

An aerial photograph of the Great Linford Manor Grounds in Milton Keynes, showing a mix of green parkland, residential housing, and a winding river. The map is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange grid.

Great Linford Manor Grounds

Milton Keynes

Draft Conservation Management Plan

Prepared for

The Parks Trust
Peter and Berni Winkelman

By

Andrew Hiorns Limited
With
Architectural History and Conservation Limited

July 2013



Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A Unique and Special Place
- 1.2 Some Background
- 1.3 What is the Conservation Management Plan?
- 1.4 The Plan Preparation Process
- 1.5 Status and Scope
- 1.6 Contacts

2.0 Understanding Great Linford Manor Grounds

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Sources of Data and Knowledge
- 2.3 Location and Setting
- 2.4 A Walk through the Grounds
- 2.5 Designations
- 2.6 A Brief History of Great Linford Manor and Grounds
- 2.7 Evolution of the Grounds

3.0 What Remains of the Historic Designed Landscape

- 3.1 Recognising the Woodsian Landscape
- 3.2 Extent and Layout of the Grounds and Key Views
- 3.3 Character of Planting
- 3.4 Components of the Historic Planned Landscape

4.0 Significance

- 4.1 Approach
- 4.2 Evidential
- 4.3 Historic Significance
- 4.4 Aesthetic Significance
- 4.5 Communal Significance
- 4.6 Natural History
- 4.7 Summary of Significance

5.0 Key Issues and Opportunities

- 5.1 Key Issues
- 5.2 Poor definition of the entrances and the grounds
- 5.3 Routes do not necessarily reflect where people wish to go
- 5.4 The uncertain relationship between public and private uses
- 5.5 The erosion of the Pleasure Gardens Character
- 5.6 Poor and Incomplete Interpretation and Signage
- 5.7 Poor safety and security

6.0 Vision and Guiding Themes

- 6.1 The Vision
- 6.2 Guiding Themes
 - Theme 1: Enhance the potential for people to enjoy the Grounds
 - Theme 2: Establish the Grounds as a Destination
 - Theme 3: Reveal, Restore and Re-create the elements of the 18th Century Pleasure Grounds
 - Theme 4: Provide improved access routes to serve the Manor
 - Theme 5: Improve Interpretation and Understanding of the Grounds
 - Theme 6: Develop a role as a place for Education, the Arts and Learning
 - Theme 7: Design-out Anti-Social behaviour

7.0 Proposals by Area

- 7.1 M Manor Grounds
- 7.2 ME Manor Entrance
- 7.3 SP Springhead and Ponds
- 7.4 W Wilderness
- 7.5 P Parklands
- 7.6 MG Manor Gardens

8.0 Next Steps

- 8.1 Further Studies and Investigations
- 8.2 Consultation
- 8.3 Detailed Design
- 8.4 Funding
- 8.5 Monitoring

References

Appendices

1. Contact for further information
2. Historical Sources
3. Richard Woods - Plant lists and illustrative typical planting list

List of Figures

Figure 1.1	West Front of Manor view from the Grounds	Figure 3.8	John Constable's painting of Wivenhoe Park 1816
Figure 1.2	Conservation Plan Study Area	Figure 3.9	Wood's Plan for the Elysium Garden at Audley End
Figure 2.1	Manor grounds in Context	Figure 3.10	View across first pond to replacement bridge
Figure 2.2	Existing Features	Figure 3.11	Pond at Rousham with open banks
Figure 2.3	The Entrance Gates	Figure 3.12	Third pond with overgrowing vegetation
Figure 2.4	The Avenue	Figure 3.13	Cascade in summer
Figure 2.5	The Pavilions	Figure 3.14	Cannon Hall cascade
Figure 2.6	The Pavilions	Figure 3.15	Wilderness today
Figure 2.7	The Almshouses and Church	Figure 3.16	View from location of Doric Seat
Figure 2.8	The Ponds	Figure 3.17	Planting along line of Ha-Ha
Figure 2.9	The Manor Garden	Figure 3.18	Manor terraced gardens
Figure 2.10	The Ha-Ha	Figure 3.19	Manor embankment to kitchen garden
Figure 2.11	The Canal and Wilderness	Figure 3.20	Example of grand palestre at Rousham
Figure 2.12	The Marsh Drive Entrance		
Figure 2.13	Historic Environment	Figure 4.1	Grand Union Canal next to Manor Grounds
Figure 2.14	History of the Manor and Grounds	Figure 4.2	Waterside Festival with stage in front of Manor
Figure 2.15	First Edition OS Map	Figure 4.3	Veteran small-leaved lime near the Ha-Ha
Figure 2.16	Aerial View of new access to Manor, Memorial Hall and Parking	Figure 4.4	Stone circle and Local Geological Site
Figure 2.17	Great Linford estate as depicted in the sale particulars.		
Figure 2.18	An artist's impression of the Manor at the time of its sale	Figure 5.1	Manor Entrances
Figure 2.19	1641 Estate Map	Figure 5.2	Combined vehicle and pedestrian access from Marsh Drive
Figure 2.20	1678 Estate Map	Figure 5.3	Lack of path along the canal
Figure 2.21	Terrace embankments on the east lawn	Figure 5.4	Combined vehicle and pedestrian access from High Street
Figure 2.22	The south embankment above the lawn	Figure 5.5	Shared entrance with Artworks
Figure 2.23	Hartley Park with its seventeenth-century house and garden	Figure 5.6	The only surfaced route to the east
Figure 2.24	North and South Pavilions	Figure 5.7	Paths through the Wilderness have been lost
Figure 2.25	Formal view created by the addition of the Pavilions	Figure 5.8	Lack of paths around the
Figure 2.26	Unfinished elevation of the Pavilions	Figure 5.9	Lack of definition between public and private space
Figure 2.27	Richard Woods' Design for Little Linford 1761	Figure 5.10	Aerial photograph from the 1970s
Figure 2.28	The Doric Seat in the Wilderness	Figure 5.11	Visibility of the ponds
Figure 2.29	The stepped Cascade proposed by Richard Woods	Figure 5.12	Veteran small leaved lime
Figure 2.30	The conduit, which formed part of the cascading water feature	Figure 5.13	Restoration replanting at Stowe
Figure 2.31	Tithe Map of 1841	Figure 5.14	Existing information boards
Figure 2.32	Manor and Pavilions showing Chilstone ornaments	Figure 5.15	Secluded areas
Figure 2.33	Undated Map by John Seed	Figure 5.16	Vehicle access due to open gates
Figure 3.1	Hare Hall painting by Thomas Day C1780	Figure 5.17	Vehicles parked on route from Marsh Drive
Figure 3.2	Key Views		
Figure 3.3	OS Plan 1881	Figure 7.1	Indicative Master Plan
Figure 3.4	Tree Survey Plan	Figure 7.2	Key Diagram
Figure 3.5	Tulip tree	Figure 7.3	Rousham water feature
Figure 3.6	Key Landscape Character Areas	Figure 7.4	Cascade at Harewood House
Figure 3.7	View down main avenue to west of the Manor	Figure 7.5	18th Century Bench
		Figure 7.6	Existing path along the Ha-Ha
		Figure 7.7	Example of palestre at Hare Hill



1.0 Introduction

The Management Plan is an informal set of guidelines and proposals to help manage the Manor Grounds in a way sympathetic to the character and qualities of the place over the next 20 years and more. It addresses issues affecting its current use and proposes measures to help realise its potential.

1.1 A Unique and Special Place

Great Linford Manor and its Grounds are a unique and special part of Milton Keynes



Figure 1.1 West front of Great Linford Manor viewed from the grounds.

What we see today is the remnant of a 350-year old designed landscape. The original medieval Manor was located near the church and then rebuilt on its current site in 1690. Its Grounds appear to have been to a formal axial layout and the gardens to the Manor retain some of this layout, and the two pavilions facing the Manor developed after, follow this plan. Changing fashions in the mid-1700s led to a second complementary transformation, probably to the designs of Richard Woods, and in the English Garden Style of an informal, naturalised show-piece landscape with carefully positioned trees, set-views, water features, rolling pasture and artfully located small buildings. This was the heyday of Great Linford Manor.

However, it was short-lived. Not 40 years later, the Grand Junction Canal ripped through the formal water gardens, followed soon after by the Newport Pagnell Railway, which irrevocably isolated the Grounds from its wider rural setting. The Grounds fell into decline and it is likely that much of the original planted landscape was already lost by the start of the 20th Century.

In modern times the Manor and Grounds have been a family home, a factory and showroom for garden ornaments, an arts centre, a sculpture park and a recording studio, and the Manor itself is now in the process of being converted back into a private home. Since their acquisition by Milton Keynes Development Corporation in 1974 most of the Grounds are publically accessible and used in the same way as all other parks in the city. The Grounds transferred to the The Parks Trust in 1992.

To the visitor it is perhaps a surprising and unexpected discovery in a city better known for its modern architecture than its inherited buildings and landscapes. It is clearly a place of great age evident in the buildings, which are simple, elegant and curious. Local people know it as a quiet and tranquil place; a place to walk the dog, fly a kite or simply stroll through on the way to elsewhere, with occasional events, such as the popular annual Waterside Festival. Its origins as a designed Georgian pleasure ground perhaps less understood or appreciated.

1.2 Some Background

The Parks Trust and owners of the Manor Peter and Berni Winkelmann commissioned the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) in December 2012. The Plan has been prepared by Andrew Hiorns Limited with Architectural Heritage and Conservation Limited (AHC) as advisers on the historic landscape.

The study area encompasses the immediate grounds of Great Linford Manor, the Manor Gardens within the curtilage of the Manor, and the wider area around the site where it appears to have been connected to the original Manor Grounds, or is in some way relevant to the appreciation of the Grounds.

The extent of the Conservation Management Plan area is shown in **Figure 1.2**



Figure 1.2 – Conservation Management Plan Study Area

1.3 What is the Conservation Management Plan?

The Conservation Management Plan follows the guidelines set out in the English Heritage document Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (2008).

The Conservation Management Plan sets out what is currently understood about the place, what is significant and the issues facing its future. From this understanding, the Plan sets out a vision, themes and proposals to guide the long-term management and conservation of the Grounds to ensure its sustainable future.

Throughout we refer to the Grounds as the full extent of the designed estate, the Parkland as the area to the east beyond the ha-ha. The Manor Gardens as the terraced garden and kitchen garden behind the Manor. The area around the church is referred to as the Church Grounds.

The Plan is compatible with the requirements of potential funding partners including the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and English Heritage, and this document can underpin funding bids to these and other potential partner organisations. The Plan can also support specific development proposals within the Grounds to demonstrate the appreciation of the context for those proposals.

The Plan is a guide and not a blueprint. It will evolve and change over time in response to today's issues and as new issues arise. The aim is to provide a common understanding and direction to ensure the character and qualities of the Manor Grounds are understood and properly taken account of in management and development decisions affecting its future.

1.4 The Plan Preparation Process

The Plan has been prepared over a six-month period beginning in December 2012. A background historical assessment was commissioned from AHC Limited in November 2012, and a tree survey from Tree Works Environmental Practice in January 2013. Meetings have been held with the Great Linford Parish Council to discuss the evolving issues and proposals affecting the wider park system at Great Linford, including the Manor Grounds.

The document presents the draft plan, which will be consulted upon more widely and then adopted by The Parks Trust and owners as the basis for managing the Grounds and bringing forward specific development proposals. The key immediate next steps are outlined in Chapter 8.

The Plan is presented in 8 chapters as follows:

- **Chapter 1 –sets out the introduction, background and scope for the plan;**
- **Chapter 2 – describes the Grounds and their evolution and management today;**
- **Chapter 3 – considers the remaining extent of the historic designed landscape;**
- **Chapter 4 – evaluates the significance of the Grounds landscape using a variety of criteria;**
- **Chapter 5 - considers the key issues affecting its current management and the opportunities to realise its potential;**
- **Chapter 6 – presents the Vision and Key Themes to guide the management proposals;**
- **Chapter 7 – presents the management proposals by area;**
- **Chapter 8 – Identifies the Next Steps to move the Plan forward.**

1.6 Contacts

Information about the Plan can be obtained from the contact provided at Appendix 1.

1.5 Status and Scope of the Plan

This Plan is a non-statutory document and does not affect the statutory protection afforded to the listed buildings and their settings or the Conservation Area, which remain and serve to conserve the Grounds and the wider historic area. It has been prepared to guide the direction of future management decision-making in relation to the Grounds.



Understanding what the Grounds comprise and their use involves deciphering development and occupation over several centuries.



