



Photograph of the Bessborough House, circa 1880's



6-inch Ordnance Survey Map 1st Edition (surveyed 1841)

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Bessborough House is a Georgian Country House believed to have been built in circa 1760. The house passed through many generations of Quaker families until it was purchased by the Sacred Heart Order in 1922.

It should be noted that there are no 'recorded monuments' on the Phase subject site but there are two 'recorded monuments' within the grounds of Bessborough House.
Bessborough House itself, is a protected structure (PS490) and a National Monument (NM CO074 – 077) and is listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH ref no. 20872005).

Other noteworthy historic structures within the demesne of the house are:

- An Icehouse (NM CO074-051)
- A Farm Complex and Walled Garden (NIAH 20872006)
- Tower Folly (NIAH 20872007)

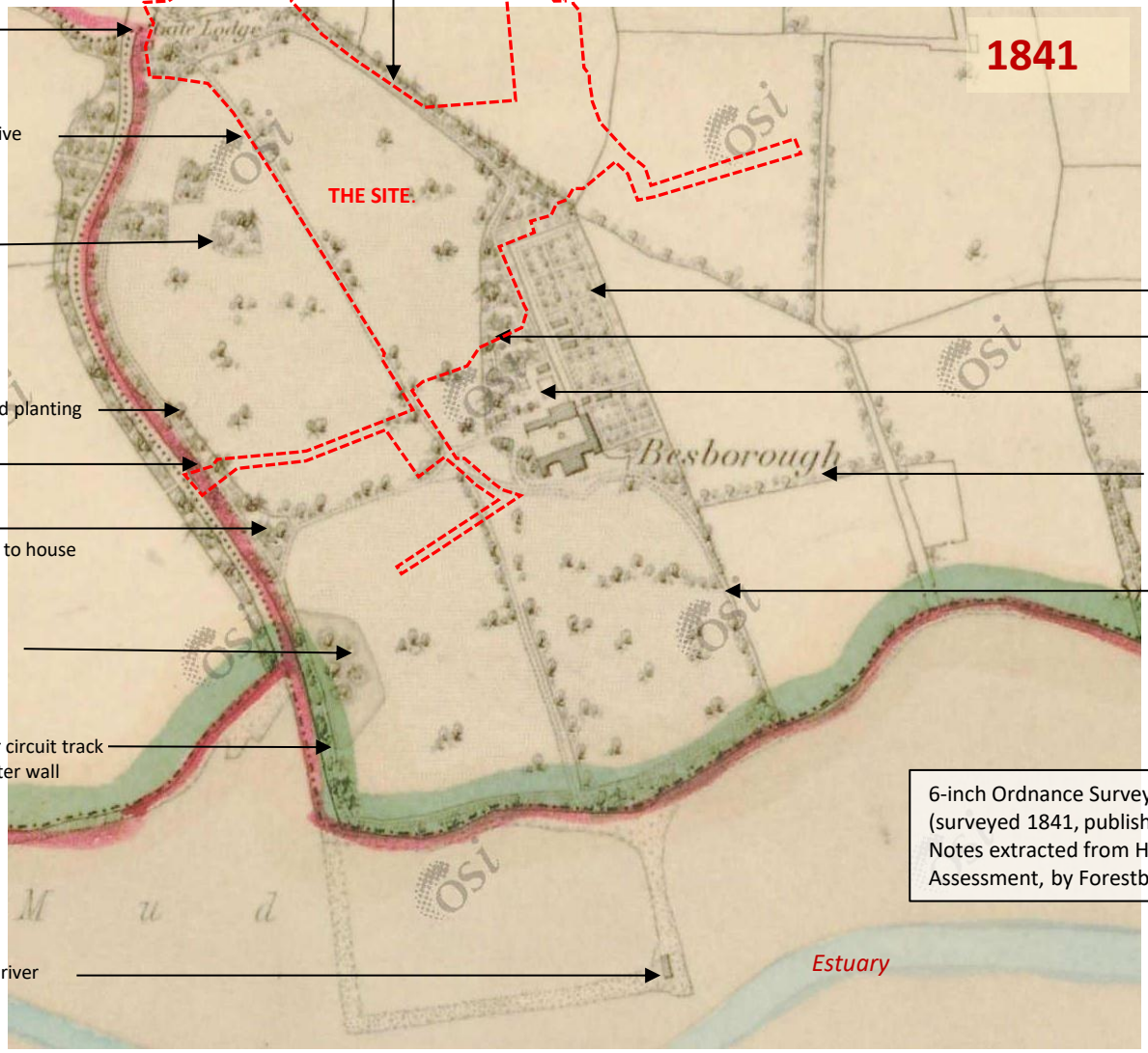
The historic demesne appears to be devoted principally to the production of food with a large walled kitchen garden, orchards, livestock pens, grow houses and the rest of the estate given over to pasture as is evidenced by the open grassland divided with paths into four fields screened with dense woodland to the walled perimeter.

A distinct landscape feature comprising a pond containing five planted islands contrived on the western boundary has no clear function and may have been symbolic. The ordnance survey of 1841 shows that the pond would have been clearly visible from the house' but it is now lost in the dense thicket of trees around the perimeter.

The 25" Ordnance Survey published in 1899, shows the original house extended with new wings to either side of the house and three new farmyards to the north and northeast of the kitchen gardens and house.
The 1899 map also shows the addition of more ornamental landscape features such at the folly, footbridge to one the islands in the pond, summerhouse and circle of trees which suggest a nod to the pleasure gardens of English natural landscape designer "Capability Brown".

Historic maps clearly show that the relationship of the estate with the Cork Harbour Estuary was of significance in the 18th and 19th century.

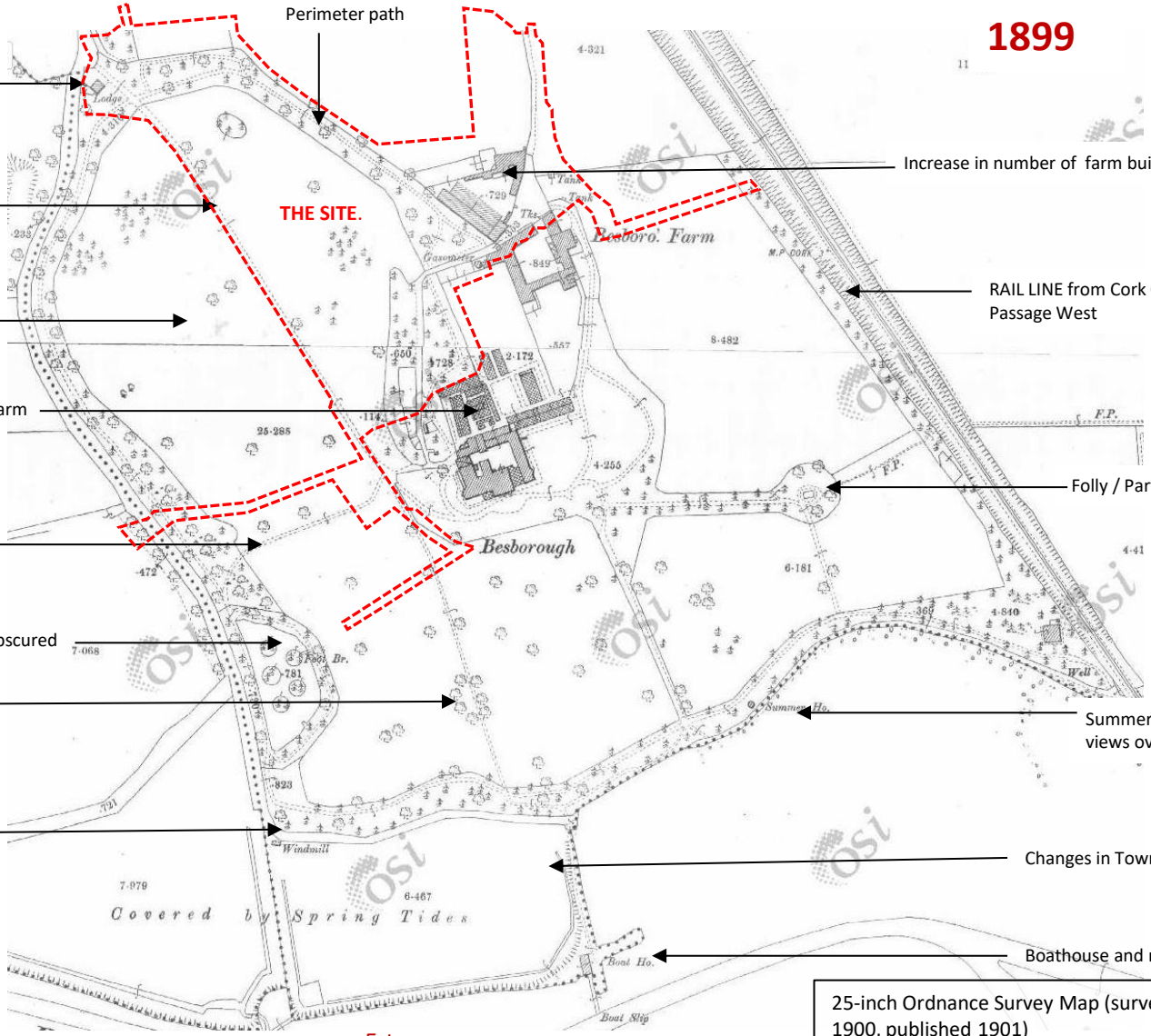
The Historic Landscape Assessment prepared by Forestbird Design in August 2020 (refer to Appendix) identifies features on historic maps which provide clues about the original landscape. Further detail on the historic context of the site is provided by John Cronin & Associates.



6-inch Ordnance Survey Map 1st Edition
(surveyed 1841, published 1845)
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape
Assessment, by Forestbird Design, August 2020.

note: red line site outline is indicative

1899



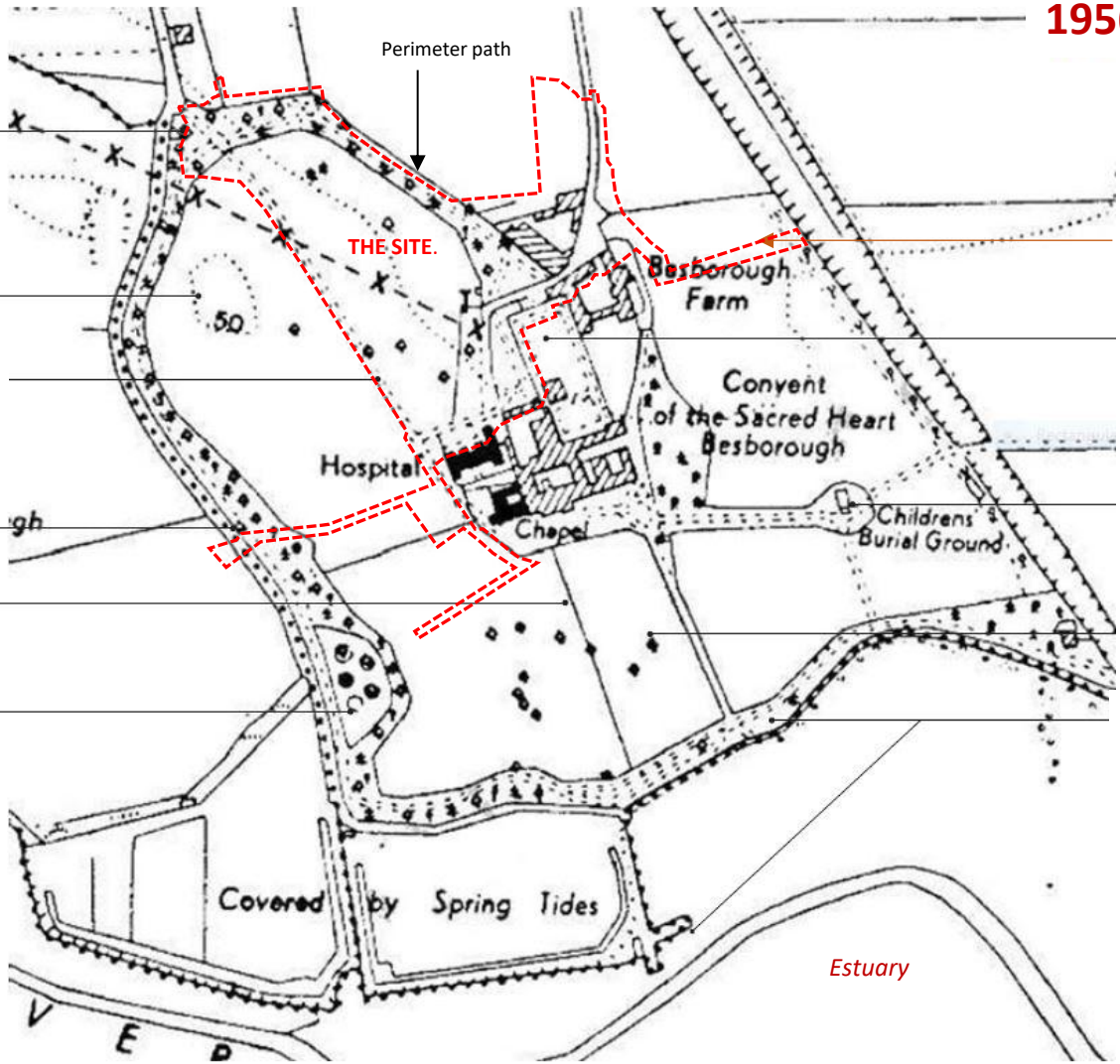
note: red line site outline is indicative

25-inch Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1899-1900, published 1901)
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird Design, August 2020

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY

1956



50m contour to identify high ground

Central Access Drive – still no avenue trees

Icehouse and perimeter path

Track has been downgraded to a fence line

Pond with 5 islands

"The Meadows" in SHD planning process

Parterre Garden

Folly / Partial Castle Keep and Cemetery (no trees illustrated).

Trees in southern pasture

Summer House and boathouse are still intact but not identified

note: red line site outline is indicative

6-inch Ordnance Survey Map Last Edition(1956)
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird, August 2020

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE FEATURES

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY



View of Bessborough House with later extensions viewed from the southern boundary.



Historic folly / partial castle keep

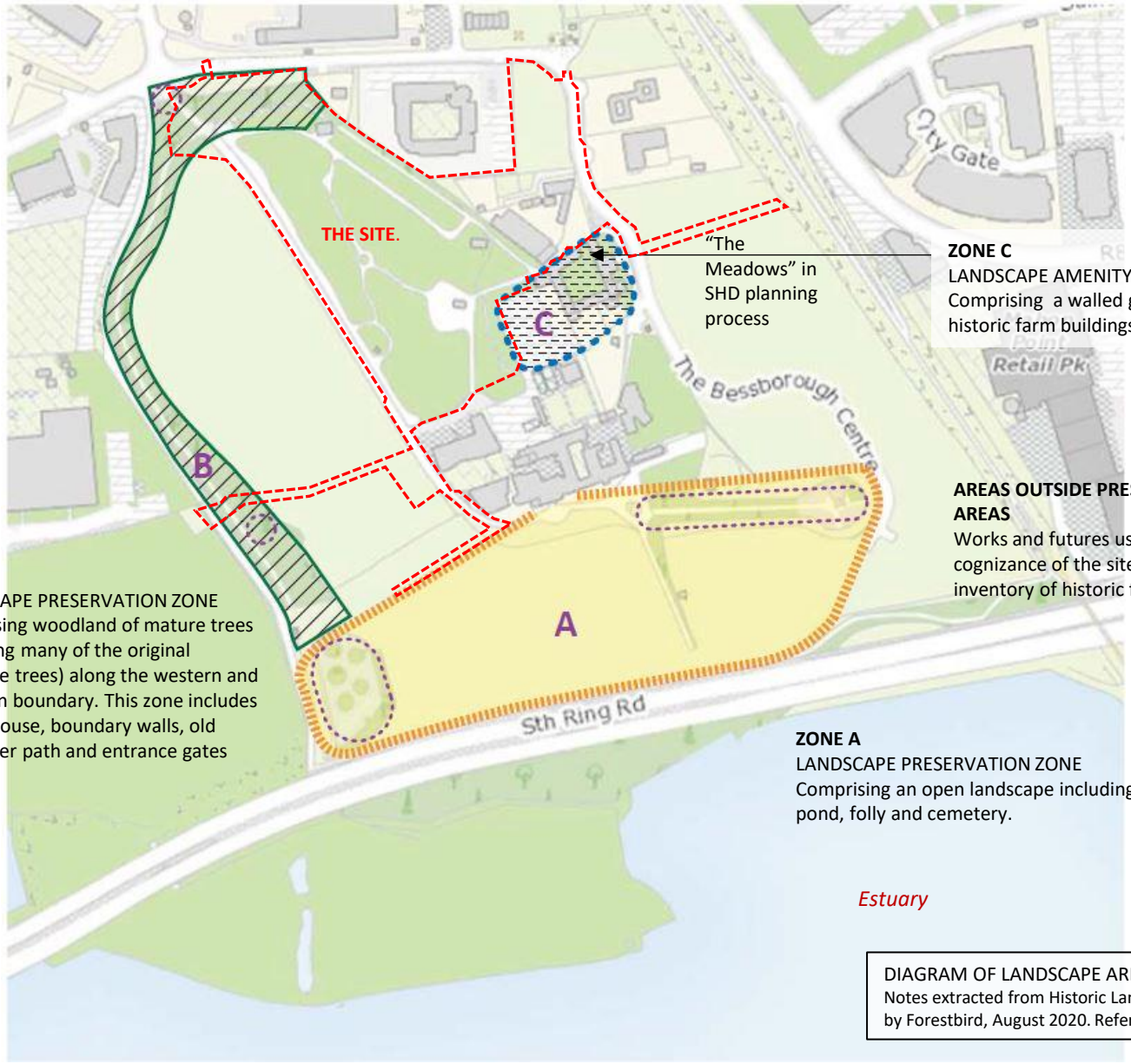


Icehouse on western boundary of the demesne



Historic pond with five planted islands

Current photographs of the landscape features identified on historic maps



ZONE C
LANDSCAPE AMENITY ZONE
Comprising a walled garden and historic farm buildings.

AREAS OUTSIDE PRESERVATION AREAS
Works and futures uses to be cognizance of the site-specific inventory of historic features

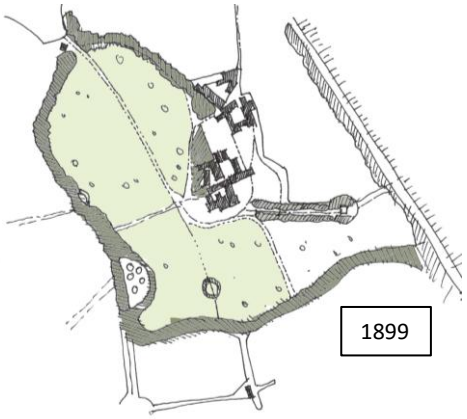
ZONE B
LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE
Comprising woodland of mature trees (including many of the original demesne trees) along the western and northern boundary. This zone includes the icehouse, boundary walls, old perimeter path and entrance gates

ZONE A
LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE
Comprising an open landscape including the historic pond, folly and cemetery.

DIAGRAM OF LANDSCAPE AREAS
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird, August 2020. Refer to Appendix.



The 1841 Ordnance Map
The site is divided into quarters with a defined edge of woodland to the perimeter. The access track from the northern boundary bisects open pastural lands, affording bucolic views of the demesne with the house and its associated farm buildings in view. The icehouse and pond with five islands are evident on these early maps. The pond is clearly visible from the house.



The 1899 Ordnance Map
Significant development in the form of extensions to the main house and the construction of three new farmyard courtyards and additional farm buildings to the north and west side of the original house. A new tree lined path to a folly was constructed and a summer house and windmill are introduced on the southern, estuary boundary.
The new rail line connecting Cork to Passage West can be seen on the eastern boundary.



The 1956 6-inch Last Edition
This map illustrates the evolution of the site, 20 years after being acquired by the Sacred Heart Order. The map contains less landscape detail than the earlier maps and Convent functions such as the chapel, hospital added to the main house and children's burial ground located near the folly are clearly annotated on the map. There is little change to the broader landscape layout.