Figure 2.1 Manor Grounds in Context



Figure 2.2 Existing Features

13 Conservation Management Plan 2013

Walled Garden

Veteran Lime Tree

Line of the Ha-ha

Tulip Tree

Arboretum

Redway

Linford Canal Wharf

District Park



Manor House

Manor Gardens
Terraced

Veteran Cedar
Tree

Memorial Hall &
Car Park

Park Road
Access

Marsh Drive

2.4 A Walk through the Grounds

The key features of the Manor Grounds are shown in **Figure 2.2 Plan of Existing Features**, and photos of some of these in **Figures 2.3 – 2.12**.

The main approach to the Manor is along the historic High Street and through the white Victorian ornamental gates.

Figure 2.3

The route continues along the tree-lined avenue. The Manor is to the right and set facing due west on the side of the shallow valley. **Figure 2.4**

Opposite the Manor are the two dressed stone-faced stable blocks in a Palladian style, but with stone rubble rear facades and unusual roofs. **Figure 2.5 and 2.6**

An avenue leads from the Manor through between the blocks into a stable yard. The former thatched barn is located on the south side enclosing the yard and is now an arts centre for Artworks MK. On the opposite side of the yard are modern workshop and studio complex called the Radcliffe building designed by Donald Insall and Partners and on the site of the otter hound kennels from the 18th Century.

The church is accessed off a modern roundabout/circus outside the gates to the stable yard, with a pond in the middle. St Andrews Church dates from the 12th Century and there is a walled churchyard and cemetery with many fine trees. Behind that are the Almshouses built in the 17th Century as single-storey cells. They have an unusual central three-storey Dutch-gabled house, which was the former keeper of the almshouses who was also the village school master. The Almshouses remained occupied until the 1960s. **Figure 2.7**

At the end of the central path are the two ornamental ponds. The first is a regular circle, is stone lined and separated from the second rectangular pond by a modern cascade and timber rail bridge. **Figure 2.8**

The ponds once continued down the valley towards the River Ouse but were disrupted in 1800 by the construction of the canal, and then in 1840 by the railway. A third pond, with a heavily restored cascade feature remains within the dense woodland between the canal and railway but is only accessible from the north down the railway embankment. It remains watered but is overgrown.

The Manor itself has a 3-storey building with a cellar, and two 2-storey wings, with a wall continuing along the front. The building is faced in local Blisworth limestone. There is a service yard alongside and a walled kitchen garden to the rear. To the south and alongside the garden wall that separates the Manor from the High Street is woodland. Behind the Manor is a rising terraced garden with surrounding embankments and dating most probably from the late 17th Century. There is a fine cedar tree marking the end of the garden. **Figure 2.9**

Beyond the walled garden are a small modern lodge building and a gravel yard.

To the north of the walled garden is the Wilderness running up to the canal. **Figure 2.10** This would have been an ornamental pleasure garden. Divided from pasture to the east of the Ha-ha which allowed unrestricted views over open countryside. **Figure 2.11** In the last 20 years this area has been planted as an arboretum.

The Manor is accessed along a surfaced track that leads in off Marsh Drive and then swings around into the service yard **Figure 2.12**

This once served a large car park, which has been removed and grassed over. The entrance area includes the access to the Memorial Hall which is used as a community centre (designed by MKDC architects), and is also accessed via the remnant of the old road off the High Street, which is now a Redway path.



Figure 2.3 The Entrance Gates



Figure 2.4 The Avenue



Figure 2.5 The Pavilions



Figure 2.6 The Pavilions



Figure 2.7 The Almshouses & Church



Figure 2.8 The Ponds



Figure 2.9 The Manor Garden



Figure 2.10 The Canal & Wilderness



Figure 2.11 The Ha-ha



Figure 2.12 The Marsh Drive Entrance

2.5 Designations

The village and Manor grounds were designated as a Conservation Area in 1974 although no Conservation Area Statement has been prepared. The Conservation Area gives protection to the area with development including works to any trees, requiring Conservation Area Consent from the local planning authority. The Conservation Area and Listed Buildings in and around the Manor grounds are shown on **Figure 2.13 Historic Environment.**



Figure 2.13 Historic Environment

There are seven listed buildings and structures within the Grounds. These are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Great Linford Manor C1720 re-modelling of 1680 Grade 2* |
| 2 | Mounting Block in front of wall to north west front of Linford Manor |
| 3 | Wall flanking west front of Linford Manor Grade 2 |
| 4 | Walls enclosing garden layout of Linford Manor Grade 2 |
| 5 | Stable blocks (referred to as the pavilions) C1720 Grade 2* |
| 6 | Barn C18 Grade 2 |
| 7 | Former School House and Almshouses 1696 Grade 2* |
| 8 | St. Andrews Church Grade 2* |

2.6 A Short History of Great Linford Manor and Grounds

The Manor and Grounds evolved over 800 years with the most discernable remains from some 350 or so years. The timeline of the history of the Manor and its Grounds are shown in **Figure 2.14 History of the Manor and Grounds**, and summarised below.

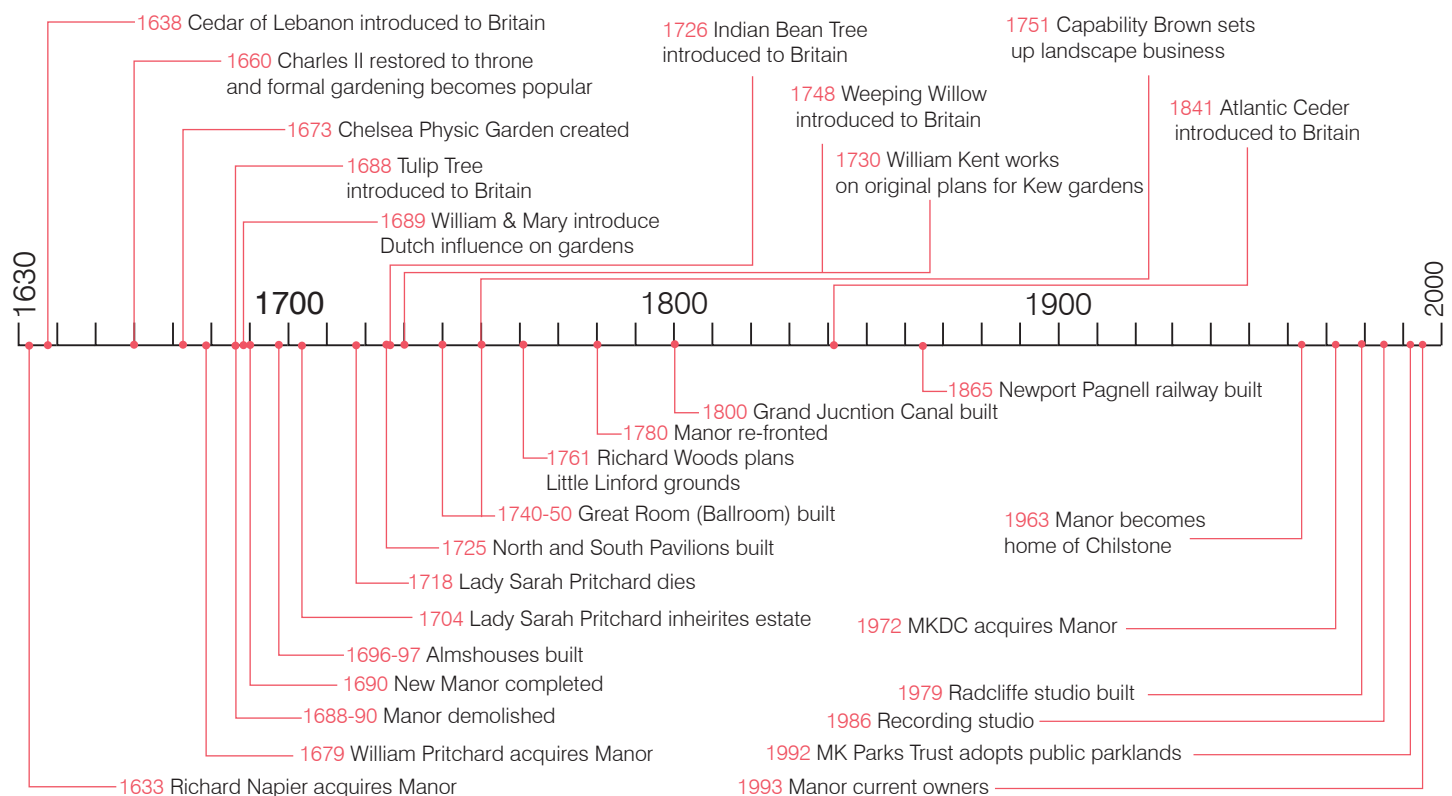


Figure 2.14 History of the Manor and Grounds

The earliest known remains are from the 7th-8thC Anglo-Saxon period. A place of worship was evident at Great Linford in 1151-54 and is mentioned in a charter, with recorded changes and alterations to the Church throughout the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries.

In the 15th Century a substantial **medieval hall house** was built at Great Linford, its footprint now partially under the South Pavilion. This was uncovered during an excavation carried out between 1979 and 1980 after the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) had acquired the site.

In **1633 Sir Richard Napier** acquired the Manor House and by 1641 'The Plot of the Mannor of Great Linford' of this year shows the important buildings of the village, and the land ownerships. The survey of the village in 1678 by surveyor Richard Browne shows 'The Mannor of Greate Lynford', and the major buildings of the village, together with their landholdings.

But by 1679 Sir Richard Napier is forced by his debts to sell the Manor to **Sir William Pritchard (1630-1704)**, a wealthy London merchant with political ambitions. By 1685 Sir William Pritchard has become the Lord Mayor of London and an MP for London, a position he retains through several Parliaments until 1702.

Between 1688-90 the original medieval /Elizabethan Manor House is demolished and the construction of a new Manor House begins; it is completed in 1690 but on the opposite side of the main street to the original.

Between 1696-97 the single-storey, stone Almshouses are constructed by Pritchard with an interesting three-storey Dutch-gabled centre-piece. This element is to house the Warden of the Almshouses, who is also the village Schoolmaster.

Sir William Pritchard dies in 1704 and Great Linford passes to **Lady Sarah Pritchard**, his wife, who lives at the estate until her death in 1718.

In 1706 an Agreement is drawn up between **Richard Uthwatt and Daniel King** (Sir William Pritchard's nephews and Lords of the Manor on his death in 1704) and the Rector, John Coles, concerning the condition of the village church. This proves that Pritchard's two nephews were taking an active, working interest in their newly inherited estate, despite Lady Sarah Pritchard continuing to live at the Manor itself. The Agreement states that:

'It is agreed.... that they.... Shall take down the Roof and walls of the Chancel and Rebuild the same...before the feast day of St Michael the Archangell in the year of our Lord God One thousand seven hundred and seven' (Williams, 1983)

Between 1706-10 the medieval chancel is taken down to foundations and rebuilt, the interior is also rebuilt, the medieval decoration plastered over and the coved ceiling inserted. Again, this is likely to be under the aegis of the two nephews.

Lady Sarah Pritchard dies in 1718 and the estate passes formally to William Pritchard's nephews, already made Lords of the Manor on his death in 1704.

A process of making alterations to the Manor then begins and between 1720-40 the Manor House is altered in at least two separate phases by **Thomas Uthwatt**.

Firstly, around 1725 The North and South Pavilions are built to frame axially the Manor House and add consequence to views from the House. And then around 1740-50 Henry Uthwatt adds the Great Room (Ballroom) to the House.

In 1758 an Inventory is taken of the House, which contains 21 rooms; there is a large service area on the north side.



Figure 2.15 The 1881 First Edition OS Map

It is known that in 1761 landscape designer **Richard Woods** prepares a plan for an extensive re- landscaping of the grounds at Little Linford for **Matthew Knapp**. Knapp had married Catherine Uthwatt, of the Great Linford Uthwatts in 1750. Catherine (1725-1794) was the daughter of Thomas and Catherine Uthwatt. There are interesting similarities between the Little Linford landscape proposal and what was achieved at some point in the mid-eighteenth century at Great Linford.

In around c.1780 the house is re-fronted; it is likely that the Walled Garden dates from this period.

But in 1800 The Grand Junction Canal is constructed to the north of the estate, severing the landscape and isolating the Cascade from its ponds.

Then in 1865 The Newport Pagnell Railway Company line is completed, again to the north of the estate, just beyond the Canal and running parallel to it. The combined effect of the Canal and Railway is to truncate the Great Linford estate. At the time both the Railway and the Canal would have been very intrusive, resulting in the loss of privacy for the estate occupants.

In 1875 the railway line is taken over by the London & North Western Railway, which operates it until closure in 1964; it is now a pedestrian/cycle way.

The First Edition OS map of 1881 **Figure 2.15** shows the Grand Junction Canal and the Railway bisecting the estate to the north. On the north-east corner of the Wilderness, adjacent to the Canal, a Boathouse has been constructed, indicating that the owners or tenants of the estate had accepted the presence of the Canal and were using it for recreational purposes. The Doric Seat, artfully located within the Wilderness, is marked on this map, facing out across the valley. The Boathouse has disappeared by the Second Edition OS Map of 1900.

There is little change by the 1925 Third Edition Ordnance Survey map. However, the Memorial Hall has been built on the other side of the main village street, to commemorate the Great War.

In 1964 Great Linford Manor House is leased to Micheal Dibben and the site for a time becomes the base for Chilstone, a company making and selling garden ornaments.

The Milton Keynes Development Corporation buys Great Linford Manor from Stella Uthwatt in 1972.

Around this time various 'village plans' are produced for the development of land around the grounds for new housing as part of the New Town prepared by a team led by Peter Winchester, with designs for Great Linford grid square by John Seed, master planning architect.

Then between 1974-79 MKDC undertake extensive restoration to the Pavilions, Barn and Almshouses. The Almshouses, which remained as Almshouses until the 1960s, are converted to craft workshops. The Barn was largely destroyed by fire in 1975 and is substantially rebuilt at this time.

In 1979 the Radcliffe Studio is built as part of the redevelopment of the site by MKDC. This is built on the site of a former Otter Hound Kennels and possibly a Coach House, behind the Pavilions.

In 1980 restoration work is carried out to the Church, which uncovers the original lath-and-plaster coved ceiling and the king-post roof structure.

By the time the Seventh Edition Ordnance Survey map is published in 1982 a new Memorial Hall has been built with the old site making way for new homes. The new Memorial Hall has an access road constructed to link it with Marsh Road. This new approach into the landscape extends to the Manor and includes a turning circle and several additional pathways and access routes to the north of the Manor House, just adjacent to the service courtyard to access the new Arts Centre created in the Manor which is visible in **Figure 2.16**.



Figure 2.16 Aerial View of new access to Manor, Memorial Hall and parking

By 1992 the estate is split between the Milton Keynes Parks Trust, which takes over the landscape, Buckinghamshire County Council and the current owners who took over Linford Manor in 1993 and developed it into one of Europe's leading residential recording studios.



Figure 2.17 showing the Great Linford estate as depicted in the sale particulars



Figure 2.18 An artist's impression of the Manor by David Gentleman at the time of its sale

2.7 The Evolution of the Grounds

The Grounds have evolved over more than 350 years and comprise five distinct phases, as follows;

1. The Medieval Manor House and late Seventeenth-Century Developments

Archaeological excavations were carried out by MKDC between 1979 and 1980. The dig exposed the foundations of a medieval or Tudor hall house partially under the South Pavilion.

While we cannot know when exactly this house was built, the layout of the foundations make it clear that it was likely to be fifteenth-century in origin. This was the first Manor House at Great Linford, as is proven by the physical remains. The two seventeenth-century estate maps also bear this out. The 1641 map depicts a large house as a pictorial representation in the location where the foundations were uncovered, just adjacent to the Church (**Figure 2.19**). This map does not state categorically that it was the Manor House, but its location indicates that it was on the manorial site.

The second map, of 1678 (**Figure 2.20**) also shows a large house in the same location as the 1641 map, indicating the continued presence of this important building. However, where the 1641 map does not annotate the sketch drawing of the house, the 1678 map clearly states that this important building was 'the Mannor House'. We can be confident, therefore, that it was the original Manor House, and that the excavated foundations under the South Pavilion are the remains of the same building. What is not clear is the final configuration of the building before it was demolished. The foundations indicate that it was a hall house of no little size. It is not known whether it was re-modelled in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries to reflect changing architectural fashion.

Neither is there any evidence, either documentary or within the extant fabric of the landscape remains, to indicate the type of landscape or garden that may have existed around the first Manor House.



2.19 - 1641 Estate Map

In **1679 Richard Napier** was forced by his debts to sell the Manor. He sold it to **Sir William Pritchard**, a wealthy London merchant with political ambitions who wished to buy a country estate. Sir William was not satisfied with the appearance of the existing Manor when he bought it (which may indicate that it had not been much altered since the fifteenth century) and he made plans to demolish it and construct a new house. Some authorities have taken entries in the house accounts to the pulling down of 'ye old house' as indicating the demolition of the Manor. The sums incurred are minimal and it is more likely that they refer to another, minor, house on the estate.

Pritchard did not begin to build his new house, utilising stone from the old Manor, until 1688, almost ten years after he acquired the estate, and would have needed a residence while he decided how to develop the new property. It is probable that the 1678 estate map (**Figure 2.20**) was drawn up for Pritchard upon the sale of the old Manor, as part of the legal conveyancing, and also as an aid to the subsequent redevelopment of the estate. Pritchard's new late seventeenth-century Manor House (which now forms the core of the existing house) was constructed down the

hill from the first Manor House in its present position. This was a very unusual location to select for this period, since it was fashionable at the end of the seventeenth century to build houses on elevated land, where the house would be prominent and command its estate. This prominent siting would have given the owners a wide prospect of the Manor's demesne, while ensuring that anyone outside could see it very clearly, therefore conferring status and power on its owner.

Building grand houses on elevated positions was also a practical decision at this time, since the land would be better drained and the air less damp. The reason for relocating Great Linford Manor to this lower ground is unclear; neither does it reflect fashionable taste, nor Pritchard's ambitious nature and increasing status.

Sadly, no early-eighteenth-century estate plan has survived to provide detailed information about any landscape that was designed to complement the seventeenth-century Manor House. In fact, there are no extant maps or plans after the 1678 estate map, which does not itself provide detailed information about the landscape, until the 1841 Tithe Map.



2.20 – 1678 Estate Map



Figure 2.21 – Terrace embankments on the east lawn

However, remains of a formal landscape do survive to the east of the house and can still be discerned on the rear lawn, as shown in **Figures 2.21** and **Figure 2.22**.

It is not certain when this formal landscape was created, but it would seem logical, for several reasons, to attribute this to **Sir William Pritchard**. Firstly, he was responsible for building the new Manor in its new location and it would have been unusual for a gentleman of the time to be content with a house but no grounds. Secondly, formal Franco-Dutch style landscapes were becoming unfashionable after the first quarter of the eighteenth century, so it is likely to have been created before 1725. While it might be argued that Thomas Uthwatt created the landscape before 1725, but after



Figure 2.22 – The south embankment above the lawn providing a raised walk along the shrubbery

Pritchard's death in 1704, it seems unlikely that he would have done so. Lady Pritchard was still living at Great Linford until her death in 1718.

This is further confirmed by the building of the Pavilions and the alterations to the house, both of which did not commence until after her death. Furthermore, although much has been lost over time, the evidence on site indicates a late-seventeenth-century design of terraced compartments. The formal terraces can still be seen to the rear of the property, where three distinct levels in the lawn rise up gently away from the House. These would have been demarcated by retaining brick walls, with steps up to the next terrace. The levels would probably each have had differing and specific



Figure 2.23 – Hatley Park with its seventeenth-century house and garden

functions ranging from the ornamental to the more rustic as the levels advanced towards the boundary. Although the lawn comes very close to the rear of the house today, originally there would have been a wide, gravelled walk between the house and the first terrace. This would have enabled air to circulate around the base of the building and also provide a more sheltered area, close to the house, for promenading.

Hatley Park in Cambridgeshire is a typical seventeenth-century landscape (**Figure 2.23**) with its geometric shapes and formality. The garden at Great Linford may have been very similar.

Flanking the three terraces, to the north and south, are two distinct, steep banks. The south bank is so large as to be almost a plateau and is planted up with many mature trees. The north bank now acts as a division between the terraces and the Walled Garden, which is a late-eighteenth-century addition to the estate. It is not known whether the north bank was similarly planted when first created. The Walled Garden retains three, largely original walls but that to the south has been rebuilt in the twentieth century. The remains of a fireplace to provide heat for glasshouses or bothies can still be seen in the service courtyard to the north of the main house. The Walled Garden does not retain any of its garden structures, such as vegetable stores or greenhouses.

The formal terraced area to the rear of the house is the oldest extant part of the designed landscape at Great Linford and the most significant.

2. The Early Eighteenth Century

Sometime in the early eighteenth century the North and South Pavilions were built on axis with the Manor House to add architectural consequence and symmetry to the view from the Manor.



Figure 2.24– North and South Pavilions

This may have been to compensate for the relatively low-lying and unimpressive position of the new Manor House. The simple, neo-Palladian style of the Pavilions suggests that they were built between 1714 and 1730. Given the provincial location of Great Linford, it is likely that they were built towards the end of this period, almost certainly by **Thomas Uthwatt** after the death of Lady Pritchard in 1718.

Previous reports about Great Linford have stated that the Pavilions could have been constructed as early as 1705 but, given their pure neo-Palladian style, this is certainly not the case. The earliest neo-Palladian house in England – Wilbury in Wiltshire – was not built until 1709. Prior to this, and particularly in provincial, rural locations, a Baroque style would have been adopted.

The Pavilions are relatively unusual in their conception, since most flanking pavilions are attached to the parent house, connected to it by wings. However, their unusual siting here does create a sense of distance and perspective when viewed from the Manor House, and also gives it a certain grandeur, which was previously lacking due to its low-lying site. The Pavilions create a sense of drama, framing the main view from the house and out into the landscape. Such dramatic focal points and the creation of contrived views were important aspects of early-eighteenth-century landscape design.



Figure 2.25 – showing the formal view created by the addition of the Pavilions, but now unfortunately masked by the trees.

The Pavilions were never intended to form a grand entrance to the site from west, but were built to provide a polite view from the Manor House. This is clear, since visitors would never have been brought through the service courtyard as an approach to the main house in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the Pavilions are ornamented only on the front elevations facing the house and those to the side. The façades to the service courtyard are of coursed rubble stone, not ashlar; left unfinished and plain, they were clearly not to be viewed from the polite area.



Figure 2.26 – showing the rear, unfinished elevation of the Pavilions

Apart from the Pavilions, and the creation of the formal drive that leads from the house towards them, it appears that very little else was carried out in the landscape in this period. It has been surmised by others that the space between the Manor and pavilions would have been terraced as gardens, and that the considerable investment in the pavilions without it would have been odd, but there is no evidence to suggest any formal terraces or landscaping fronting the Manor from this time.

The key feature of the early eighteenth century landscape was the development of the pavilions on an axial plan, designed to add consequence to the view from the Manor.

3. The Mid Eighteenth Century

By the mid eighteenth century the fashion for symmetry and angularity in landscapes had been replaced by a much more informal, loosely planted style, often referred to as the Arcadian Picturesque or, more ambiguously, the **English Landscape Style**. Its most important designer, who had introduced garden buildings of a human-scale set in shrubberies threaded with serpentine walks, and who had effected a softening of the landscape, was William Kent (1685-1748).

Kent was succeeded in the 1750s by several landscape gardeners who had adopted the more open parkland style of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, but who retained the ornamental garden buildings that Brown was to banish from his minimalist parks. One of these was **Richard Woods** (1715-1793), who is now known to have produced a landscape design for the neighbouring estate of Little Linford. Whether any elements of his 1761 plan were implemented or not is unclear, but the presence of Woods in the area and at a property with family ties to Great Linford, suggests that he might have been consulted by **Henry Uthwatt**. Matthew Knapp of Little Linford had married Catherine Uthwatt, of the Great Linford Uthwatts in 1750. Catherine (1725-1794) was the daughter of Thomas (d.1754) and Catherine Uthwatt (d.1769).

With its axial view towards the Pavilions and formal terraces to the rear, the landscape at Great Linford was no longer fashionable. Consequently, another layer of design was applied to the grounds, either by Woods or at least in his style. The shrubbery Wilderness to the north of the estate with its wild trees, flowering bushes and curving, meandering walks was created as a foil to the regularity of the existing landscape with its confined views. The retention of the central drive to the Pavilions and the formal terraces to the rear of the Manor House indicates that the aim was to create additional, more fashionable landscape features to contrast with the more formal elements of the Grounds.



Figure 2.27 – Richard Woods' 'Design for the Improvement of Little Linford', 1761

There was clearly no intention of removing all traces of the existing landscape and replacing it with a completely informal Arcadia.

A Doric Seat was built in the Wilderness, on the edge of the woodland by an open lawn leading down to the river, its seating alcove facing out to the fields beyond which survived until the 1980s when it was vandalized and destroyed by fire.



Figure 2.28 – The Doric Seat in the Wilderness

This is close in conception to the proposed 'Light Dorick or Ionick Alcove' offering views across the park at Little Linford, which is marked F on his plan. Woods also planned to construct a 'Grotto over the Spring' at the neighbouring estate, so it is not surprising, if Woods was indeed involved, that the chain of ponds developed from the ancient Hine Well at Great Linford was given a Cascade with a grotto-like archway, part of which still survives (see **Figures 2.29 & 2.30**).