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE (ZO 17)
SE 4 PLANNING OBJECTIVE

The SE4 Landscape Preservation Zoning Objective is described as follows:

- To reinstate Historic Landscape;
- To seek use of grounds as Neighbourhood Park in context of local area plan (H);
- To allow development within the immediate environs to the north of Bessboro House consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site.

TO REINSTATE THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

The Zoning Object to reinstate the 'Historic Landscape' requires study and analysis of historic maps and aerial photographs to ascertain the original design intent in the laying out of the grounds of Bessborough House.
The cartographic sources include:

- The first edition (scale 1:10,560) Ordnance Survey (Published in 1840).
- The first edition (scale 1:2,500) Ordnance Survey (Published in 1887 - 1930).
- The last edition copperplate Cassini 6 inch (1:1000) , surveyed from 1845 – 1930

The 1841 Ordnance Map is the first documented evidence available to the design team which gives a clear picture of the original landscape associated with Bessborough House.

The site is divided into four field parcels dotted with clusters of trees which indicate that these fields were intended for grazing rather than crop production. The perimeter of the site is defined with dense woodland planting. The access track from the northern boundary bisects open pastural lands, affording bucolic views of the demesne with the house and its associated farm buildings in view. A parterre garden and what appears to be a fruit tree orchard and small structures for livestock are located north of the house. The front of Bessborough House overlooks the gently scooped open grass lands down to the estuary.
An icehouse and pond with five islands are clearly visible from the house in these early maps.
The 1899 Ordnance Map - Alterations and extensions to the buildings and the construction of a folly to the southeast of the house occurred over the 2nd half of the 19th century but this did not have a massive impact on the landscape setting.
The 1956 Ordnance Map - Following the acquisition of Bessborough House by the Sacred Heart Order, new convent functions began to appear. The new chapel, hospital and cemetery are clearly shown and annotated.
The landscape and gardens of Bessborough House did not however, undergo much change until the 1980's and 1990's as can be evidenced in the aerial photographs overleaf.



Aerial Photograph 1951 (source Military Archives)
This photograph clearly shows the open quality of the site, bisected into field parcels for grazing with dense, deciduous woodland trees to the perimeter. The central approach roads leads from the gate lodge on the northern boundary to Bessborough House affording views across the land holding.

SE 4 OBJECTIVE

TO REINSTATE THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

An aerial photograph of the site taken in 1951 shows that the original historic landscape remained largely intact.

Subsequent aerial photographs suggest that the most significant changes to the historic landscape occurred in the last 30 years with the construction of the N40 ring road in the early 1990's which severed the demesne from the estuary.

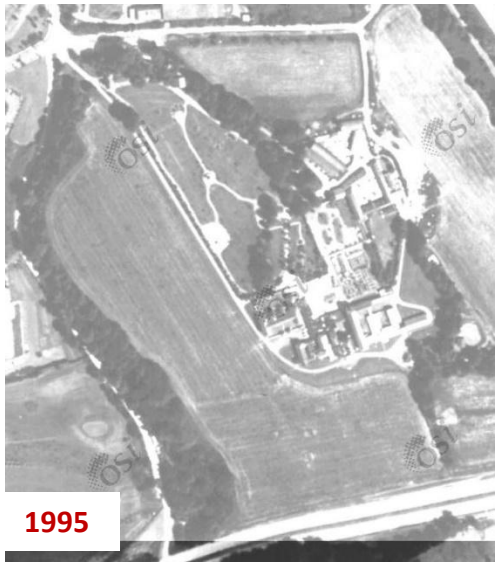
Since the 1990's, gradual development of new institutional buildings, a creche and the demands of parking altered the footprint of the built form on the site. The conversion of the fields to the east of the entrance road into what we see now as an enclosed park with mature trees was only planned and implemented in the early 1990s.

A study of aerial photographs from 1995 show the development of the park and the maturing of trees from barely visible saplings in 1995 to almost full coverage of the site. (Refer to more recent photographs overleaf).

The creation of the park in one of the four field parcels transformed the historic landscape and completely altered the approach to the house through an open, bucolic landscape.

The densely wooded park has removed the symmetrical relation between the two field parcels and created a new edge to the site with the line of Lime trees extending the full length of one side of the approach road.

The park is now perceived as a boundary edge and feels as though it is no longer belongs to the house but rather to an adjoining property.





Aerial Photograph 1995 (source OSI)
While the quality of the photograph is poor, it is clear that the Sacred Order had begun to develop the field parcel to the north of Bessborough house into an amenity park with winding paths, follies and play areas. Small dark marks suggest that saplings may have been planted at this stage. The avenue trees are clearly visible along the east side of the entrance road.





Aerial Photograph 2000 / 2005 2013 (source OSI)
Colour aerial photographs take in 2000, 2005 and more recently in 2013 show the development of the park from the barely visible saplings in 1995 to the dense cover of trees we now see today.

SE 4 OBJECTIVE - TO REINSTATE THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

The ariel photograph taken between 1995 and 2013 document the changes that the landscaped grounds of Bessborough House underwent.

The most significant of which was the construction of the N40 which severed the relationship between the house and the estuary on the southern boundary. Another significant change was the establishment of an amenity park in the field parcel north of the house.
Winding paths, a playground, folly structures and a new line of Lime trees along the approach road were introduced between 1990 and 2000 which diminished the open parkland quality of the grounds.

It is the intention of this landscape proposal to remove the winding paths and small structures introduced in the park in the 1990's and reinstate the historical paths along the perimeter of the park. It is proposed to re-wild large areas of the park to create wild meadow and rough grass with mowed routes along desire lines rather than hard standing.

While the existing trees in the park provide great amenity and create an attractive, mature setting, reinstating the historic landscape to it's more open, meadow landscape would suggest the careful management of the landscape over the next 20 years to gradually thin out diseased and unwanted trees as they reach the end of their life span and replace these with new native deciduous and evergreen trees along the perimeter and in groups within the field on the western side of the entrance road.

This will over time achieve a more equal relationship between the parcels of land east and west of the approach road and open the site up visually. The planting of new appropriate trees in the right location will ensure continued tree cover on the perimeter and will gradually replace some of the exotic or low value trees that are currently in the park.


Evidence of fly tipping around the protected historic folly/ partial castle keep


Historic Icehouse


Evidence of fly tipping around the protected historic folly/ partial castle keep

SE 4 OBJECTIVE - SEEK USE OF GROUNDS AS NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

The grounds of Bessborough House have massive potential as an attractive public "Neighbourhood Park" linking the existing greenway (scheduled for upgrade) on the western boundary to the popular Cork-Passage West Greenway on the eastern boundary.

Currently access to the grounds is monitored at a security point located at the entrance gate on the northern boundary. All amenities within the site are privately owned and are therefore currently not accessible to the public.

Numerous gaps in the damaged or vandalized perimeter fencing, allow local residents unofficial access for walks; and the perimeter of the grounds is well used as a local park, albeit unofficially.

Unfortunately, vandalism, fly-tipping, fires and stunt driving have left a less positive mark on the landscape and have resulted in damage to historic landscape features some of which are protected structures.

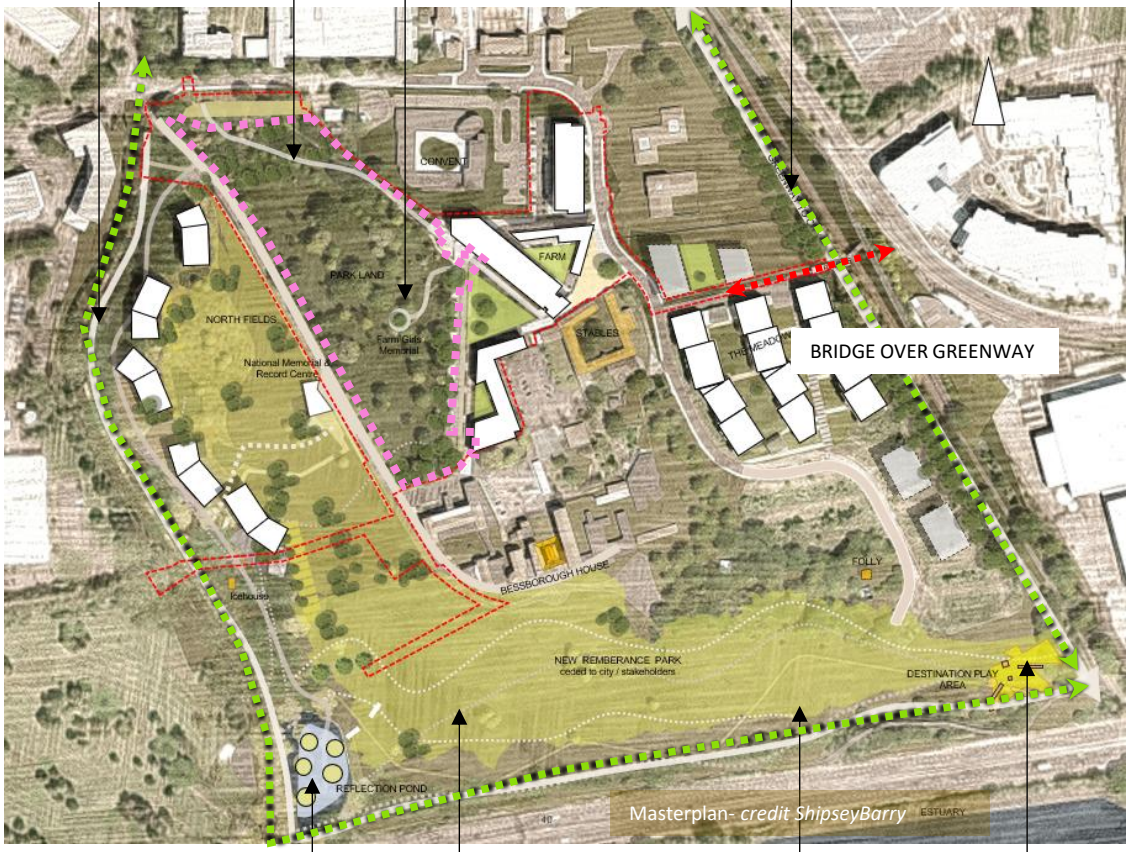
The architectural and landscape proposals put forward in the Masterplan for all three proposed phases seeks to safeguard these landscape assets and promote well overlooked, organized permeability through the site.

The Masterplan prepared by ShipseyBarry Architects (overleaf) indicates the Applicant's intention to cede a large area south of the house to Cork City Council or another stakeholder for use as a Neighbourhood Park.


Historic Pond with five islands


Unused path on western boundary (scheduled for Greenway upgrade)


A pedestrian bridge is proposed to connect to the ramp accessing the Passage-West Greenway on the Mahon boundary



REFLECTION POND
Clear and restore the historic pond to provide attractive amenity.

REMEMBRANCE PARK
Area south of Bessborough House to be ceded to Cork City Council as a Neighbourhood Park

BISHOP'S WALK
Reinstate the new and historic looped track around the walled perimeter.

DESTINATION PLAYGROUND

SE 4 OBJECTIVE - SEEK USE OF GROUNDS AS NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

The proposed Masterplan for the site and surrounding areas, prepared by ShipseyBarry Architects illustrate how development at Bessborough can deliver significant public amenity and provide the missing link in connecting either side of the old railway line.

Within the subject site , the existing park (dotted in pink), north of Bessborough House will remain in the ownership of the developer but will be treated as public open space.

This proposed public open space, in conjunction with the proposed pedestrian bridge over the Greenway to Mahon ensures that the development delivers an attractive route through the site linking the northern boundary entrance to the popular Passage-West Greenway on the east side of the site.

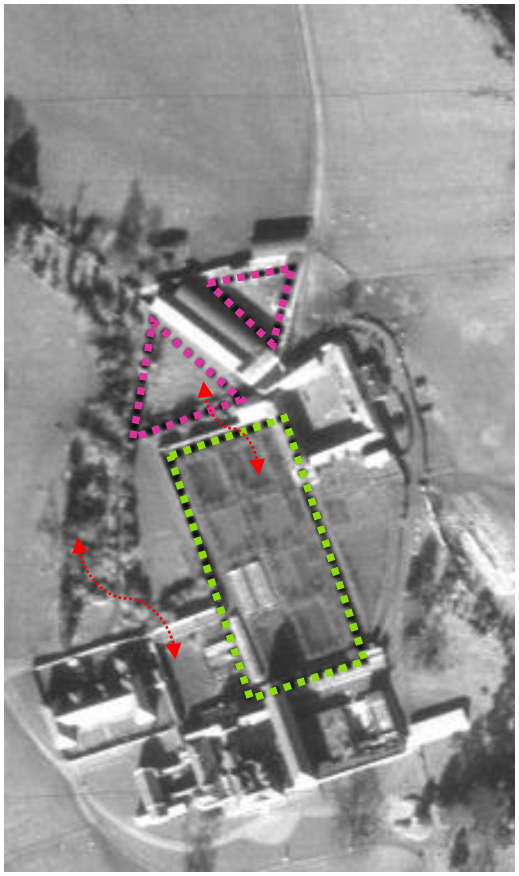
Public permeability through the entire site to connect all phases of the development with existing Greenway infrastructure on both east and western boundaries is a key driver in the landscape and architectural layouts.

The proposed new public realm showcases the unique and inherent character of Bessborough, to create a wide variety of public space that optimizes the existing natural and historic context.

As part of Phase 3 of the development, it is intended to cede the swathe of lands south of Bessborough House to Cork City Council or another stakeholder to develop as a Neighbourhood Park in line with the objectives of the SE04 Zoning.



Sketch illustrating current spatial arrangement



Aerial Photograph 1951 – illustrating historic spatial arrangement

SE 4 OBJECTIVE - SE 4 OBJECTIVE – TO ALLOW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONS TO THE NORTH OF BESSBORO HOUSE CONSISTENT WITH THE LANDSCAPE AND PROTECTED STRUCTURE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

The proposed development concentrates all proposed buildings in the area, just north of Bessborough House.

The geometry of Building C holds the edge of the parterre gardens (now a carpark) and defines the southern side of the triangular park.

New native Irish trees including Oak and Scot's Pine are proposed to reinforce the dense wooded edge to the park.

Most of the trees that are impacted by Building 'C' are large non-native Eucalyptus trees and these will be replaced with appropriate native parkland trees to reinforce the existing wooded perimeter.

The intended landscape treatment to the remaining park is to have as light a touch as possible. It is proposed that the existing paths built in the 1990's are removed, and this area reseeded as an open meadow with new paths introduced to reinstate the historic routes along the north and eastern edges.

The remaining buildings (Blocks A, B and E) are located on the northeast side of the site with Block D forming the western edge of the old farmyard.

The character of landscape in these two different environments tries to capture the special quality that the site offers.

The courtyard formed in the historic triangular farmyard is edged on two sides with existing historic farm buildings ('A' and 'B') and the landscape treatment references the past use of the courtyard as a farmyard in the selection of materials and planting.



TREE MANAGEMENT in THE PARK

A full tree survey of the Applicant's landholdings related to the subject site was undertaken by ArborCare in 2021 and updated in 2025.
The total number of trees survey was 373 and these include a wide variety of indigenous and non- native trees.

The Design Team have positioned buildings carefully in order to reduce the impact on existing mature trees in this area.

The current design impacts on 49 No trees including 4 existing trees impacted by the pedestrian bridge on the Passage West Greenway.

Refer to the Arboricultural Report for a full breakdown of trees impacted by the development.

49 No. trees to be removed due to the development – these include:

16 No. Native trees include
3 No. Cat A
9 No. Cat B
4 No. Cat U (diseased Ash and Elm)

33 No. Non Native trees include
6 No. Cat A
26 No. Cat B
1 No. Cat U (diseased Cherry)

116No. New trees are proposed as part of the Development

Removal of diseased or damaged trees will protect existing high value trees from disease and make room for the introduction of new appropriate trees in line with proper parkland management. Dead trees may be retained as habitat if these are not seen as a threat to the public.

New tree planting should be sensitive to the historic landscape and should be selected from appropriate native species.

Native wildflowers and meadow grasses should be introduced to create a more natural, ecologically biodiverse landscape with recommendations from ecologists, NPWS, THE Native Woodland Trust and Cork City Council.

REINSTATE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE - OPEN UP VISTAS
Reinforce wooded perimeter and gradually open-up approach vistas with removal of trees to road edge(

NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
Park to be opened to public.
Reinstate historic paths and introduce play zones and a remembrance bench

PROMOTE WALKING + CYCLING
New paths create full permeability across the site. A new pedestrian bridge to the Cork – Passage West Greenway knits the site into existing green infrastructure and provides a critical link across the site between east and west



FARM GIRL MEMORIAL BENCH
Circular bench centered on specimen Magnolia tree

MEMORIAL ARCHIVE CENTRE

FOLLY

DESTINATION PLAYGROUND

ICEHOUSE
Restore the historic Icehouse

REFLECTION POND
Restore the historic pond to provide an attractive amenity. Remove invasive species from the islands and clear trees obscuring the visual link between the pond and the house.
Drain site surface water into pond to replenish with fresh water.

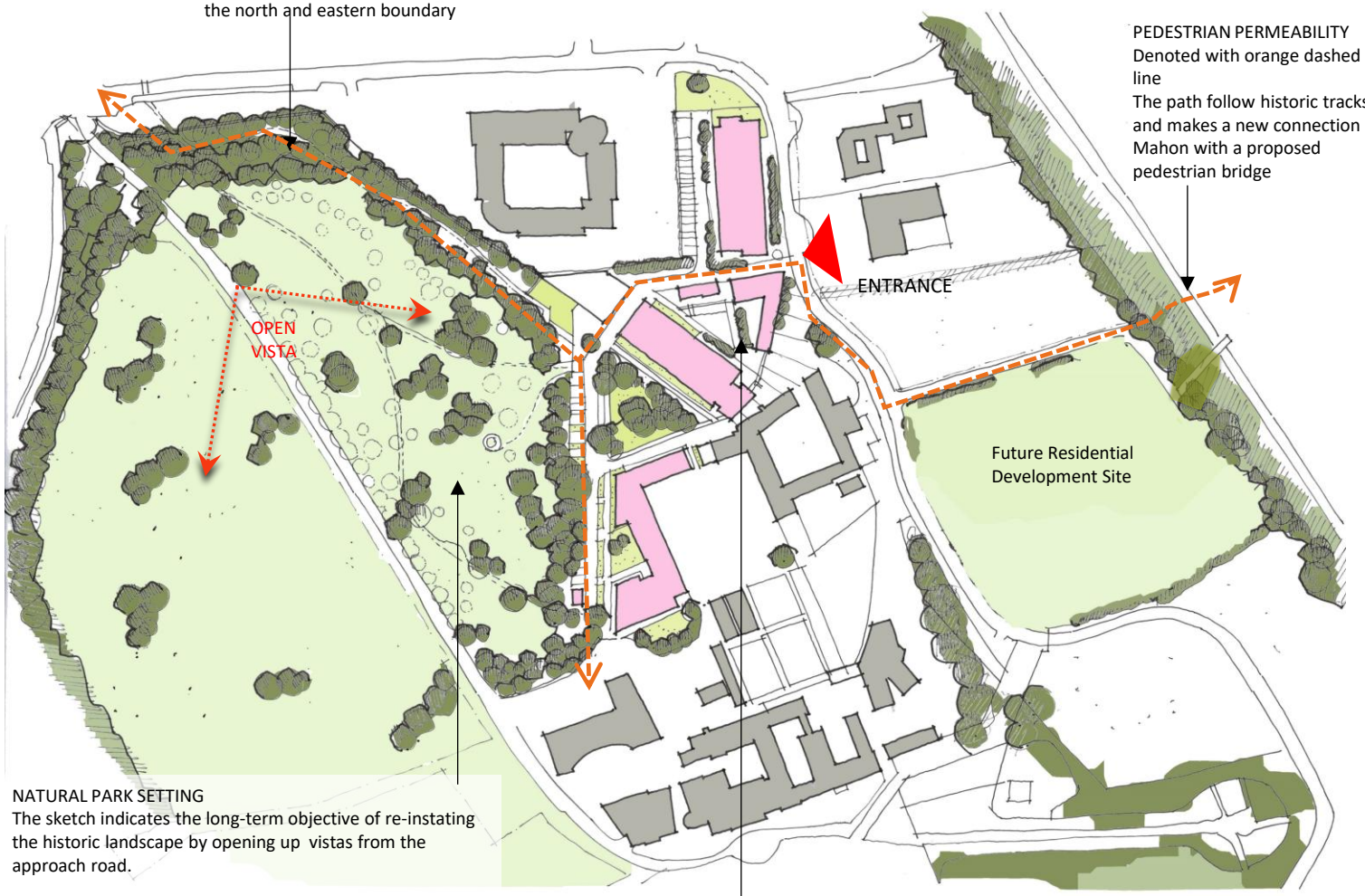
REMEMBRANCE PARK
Area south of Bessborough House to be ceded to Cork City Council/ Stakeholders as a Neighbourhood Park

REINFORCE WOODLAND SCREEN
Reinforce buffer with ring road with new native trees

irla

DESIGN CONCEPT

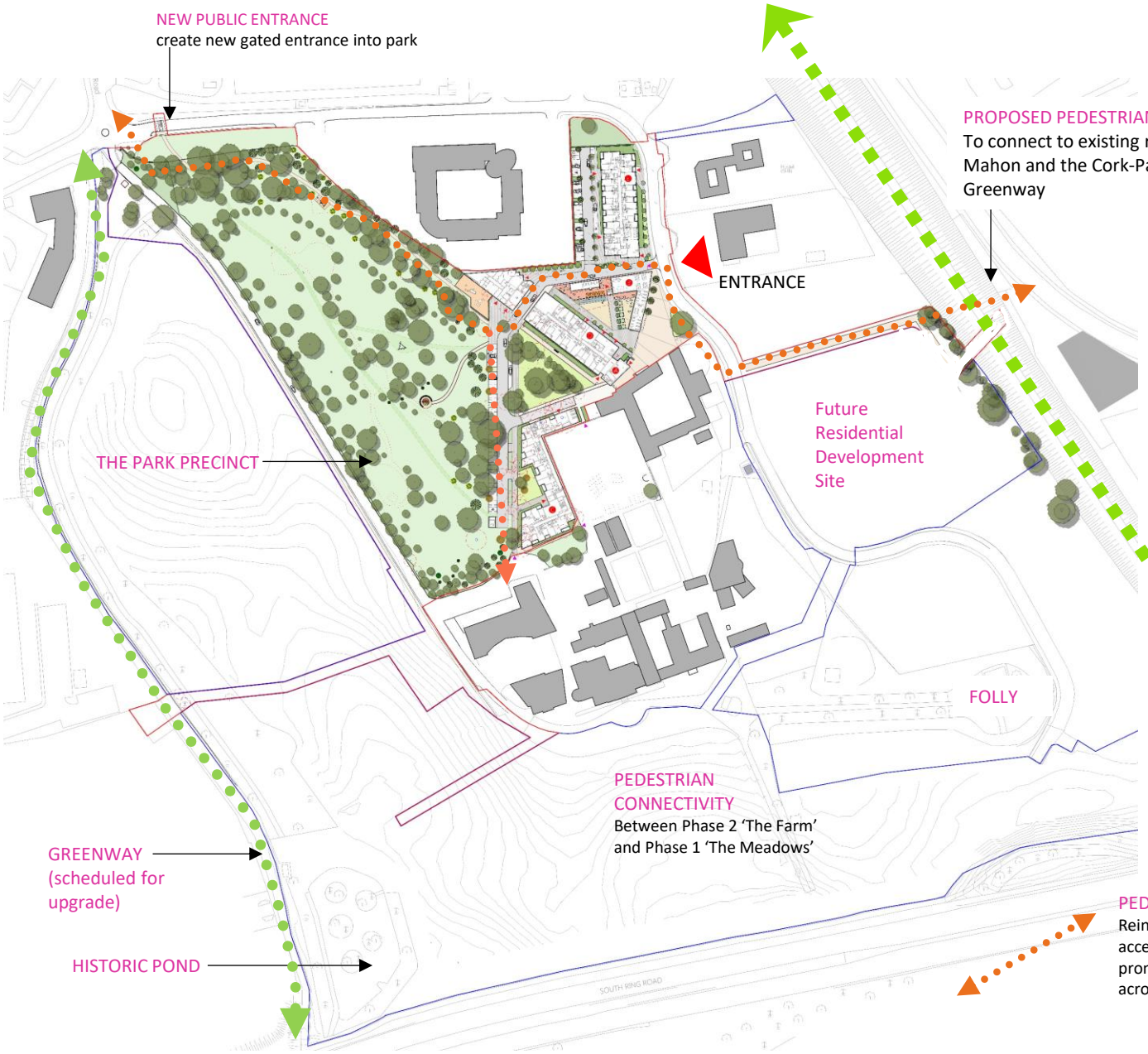
LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY



NATURAL PARK SETTING
The sketch indicates the long-term objective of re-instating the historic landscape by opening up vistas from the approach road.

In this application, existing trees are to be retained except those impacted by the development. Careful management of the park over decades will eventually achieve a more open landscape.
In the short term, existing paths and structures introduced in the 1990's are to be removed and re-seeded with rough grass and meadow. New trees will be concentrated on the perimeter only.

HISTORIC FARMYARD PRECINCT
Create kitchen garden with cobbled / gravel forecourt and courtyard


NEW PUBLIC ENTRANCE
create new gated entrance into park
PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
To connect to existing ramp to Mahon and the Cork-Passage West Greenway
ENTRANCE
Future Residential Development Site
THE PARK PRECINCT
THE PASSAGE WEST GREENWAY
FOLLY
PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY
Between Phase 2 'The Farm' and Phase 1 'The Meadows'
GREENWAY (scheduled for upgrade)
HISTORIC POND
PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY
Reinstated historic routes, new access points and a new bridge promotes full permeability across the site.


REINSTATE HISTORIC PATHS
along the north and eastern boundary
CRECHE
with outdoor play area
THE FARMYARD PRECINCT
HISTORIC FARMYARD
Create kitchen garden with cobbled / gravel forecourt and courtyard
ENTRANCE
PEDESTRIAN PERMEABILITY
FARM GIRL'S MEMORIAL BENCH
Centered on specimen Magnolia tree.
TRIANGULAR POCKET PARKS
Lawn edged with gravel and bound gravel paths. Existing trees to be protected.
THE PARK PRECINCT
Remove existing paths in centre of park and re-seed with grass and meadow mix to reinstate historic landscape and encourage biodiversity. Refer to Parkland Management Strategy on renovation of historic landscape.
REINSTATE HISTORIC PATHS
along the north and eastern boundary

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY **THE FARM COURTYARD**

THE FARM PRECINT

The Farm precinct is centered on the historic farmyard which is triangular in shape and comprises barrel-vaulted, stone buildings and derelict lean-to sheds as well as some small, more recently constructed buildings.

Refer to the Architect's Design Statement on the retention of existing buildings and the inclusion of new apartment buildings to retain the shape of the historic farmhouse and repurpose its use.

The proposed landscape strategy to the triangular shaped courtyard evolves from the historic use of this space as a working farmyard involving farm animals and heavy agricultural equipment. Much of the original farming equipment is still on site and should be carefully preserved and reused in the new design.

The new courtyard is conceived as a kitchen garden with raised beds comprising both edible produce, herbs and ornamental plants. The surfaces and materials are carefully selected to retain the informal and functional beauty of a working space.

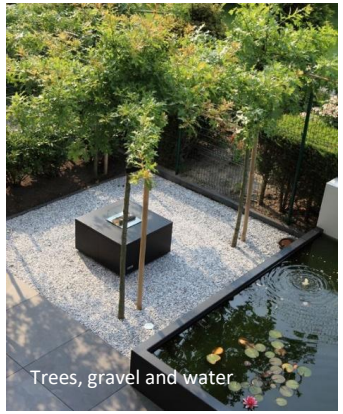


Image of proposed water feature in the courtyard
credit ShipseyBarry

THE FARM COURTYARD

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY




Trees, gravel and water


Ornamental Kitchen Garden


Water troughs made of salvage brick

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY **THE PARK**

THE PARK PRECINCT

Bessborough's Park includes a wide variety of mature native and non-native trees which are concentrated on the perimeter of the park but are scattered in a relatively random fashion across a well manicured, sloping lawn in the centre of the park.

The objective of the landscape strategy in the park is to reinstate the historic landscape over a long period of time.

The existing paths will be replaced by reinstated historic paths and the manicured lawn will be allowed to turn to rough grass with new native meadow introduced. Mowed routes will provide more subtle, natural paths through the landscape and these may connect mowed clearings in the meadow.

Native wildflowers and meadow grasses will be introduced to create a more natural, ecologically biodiverse landscape with recommendations from ecologists, NPWS, THE Native Woodland Trust and Cork City Council.

Roads and paths are kept to a minimum and parking is provided in small communal pockets beneath trees using a light impact, permeable gravel surface which will not damage existing roots. All works shall be carried out in accordance with BS5837:2012.

Very little new landscaping is proposed as the existing palette of trees and lawns will be retained and enhanced with new native trees to replace those trees lost at a ratio of 2:1.

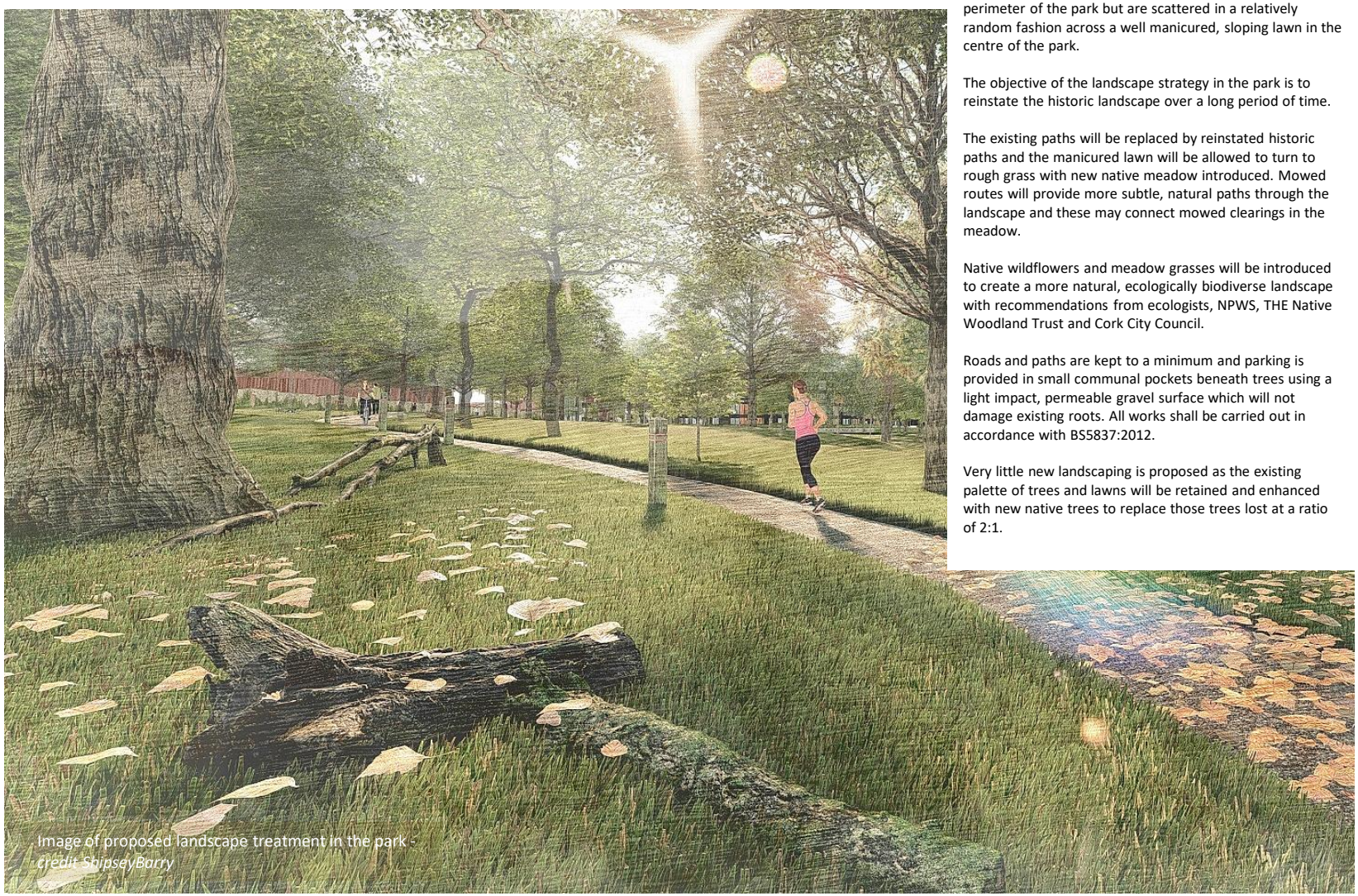


Image of proposed landscape treatment in the park - *credit ShipseyBarry*



LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY **THE PARK**



Simple seating and play areas incorporated into the bound gravel paths following historic routes



Photograph of the existing path through the park

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & COMMUNAL AMENITY

Public open space is provided in the form of a landscaped forecourt and a large public park created out of the existing private park to the north of Bessborough House. The park is currently bounded by historic walls on the north, east and southern sides with a fence along the western boundary with the entrance drive.

A proposed new entrance in the historic stone wall near the Bessboro Road roundabout will ensure good public access and permeability through the site.
New public routes through the park and through the development, to the proposed new pedestrian bridge provides continuous connection through the site linking the greenway on the western boundary to the Cork – Passage West Greenway on the eastern boundary

Safe cycling, walking and play is facilitated in an integrated way with play and seating pause zones located along the path.

The provision for public open space is **10.6%** of the developable site which meets the requirement to provide a minimum of 10% of the total site area as stated in the Policy and Objective 5.1 of the "Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements"

It should be note that the calculation of public open space does not include the proposed public park.

Communal is figure far exceeds the requirement to provide a minimum or semi-private amenity space is provided in a number of small courtyards or pocket parks, around which the residential buildings cluster, thereby ensuring convenient access and passive supervision.

The old farmyard courtyard accommodates many communal functions such as meeting rooms, workspace, hot desking hubs etc. as well as a sunroom. Pocket parks comprising lawns beneath existing trees are provided within the park for the exclusive use of residents. These lawns include informal, natural play equipment and are well overlooked.

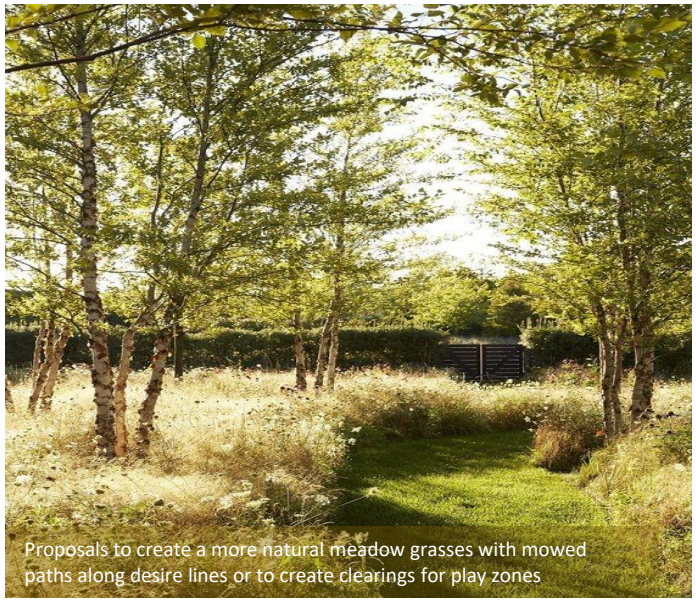
SITE AREA	5.08 ha
DEVELOPABLE AREA	1.46 ha
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	
10.6% of DEVELOPABLE AREA	
COMMUNAL AMENITY SPACE	2,563sqm
(exceeds min requirement of 830sqm)	

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY **PUBLIC OPEN SPACE / AMENITY**



SITE AREA	5.08 ha
DEVELOPABLE AREA	1.46 ha
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	
10.6% of DEVELOPABLE AREA	
COMMUNAL AMENITY SPACE	2,563sqm
(exceeds min requirement of 830sqm)	


View of current park with manicured lawns


Proposals to create a more natural meadow grasses with mowed paths along desire lines or to create clearings for play zones


Bird nesting boxes


Bat boxes


Bat boxes

BIODIVERSITY

The sites greatest natural asset are the mature trees within the park as well as the significant woodland buffer on the western boundary of the Bessborough Estate.

Given that the zoning objective permits development immediately north of the house, a total of 49 No. trees will be impacted by the development. Fortunately, the majority of these of the trees to be removed are non-native with limited biodiversity value.

It is proposed that a minimum of two native trees will be planted for every existing tree impacted. All mitigation measures will be put in place to protect the retained trees during construction. A specific Arboriculture Method Statement shall be prepared for any works within the root protection area of any tree to be retained and the measures outlined shall be strictly enforced on site. Trees will be protected in accordance with BS: 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

It is proposed that eight bat boxes will be located within the Park and all boxes will be erected by the Project Ecologist, with regard to vehicle movements and lighting.

The proposed woodland planting mix will be dominated by native species including Quercus robur, Quercus petrea, Pinus sylvestris, Sorbus aucuparia and Pyrus avium. The objective of these elements is to create natural, multi-layered woodland habitat which will be of local ecological value and has the potential to support native flora and fauna.

A native wildflower/grass mix will be utilised to provide a more diverse sward which is of higher ecological value for invertebrates and birds. Perennial Rye Grass or other vigorous amenity/agricultural grass species will not be utilised as they tend to over-dominate the sward and reduce overall biodiversity.

The final grassland/wildflower mix for same will be specified by the Project ecologist based on final ground conditions including alkalinity, fertility and moisture levels.



Samples of bound gravel to paths in the Park



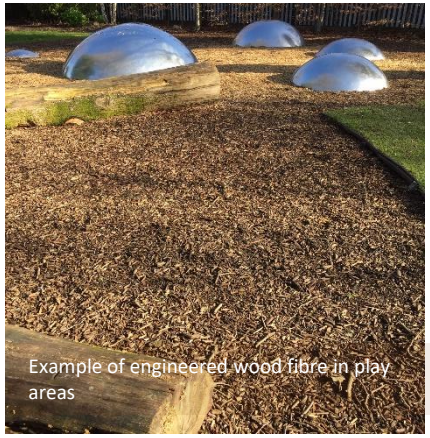


Golden Breedan gravel to paths in the Park and areas of the Farm Courtyard.



Salvage stone cobbles and clay bricks to the Farm courtyard.





Example of engineered wood fibre in play areas

HARD LANDSCAPING /PAVING

The proposed palette of materials for hard landscaping surfaces reinforces the character of the two primary precincts namely the Farm centred on the historic farmyard and the Park.

Materials associated with the Farm Courtyard:

- A combination of salvage materials including stone cobbles and clay bricks with large areas of loose gravel and Breedan Golden Gravel is proposed.
- Water feature in the courtyard to be constructed of salvage bricks.
- Rough timber, railway sleepers and Corten steel are used as surface edging where suitable.
- Smooth surfaces suitable for universal accessibility will ensure access to all parts of the courtyard despite the predominance of loose materials

Materials associated with the Park:

- Roads, parking and paths are kept to a minimum to reduce the built footprint in the Park.
- Permeable paving and bound gravel are proposed as hard surfaces to minimise the impact on roots and to ensure that the standards are SUDs are met to deal with surface water.

Materials associated with the Vehicle:

- New parking bays /set down - permeable paving in 'The Farm' and reinforced gravel in 'The Park'.
- New access road to be concrete with exposed selected aggregate.

Materials associated with Playgrounds

- Engineered wood fibre or lawn for falls less than 1 m – proposed under low equipment in 'The Park'.