Whilst the two extant seventeenth-century maps depict a stream feeding the Hine Well, it is possible that these were in fact elongated fish-ponds by this time, informally created from the stream during the medieval period. Where a stream or river ran close to an estate in the medieval period, the conversion of the stream to fishponds was very common and would have been used to supplement the estate's own produce. The ponds and cascade were heavily and most unsympathetically restored with concrete in 1974 by MKDC. The stepped Cascade and its grotto-like archway can still be accessed from the old railway line. The grotto-like arch was almost certainly part of the design of the cascade, as the original stonework still in its structure indicates. It is now a culvert to the canal and has been heavily restored with modern bricks.



Figure 2.29 - the heavily restored stepped Cascade, probably by Richard Woods



Figure 2.30 – the conduit, which formed part of the cascading water feature probably by Richard Woods

Also surviving from the mid eighteenth-century remodelling of the landscape is the ha- ha, which was used at Great Linford to create a sense of enclosure to the Wilderness. Since no estate maps exist for this time it is impossible to determine any particular long-range views that may have been planned from the ha-ha, though it is probable that its main function was simple as a boundary. If views existed, the most important would have been to the north, across the open fields and valley, in the direction which now looks out across the canal and railway. Woods' Doric seat, in the Wilderness, was purposely faced in this direction, under a large tree, on the edge of the ha-ha.

It is possible that some lengths of the ha-ha could have been aligned along old or existing field boundaries but, again, the lack of a comprehensive sequence of maps makes this speculative. At the time of its construction the ha-ha did not have any special significance in the landscape and this remains the case today.

The mid eighteenth-century landscape at Great Linford is professional in its execution, and there is no doubt that it was carried out by an experienced landscape designer.

On this evidence alone it is a strong possibility that Woods was involved at Great Linford, but there is additional evidence that makes this attribution almost a certainty. Interestingly, in the Little Linford plan, Woods incorporates an element of formality into the design with a semi-circular kitchen garden laid out with geometrically radiating walks. Woods was clearly comfortable working with some formality in the landscape, which was the pre-existing condition of the parkland at Great Linford, with its axial Pavilions and terraces. More than that cannot be claimed, but the Wilderness to the north of the Manor House is unquestionably of the mid-eighteenth century.

The mid-eighteenth century landscape involves the remodeling of the estate in the English Landscape Style - with the creation of the water gardens, cascade, Wilderness, Doric seat and ha-ha, most probably to designs by Richard Woods.

4. The Nineteenth Century

The Victorian period was relatively uneventful in terms of architectural and horticultural changes to the landscape at Great Linford. However, it was during this phase of Victorian progress and advance in engineering that great harm was done to this hitherto quiet, rural landscape. In 1800 the Grand Junction Canal was built, which bisected the estate and shattered its eighteenth-century water feature. This is clearly shown in the 1841 Tithe Map (see **Figure 2.31**). The Canal had a very damaging effect upon the integrity of the landscape, which would from this time be split in two. Unfortunately, this division was reinforced in 1865 when the Newport Pagnell Railway Company line was constructed to run parallel to the Canal, just to the north. Both the Canal and the Railway ruined the privacy and peace of the estate, changing its character forever. Canals and railways were the major infrastructural developments of the Victorian era and their impact upon the local residents of Great Linford should not be underestimated.

The Victorian changes brought irrevocable damage to the designed landscape with construction of the Grand Junction Canal and Newport Pagnall Railway

5. The Mid-Twentieth Century

The Manor House continued to be owned privately during the first half of the twentieth century, and remained in the hands of the Uthwatt family until it was sold by Stella Urthwatt to MKDC in 1973.

Having for a time been leased as the headquarters of Chilstone, who make ornamental garden products, one of which is an urn that was placed in the Wilderness. This was claimed by Chilstone to be have been designed by William Kent 'for the gardens at Great Linford' but there is no association of Kent with Great Linford. **Figure 2.32** is an aerial photograph of the estate taken at this time when the ground between the Pavilions was used for storage and display for the business.

In 1964 the first proposals were made for a new town to be built in Buckinghamshire and within ten years Great Linford had been absorbed into Milton Keynes. The Chief Architect Planner implementing the new town was Derek Walker, who made his home at the Rectory alongside the Manor Grounds.

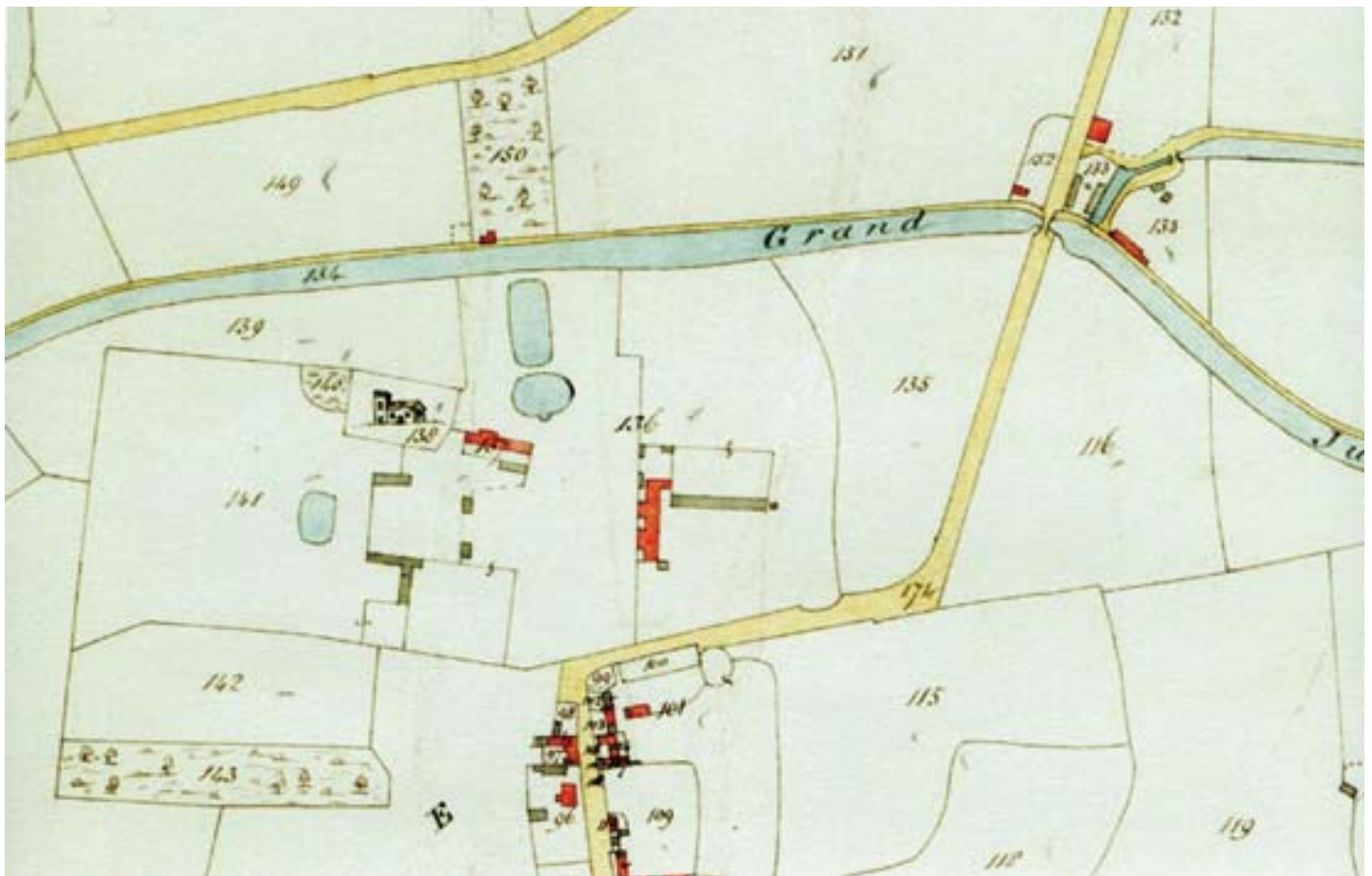


Figure 2.31 showing Tithe Map of 1841



Figure 2.32– Aerial view of the Manor and Pavilions showing Chilstone ornaments

One of the first tasks of the newly formed Corporation was to prepare village master plans, and copies of the Village Plan for Great Linford survive in the City Discovery Centre, with plans and illustrations by John Seed (1939-2011). These form the basis of the development, which was eventually carried out and provide an interesting, though largely undated and un-built, history of ideas for the area abutting and including the Great Linford estate.

It was in 1972 that the MKDC acquired the estate and plans began shortly afterwards to create an Arts Centre at the site for the people of Milton Keynes.

The Pavilions, Almshouses, Barn (also known as the Artworks Building), and the Radcliffe Building (designed by Donald Insall Architects) were to form the core of the Arts Centre. The Manor was also converted into a gallery space and a recording studio and a new access established off Marsh Drive with a substantial car park. A new Memorial Hall was also developed around this time to replace that on the other side of High Street demolished to make way for the new houses.

Many conceptual sketches were also drawn up and **Figure 2.33** provides a good example of these sketches.

Pevsner describes the expansion of Milton Keynes to take in Great Linford as follows:

'Great Linford repays leisurely investigation. It is a big area, one and a half grid squares in one – layout informal, directed by the old village at its centre and by the serpentine course of the Grand Union Canal and linear park that follows it. Developed between 1974 and 1980 it is the first grid square to have an old village at its nucleus. Not only have the old buildings been successfully incorporated, and in fact enhanced, but all private and rented developments have been skillfully integrated and because of a good standard of design throughout, are almost indistinguishable'. (Pevsner, 1973).

In 1982, between 3 July and 31 October, a temporary **sculpture exhibition** was set up at Great Linford. A carefully designed 'Sculpture Walk' was laid out in the grounds and also in the house. It incorporated many pieces from internationally renowned sculptors such as Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. These pieces were loaned to the estate from a peripatetic exhibition, known as the City Gallery, curated by Edna Read (1929-2012). Pieces included John Maine's 'Outrider' (1978) located on the lawn by the front drive, Barbara Hepworth's 'Spring' (1960) located under the large cedar, as well as William Pye's 'Red Desert' (1982) and James Butler's 'The Bride' (1975).

The Sculpture Walk paid homage to the landscape within which it was temporarily based, and particularly the Wilderness, as the following extract demonstrates:

'the garden at Great Linford is fringed by a bosky, shrubby area whose secrets have to be penetrated one by one. It embodies the 18thC concept of the ideal landscape garden: anticipation and surprise' (extract from the Guide to the Sculpture Walk, MKDC)

The 20th Century changes saw the Manor and Grounds pass from private ownership to the Development Corporation who converted the Manor to an arts centre and implemented new access ways and parking areas, the building of the Memorial Hall alongside the Grounds, and then sale of the Manor and gardens to a private business and eventually a return to a house again.



Figure 2.33 - Undated Plans by John Seed showing proposed houses to south of the Manor House



3.0 Remains of the Designed Historic Landscape

The extent of the remaining historic designed landscape and its qualities are a major influence on the potential of the site.

3.1 Recognising the 'Woodsian' Landscape

In this section we look more closely at the remains of the 18th Century landscape at Great Linford. This is the most evident historical character of the Grounds although it has over time been diminished as planting and trees have matured and fallen or been cut down, and the landscape altered in other ways.

A better understanding of what remains helps inform the potential to conserve and enhance the remaining features and strengthen the landscape character to create a distinct, interesting and unusual landscape.

There is no documentary evidence that Richard Woods was the designer at Great Linford, so we must be cautious, but we can be confident that the grounds are a designed landscape. The components of the landscape are typical of the period and laid out with the confidence and assurance of an experienced designer.

The Woodsian landscape overlays the pre-existing early 18th Century formal axial landscape probably created by Pritchard but now only evident to the front of the Manor in the unusual placement of the twin pavilions in a formal relationship to the Manor, and the terraces to the rear of the house (and within its garden), which suggest a formal structured arrangement. It is also possible that the ponds in some form may have existed at this time too, perhaps as medieval fishponds along the course of the spring and then formalised as a stone lined pond. There is no documentary evidence of a formal garden with planted beds to the west of the Manor. Given that it also remained as the Main Street and route to the church for the village, it is likely the design concentrated on axial approaches to the manor and views.

Richard Woods was a contemporary of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, being born in the same year. A Woods landscape shares some of the stylistic components of the Brownsian landscape. But there are important differences. The features of a Woods landscape are shown below.