Simple blocks of Oak lifted off the ground are proposed in the Park


Polished concrete block benches in the Farm


Corten planter boxes


Loose furniture




Bicycle Stands

STREET FURNITURE

The final selection of street furniture and lighting will be agreed with Cork City Council.

The street furniture proposed as part of this proposal includes the following :

Seating /Benches
Polished concrete block benches are proposed in 'The Farm' and heavy Oak benches are proposed in 'The Park'

Tree grates / grilles:
Trees are proposed in bio retention pits flush with the footpath level or within raised planters in the kitchen garden of 'The Farm'.

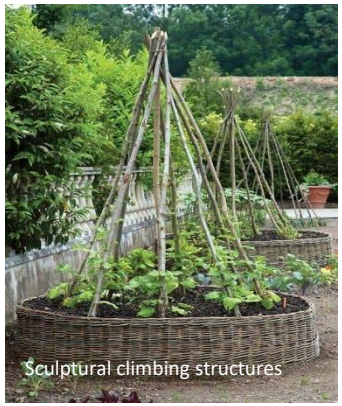
New trees within 'The Park' will not have grates but will be stacked.

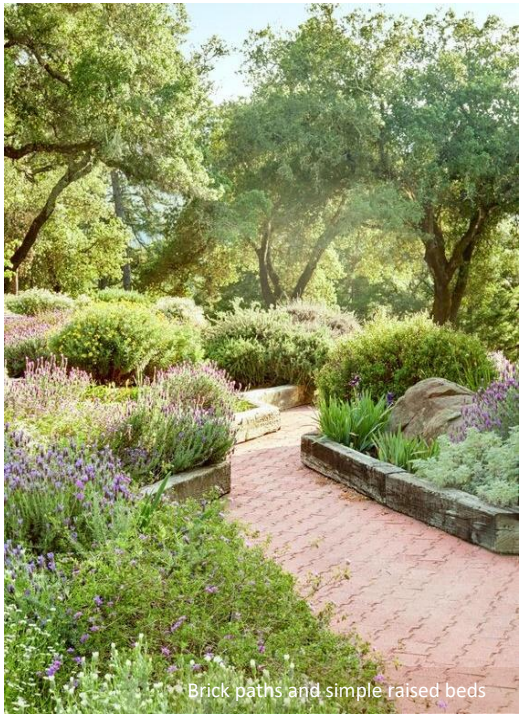
Bicycle Racks
Stainless steel bicycle racks are proposed around the development in small pockets

Planters / Raised Beds
Rough, farm materials are proposed like railway sleepers or Corten to form raised beds in the Farm courtyard.

Water features
Shallow water features are formed with salvage bricks.

Loose furniture
Modern, bright and stackable.


Sculptural climbing structures


Brick paths and simple raised beds


Paths between fennel, rosemary and wildflowers

KITCHEN GARDEN PLANTING - FARM COURTYARD

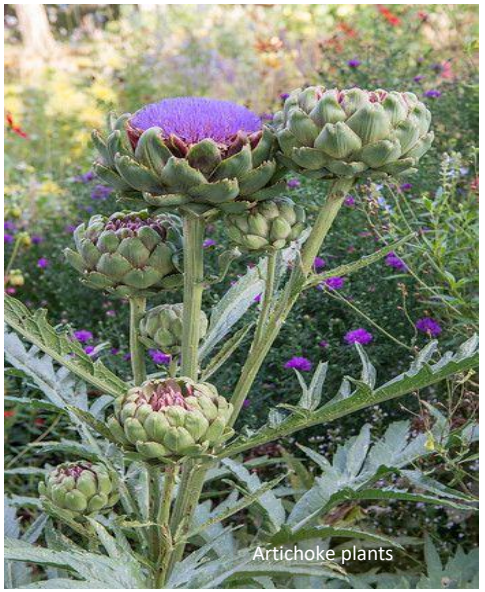
The historic farmyard is reimagined as a slightly softer and less utilitarian kitchen garden edged by both original and new buildings.

Many of the residential amenities will be located here and it is envisaged that café style tables will spill into the space amongst the plants.

The plants proposed in raised planters comprise fruit trees such as Mirabelle plum, wild cherry and dwarf apple trees as well as olive trees which will be underplanted with aromatics such as rosemary, lavender and thyme.

Raised beds are also set aside for edibles with high architectural merit including artichokes, rhubarb and alliums. Climbing structure for plants animate the space and give scale and character to the courtyard.


Image of planting in raised beds - *credit ShipseyBarry*


Artichoke plants

PROPOSED TREES for THE PARK

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY



Native EVERGREEN Trees like Scot's Pine, Yew and the Strawberry Tree to replace inappropriate, alien evergreen trees such as Eucalyptus, Lawson Cypress, Monterey Cypress and Spruce



TREE MANAGEMENT in THE PARK

The existing park at Bessborough contains in excess of 350 trees comprising a wide variety of indigenous and non- native trees.

The Design Team have concentrated development immediately north of the house and positioned buildings carefully in order to retain a dense screen of trees between the park and the proposed Building "C".

It is recommended that a new generation of native and naturalized evergreen and deciduous trees are planted at a ratio of 2 new trees to every 1 existing tree proposed for removal due to the impact of the development or the condition of the tree.

A Parkland Management Strategy is recommended to ensure that the condition of trees is surveyed on an ongoing basis and that the health of Ash and Elm trees are monitored.

The purpose of the Parkland Management Strategy is to gradually open up visas into the park by thinning out unattractive, inappropriate trees and replacing with new trees on the perimeter and in groups on the west side of the entrance road.

New tree planting should be sensitive to the historic landscape and should be selected from appropriate native species. Native wildflowers and meadow grasses should be introduced to create a more natural, ecologically biodiverse landscape with recommendations from ecologists, NPWS, THE Native Woodland Trust and Cork City Council.

Native / naturalised DECIDEOUS TREES to replace existing trees impacted by the development

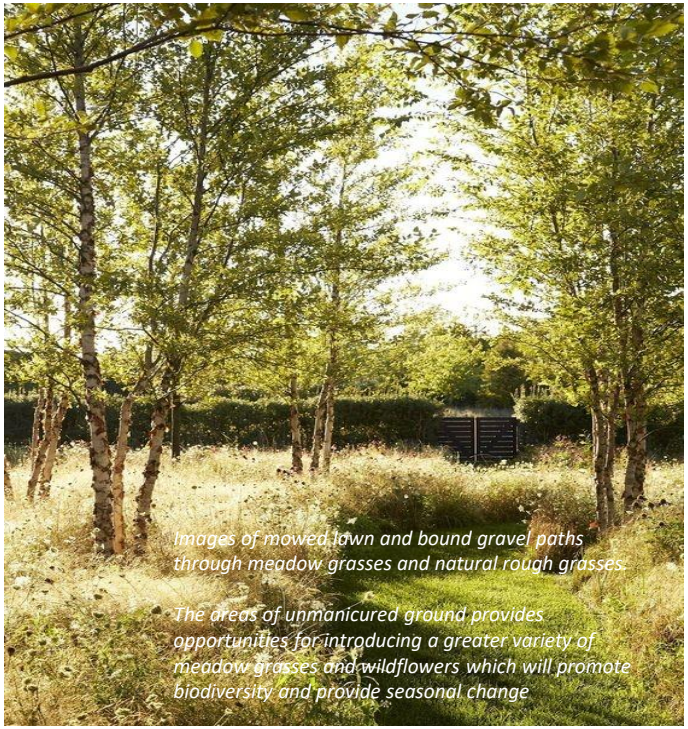

Quercus robur – European Oak


Tilia Cordata – Lime tree


Betula pendula – Silver Birch


Fagus sylvatica – European Beech

THE PARK – proposed planting

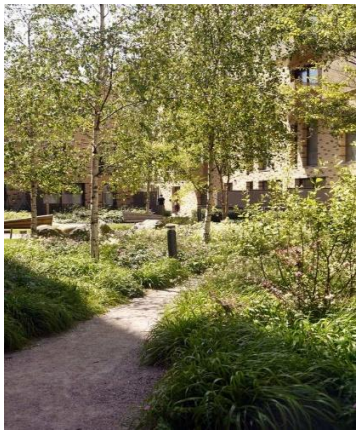


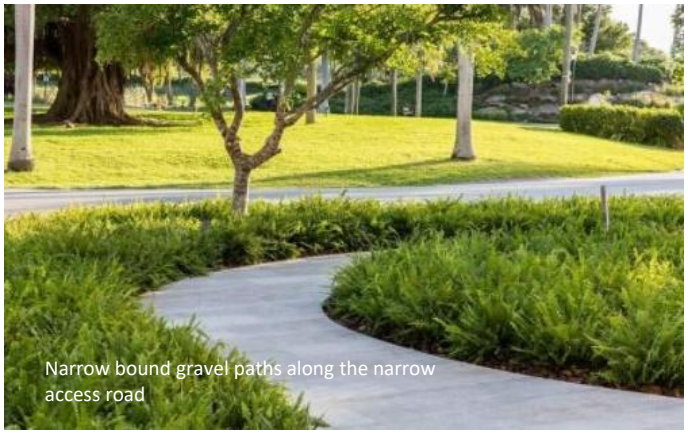
Images of mowed lawn and bound gravel paths through meadow grasses and natural rough grasses.

The areas of unmanicured ground provides opportunities for introducing a greater variety of meadow grasses and wildflowers which will promote biodiversity and provide seasonal change









Narrow bound gravel paths along the narrow access road

NATURAL UNDER PLANTING – Wild grasses and Meadows.

The existing character of the 'PARK' with its significant stands of trees is to be retained and gradually returned to it's original, more open historic landscape.

The central paths built in the 1990's are to be removed and the ground reseeded. Native wildflower meadows and rough grass will be introduced to create a less manicured, more natural park with greater scope for biodiversity.

It is envisaged that new native trees with be planted along the perimeter to ensure that this woodland edge is safeguarded and reinforced with new trees for future generations.



MAINTENANCE + MANAGEMENT

The selected trees, hedging and plants are all relatively low maintenance species. A fully detailed Landscape Specification will be prepared as part of the tender documentation should this development receive planning permission and proceed to construction.

As required by BCAR, Building Control (Amendment) Regulations, all landscape specifications will be uploaded to the Building Control System.

The Landscape Specification will include protection of all retained landscape features including existing trees, hedgerows and watercourses: the control of soil imported onto the site: the removal and storage of topsoil; preparation of seed beds and plant/tree pits as well has the establishment of plants post planting.

The use of non-toxic herbicides and pesticides will only be employed as a last resort if manual /mechanical processes are not successful. It is not envisioned that chemicals will be required on this site as there does not appear to be any invasive species

Initial maintenance during the Defects Liability Period is typically undertaken by the Landscape Contractor in accordance with the Contract Works . The Landscape Specification covers the annual seasonal cycle of maintenance and includes details on establishing and caring for the meadow and shrubs for the first 2 years after planting.

Once established, maintenance includes normal mowing, hedge trimming and weeding within the perennial beds. The areas of perennial shrubs is relatively small to reduce these areas of higher maintenance.

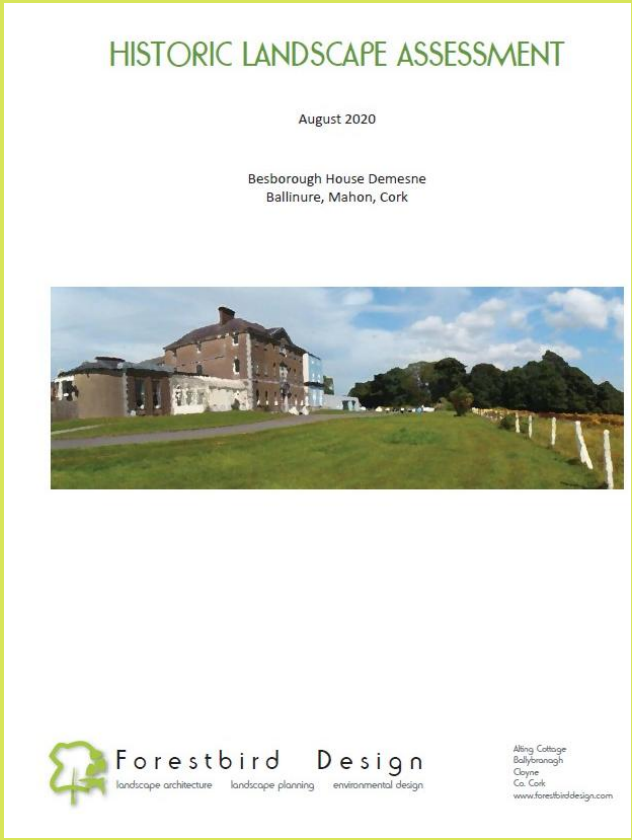
Any trees damaged or not thriving in the first 18 months after planting will be replaced with a tree of the same size, species or appropriate alternative.

Appendices

A.1

Historic Landscape Assessment

by Forest Bird Design



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Document Title:	Historic Landscape Assessment Report
Issue Date:	18th August 2020
Site Location:	Besborough Demesne, Mahon, Cork
Townland:	Ballinure
Irish National Grid Reference:	(E,N) 571800, 570250
Client:	Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Limited
Report Author:	Mike Waldvogel, MILI

1 - INTRODUCTION

Forestbird Design has been commissioned by Estuary View Enterprises to prepare a Historic Landscape Assessment for the lands at the Besborough Demesne in Ballinure, Mahon, Cork. The author of this report, Mike Waldvogel, has more than 20-years experience as a Landscape Architect and is a specialist in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Within this heading falls the expertise in assessing cultural and historic landscapes. Mike is a corporate member of the Irish Landscape Institute. Having assessed dozens of potential development lands within the city boundary and involved with projects as nearby as Skehard Road, Mahon, Blackrock and Rochestown, he is familiar with the local history, landform and landscape characteristics of the area. Varying documents also refer to the house as 'Bessborough', 'Bessboro' and 'Bisboro' with the spelling 'Besborough' selected for this report due to its consistent use in Ordnance Survey maps.

2 - METHODOLOGY

This report was developed through a combination of on-site investigations and desktop research. The research involved analysing cartographic information, historical reference texts and publications on the application of Historic Landscape Assessments. It is intended that this document be read in conjunction with the *Cultural Heritage Assessment* produced by John Cronin and Associates, as their work provides historical details not duplicated here. The other primary resources referenced include the following:

- Ordnance Survey historical mapping (6-inch, 25-inch, Cassini)
- National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey of Ireland
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage database
- National Museum of Ireland online database
- Aerial photography from Google and Bing Maps
- Cork City Development Plan 2015-21 (objectives, designated sites and landscape policy)
- National Biodiversity Data Centre national vegetation database and heritage trees
- Landscape Institute (2013) *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd edition
- The Heritage Council (2013) *Historic Landscape Characterisation in Ireland: Best Practice Guidance*
- Howley, James (2004) *The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland*
- Buxbaum, Tim (2002) *Icehouses*
- Robinson, William (1870-1895, rev.2010) *The Wild Garden*, 5th edition
- Ballitore Quaker Library and Museum (Quaker Garden Research)
- Powers, Jane (2015) *The Irish Garden*

3 - SITE BACKGROUND

Besborough House is a Georgian country house dating back to 1760, passing through a series of Quaker gentry and eventually purchased by the Sacred Heart Order in 1922, who are still on site today. Although the grounds sit within close proximity to urban life, the site has a discreet entrance and a sense of separation from surrounding activity. Besborough House is a *Protected Structure* (PS490), a *National Monument* (NM ref. no. CO074-077) and listed on the *National Inventory of Architectural Heritage* (NIAH ref. no. 20872005). Within the demesne are an Icehouse (NM CO074-051) to the west, a Farm Complex and Walled Garden (NIAH 20872006) to the north and a Tower Folly (NIAH 20872007) to the east.

The site is accessed at a single point through a historic stone and wrought iron gateway. Stone boundary walls are largely intact. The internal landscape generally consists of a defined entry drive, large pastures and mature parkland trees at the periphery. The land undulates, but with a natural fall towards the estuary to the south. The historic site was permanently altered with the construction of the South Ring Road (N40).



Aerial reference image of site and environs (courtesy of Bing Maps and Microsoft ©2020).

4 - WHAT IS A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT?

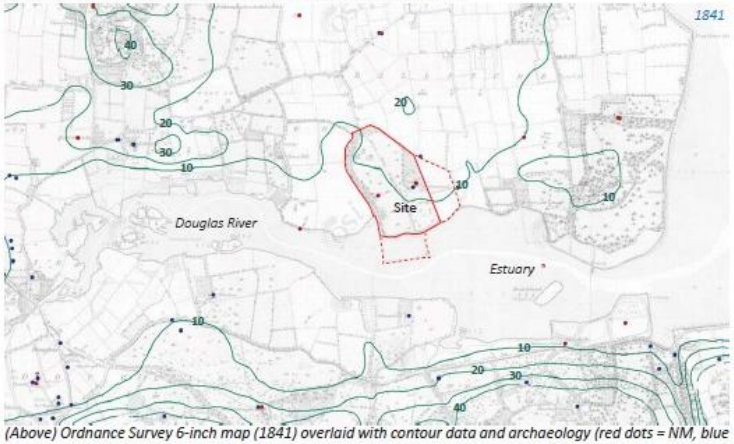
A *Historic Landscape Assessment* (HLA) is a report that documents past landscape use, the evolution of the landscape over time and identifies the key components linked to such historical use. In order to draw conclusions on individual components, they need to be brought into relationship of the greater landscape. In this instance, the HLA would cover the greater demesne lands, beyond the central building cluster. The individual elements are intrinsically linked and assessed regardless of current ownership.

There are no statutory guidelines on HLA. But there is a quality framework laid out by the Heritage Council, National Monuments Service, the Landscape Institutes and published notes from An Taisce. The combination of these provides clarity in HLA approach. At this site, the HLA would include the following investigations:

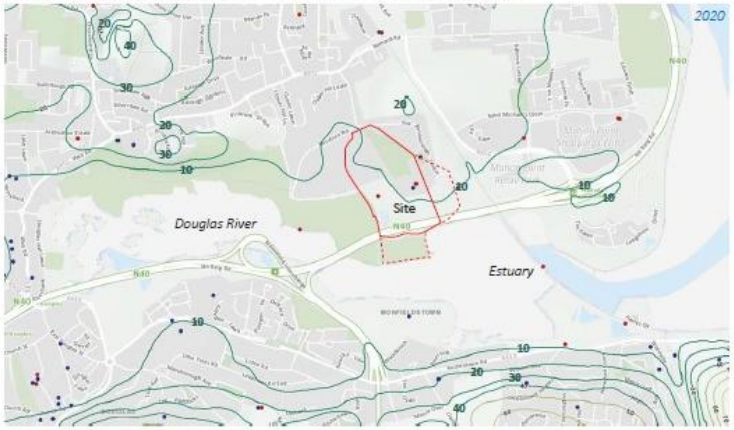
- Historical written and map references pertinent to the site and environs
- Original landscape extent of the demesne and land use pertinence
- Identifying a period of landscape significance and landscape trends during this time
- Overview of the types, ages and arrangement of the trees on site
- Evolution of the landscape with evolution of the site use and external influences
- Assessment of historic and cultural benefit of current landscape, including degree of importance
- Conclusion to assess potential impact of proposals

5 - LANDSCAPE SETTING

Naturally, the lands are located on a gently sloping hillside that falls towards the Douglas River and Cork Harbour estuary. The map below illustrates the historical site in terms of landform. The house sits on a highpoint within the site, but in the larger context the site itself is not one of prominence. Knolls to the east at Lakeland (modern Mahon Interchange), to the west at Ballinlough and the steep hillsides of Rochestown across the estuary would have been more visible. It benefits from a sheltered position and access to the water. Site archaeology is recent and a direct result of the demesne.



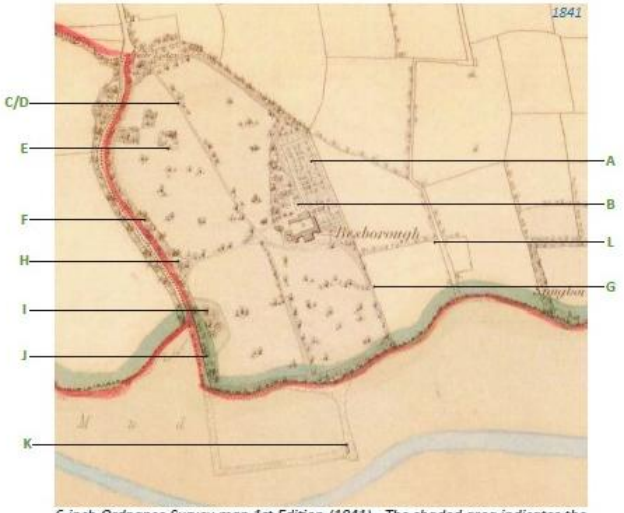
(Above) Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (1841) overlaid with contour data and archaeology (red dots = NM, blue dots = NIAH). The original demesne is outlined in red, with dashed red lines indicating natural extensions of the demesne lands. The parcel size and proximity to the water indicate a privileged setting, but the landform suggests an estate with a localised degree of visibility. (Below) The original demesne outline overlaid onto a modern map of the area, with the N40 severing the southern portion of lands.



6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS

The maps prior to the 1841 6-inch Map identify Besborough as a house of status, but give little information on the landscape or contents therein. The 1841 map provides the first detailed graphic account of the site. However, at this stage the demesne would have been in place for more than 80 years. In interpreting landscape use prior to 1841, we can make inferences based on how the buildings evolved, the landscape trends of the time and the business and religion of the landowners.

By 1760, there was a trend for 'designed landscapes' and there were numerous publications to which the landed gentry could refer. Preferences could lean towards the more ornamental French style or the planned natural English style. Neither appears to have been wholeheartedly embraced, which could be influenced by the fact that for the first 150 years, the landowners were Quakers. As pertains landscape history, Quakerism has a close link to the natural world. Their landscapes often had animals, individual tree planting and typically shunned high degrees of ornament or amenity. From these roots, we can comment on the detail of the 1841 6-inch map.



6-inch Ordnance Survey map 1st Edition (1841). The shaded area indicates the demesne lands. The two parcels to the east may have been used by Besborough, but they do not form part of the original demesne designation.

A - The structured parterre garden is offset from the main house, indicating that it was likely a functional garden and not for ornament. It also contains grow houses close to the house, whereby aesthetic design would have placed them at the rear periphery of the garden.

B - North of the house is a small area that likely housed pens for small livestock (chickens, pigs). Beyond this is an area of dense vegetation, potentially fruit. It also includes the largest trees on site, indicating that these may have been native trees or planted as part of an avenue when the house was first constructed.

C - The central access drive only has clusters of tree planting (moderate age) and is not planted as a contiguous avenue (as it is today). It also does not stand out in the hierarchy of paths. It is reasonable to assume that the original access drive followed the northeast boundary, where a larger track with more mature trees is represented. The central drive probably arose due to increased horse and cart traffic as roads improved in the late 1700- early 1800's and the benefit of water access declined.

6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS

D - The paths are all fairly wide, indicating their main purpose was for a cart and not pedestrian promenades.

E - The demesne is divided up into four field parcels, each with parkland-type tree planting or roughly the same age (moderate). This indicates the fields were intentionally planted and used as animal pastures, not grains or crops.

F - Boundary planting to all sides is notably thick and of mixed species (primarily deciduous). There are also boundary walls within the tree planting; all indicating a desire for a degree of privacy.

G - The two field parcels east of the house are not indicated as part of the demesne. But, the lack of boundary between them and the presence of a shared track hints that they may have been used by the demesne (crops/grain) or had a close relationship with the landowner.

H - There is a direct track west of the house leading approximately to where the Ice House is today. The Ice House is not clear on the map (in vegetation), but the late 1700's would have been a likely installation period, particularly this close to boat access and for a business that would need to store goods.

I - The pond with 5 islands is a distinct feature and illustrates vegetation on the islands. At this time there is no vegetation to the edge of the pond (as today), so there is an unimpeded visual link to the house. The use of 5 islands in a pond this size is very unusual and its meaning is also unclear. As the islands appear equal in size, it could allude to a familial connection to the number 5, a means of separating certain types of animals or a religious anecdote to the *Testimonies* of Quakerism at the time. Written description reveals that the pond was later used as an amenity (late 1800's), but amenity may not have been its original intent.

J - Within the walls but along the site periphery, a sizable track is indicated; providing a looped circuit back to the parterre garden area. Adjacent to the pond, the track runs along the west.

K - Beyond the boundary walls, but likely an important part of the functioning of the demesne is a boat house and access routes. The access would likely have been made of built-up shingle, protecting the route from regular tides (but not spring tides). It accesses both the demesne and the track to the west. The fact that it makes a square (rather than merging into a single route) means that the internal square may have been protected for a coastal agricultural use.

L - The two agricultural parcels east of the house are separated by a hedgerow. This would not form part of the Folly avenue we see today. Where the hedgerow meets the track, some have argued that this square is the Folly. It is an odd juxtaposition and would be highlighted grey if it were the Folly. A wave of follies (particularly castle follies) arose across Ireland during the famine years of the late 1840's.

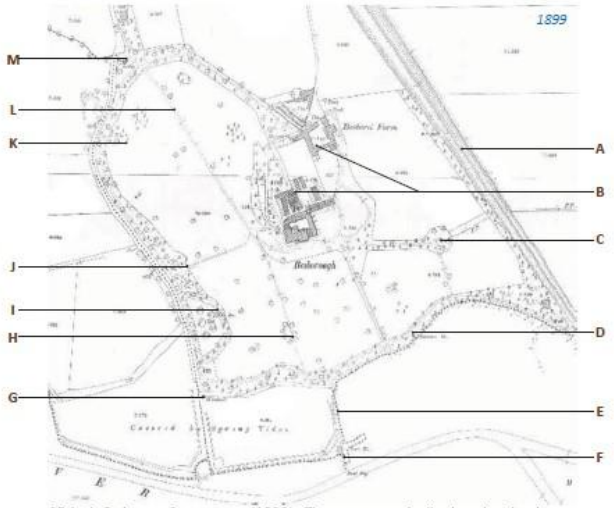
From the 1841 6-inch map to the 1899 25-inch map, the house was occupied by one family. This period also saw a number of changes to the demesne, achieving the size we are more familiar with today. The advent of the railway line creates a abrupt boundary to the east, allowing the two field parcels east of the house to be amalgamated within the domain of the house. North of the house, the farm has expanded considerably, with structures attaining a larger footprint than the house itself. The introduction of the Folly expands the landscape equally from west to east, centred on the house.



Photo of the house from the 1880's, with a manicured lawn and planted urns; yet still functional land as wire fencing separates the pasture.

The late 1800's saw a change in Irish lifestyle, with recovery from the famine and the advent of parkland as amenity (whether it be private or public). These changes also occurred within Besborough. The Folly expanded the landscape, as a romantic and amenity focal point. A 'Summer House' was introduced along the shoreline, a frivolous feature where one could take tea or use for play. A slip was enhanced at the Boat House, likely for pleasure access rather than business. And written text alludes to the Pike family using the pond for paddling boats.

6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS



25-inch Ordnance Survey map (1899). These maps typically show less landscape ornament, but provide more clarity for boundaries, access routes and tree types.

A - The railway line from Cork City to the Passage West docks is introduced, severing the site from lands to the east. Buffer planting has been installed adjacent to the track (not always the case at this time).

B - The farm complex substantially increases, minimising the importance of the former parterre garden.

C - Amalgamation of adjacent lands and construction of the Folly (a partial castle keep) create a new focal point and visual feature for passersby on the train. New types of parkland trees form an avenue, including a Monkey Puzzle, Scots Pine and a Copper Beech (in addition to traditional Beech, Oak, Yew and Ash).

D - A Summer House with views over the estuary expands the landscape amenity.

E - The Townland boundary has changed, incorporating the coastal reconfiguration.

F - The Boat House remains and is enhanced with an expanded slip (likely amenity).

G - A windmill is introduced at the edge of the coastal reconfiguration. No longer extant, it could have served an amenity purpose (focal point from house) and a functional purpose (coastal agricultural square or water circulation within the pond).

H - A circular band of trees appears, but none remain today. Aligned with the track, they would have been an ornamental feature, possibly new tree species at the period or short-lived ornamental trees (like Cherry).

I - The pond is cleanly presented, illustrating coniferous trees on the islands (as is today) and a footbridge to the northeast island. A vegetative buffer has been introduced to the edge of the pond, likely obscuring visibility from the house.

J - The track crossing the field west of the house appears to access the pond and not a direct link to the Ice House. The Ice House is indiscernible on this map, which may indicate its' disuse or coverage by vegetation.

K - Tree clusters still exist within the field parcels, indicating they are still used as pastures (not crops).

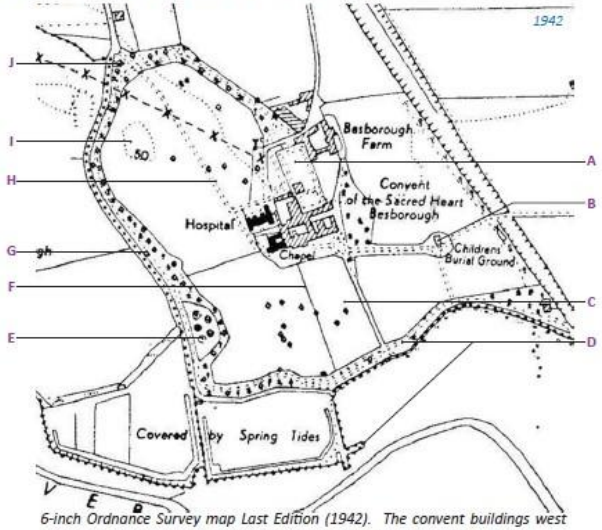
L - The central avenue is now the prominent track, but avenue planting has not yet commenced.

M - The Gate Lodge is as per the 1841 map and the entrance has the current concave boundary.

6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS

Between the 1899 25-inch map to the 1942 6-inch Last Edition map, the house underwent a change of occupancy, which also resulted in a change of landscape uses. The map below illustrates the evolution of the site 20 years after being acquired by the Sacred Heart Order. Substantial additions and subtractions were made to the buildings. While many of the amenities from the second half of the 1800's are present, they appear less prominent. It should be noted that the Last Edition maps typically contain less landscape detail than earlier versions, so maps cannot be compared like-for-like.

Suburban growth from Cork began to make its way to the gates of Besborough. With a significant increase in occupant numbers on site, the use of the grounds for casual amenity is also anticipated to have increased. However, amenity may have been limited to walks/promenades. The loop path along the boundary wall is a significant landscape feature and the convent uses are highlighted.



6-inch Ordnance Survey map Last Edition (1942). The convent buildings west and east of the House result in significant changes to its landscape setting.

A - The walled garden appears intact and de-cluttered, perhaps for resident use.

B - Association with the Folly has been altered by attaching an area of solemn commemoration to it. It is of interest that trees are not shown along the avenue, despite significant specimens having been present.

C - Trees are still shown within the southern pasture.

D - The Summer House, Boat House and slipway are unmarked, but appear intact.

E - The pond is still clearly identified with 5 islands and a buffer of planting to all sides.

F - Former tracks to the Ice House and estuary appear to have been downgraded to fencelines.

G - The Ice House is visible on the map, adjacent to a clearly defined perimeter path.

H - Despite the advent of the motor car, the entrance avenue does not illustrate upgrading from a track. Avenue tree planting is still not indicated.

I - 50' contours appear on the map, identifying the site high point. Former tree planting has been removed.

J - The Gate Lodge, mature tree planting and concave entrance are extant.

7 - CURRENT LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

Some elements of the existing landscape have been well maintained, while others have been neglected. In developing a landscape inventory, we look at both hardscape and vegetation. Pertinent existing components are described below and assessed on a scale of 1-5 based on the relevance of the element to the historic landscape and the condition it is in.

Category 1 = Low Importance; no landscape heritage link or is a modern artefact in place of a historic one, loss would have no detrimental impact on the historic landscape.

Category 2 = Minor Importance; a feature that exists from a historic era, but has little impact on the landscape character or landscape intent, loss is acceptable with compensation.

Category 3 = Moderate Importance; a feature that adds to the historic landscape character and should be retained, loss at this level is not detrimental individually, but cumulative loss must be assessed. This category could include important elements that are in poor condition.

Category 4 = High Importance; a prominent feature that should be retained, loss at this level would have significant impact, but not an impediment to comprehending the historic landscape.

Category 5 = Extremely Important; a key feature requiring retention and protection, loss at this level would be detrimental to proper interpretation of the historic landscape.



Item: Entrance Piers
Comments: Scale and offset to eachother
Category: 4

Item: Entrance Wrought Iron Fence
Comments: Curved form and finial design
Category: 4

Item: Cobble Paving
Comments: Natural stone, modern addition
Category: 2



Item: Tarmac Entry Avenue
Comments: Alignment and scale
Category: 3

Item: Concrete Post and Wire Fence
Comments: Later generation fence
Category: 1

Item: Avenue Hedge
Comments: Biodiversity, but impedes visibility
Category: 1



Item: Northeast Parkland Conifers
Comments: Ornamental conifers from 1950-70
Category: 1

Item: Northeast Parkland Broadleaves
Comments: Hybrid and smaller stature ornamental species from 1950-70; select retention
Category: 2



Item: Entry Avenue Tall Lime Tree
Comments: Remnant from 1760-1820 parkland
Category: 5

Item: Entry Avenue Short Lime Trees
Comments: Monoculture from mid 1900's
Category: 2



Item: Arrival Layout
Comments: Curvature and scale
Category: 4

Item: Concrete Kerbs and Tarmac
Comments: Mid-1900's, replaced gravel
Category: 1

Item: Cabbage Palms
Comments: Frame to front door, period specific
Category: 2



Item: Grotto
Comments: 1920-30; appropriate, but poor location
Category: 3

Item: Mature Ash and Sycamore Trees
Comments: Spatial definition, diversity
Category: 4

Item: Mature Scots Pine Tree
Comments: Focal point, form and longevity
Category: 5



Item: Ornamental Garden at Modern Shed
Comments: Unique plants; outside of Folly avenue
Category: 1



Item: Avenue Monkey Puzzle and Copper Beech
Comments: Mid-1800's, alignment
Category: 5



Item: Stone Folly (Castle Keep)
Comments: Mid-1800's, quality, romanticism
Category: 5

Item: Graveyard
Comments: 1920's; cultural
Category: 5

Item: Yew Tree
Comments: Mid-1800's, obscures view but culturally appropriate, moderate health
Category: 4



Item: Pond with 5 Islands
Comments: Original, cultural interest, biodiversity
Category: 5

Item: Island Scots Pine Trees
Comments: Original planting, identity, bird perch
Category: 5

Item: Island Shrubs
Comments: Overgrown with Laurel, revamp req.
Category: 1

7 - CURRENT LANDSCAPE INVENTORY



Item: Ice House
Comments: Style and setting, intact but used as a rubbish dump and graffitied
Category: 5

Item: Surrounding Woodland
Comments: Original, shelter and character
Category: 5



Item: Stone Boundary Wall
Comments: Stone and plaster to 2.5m ht.; compromised at several locations
Category: 5

Item: Woodland Understorey
Comments: Clean, but only modest diversity
Category: 3



Item: Woodland Path at West Boundary
Comments: Original, would benefit from widening, but do not pave (potential tree root damage)
Category: 4



Item: Undulating Landform
Comments: Site character, allows devel. variety
Category: 4

Item: Open Pastures
Comments: Modern evolution from parkland trees
Category: 1



Item: Visual Link to Amenity Path Bridge
Comments: Railway line route over N40; Folly and House filtered visibility
Category: 3



Item: Visual Link to Southern Hillsides
Comments: Distant views (2km) of House from Rochestown and Mount Oval
Category: 3

8 - IDENTIFYING LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE

The historic landscape isn't just a snapshot at a particular point in time. It is the culmination of contributions by various landowners, cultures and time periods that improve the setting and experience of the landscape. The previous pages investigated the evolution of the landscape and the components that are consistent through the generations. With this information, we can identify a framework that best exemplifies and enhances the setting of the house. At Besborough, the key landscape components are contained within 3 zones, identified in the diagram below.



Diagram of landscape zones that should be protected and enhanced to enable retention of historic landscape character. Areas not highlighted have a degree of flexibility to receive landscape change or built development.

ZONE A - The historic house has undergone an enormous amount of change to the rear and and sides, but the one constant is the open landscape to the front (south) of the house. These contextual relationships can be extended into the landscape. The lands to the south are vital to keep open, while the lands to the east, west and north can tolerate development without diluting the historic landscape strengths. The zone includes the full extent of the pond to the west and the Folly to the east. It is this zone that should be classified as the "Landscape Preservation Zone".

ZONE B - The band of woodland along the western and northern boundaries relates back to the original demesne planting. The number of stately trees this close to the city centre is a rare find, creating a unique atmosphere and sense of time. The zone includes the Ice House, the entrance gates, the boundary wall and a footpath link. Defined by the extent of trees, any development outside of this needs to be cognisant of root protection zones. In terms of status, this is secondary to Zone A, but it would be equal in terms of protection.

ZONE C - The walled garden and historic farm buildings would be considered part of the built fabric of the demesne, but it is here where the landscape composition would have impacted the daily lives of many residents through time. The walled garden and associated stone buildings should be viewed as a landscape amenity within the interconnected fabric of structures.

OTHER AREAS - The lack of zone identification does not give the right for unencumbered development. Works in these areas are to be cognisant of the individual inventory and to create new uses embedded within a parkland setting.

9 - IDENTIFYING THE LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE

In identifying the historic landscape zones for protection and enhancement, the query arises *What parameters have we used to define the Landscape Preservation Zone*? There are 4 key criteria described below. The diagram graphically presents an accurate depiction of the extent to be included in the Landscape Preservation Zone (LPZ).



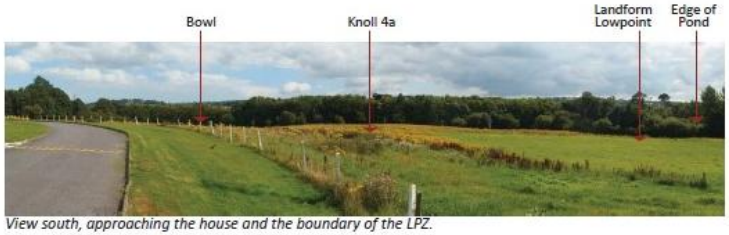
Diagram depicting an accurate extent of the proposed Landscape Preservation Zone. The base image includes structures, landscape features, 1m contour lines and aerial extent of tree canopies.

Criteria 1 - The Pond - The entirety of the pond needs to be included with future visual link to the house (after mitigation).

Criteria 2 - The Folly - The ring around this element defined by edging and paths is to be included.

Criteria 3 - Folly Avenue - Includes 20m north of the path for suitable tree protection.

Criteria 4 - Landform - More important than a line on a plan, the lay of the land defines the southern open space with a distinct 'bowl' feature. The knolls to either side (4a and 4b) must be included to enhance the effect. The northwest extent of the LPZ reflects a lowpoint of the receding knoll in the undulating landscape.



View south, approaching the house and the boundary of the LPZ.

10 - LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE MITIGATION MEASURES

In reinvigorating the historic landscape and evolving it into a public amenity, there are a number of mitigation measures to be incorporated so that it reads as a designed demesne parkland. The historic setting had a relationship with the estuary and distant hills. As that has been altered and urban development encroached on all sides, the aim is to create amenity where users can escape the urban surrounds and experience different natural and historic environments



Diagram illustrating mitigation measures to improve amenity and interpretation.

Mitigation 1 - Ice House - Full cleaning and resculpting of base per Archaeologist guidance. Provide interpretation. Provide a visual gap to new development for secondary supervision.

Mitigation 2 - Perimeter Path - Contiguous link from Entrance gates to Folly. Upgrade path and make it inviting. Enhance for biodiversity.