Features of a Richard Woods design

- **Concentrates on pleasure grounds around a house rather than more extensive parklands;**
- **Typically contain arrangements of small ponds rather than Brown's great pieces of water;**
- **Creates cascades on water features as devices to add points of interest, often associated with buildings or seating over the cascade;**
- **Makes extensive use of evergreen trees and shrubs;**
- **Makes greater use of recently introduced exotics than other improvers;**
- **Uses flowering shrubs, climbers and bulbs in pleasure grounds;**
- **Gives greater consideration to the kitchen garden, combining ornament and utility;**
- **Informality vied with studied effect; and**
- **Emphasises variety and charm more than magnificence.**

So, a Woods landscape is characterised by a more intimate scale, close to and easily accessible from the house rather than the extensive sweeps of parkland and lakes of Brown, which were often to be seen from the house but then enjoyed on horseback, or driven through by carriage, rather than walked.

Water plays a big part in the Woods landscape. He remodeled the landform to create natural looking strings of smaller sinuous ponds and cascades for incident and variety. Woods planting used a greater variety of species than many of his contemporaries, aiming for visual interest more than aping the natural English landscape. He used conifers extensively, with more flowering shrubs and climbers and the recently introduced exotics from the colonies. His grounds were more varied, colourful and had utility, with seasonal interest and evergreens for all year round effect.

During the Georgian period the expansion of grounds from the formal and axial and often enclosed gardens to gardens that expanded out around the house to be walked through and enjoyed were an important part of the social scene.

Fiona Cowell in "Richard Woods (1715-1793) Master of the Pleasure Garden" uses for the jacket illustration the painting by Thomas Day c1780 of Hare Hall, Romford designed by Woods (**Figure 3.1**). It is a very helpful image to reveal the characteristics of a Woods landscape. The landform and sinuous water feature look natural, but are the result of detailed design and engineering. The sinuous path leads a meandering route from the newly built villa through the grounds to create leisurely promenades with sequential composed views with great visual interest and variety. The banks of the canal are left predominantly unplanted, to maximize the impact of the water in views. There are

however three weeping willow planted to draw the eye along the water. This tree was first introduced to England in 1748 from Syria. The now rather clichéd image of a weeping willow overhanging water, was at this time an exotic curiosity and exhibition of fashionable, and expensive planting. It is relatively short lived, surviving a maximum of about 75 years. The trees in the foreground cannot be identified but may include conifers. What is most notable is that the crowns have been lifted, by pruning the lower branches, to enable views through the tree group. In the background close to the house there are areas, which appear to be more densely planted possibly with flowering shrubs, this could be the edge of a wilderness garden. The principles established at this time of creating a landscape which looks natural but is carefully designed to create composed views and screen more intrusive elements underlies the principles of most large scale landscape design today, and is evident in the design and layout of the modern parks system in Milton Keynes.

3.2 Extent and Layout of the Grounds and Key Views

This more intimate scale of pleasure grounds would be consistent with what remains at Great Linford. Whether there were related parklands, beyond the ponds and ha-ha we do not know, but if they did exist they are long since gone, and today are less relevant in understanding what was created.

The original extent of the pleasure grounds to the north, either side of the ponds is difficult to discern because the first known map after the improvements was as late as the



Figure 3.1 Hare Hall painting by Thomas Day c1780

Tithe Map of 1841. By this time the Grand Union Canal had cut through the landscape and the extensive earth works had shattered the water gardens. The northern pond does survive, albeit in a poor state, and there may have been another further north but destroyed by the railway in the 1840s. Access is shown from the canal to the northern pond in the 1881 OS map. There are also some large stones in the area, which might suggest a formal feature (such as a grotto?) but this can't be verified.

The Wilderness on the 1881 map was designed on the level but affording views out across the valley, as the Doric Seat confirms, facing towards Little Linford Manor. It is likely when the canal was constructed that views out remained from the edge of the Wilderness but the woodlands that have grown up between and along the canal and railway block any remaining views and contain the Grounds.

The creation and control of views (**Figure 3.2**) was a key element of landscape design of the period and would have been key features of both the earlier landscape associated with the Pritchard house and the later Uthwatt remodeling of the Manor and Grounds.

The key views are:

- 1 Between the Manor and Pavilions and through the stable courtyard in both directions;
- 2 From the Manor Gardens looking out over the ha-ha and what would have been parkland;
- 3 Down the slope along the line of the ponds and (what would have been) out over the Ouse Valley;
- 4 From the Doric seat (now lost) in the Wilderness the view out over the Ouse Valley
- 5 From the Wilderness the view from the ha-ha out over the parkland;
- 6 Short distance views within the Wilderness and around the ponds;
- 7 As the back of the Manor is stone faced and as impressive as the front it is also likely that a view of it was designed to be seen from the Parkland in the east, but now confined to the garden.

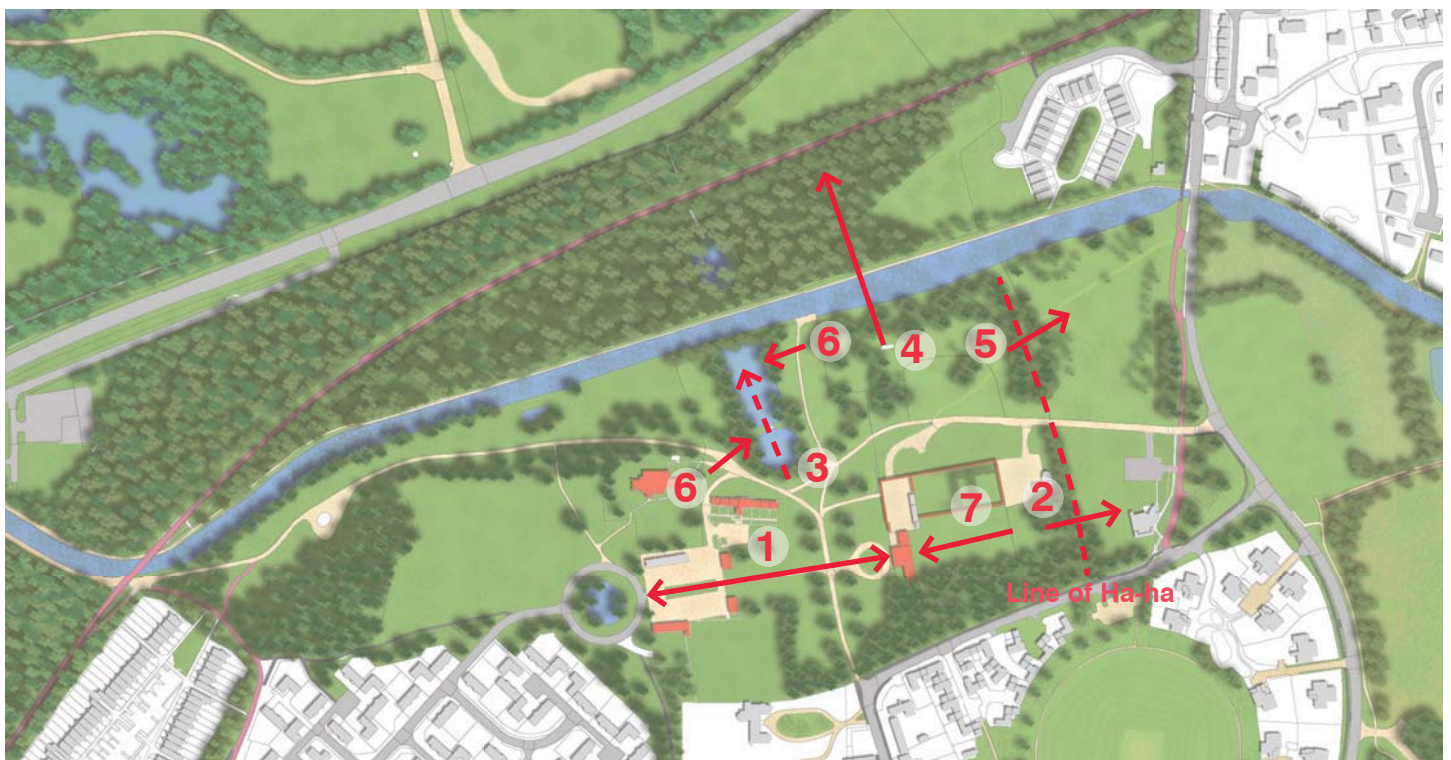


Figure 3.2 Key Views

3.3 Character of Planting

Our impression today of an 18th Century designed landscape is most influenced by Brown with his carefully located tree groups and sweeping grass parkland around a large lake. This is understandable as his designs are some of the grandest and most iconic landscapes that create a lasting impression, but it is also because he used native trees of oak and beech that are some of the most long-lived species and so have survived for more than 250 years. It is easier to appreciate because in its scale and planting much survives. But more intimate ornamental tree and shrub planting associated with the period was more ephemeral, so unless consciously replanted to the original designs, is lost.

We have no records of how the Manor Grounds were planted. We can however reach a reasoned impression from several sources including:

- The 1881 Ordnance Survey map, which shows the extent of trees and conifers and deciduous types;
- The commissioned tree survey;
- Local knowledge of trees that have been lost;
- Planting information from other Woods designs and designed landscapes of the period.

The **1881 Ordnance Survey (Figure 3.3)** gives a good general indication of the character of the planting at this time and is reasonably accurate. It is most useful in indicating the overall extent of tree planting and the balance between deciduous and conifer trees. The Wilderness is shown to have a strong mix of deciduous and conifer trees with a dense shrub understory. This is very typical of wilderness planting carried out by Woods with a structure of native broadleaved trees and conifers strongly under-planted with evergreen and flowering shrubs.

By 1881 the trees planted a hundred years earlier would have been mature with the conifers at their most magnificent. But a hundred years later many of these trees would have fallen or died. So the survey may well have captured the essence of the original planted character of the Wilderness at its prime.

In contrast to the dense planting within the Wilderness, the 1881 OS map shows the first two ponds with largely unplanted open banks. This strongly suggests that the ponds would not have been so surrounded and overshadowed by trees as they are today. The 1881 OS map also suggests fewer trees between the front of the Manor and the first pond. This supports the view that the original design would have aimed to have the first pond and the view down the small valley visible from the front of the Manor.

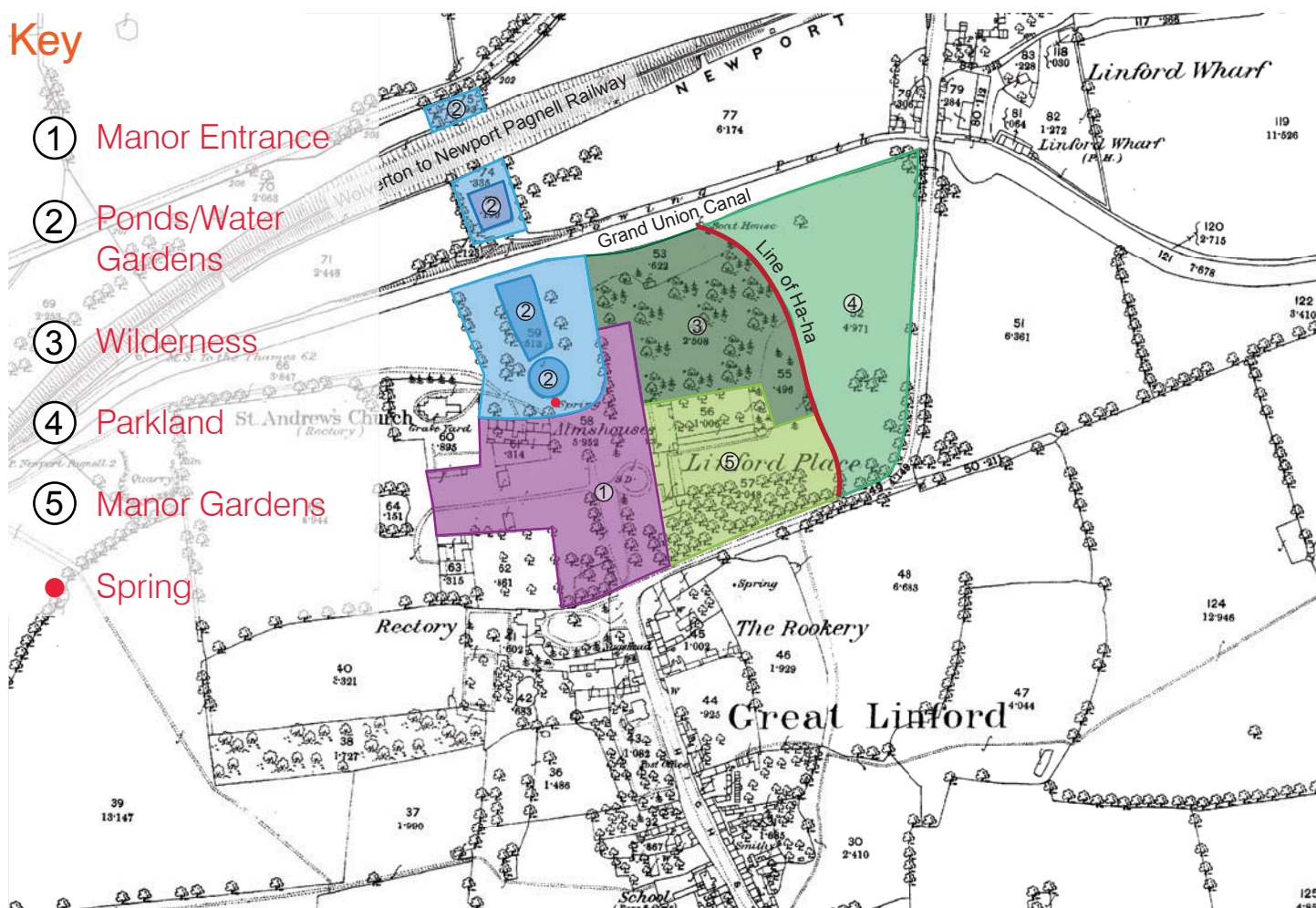


Figure 3.3 The 1881 First Edition OS Map with historic zones added

This would be consistent with other Woods designed landscapes where the banks of ponds are seen largely as open. The tree survey (see below) shows no trees older than 1860s around the ponds. On the south west corner there are a collection of Aspen, *Populus tremula*. These are of varying age and regenerate from suckers so it is possible that the collection of trees today are descendants of an original Aspen planted in this location as part of the designed landscape.

The third pond is shown between the canal and the railway. The OS map shows avenue trees set back on either side of the pond leading down the valley. The major embankments for the canal and railway line would have obliterated the wider planting with just the section immediately around the pond remaining, but now overgrown and lost.

The Tree Survey confirms that the only trees that date back to the later part of the 18th Century are peripheral and not related to the ponds. The oldest trees include the following which are shown in **Figure 3.4**:

- **The small leaved Lime at the end of the ha-ha near the canal;**
- **Cedar Tree in the Manor Gardens;**
- **Yew trees in the church yard; and**
- **Ash near rear of Manor**

The majority of the trees within the Grounds are less than 60 years old. Most date from when the Milton Keynes Development Corporation took over the Grounds. They are primarily native in character but with some notable exotics. Woods would have known some of these but many are more recent introductions or of garden origin.

Another important source of guidance on the planting within the Grounds can be garnered from **examples of Woods gardens and designs** elsewhere where original records do exist.

In wilderness areas Woods is known to have used plants with a strong visual and aromatic character such as extensive use of jasmine and honeysuckle as flower climbers. Spring bulbs would have been used and flowering shrubs such as Lilac, *Syringa* and Mock Orange *Philadelphus*. Specimen trees were planted for special effect, including the recently introduced exotic trees from North America such as the Tulip tree *Liriodendron tulipifera* introduced to England in 1688. Each seed or sapling had to be imported from North America via a sea journey taking several months so it was an expensive and exotic tree. It was only some 20 years later when the trees had been established in England and producing seed that the price dropped. We know that Woods ordered two tulip trees for the gardens at Hartwell House near Aylesbury some 26 miles away.

Key

- Less than 10 years old
- 10-20 years old
- 21-40 years old
- 41-60 years old
- 61-100 years old
- 101-150 years old
- More than 150 years old



Figure 3.4 Tree Survey Plan (also showing 1881 features)

We can also gain an impression of the pre-existing landscape from **local knowledge**. It is known that three mature beech trees have been lost in recent years. These were likely to be part of the original designed landscape. We also know there were very large mature elm trees within the Grounds lost through Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s. The disease swept through Britain in the 1970's killing as many as 25 million trees and decimating significant parts of the countryside. It is estimated 50,000 trees were lost in Milton Keynes alone.

Elm trees were once one of the most iconic features of the English landscape. Tall and graceful, they were much valued for their beauty. Elms for instance feature in many of John Constable's paintings (1776-1837). They were also planted within many designed landscapes and often favoured for avenues dating back to the 17th Century.



Figure 3.5 A flower on a young tulip tree growing in the Manor Grounds.

It is likely that some of the Elm trees lost in the 1970s dated back to the Woodsian landscape of 200 years previously. Richard Woods is known to have planted Elm trees at Cusworth. It is known from local knowledge that Elms once grew in the avenue at the front of the Manor. Recent replanting of elms in the area by the Parks Trust have so far remained Dutch Elm disease free.

3.4 Components of the Historic Planned Landscape

The landscape of the Manor Grounds has been divided into **six key landscape character areas** shown on **Figure 3.6**. Identifying the qualities of each area gives a foundation to establish the future management proposals.

1. Manor Entrance

The Manor entrance area includes the main access from the High Street, defined by the Manor House, and the Pavilions and the view to the first ponds. The area has a strong sense of place and historic associations, and the highest aesthetic value of all the landscape character areas. The quality results from the relationship of the buildings to each other and the simplicity and clarity of the landscape.

Arriving at the front of the Manor the main emphasis of the view is the strong link between the Manor and the Pavilions. It is likely that the Woods proposals established a view of the first formal circular pond and glimpses of the bridge between the first and second ponds. While landscape improvers at that time generally strived to create views of water from the house, in this case with the water source being the spring at



Figure 3.6 Key Landscape Character Areas

a lower level, the option to create a large pond and ensure it could be seen from the Manor approach was probably the key objective.

The 1881 Ordnance Survey map shows that originally the path between the Manor and the Pavilions extended through the stables courtyard on the same axis giving a much stronger emphasis to the view through from the Manor. The Great Linford archaeological survey "Excavations at Great Linford 1974-80" states "Beyond the yard was a circular pond, and behind this a large conical grass-covered mound, which formed the focus for the drive." This mound has been lost. Further investigation is needed to establish its exact size and location.

The complexity of the paths in the northern part of the area distracts from the simplicity of the scene and it seems likely that the path immediately to the south of the round pond leading through to the Almshouses and church has been raised up at a later date disrupting the natural fall of the ground towards the first pond and makes the spring area less visible.



Figure 3.7 View down the main avenue to the west of the Manor

The trees forming a uniform avenue in front of the manor were replanted in the 1970's. Many of the horse chestnuts planted to replace elms are in poor condition. Other trees planted at the time obstruct views the 1881 OS Map suggests are important. In due time the horse chestnuts will need to be replaced and this may provide an opportunity to re-introduce elms. The condition of the existing trees will need to be monitored and proposals put in place to replant the avenue when the horse chestnuts are no longer viable and re-establish the views.

2. The Ponds / Water Gardens

The creation of water features was a significant part of the Georgian designed landscape. While water was a feature in earlier gardens it was often structured within the overall formal geometric framework of the garden. The Georgian garden uses water to add incident and interest to the landscape with water features set into the landform to look natural. This was achieved by often substantial and complex engineering works to obtain the necessary water supply, ensure the ponds didn't leak and by creating dams that were carefully designed to blend into surrounding landscape, sometimes in Woods case by also creating a bridging point.

While Richard Woods worked in generally smaller scale landscapes he also designed in a naturalistic way. He tended to use ribbons of water often in sinuous form, as can be seen in his design for Wavendon nearby. Cascades were also a characteristic feature of his designs. These were used at Cusworth and Cannon Hall located for maximum impact in a view or incorporating seating above the cascade to afford views along the watercourse.



Figure 3.8 John Constable's painting of Wivenhoe Park in 1816 showing Wood's sinuous lakes, bridge disguising small dam and boat house at the top.

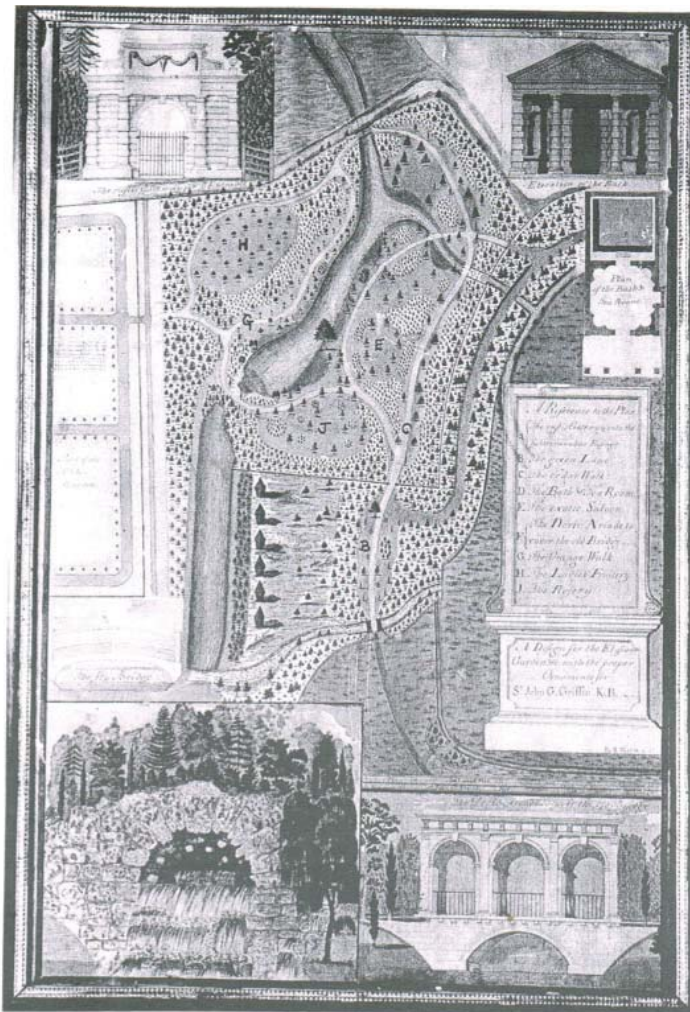


Figure 3.9 Wood's plan for the Elysium Garden at Audley End with cascade, pavilions & bridge.

The series of ponds at Great Linford uses the water issuing from the spring at the Hine Well and creates a series of ponds down the slope towards the Ouse Valley.

The highest of these ponds (into which the spring flows) is a regular circle in shape, has a stone built edge and a bridge in the narrow gap between it and pond two.

It is likely that this highest pond was designed to be the most accessible and formal with access to the waters edge and to be a mirror pond. The circular pond at Rousham (by William Kent) suggests the more open reflective character that the first pond may have had.

It is likely that the original design made a feature of the spring outlet. Today, there are a few large stones close to the spring head, but there is nothing to mark it and most people visiting the site would not recognise the spring as the source.

The junction between the first and second pond is formed by a dam and gentle cascade crossed by a small (replacement) timber bridge. This is a very typical feature within a Woods design and would have been a key feature of the original gardens. The dam and bridge was used by Woods in several locations (**Figure 3.8+3.9**) The original bridge and cascade have been lost and replaced, probably during the 1970s with a brick cascade and timber hand-rail which enable access but don't reflect the original design. (**Figure 3.10**)



Figure 3.10 View across first pond to replacement bridge.

There are several large mature trees surrounding the second pond. At the canal end there is a path at the base of the retaining wall to the canal. This area has a very different character because of the abrupt termination created by the high canal embankment. There are no signs on the 1881 OS map that a bridge was provided across the canal to link the ponds and there were paths shown down from the towpath to the third pond suggesting that the intention was to retain access to the garden and not to abandon it. The 1881 map also has a boat house identified close to the ha-ha, so maybe access across the canal was by boat? Today there is no access across the canal connecting the gardens, and the routes down from the towpath to the third pond have been lost.



Figure 3.11 Pond at Rousham with open banks.

It is possible to access the third pond by steps, which have recently been constructed down from the railway walk. The pond is overgrown with large trees overhanging the water, making access near impossible (**Figure 3.12**). The area is enclosed by the canal and railway embankments to the north and south, which with the unmanaged planting are evocative of a lost garden (which it is). The planting appears to be primarily native species with little indication of what may once have existed there.



Figure 3.12 Third pond with overgrowing vegetation

Water flows from the pond to the north through a cascade of approximately 2m in height (**Figure 3.13**). It is an attractive feature but has been heavily restored with modern brick and concrete, and is also now in such poor condition it may collapse at any time, which would be unfortunate. It is likely that this cascade is in the original position and based on the original design.



Figure 3.13 Cascade in summer with little water



Figure 3.14 Example of Woods design for a cascade at Cannon Hall with stone footbridge at base.

The fact that the ponds have retained water for around 250 years suggest the design was well constructed with puddled clay. Despite having lost their connection to the wider landscape they remain important features of the Grounds meriting careful management and restoration. If the northern pond can be made accessible from the Grounds this too should be improved.