Mitigation 3 - The Pond - Remove Cherry Laurel from islands. Create pedestrian bridge across 2 islands (retain existing stone bridge, but do not use). Remove vegetation at northeast corner of pond for visual link back to house and parkland.

Mitigation 4 - Pond System - In accordance with SuDS, incorporate all surfacewater into a natural swale filtration system to regularly replenish and cleanse the pond.

Mitigation 5 - Link Path - Re-establish a western link path.

Mitigation 6 - Ornamental Trees - Incorporate a couple of clusters of showy parkland tree planting, resonant of historic planting regimes, but small in stature to ensure continued long range views.

Mitigation 7 - Open Up Parkland - Improve the historic north-south path. Remove 90% of tree belt to amalgamate parkland and increase visibility.

Mitigation 8 - Remove car parking from within the LPZ and relocate to the north. Create an amenity square at the Grotto to link with the Folly avenue, as a public gathering and interpretation point.

Mitigation 9 - Outside the LPZ, provide an amenity landscape incorporating a commemorative space, community garden focal point or modern landscape amenity. Consider reducing the derelict road.

Mitigation 10 - Provide a pedestrian link over the railway amenity path, for ease of access to Mahon office and retail area.

11 - REFERENCE IMAGES



The aim is to restore the pond with a character pertinent to the time period where it received greatest amenity interaction. Reinvigoration of the pond water should be coupled with Laurel removal on the islands and new footbridges to enhance the amenity. This image illustrates an ambience that we want visitors to experience.



Pond restoration is intended to work in tandem with site stormwater solutions. Creating a sustainable drainage system that can remove surfacewater naturally and feed the pond with regular, fresh water is the desired design technique. This image illustrates an undulating parkland collecting and mitigating stormwater.



Within the southern open space, tree planting should be minimal in order to retain long range views. This minimal quantity should be presented as clusters of small canopy ornamental trees with spring flowers and autumn leaf colour to demarcate the seasons. Crabapple (left) or Cherry would be suitable species and relevant to the historic setting as classic ornamental trees.





Within the north and northwest parklands, tree planting should consist of large canopy traditional native and acclimatised trees. Mature canopies should be able to exceed 20m in height or width. These could be Oak (left), Ash, Lime (right), Beech, Plane or Chestnut; being cognisant of horticultural threats at the time of selection and installation.

12 - CONCLUSION

The landscape at Besborough has been evolving in a managed way for 260 years. Over this period, landowners with different approaches to the landscape have left their mark on the demesne. The current Development Plan has classified the bulk of the site as being within the *Landscape Preservation Zone* (LPZ). The research in this report comes to the conclusion that not all of this site should be classified as LPZ. Many parts, particularly north-northwest of the house, are not fundamental in contributing to a historic setting or defining the demesne landscape character.

The diagram in Part 8 identifies the key elements that give the house its' landscape character. The diagrams in Parts 9 and 10 illustrate how the LPZ should be defined and the key measures that need to be carried out to ensure the proper historic fabric is retained and suitably enhanced.

There is no single period of landscape significance at this demesne. The period of the late 1700-early 1800s provided a layout, tree planting and landform that have carried through to today. The period of the mid-late 1800's could be considered the apex in terms of landscape amenity, as society and lifestyle experienced notable changes and the landowners appeared to have taken on a number of landscape leisure features. Equally impactful is the change in landscape use that occurred in 1922 and carried through most of the 20th century. It could be said that this period had the greatest cultural and societal impact on the site.

To this day, the site is evolving in terms of community services, but devolving in terms of landscape (N40 construction, dereliction of large areas). Our current culture, lifestyle and societal relationship to the landscape seem to mirror this speed of change. If the site were to be managed as-is in perpetuity, we would certainly see the loss of irreplaceable historic landscape. Part of the benefit in developing the less-historically pertinent areas is creating a community to oversee the site and take a degree of personal stewardship in it. The potential for the public to receive these lands as fully accessible parkland is a rare opportunity. At the same time, site use must evolve in order for the public-landscape relationship to be successful.

If zoned and developed as per the guidelines in this report, I believe the landscape character can be not just retained, but brought back to life for the benefit of the general public. In doing so, the historic framework and qualities will be clearly understood for generations to come.



End of Report

A.2

Parkland Management

irla



contents

01 introduction and scope of report
02 historic landscape context
03 site analysis
04 arboricultural inventory
05 restoring historic landscape context
06 phased tree management and replanting
07 biodiversity

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared to provide a medium to long term strategy for the development of the Bessborough Estate, having regard to its Landscape Preservation Zoning; and in recognition that a broader strategy is required as a guiding framework to protect and manage existing trees and tree groups of significance.

The second function of this report which is of equal and growing relevance, is to inform the selection of appropriate trees and their location in order to secure a future for this important historical landscape.

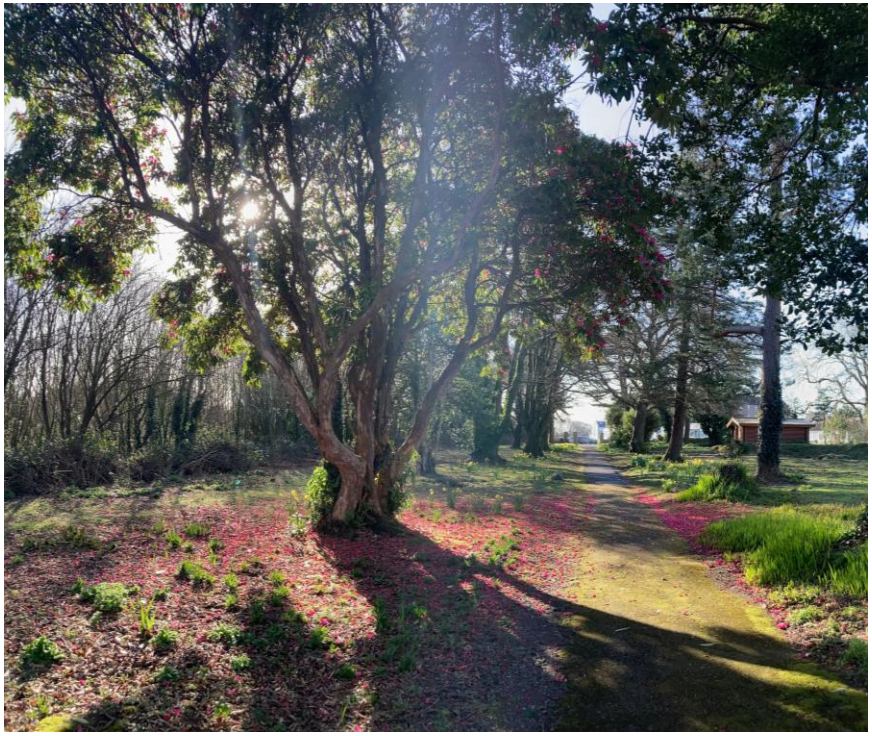
The enormous impact on species selection and landscape planning is barely tangible when planting is first installed but the impact of a successful or poorly considered planting plan is often only evident 30 years later when trees groups mature and begin to have a vital role in shaping a landscape spatially. This can be seen in the planting of the area north of Bessborough House in the late 1990's which dramatically altered the open, pastoral quality of the demesne.

It is therefore vital that any programme for new tree planting is informed by a planting plan which reflects the key objective to instate the historic landscape.

This report is a starting point for engagement with that process, as it attempts to establish what that historic landscape is, in the 250 years of evolution since Bessborough House was first built.

This report looks at how the development of the site can adapt to change and protect and enhance the landscape environment.

View looking back toward the house from the folly (this area is not in the ownership of the applicant)



ZONING OBJECTIVES

Most of the site falls in the north-western portion of the Zoned Objective 12 **Landscape Preservation Zone** where the objective is:

To preserve and enhance the special landscape and visual character of the landscape preservation zones. There will be a presumption against development within these zones, with development only open for consideration where it achieves the specific objectives set out in Chapter 10, Table 10.2.

Extract from Table 10.2 of Chapter 10 of the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 states:

SE4 BESSBORO HOUSE

- To reinstate Historic Landscape;
- To seek use of grounds as a Neighbourhood Park in the context of the local area plan (H);
- To allow development within the immediate environs to the north of Bessboro House consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site.

The zoning objective 'to reinstate the Historic Landscape' is a key driver, not only in the development of the site and in the placement of buildings but in the management of the trees and the landscape within this urban parkland.

Map 6, Volume 2 – Mapped Objectives, Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021



SCOPE OF THE REPORT

While this report is being submitted as part of the suite of Planning Application documents for Phase 1 and Phase 2; the scope of this report lies beyond the confines of the development sites.

More importantly, the purpose of the report is to start a dialogue with Cork City Council about the future management of the parkland trees on the whole of the site under the ownership of the Applicant.

This report does not proport to seek formal permission to remove any trees from the site; as the trees impacted by the development in Phase 1 and Phase 2 are clearly identified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted as part of the planning application for both Phase 1 and Phase 2. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies specific trees to be removed in these phases and provides mitigation methods for the protection of trees to be retained.

The scope of this report explores how the management of the trees on the site, could over a 20-year period gradually reveal and reinforce the landscape structure that was implemented on the site in the 19th century. The gradual implementation of this strategy over decades ensures that there is no sudden loss of amenity or habitat.



The 1841 Ordnance Map

The site is divided into quarters with a defined edge of woodland to the perimeter. The access track from the northern boundary bisects open pastural lands, affording bucolic views of the demesne with the house and its associated farm buildings in view. The icehouse and pond with five islands are evident on these early maps. The pond is clearly visible from the house.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

To "Reinstate the Historic Landscape" implies identifying the most important or enduring period in history in the evolution of the site from circa 1760 to today.

The objectives for the preservation of historic gardens defined in The Florence Charter – 1982 have been a useful guide in defining a strategy for the management of the historic landscape at Bessborough.

Extract from The Florence Charter

Article 11.

Continuous maintenance of historic gardens is of paramount importance. Since the principal material is vegetal, the preservation of the garden in an unchanged condition requires both prompt replacements when required and a long-term programmed of periodic renewal (clear felling and replanting with mature specimens).

Article 12.

Those species of trees, shrubs, plants and flowers to be replaced periodically must be selected with regard for established and recognised practice in each botanical and horticultural region, and with the aim to determine the species initially grown and to preserve them.

Defining a management strategy of the parkland trees takes its cue from the relevant objectives of the Florence Charter and from the recommendations and guidelines provided in the Historic Landscape Assessment that was undertaken by Forestbird Design.



The 1956 6-inch Last Edition

This map illustrates the evolution of the site, 20 years after being acquired by the Sacred Heart Order. The map contains less landscape detail than the earlier maps and convent functions such as the chapel, hospital and burial ground located near the folly are clearly annotated on the map. There is little change to the broader landscape layout.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Bessborough House is a Georgian Country House believed to have been built in circa 1760. The house passed through many generations of Quaker families until it was purchased by the Sacred Heart Order in 1922.

The first substantial documentary account we have on the historic gardens and landscape surrounding Bessborough House, dates back to the first edition Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed in 1841).

The historic demesne appears to be devoted principally to the production of food with a large, walled, kitchen garden; orchards, livestock pens, grow houses and the rest of the estate given over to pasture as is evidenced by the open grassland divided with paths into four fields screened with dense woodland to the walled perimeter.

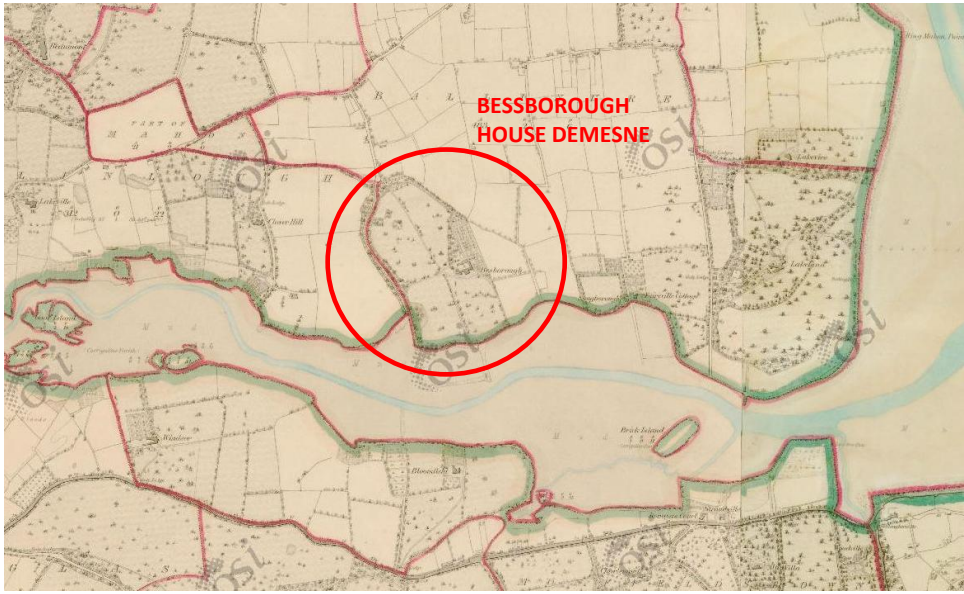
A distinct landscape feature comprising a pond containing five planted islands contrived on the western boundary has no clear function and may have been symbolic. The ordnance survey of 1841 shows that the pond would have been clearly visible from the house, but it is now lost in the dense thicket of trees around the perimeter.

The 25" Ordnance Survey published in 1899, shows the addition of more ornamental landscape features such at the folly, footbridge to one the islands in the pond, summerhouse and curious circle of trees which suggest a nod to the pleasure gardens of English natural landscape designer, "Capability Brown".

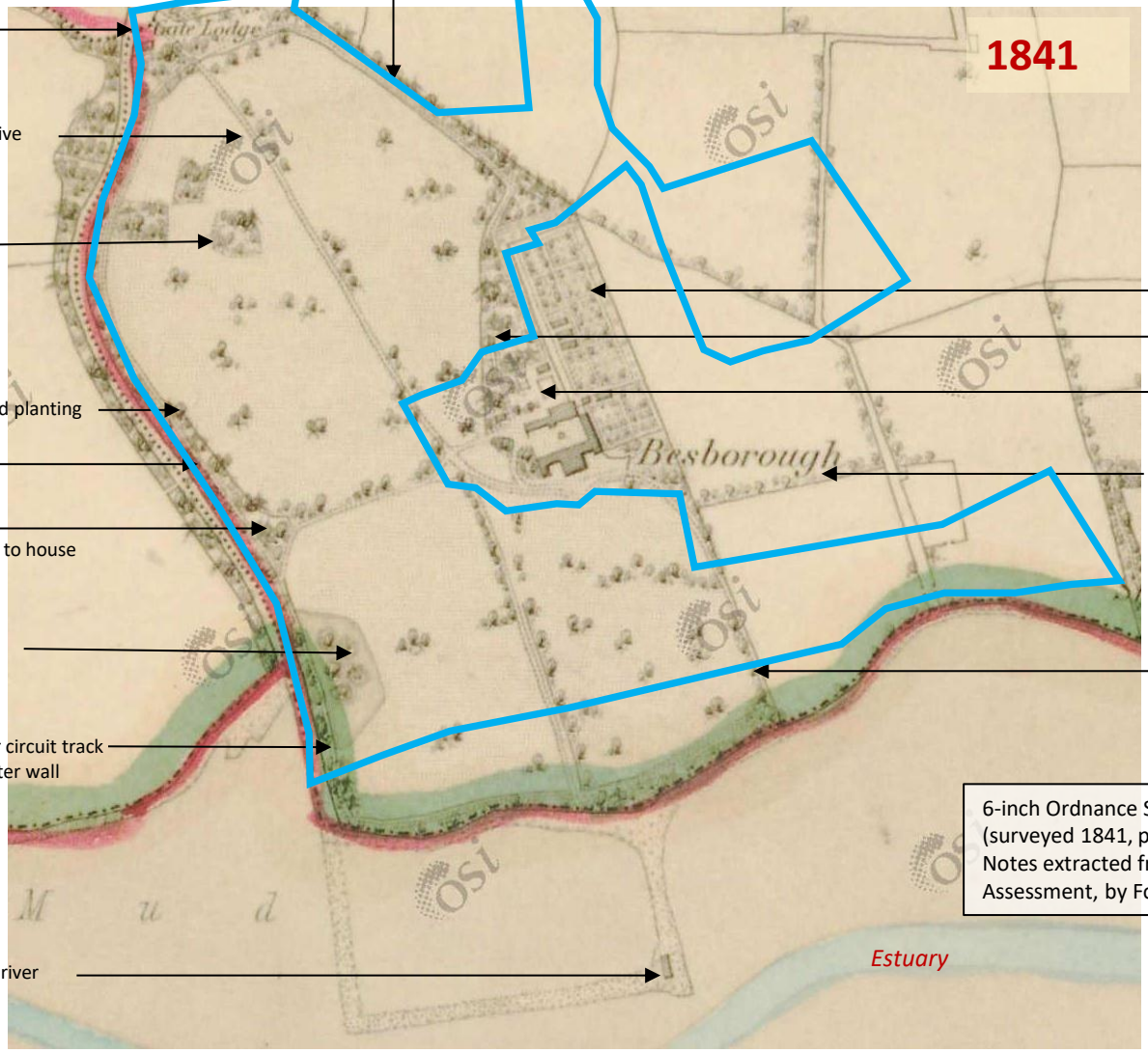
Historic maps clearly show that the relationship of the estate with the Cork Harbour Estuary was of significance in the 18th and 19th century.

The Historic Landscape Assessment prepared by Forestbird Design in August 2020 (refer to Appendix) identifies features on historic maps which provide clues about the original landscape.

Further detail on the historic context of the site is provided by John Cronin & Associates.



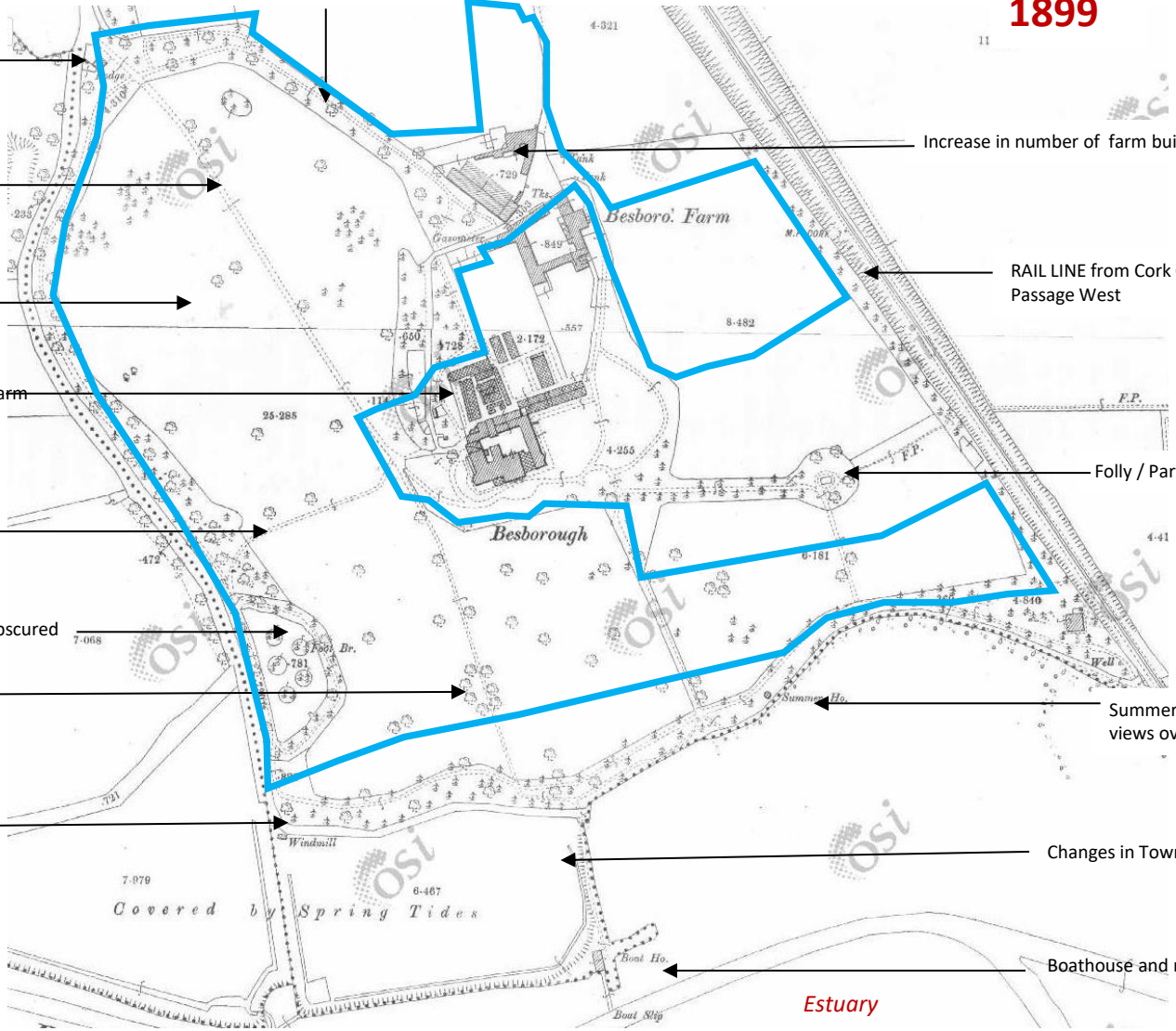
6-inch Ordnance Survey Map 1st Edition (surveyed 1841)



6-inch Ordnance Survey Map 1st Edition
(surveyed 1841, published 1845)
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape
Assessment, by Forestbird Design, August 2020.

*note – the blue line is an approximate/ inaccurate indication of the applicant's landholding

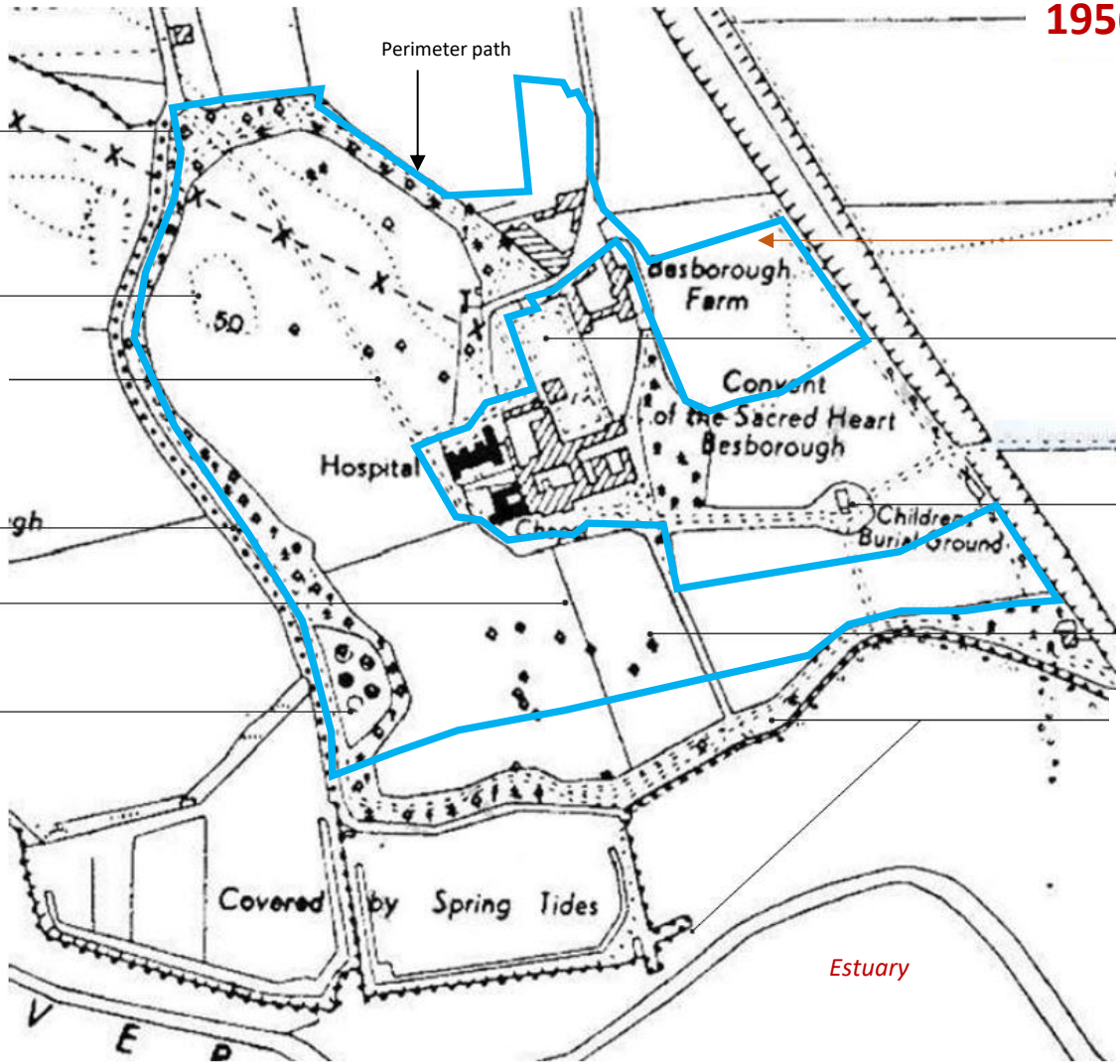
1899



*note – the blue line is an approximate/ inaccurate indication of the applicant's landholding

25-inch Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1899-1900, published 1901)
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird Design, August 2020

1956



*note – the blue line is an approximate/ inaccurate indication of the applicant's landholding

6-inch Ordnance Survey Map Last Edition(1956)
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird, August 2020



1951

Aerial Photograph 1951 (source Military Archives)
This photograph clearly shows the open quality of the site, bisected into field parcels for grazing with dense, deciduous woodland trees to the perimeter. The central approach roads leads from the gate lodge on the northern boundary to Bessborough House affording views across the land holding.

The parterre gardens, farm courtyards, chapel, hospital and tree lined path to the folly as wall as a perimeter path are all clearly visible.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIS STUDY FROM 1951

An aerial photograph of the site taken in 1951 (on the previous page) shows that the original historic landscape remained largely intact.

Subsequent aerial photographs suggest that the most significant changes to the historic landscape occurred in the last 30 years with the construction of the N40 ring road in the early 1990's which severed the demesne from the estuary.

Since the 1990's, gradual development of new institutional buildings, a creche and the demands of parking altered the footprint of the built footprint on the site. The conversion of the fields to the east of the entrance road into what we see now as an enclosed park with mature trees was only planned and implemented in the early 1990s.

A study of aerial photographs from 1995 show the development of the park and the maturing of trees from barely visible saplings in 1995 to almost full coverage of the site. (Refer to more recent photographs overleaf).

The creation of the park in one of the four field parcels transformed the historic landscape and completely altered the approach to the house through an open, bucolic landscape.

The densely planted park has removed the symmetrical relation between the two field parcels and created a new edge to the site with the line of Lime trees extending the full length of one side of the approach road.

The park is now perceived as a boundary edge and feels as though it is no longer belongs to the house but rather to an adjoining property.





AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIS STUDY FROM 1951

The aerial photographs taken between 1995 and 2013 document the changes that the landscaped grounds of Bessborough House underwent. Most of these changes occurred in lands outside the ownership of the applicant; however, they do impact on the evolution of the historic landscape and are therefore relevant to this report.

These changes included the construction of the Sacred Heart Convent on the northern boundary, and a creche and new road on the eastern side of Bessborough house and folly. Significant extensions were made to the original hospital north of the House and the walled kitchen garden was given over to a car park.

The park to the north of the House was developed into a Heritage Park with winding paths, new exotic avenue trees, a playground and various folly structures.

The planning application for 'The Farm' proposes to remove the winding paths and small structures introduced in the park in the 1990's and reinstate the historical paths along the perimeter of the park.

It is also proposed to re-wild large areas of the park to create wild meadow and rough grass with mowed routes along desire lines rather than hard standing.

Details of trees impacted by planning application are captured in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with the Planning Application.





Aerial Photograph 2000 / 2005 2013 (source OSI)
Colour aerial photographs take in 2000, 2005 and more recently in 2013 show the development of the park from the barely visible saplings in 1995 to the dense cover of trees we now see today.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SITE

The historic wrought iron entrance gate and stone piers on the northern boundary remain the single entrance into the site. A narrow drive leads from the densely wooded entrance gate to the front of Bessborough House with only a single branch off to the parking area to the north of the house.

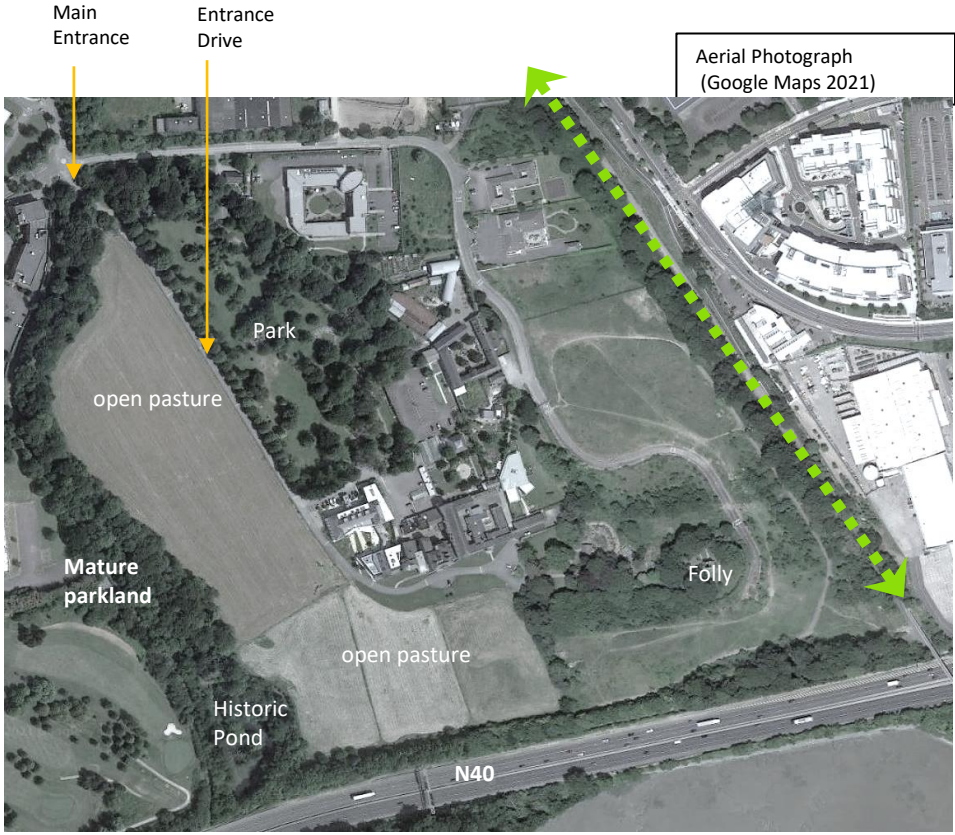
The experience on arrival is of open pastoral views on the west side; and on the east side, the road is closely edged with a mixed hedge and line of closely spaced Limes trees, which form a dense, tall hedge when in leaf.

A private amenity park is located on the east side of the entrance drive, to the north of Bessborough House and this is planted with a wide variety of native and exotic trees.

The perimeter of the site is bounded with the original stone walls and mature parkland. Large canopy native and naturalized trees including Oak, Beech, Ash, Sycamore and Sweet Chestnut form a valuable woodland setting around the perimeter . Many of these trees date back to the original parkland planting predating 1840.

The trees currently growing along the southern boundary are not part of the original parkland, as these were planted to screen the N40 Ring Road which severed the site from the estuary in around 1990. These trees are a mainly non-native, evergreen trees which were planted as fast growers to screen the road and reduce traffic noise.

A number of historic landscape features remain intact but, in some instances, they are suffering from neglect and vandalism. These include the historic perimeter wall, pond with five islands, ice-house and folly.




Open Pasture
Original Estate Entrance
Original Estate Entrance Drive
Existing Park
Bessborough Farmyard
Old Railway Line Greenway connecting Cork to Passage West


Bessborough Centre
Mature parkland to perimeter
Original Estate Entrance Drive
Park
Bessborough Farm
Original Estate Entrance


Original Estate Entrance
Original Estate Entrance Drive
Park
Bessborough Farm
Open Pasture
Bessborough House
Folly and tree lines walk

ARBORIICULTURAL SURVEY AND REPORT

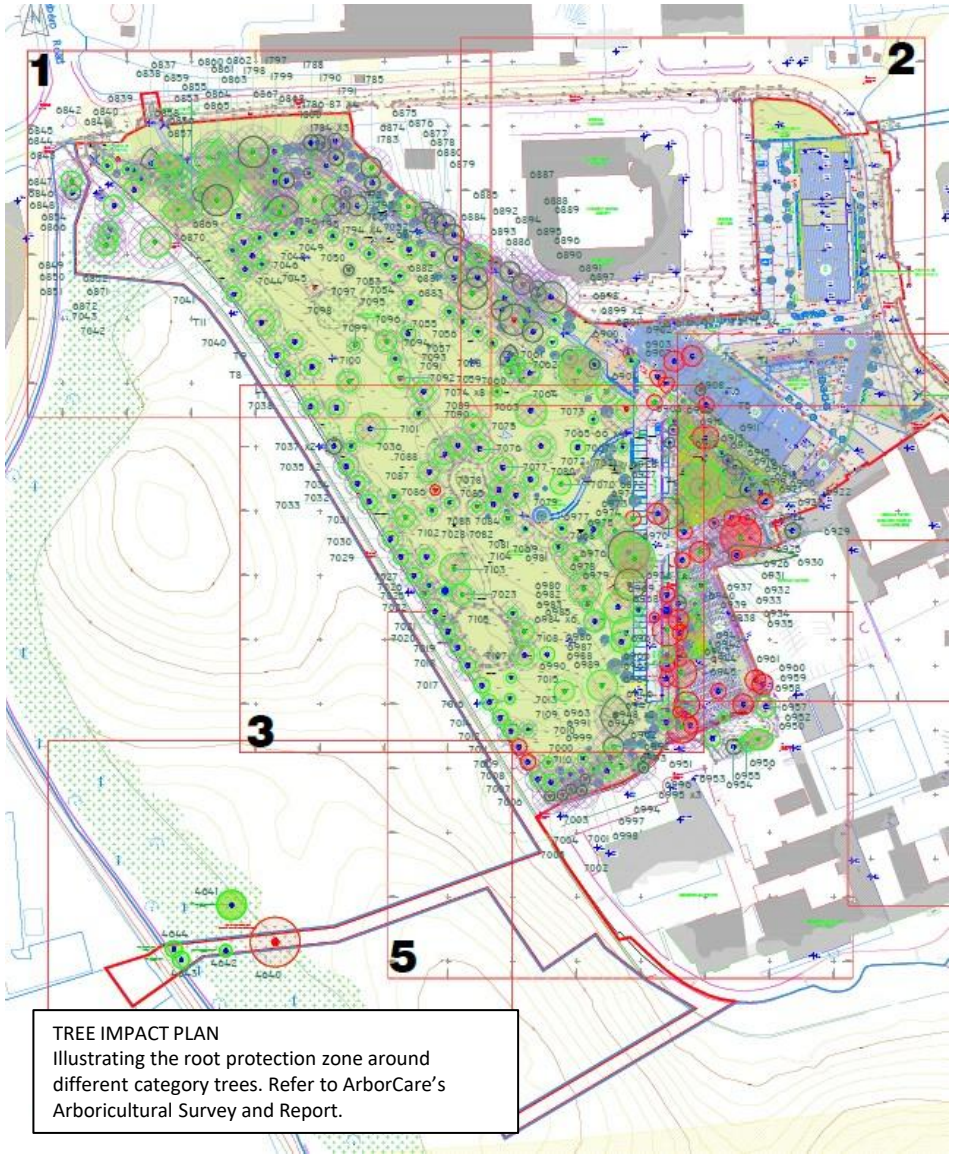
The lands at Bessborough contain a wide variety of indigenous and non-native trees which are concentrated around the perimeter of the demesne and in the park north of Bessborough House.

A full tree survey was undertaken by ArborCare in 2021 and updated in 2025.

A total of 373 trees were surveyed

The full Arboricultural Impact Assessment was submitted as part of this planning application.

Category	Quantity	Category %
A-Tree of high quality	66	18%
B-trees of good quality	234	63%
C (Low quality or trees less than 75mm diameter)	63	16%
U (remove due to poor condition)	10	3%
Total Trees surveyed	373	100%



TREE IMPACT PLAN
Illustrating the root protection zone around different category trees. Refer to ArborCare's Arboricultural Survey and Report.

ARBORICULTURAL PRECINCTS

The site can be divided into four primary arboricultural precincts. Each precinct has unique character, historic significance, specific trees and other landscape features.

AREA 1 & 2: LARGE CANOPY, PARKLAND TREES on the WESTERN & NORTHERN BOUNDARY

The trees on the western and northern boundary include many fine, mature specimens of Scot's pine, Oak, Ash, Beech and Chestnut. It is believed that many of the stately trees, inside the perimeter wall date back to the original demesne parkland planting between 1760-1820.

Historic features include the original stone boundary wall, looped track, the ice-house and pond with five islands. The islands in the historic pond on the western boundary are planted with mature Scot's pine which would have been part of the original planting scheme.

AREA 3: THE PARK

The park north of Bessborough House contains both native and exotic trees. Original native, parkland trees occur in Area 2 close to the historic entrance and against the northern boundary wall. There are a number of the original parkland trees in the park forming a triangular lawn west of the original kitchen garden wall (clearly visible on the 1951 aerial photograph above.

Area 3 was not historically dissimilar to the open pastures of Area 4 but was claimed as a pleasure garden in circa 1990 and planted with exotic trees such as eucalyptus, ornamental cherry blossom and conifers.





ARBORICULTURAL OVERVIEW

AREA 4: PASTURE

A wide area of open pasture around the western and southern sides of the house. This area is still used for grazing and remains much the same as it was originally designed. The single, biggest alteration to this area was the construction of the N40 which severed the relationship that the house had with the estuary and cut off access to the historic tidal pool, boat house and slip, and summer house.

The trees originally dotted about the pasture have been felled and additional trees planted around the pond now screen the pond from the house.

AREA 5: SOUTHERN TREE BUFFER

These trees comprise mainly evergreen Lawson Cypress with a small percentage of native, deciduous trees. This buffer of trees was planted after the construction of the N40 in around 1995 to provide visual screening and noise reduction.

AREA a: AVENUE TO FOLLY (not in ownership of applicant)

While not in the applicant's ownership, it is worth noting that the folly was only constructed during the later half of the 19th century and the trees planted along the avenue include more ornamental, fashionable exotics including a Monkey Puzzle tree, Copper Beech and Rhododendron.





RESTORING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The approach to reinstating the historic landscape focuses on

1. protecting , maintaining and reinforcing elements of the historic landscape that still exist
2. Conserving and in some cases restoring historic features
3. Removing unwanted built features or trees/ vegetation to restore a specific area to its original / historic form or to restore a view / vista that has been lost.

The first edition Ordnance Map, surveyed is 1841 and the subsequent addition in 1899 provide us with a very clear picture of the original landscape associated with Bessborough House.

The landscape design, captured in these detailed maps, informs the strategy for management of trees toward an objective of gradually restoring the historic landscape.



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The strategy for managing the trees on the site must provide a robust framework which can respond to the ongoing evolution of the site. Like the past, the future landscape must respond to climate change, demands of transport infrastructure, ecological considerations and societal change.

The framework will be developed and agreed with Cork City Council and all other stake holders. The strategy put forward in this report provides guidance on the methodology and key actions but by no means, does it attempt to present a definitive plan as this will involve discussion with all stake holders as well as consultation with ecologists, historians and arboriculturists.