3. Wilderness

The historic meaning of Wilderness differs from the modern meaning. In the Georgian landscape a Wilderness was a managed garden, interlaced with surfaced paths accessible from the main house. It would have had indigenous and exotic trees and plants, and would have more suggested a natural place than been one. The wilderness with a strong under planting of evergreen shrubs would have been less open and appeared more as a series of rooms. The term 'wilderness' reflects the screened and more hidden nature of this part of the garden. At a time when young ladies could not venture out un-chaperoned, the pleasure garden, and particularly the secluded nature of the Wilderness offered opportunity for chance encounters and trysts. In Jane Austen novels many of the most significant encounters occur within the grounds of various houses, perhaps most memorably in *Pride and Prejudice* when Mr Darcy emerges from a refreshing plunge in a pool and startles Elizabeth Bennet walking the grounds of Pemberley.

The extent of the Wilderness is clearly evident in the 1881 OS map as extending from the canal to the kitchen garden wall. Today, the extent has been cut back, and the main woodlands run along the canal edge and along the garden walls and ha-ha.

The planting today is very different to that suggested by the 1881 survey. The area adjacent to the walled garden lost its trees probably when the arts centre car park was constructed, which has since been grassed back over, but not replanted (**Figure 3.15**). The woodland has a strong mix of predominantly deciduous trees with scrubby understory, mostly dating from the time of the MKDC.



Figure 3.15 Large part of Wilderness today is cleared of vegetation and dominated by the access road.

The 1881 OS Map shows a gazebo within the Wilderness. This is the Doric Seat and was designed to afford a view across the Ouse Valley with the Wilderness behind. At Little Linford Woods designed a similar feature, and there may be some substance to the local myth that the unhappy bride used to sit and look across the valley pining for her former home.

The Seat was destroyed by fire in the 1970's but the foundations are still there. Today, the location gives a view to the Grand Union Canal and passing boats. More extensive views beyond the railway might be enjoyed if the woodland tree cover that has grown up could be thinned and more carefully managed.



Figure 3.16 View from site of Doric Seat towards canal.

4. The Parkland

The parkland would have been a grazed area with tree groups divided from the pleasure grounds by the ha-ha. There is a ditch on the line of the ha-ha along most of its length, but has been lost where the road crosses it. It remains most intact close to the end of the Manor gardens and at the northern end near the veteran lime tree. The ha-ha represents an important line dividing the Grounds from the parkland and would have distinguished two differently managed areas.



Figure 3.17 Planting along the line of the ha-ha

Today, this distinction is a little buried as ornamental planting has taken place beyond the line of the ha-ha. This planting includes a variety of specimen trees of less than 20 years old selected to grow and define the outcrop on the Cornbrash soils associated with the underlying limestone, as distinct from the clay soils elsewhere in Milton Keynes, and are therefore locally unusual.

We have no evidence of any associated wider parkland with the house and we can only surmise what the views were across the landscape beyond the ha-ha. Maintaining relatively open views to the east of the Grounds is important to imagining the original setting. The ha-ha may be stone lined, and an archaeological investigation would help establish this. Nevertheless, excavating the ditch and using it as the divide between the Grounds and wider park would enhance its role in the landscape.

5. Manor Gardens

The Manor Gardens are the area to the east of the house and include a small area of woodland adjacent to High Street, grassed lawns on three rising terraces to the rear of the Manor, and the kitchen garden.

The Manor gardens appear to have been originally set out when Sir William Pritchard relocated the Manor to this location in the late 1600s. The gardens include 3 rising terraces at the back of the house terminating in the ha-ha. The intention would have been to enjoy views from the ha-ha at the end of the gardens to the parkland or countryside beyond, rather than the enclosing woodlands seen today.



Figure 3.18 Terraced gardens showing enclosing woodland adjacent to ha-ha where there were originally views out see 1881 OS Map (Figure 3.3)

The formal gardens may well have been defined by an exedra (semi-circular seating area). We can surmise that as the back of the Manor is finished in dressed stone as well as the front that it was designed to be seen and admired in views from the gardens. Originally the terraces would have been designed with geometric patterns of planting and paths. The gardens today are laid to grass, the woodland group on the highest end terrace includes the Cedar tree which is thought to date from the mid-18th Century and a special feature of the local landscape.

To the south of the terraced garden is a small area of mixed woodland. The planting shown on the 1881 survey shows trees but no shrub understory, so it may well have been designed as a grove, with large forest trees and clear understorey. It has been densely planted in recent times and is currently being bought back into active management.

To the north of the terraces the ground rises on embankment to a terrace beyond which is the walled kitchen garden, three of the four walls are original. The fourth wall to the terraced garden is a modern reconstruction.



Figure 3.19 Showing embankment up to walled garden and reconstructed garden wall.

The 1881 OS map appears to show a structure with a double wall along this edge, which might suggest a colonnade or palestre overlooking the formal terraces.



Figure 3.20 Example of a grand palestre at Rousham above a similar embankment.

6.0 Church Grounds

This comprises the area around St Andrews Church including the walled churchyard and the park area between the churchyard and the canal. The western boundary of this area is marked by the existing footpath between the church yard and the meadow green. There is no evidence of any designed landscape in this area. The eastern edge of the area looks on the 1881 map to be the edge of the designed grounds. The path running east-west to the north of the church appears historic with a similar route on the 1641 estate map. Today this route connects to the west to the Grand Union Canal towpath and railway route making it an important recreational access to the manor grounds. The timber gates with elaborate finials on the eastern edge announce the entrance to the Manor grounds. The church grounds contain veteran yew trees of over 150 years old. Some small scale interpretation or signing would help direct visitors.

The church is accessed through the grounds, from the High Street on occasions, and from Parklands circus, where there are also some disabled parking spaces. The Stable courtyard is also used for parking, with an access alongside the Almshouses to access the eastern end of the church.



4.0 Significance

The significance of the Grounds is a measure of their importance, an appreciation of which affects the scope, impact and direction of the management proposals

4.1 Approach

Significance is a measure of the importance of the Grounds using a variety of criteria. Recent publications from English Heritage and the National Heritage Lottery Fund set out the current thinking on what is significant and how it is to be described. These are broadly similar and both include the following value categories:

- Evidential - the site as a source of evidence or knowledge;
- Historic – the site as a link to the past, the people who shaped it and a means of learning about it;
- Aesthetic – the site as a source of sensory or intellectual stimulation, designed or incidental; and
- Communal – the site as an embodiment of social or spiritual values.

To these we might add a fifth category of;

- Natural history – including geological and ecological value.

Within these value categories there will be different levels of importance. This requires an assessment of which aspects are of greatest importance and which are least important. These can be expressed as a ranking of significance including:

- Descriptive – (Exceptional; High; Medium; Low; None; Negative);
- Geographical range (International; National; Regional; Local); and
- Designation (World Heritage Site; Grade 1 or 11*; Scheduled; SSSI; Conservation Area; Registered Park; local designations)

These categories create a hierarchy but they cannot always be directly compared, for instance despite a site being of low historic interest it may be of great significance to the local community. Most sites are complex and involve a range of values and levels of significance depending on the topic.

We consider the significance according to the criteria below.

4.2 Evidential

- historical significance of St Andrews Church.
- historical occupation of a Manor for over 500 years.
- the Manor has a traceable history with archaeological remains of the original Manor dating back to the 13th Century, therefore as a significant house within the local area.
- the Manor is notable in being the country residence of William Pritchard who was a member of several parliaments and Mayor of London.
- The association of the Grounds with Richard Woods is potentially important. Implemented and surviving gardens attributable to Richard Woods are not rare, as some 45 gardens are known nationally, although there are likely to be many more which are not yet identified. Woods standing as a designer has increased in recent years as more has become known of his works, and a greater understanding has emerged of his particular approach. He is an important figure in 18th Century landscape gardening at a time when the art form and profession was forming a period which provided the foundations for landscape architecture, as we understand it today.

4.3 Historic Significance

- The Grounds are included within the Great Linford Village Conservation Area designated in 1975. This provides protection and is considered to be of national significance.
- The archaeological investigation of 1974-1980 established the location of the first Manor within the Grounds and enables the history of the Manors to be pieced together to understand the evolution of the site for nearly 500 years or so.
- The Listed Buildings are Grade II* and therefore of special interest and within the top 8% historic buildings nationally. The setting of the buildings is therefore considered to be of national significance.
- The Manor and its relationship to the two pavilion buildings is interesting and an unusual arrangement which is considered to be of national significance;
- Extant remains of the former early 18th Century formal gardens to the rear of the Manor are the most significant remains of the designed landscape and date from the early 18th Century and are considered to be of national significance;
- The surviving features of the later 18th Century Pleasure Grounds, probably by Richard Woods, including the ponds, Wilderness, ha-ha and lost Doric Seat are of local and perhaps regional significance as survivals, but their incompleteness and significant alterations reduce their significance.
- The relationship of the Manor Grounds to the historic village is important and considered, by virtue of its Conservation Area status, of national significance.
- The Grand Union Canal and Railway are significant features of historic industrial value. The Canal is of national significance and the railway of local significance.
- The age and possible relationship of certain trees to the designed 18th Century Grounds makes them of local significance.

4.4 Aesthetic Significance

- The grounds derive their aesthetic value from both the conscious design of the buildings and landscape and the way in which they have evolved and been used over time. A key part of the aesthetic quality of the Manor Grounds relates to the relationship between the Grounds and the rest of the village particularly to High Street and the Church and how the area has evolved. The quality of the space and inter relationships was recognised in the 1970s with the protection of the area within the Conservation Area.
- Conscious design is most evident at the front of the Manor with the relationship between the Manor and the two pavilions. The symmetry of the buildings and strong axial layout are of high visual quality;
- The later 18th Century landscape of Woods is significant. However the aesthetic quality and completeness is radically diminished by the canal and railway, and loss of trees and planting. What remains is a bare comparison with the original plan, and the loss of views to wider parkland and separation of grounds from wider context reduces the significance. The northern area has become overgrown and naturalized so the designed landscape is barely recognizable. The relics have a quality and charm but are of only local or regional significance;
- Canal and railway corridors are unusual in passing through a designed park, with colour and activity of the canal boats and people passing along the railway corridor path make them of local significance.
- Larger and older trees also have an aesthetic quality, which is high in local terms creating a view and silhouette. Other modern trees are also of some quality, including the Tulip tree, but again are of local significance;

4.5 Communal

Access, Leisure and Recreation

- The Manor Grounds have a local value for recreation as an open space close to where people live, and as routes through to other strategic open spaces from the canal.
- The Canal itself can be considered to be a leisure and recreation route of national significance.
- The railway immediately to the north is a recreational route of significant local value as a traffic free walking and cycling route.
- The Manor Grounds are promoted on the Milton Keynes Parks Trust Website but are not widely promoted as a recreation destination within Milton Keynes. Their recreational and leisure role appears to be currently primarily of local significance to people living in the immediate vicinity.



Figure 4.1 Grand Union Canal next to Manor Grounds.

Tourism

- Great Linford manor is immediately adjacent to the Grand Union Canal which is a national tourist route, but the grounds are not recognized or promoted as a tourist destination in Milton Keynes. Heritage information promotes Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes Museum and historic parks and gardens such as Woburn Abbey and Stowe further afield. Great Linford Manor is promoted on the Parks Trust website which also provides information on the history of the site.
- The Grounds of Great Linford Manor appear to be of very limited local tourism significance at present, partly due to the lack of facilities and profile but as there is potential to establish the Grounds as a tourist attraction of local significance for visitors to Milton Keynes.

Educational Resource

- The grounds are used by frequently Milton Keynes Parks Trust for educational visits, walks and events.
- St Andrew's School regularly visit the woodland adjacent to Great Linford Manor as part of their curriculum activities.
- Milton Keynes Art Works project is based in the stables of the Manor Grounds with space provided for teaching and artist's studios. The Grounds might be considered an inspirational resource for local artists.

Events

- The 3-day Waterside Festival has been established as a key event in the Milton Keynes Parks Trust calendar. The current festival was introduced in 1994 in collaboration with the current owners. It is now run entirely by volunteers with the aims of community development and the advancement of arts, crafts and heritage. As well as music, the festival includes sports displays, art displays and activities, a dog show and a cycle ride. The festival is of local significance to the people of Great Linford and Milton Keynes.



Figure 4.2 Waterside Festival with stage in front of manor.

- Milton Keynes Parks Trust allow the grounds to be used for occasional receptions with marquees.

Others

- On our visits we met several visitors who had come to the grounds to photograph the buildings and landscape.
- There is evidence that a small number of people are using the Grounds for small-scale personal ritual activities including leaving flowers and memorial tributes on trees.
- Other community values attributed to the site by informal consultation was that the Hine Well water is valued for the healing powers and that the Manor Grounds are on a ley line.