The key actions in delivering a strategy for management of the landscape and in particular the parkland trees on the site are:

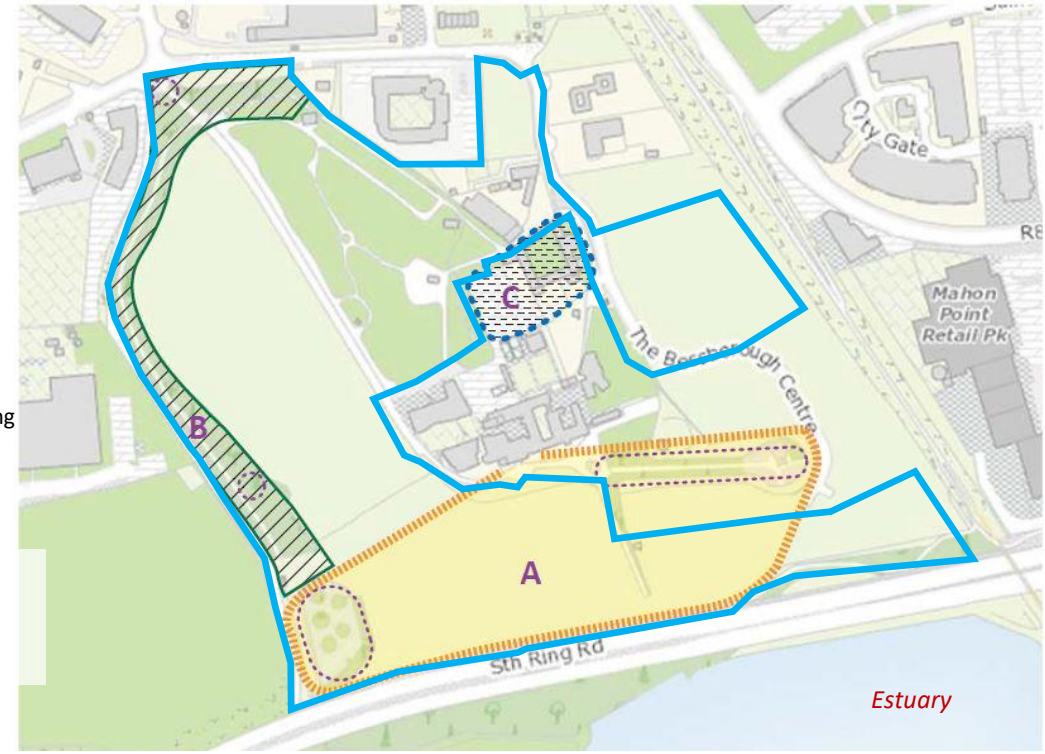
- Create a database which provides an inventory of all trees on the site detailing species, location, size, condition any special features
- Maintenance Programme – an aging, mature tree population requires review and maintenance in order to sustain their health
- Ongoing Critical Appraisal - Review of suitability of existing trees in terms of location, eventual size, habit and potential safety issues
- Replenishment and replanting – ensuring the renewal of trees and continuity of the landscape for future generations.
- Working toward a new vision – The selection and location of new trees to be informed by an overall masterplan which seeks to reinstate the historic landscape.

RESTORING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

While the key actions highlighted above are good practice in Tree Management , the overriding ambition is to reinstate the Historic Landscape which implies that all actions should be informed by a Landscape Masterplan plan to be agreed between the landowner, the local authority and all other stake holders.

The Historic Landscape Assessment prepared by Forestbird Design in August 2020 (refer to Appendix) identifies the key landscape preservation zones. Zone A identified on the map is the key Landscape Preservation Zone. Mitigation measures for Zone A are recommended and are reinforced in this report.

DIAGRAM OF LANDSCAPE ZONES TO BE PROTECTED AND ENHANCED.
Areas not highlighted have a degree of flexibility to receive landscape change or built development
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird, August 2020. Refer to Appendix.



ZONE A
LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE
Comprising an open landscape including the historic pond, folly and cemetery.

ZONE B
LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE
Comprising woodland of mature trees (including many of the original demesne trees) along the western and northern boundary. This zone includes the icehouse, boundary walls, old perimeter path and entrance gates

ZONE C
LANDSCAPE AMENITY ZONE
Comprising a walled garden and historic farm buildings.

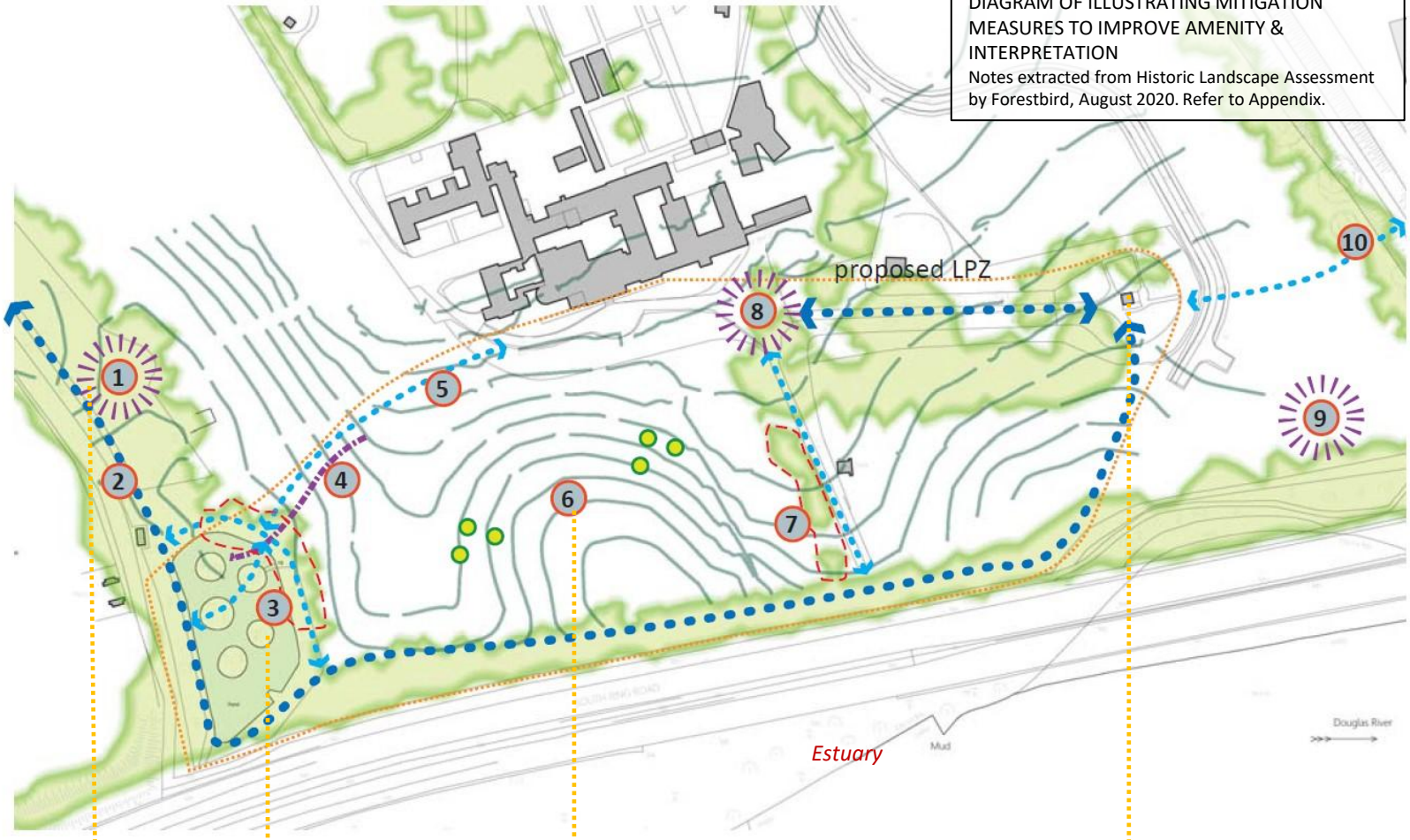
AREAS OUTSIDE PRESERVATION AREAS
Works and futures uses to be cognizance of the site-specific inventory of historic features

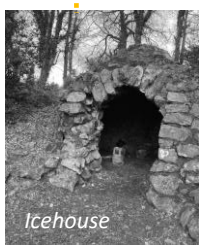
*note – the blue line is an approximate/ inaccurate indication of the applicant's landholding

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY

DIAGRAM OF ILLUSTRATING MITIGATION MEASURES TO IMPROVE AMENITY & INTERPRETATION

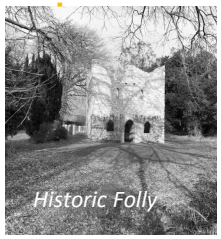
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird, August 2020. Refer to Appendix.




Icehouse


Historic pond with planted islands


View of Bessborough House with landform


Historic Folly

RESTORING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PRECINCT BY PRECINCT

Management of the parkland trees is divided into precincts for ease of defining the specific scope of work; however, the site should be considered as a whole and work to trees should only be done in the dormant season unless emergency works are required.

AREA 1 & 2: LARGE CANOPY PARKLAND TREES on the WESTERN & NORTHERN BOUNDARY

- Tag every tree and maintain an up-to-date inventory of every tree
- Remove any diseased trees but retain dead trees stumps etc. to promote biodiversity.
- Create a 2m wide path using wood fibre or similar natural, sustainable path to follow historic looped circuit inside boundary walls.
- Fully restore the icehouse and provide signage to convey significance of the structure
- Repair stone boundary wall
- Restore pond with five islands by cleaning water, removing litter and detritus, remove all invasive plants from the island and establish fresh-water drainage system using SUDS to improve water quality.
- Consider creating an amenity walk around the pond with possible bridge
- Remove all trees that obscure the view of the pond and islands from the house.
- Consider methods of draining surface water from Area 4 into the pond to ensure constant replenishment of fresh water. Fresh water will improve the health of trees and promote biodiversity.




View of island with five islands


View of perimeter parkland trees

RESTORING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PRECINCT BY PRECINCT

AREA 3: THE PARK

- Tag and maintain an up-to-date inventory of every tree
- Remove any diseased trees or dead trees stumps.
- Remove all paths, sheds, follies built after 1990.
- Replace the current manicured lawn with a more diverse rough grassland sward.
- Create a 2-3m wide path using permeable bound gravel to follow the historic looped circuit inside the boundary wall.
- Provide play areas along the path using timber equipment that does not require safety flooring but rather wood fibre to achieve a more natural, informal amenity.
- Repair the stone boundary wall
- Remove selected ornamental conifers by agreement with Cork City Council as these trees are not appropriate parkland trees (Lawson Cypress and Spruce)
- Remove Lombardy Poplar trees close to Bessborough Centre by agreement with Cork City Council as these non-native trees will grow to 30 m plus and are susceptible to windthrow.
- Gradually open-up views through the park by concentrating new appropriate planting to the perimeter of the park so that the park eventually regains its original open pastoral character.
- While this may lead to some resistance, consider removing the line of lime trees and hedge on the east side of the entrance drive to open vistas and achieve parity between the east (Area 3) and west (Area 4) fields.
- Removing the mixed hedge and cleaning the water shoots and suckers off the lime tree trunks will open-up vistas and go a long way to restoring the original sense of arrival to Bessborough House.




Inside park, view of hedge recommended for removal to reinstate vista across the pasture to the western boundary


View of entrance drive

RESTORING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PRECINCT BY PRECINCT

AREA 4: PASTURE

- This area comprises a wide, open pasture of gentry undulating land-form
- Consider land drainage to replenish water to historic pond but take care to preserve the shape of the land and particularly the knolls and shallow bowl described in Forestbird's Historical Landscape Assessment.
- Plant a small number of new semi-mature Oak trees within the field to mimic original locations.
- Clear or thin out the line of trees that extend north from Area 5 toward the House as these are a later addition which now impede views both from and toward the house.
- Reinstate historic paths (define with mowed routes)

AREA 5: SOUTHERN TREE BUFFER

- Tag and maintain an up-to-date inventory of every tree.
- Retain and protect all native trees
- Gradually thin out the northern edge of the non-native Lawson Cypress trees that were planted as a screen to the N40 and replace with a wider band of native trees to recreate the wooded perimeter with large canopy parkland trees.




View of gently scooped pasture with edge of woodland to southern and western boundary.


View of the house from the southern boundary.

PHASED TREE MANAGEMENT

While the existing trees in the park provide great amenity and create an attractive, mature setting, reinstating the historic landscape to its more open, meadow landscape would suggest the careful management of the landscape over the next 20 years to gradually remove unwanted trees as they reach the end of their life span and replace these with new native deciduous and evergreen trees along the perimeter and in groups within the field on the western side of the entrance road.

This will over time achieve a more equal relationship between the parcels of land east and west of the approach road and open the site up visually. The planting of new appropriate trees in the right location will ensure continued tree cover on the perimeter and will gradually replace some of the exotic or low value trees that are currently in the park.

REPLANTING

In excess of 200 new trees are proposed as part of Phase 1 and 2 which more than doubles the number of trees identified for removal.

New tree planting in areas outside the sites for Phase 1 and 2 should be targeted in order to establish the tree canopy envisaged in the restored landscape. Native and naturalized trees are considered appropriate parkland trees befitting of the historic landscape.

Recommend reinforcing the buffer of native trees to perimeter by planting new Oak, Scot's Pine, Sycamore and Beech to ensure longevity of the landscape





Recommend removal of inappropriate Spruce trees to open up the park and plant more native trees to perimeter.

PROPOSED NEW TREES - LARGE CANOPY PARKLAND TREES

Trees can create a distinctive landscape and in the case of Bessborough house where there is an objective to reinstate the historic landscape; the selection of the right tree, in the right location is critical.

Appropriate new trees will replenish the aging population of mature trees, and these should reinforce the palette of existing traditional, parkland trees.

The majority of the original trees are native but some non-native, exotics such as Magnolia, Monkey Puzzle and Rhododendron which would have been introduced in an Estate of this status, in the 1900's .

It is important to replant a wide variety of species as this promotes biodiversity but also safeguards the tree canopy from devastation, if a disease targets the predominant species planted.

Native Deciduous Trees include Oak, Sycamore, Birch and Ash



Acer pseudoplatanus - Sycamore



Ash (currently impacted by Ash Dieback. DO NOT SPECIFY)



Quercus robur – European Oak



Betula pendula – Silver Birch

Native / Naturalised Evergreen Trees to replace inappropriate, alien evergreen trees such as Lawson Cypress, Monterey Cypress, Spruce


Pinus sylvestris – Scot's Pine (evergreen)


Quercus ilex – Holm oak (evergreen)


Taxus baccata – Yew (evergreen)


Fagus sylvatica – Beech


Castanea sativa – Sweet Chestnut

Non - Native Naturalised Deciduous Trees include Beech, Sweet Chestnut

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY

PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY IN THE PARK

The proposed works to the public park included in Phase 2 will promote biodiversity by replacing the current manicured lawn with a more diverse rough grassland sward.

A more mixed, taller grass is of higher ecological value for invertebrates and birds. Perennial Rye Grass or other vigorous amenity/agricultural grass species will not be utilised as they tend to over-dominate the sward and reduce overall biodiversity.

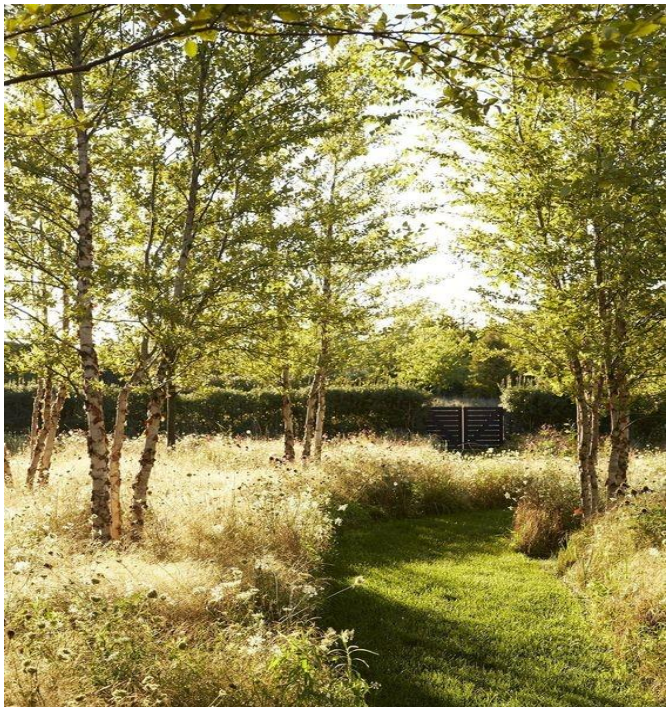
The final grassland /wildflower mix will be specified by the Project Ecologist based on final ground conditions including alkalinity, fertility and moisture levels.

As part of the proposed works to the park in Phase 2, existing paths, playground, sheds, follies etc. will be removed and the park allowed to 'rewild' to some degree.

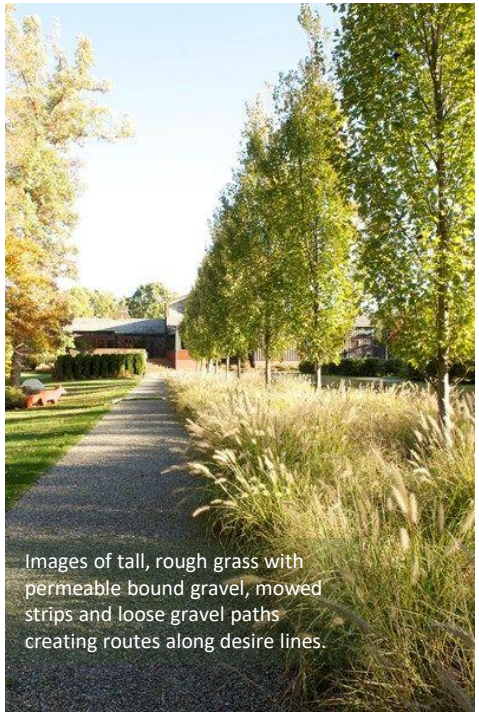
New narrow paths created with permeable bound gravel, mowed strips and loose gravel paths are proposed along desire lines to create routes through the tall grass.

Bat and bird nesting boxes are also proposed.

All biodiversity promoting measures will be subject to site investigations and will be agreed with a qualified ecologist.







Images of tall, rough grass with permeable bound gravel, mowed strips and loose gravel paths creating routes along desire lines.

PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY IN THE WOODED PERIMETER (Western Boundary)

The wooded perimeter boast many fine specimens of indigenous parkland trees including Oak, Scot's Pine, Sycamore, Ash as well as Beech, Lime and Holm Oaks. These mature trees as well as the fallen, dead trees provide great ecological value. New bird and bat nesting boxes are proposed.

Biodiversity is however, limited in the under-storey planting, but this could be boosted with new planting recommended by a qualified Ecologist.

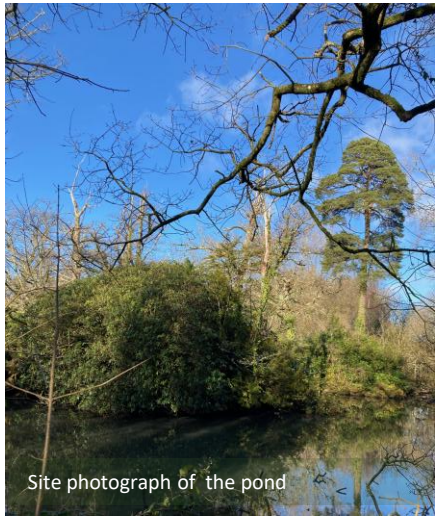
The man-made pond comprising five planted islands contains stagnant water, litter, as well as other detritus.

A major clean up the pond including removal of litter, invasive vegetation like Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron as well as replenishing the water with fresh surface water will turn this unique and symbolic landscape feature into a great amenity with far greater ecological potential.



Site photographs of existing understorey of hazel, brambles, elder and ferns





Site photograph of the pond



Site photograph of the pond with planter islands