4.6 Natural History

Ecological Significance

- The Grounds of Great Linford Manor are not subject to any nature conservation designation.
- The Grounds include a range of habitats of local significance including woodland, ponds, the canal and grassland. These gain significance by the fact they are well connected to the wider landscape, establishing strong wildlife corridors.
- Trees in the park are a significant natural resource.
- There is a wide range of tree species, including ornamentals and British natives. The majority of these trees are less than 40 years old and date from the planting carried out within the original MKDC proposals for the park.
- The Parks Trust identified the small leaved lime close to the junction of the Ha-Ha and Grand Union Canal as a veteran tree.
- Trees within the Conservation Area are protected by virtue of the area being designated a Conservation Area.
- The Grounds also support various invertebrates, bats and woodland birds.
- The 2005 common bird census of the area identified two National Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species - Bullfinch and Song Thrush. Four Red Listed species of conservation concern - Bullfinch, House Sparrow, Song Thrush and Starling were also recorded.
- Protected species of national importance known to be present in the area include great crested newt, grass snakes and a variety of bats including Common Pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat, Brown Long-eared bat and Noctule bat - the largest UK bat species.

Geological Significance

- The Local Geological Site (LGS) (previously Regionally Important Geological Site RIGS) around the Oolitic limestone outcrop at the quarry and the quarry face and stone circle is one of eight LGS in Milton Keynes district. The site has direct footpath access to the Manor Grounds and is easily accessible even to those with more limited mobility. The presence of fossils in the limestone is an attractor to children. The Manor Grounds are therefore considered to be adjacent to a site of local geological significance with good access and potential to enhance the understanding of the area.



Figure 4.4 Stone circle and Local Geological Site.



Figure 4.3 Veteran small-leaved lime near the ha-ha.

4.7 Summary of Significance

The key aspects of the Grounds that are of most significance are:

- The **traceable history** through records, investigations and archaeology that show the pattern of occupation of the estate and the Manor over the last 500 years;
- The **Conservation Area and Listed Building designations** which give the Grounds and the adjacent village national protection, and the Grounds by virtue of being part of the Conservation Area and forming the setting to the listed buildings is also of national significance.
- The most significant historical aspect of the Grounds is the **remnant of the formal terraced gardens** to the rear of the Manor, possibly associated with the Pritchard Manor;
- **The relationship of the front of the Manor to the two twin pavilions** built in the early part of the 18th Century is also significant in being unusual, and also of a high aesthetic quality;
- The remnant grounds possibly attributable to **Richard Woods** including the ponds, Wilderness, ha-ha, lost Doric Seat are of significance although they are damaged and much affected by changes;
- The Grounds as a **public park** are significant and highly valued by local people. They are used informally and are unusual in a Milton Keynes context in being historic.
- The Grounds are used for **formal events** including the annual Waterside Festival, for weddings and occasional functions and events.
- The **Grand Union Canal** which is a nationally important waterway and leisure route passes through the Grounds;
- The Grounds have **ecological significance** as a location for nationally protected species.
- Grounds include part of the **Local Geological Site** (LGS)



5.0 Key Issues and Opportunities

There are a number of issues that affect the enjoyment of the Grounds and their long term potential which need to be addressed through the management proposals.

5.1 Key issues

There are seven key issues that need to be tackled to improve the character and qualities of the Grounds.

5.2 Poor Definition of the Entrances to the Grounds

The Grounds of Great Linford Manor can be accessed from a number of different locations (**Figure 5.1**) It is only from the entrance off High Street and through the stable yard that there is any sense of arrival at a special landscape because of the sight of the Manor and the Pavilions. The other access points from Marsh Drive and from the canal path in the west are poorly signed and there is little or no indication of the Manor or its Grounds.

There are issues associated with each access:

1. Marsh Drive

The access from Marsh Drive is shared with the Memorial Hall and mixes pedestrian and vehicle traffic, and is crossed by the Redway, which is a remnant of the old road across the canal. The access is unpleasant and where the carpark turns out onto the access road potentially dangerous. We have seen children playing on the access route unaware of traffic. This is the main vehicle access to the park and the conflicts need to be addressed. This is also the main service access to the Manor, which follows the wide road that was created for the arts centre access at the Manor. The road is in poor condition and its shared use creates ambiguity over priorities between traffic accessing the Manor and pedestrians and cyclists, with pedestrians and cyclist having to step off the path to allow vehicles to pass.

This is compounded by the (inappropriately designed) two stone gateposts and fence that seem to signify that this is a private area. However, the gates have broken open. The side pedestrian/cycle access is also narrow. There are also no other obvious routes in from Marsh Drive.

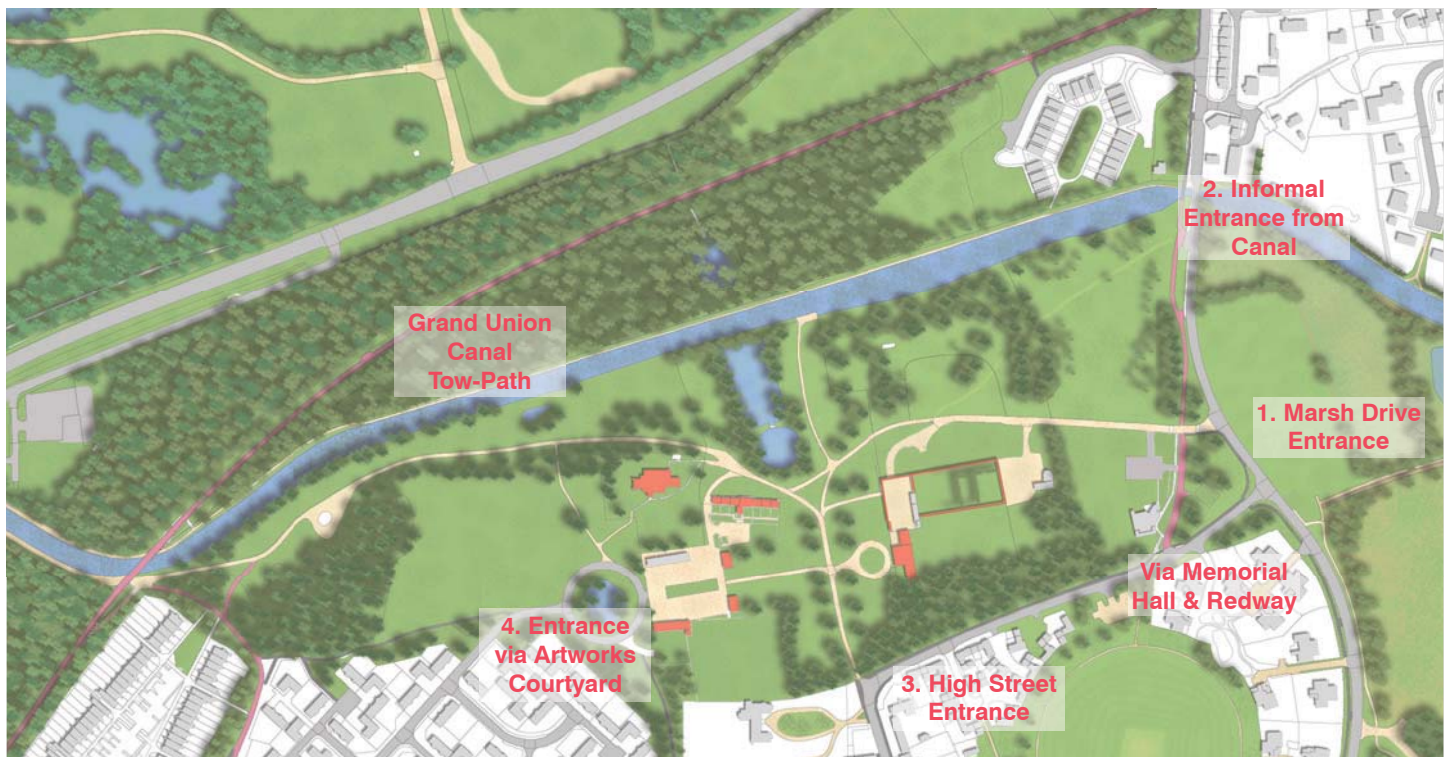


Figure 5.1 Entrances to Grounds

2. Via the Canal

There is no obvious access from the canal, and no path on the southern side of the canal. This means that people walking the canal need to cross at the Marsh Drive bridge but are not directed to any other path than the shared main path/road from Marsh Drive.



Figure 5.2 Combined vehicle and pedestrian access from Marsh Drive.



Figure 5.3 Lack of path along canal.

3. High Street

The route from the High Street is the historic access to the Manor and church and is signified by the listed Victorian Gates. Again this route and path are shared with vehicles accessing the Manor, with pedestrian access from each side of the gates bringing pedestrians onto the route. This is a narrow vehicular route and its use for vehicles is limited by the Parks Trust.



Figure 5.4 Combined vehicle and pedestrian access from High Street.

4. Stables/Artworks

The access from the stables/ Artworks is again shared and gated, although the gates are now rarely closed. The Manor is not signposted and there is no interpretation or information on the Manor at the car park. This is also the access to the church and provides parking, although the routes down are fairly steep. The alternative access to the church is from the western circus, where some disabled parking has been created.

As a result pedestrians are forced to share several access points and routes with vehicles serving the Manor and accessing the Memorial Hall, Artworks and the church. While conflicts are infrequent they are potentially severe, and there are understandably concerns that accidents could happen.



Figure 5.5 Shared entrance with Artworks gives no information about the Manor Grounds.

5.2 Routes do not necessarily reflect where people wish to go

Pedestrian routes do not fully reflect existing desire lines through the Grounds but would benefit from rationalisation to better reflect desire lines and operational needs. The lack of paths makes large parts of the Grounds inaccessible to the less mobile.

Specifically:

- **There is no route along the southern edge of the canal;**
- **There are no routes through or around the Wilderness;**
- **There are no obvious routes around the ponds or from the ponds to the canal;**
- **Footpath routes do not explore and express the historic designed landscape;**
- **Vehicle and pedestrian routes lead up to the Manor entrances, inviting public access;**
- **There is no route to the gate to the woodland grove at the Manor;**
- **The route construction is in the same materials as elsewhere and does not express any change in character for the designed historic landscape; and**
- **Routes are not signed.**



Figure 5.6 The only surfaced route to the east does not explore the historic designed landscape or other features of interest.



Figure 5.7 The original meandering serpentine paths through the Wilderness have been lost.



Figure 5.8 Lack of paths around the ponds leads to worn pedestrian desire lines.

5.3 The uncertain relationship between public and private use

The conflict on the main routes is one expression of a larger issue. The Manor was designed as a private house set within its grounds. The Grounds are now used as a public park with free and open access at all times. There is no signage at the entrances to the park, or within it which defines where public space ends and private space begins. The viability of the house as a private residence is dependent on a measure of privacy and security for the residents. The rear of the Manor has the walled garden that provides privacy from the public grounds but is insecure. However, the front of the Manor faces onto the public park directly and is accessible to the general public who can easily peer through the windows without let or hindrance. There are also two service gates to the front of the Manor, one to the courtyard the other to the woodlands, only the courtyard access has a path which is again a shared route.



Figure 5.9 Lack of definition between private and public space in front of the manor.

The rear of the Manor needs to be secured and suitable access needs to be achieved to the front gates. Some low key demarcation of space fronting the Manor would help convey to Ground's users that the Manor is a private residence, such as grass management, bollards and signage.

5.4 The Erosion of the Pleasure Gardens Character

The Manor Grounds have a distinct and interesting history this is not clearly apparent to visitors. Whilst the Manor House, Pavilions and Alms Houses have been preserved, the original designed landscape including the planted design, the serpentine walks and carefully controlled views were largely lost by the time Milton Keynes Development Corporation took over the grounds in 1974. Features in the landscape such as the bridge between ponds, the Doric Seat and the later boathouse had also been lost. The Development Corporation replanted the avenue and designed a new landscape with paths, roads and parking as part of the Arts Centre and for the display of sculpture.

The replanting of the Manor Grounds now masks many of the views. This means that the Grounds are seen today in a very different way to how they were designed to be seen. Many of the views that would have been part of the original design have been lost or significantly changed.

The opportunity is to restore the known features of the Grounds and give an impression of how the pleasure grounds would have been enjoyed in the 18th Century. While documentary evidence of the grounds does not exist, enough physically remains, and with knowledge of other contemporary gardens (especially by Woods), an authentic representation could be created which would make the Grounds a more interesting and enjoyable place to visit.



Figure 5.11 The Ponds are now much less visible than they would have been originally.

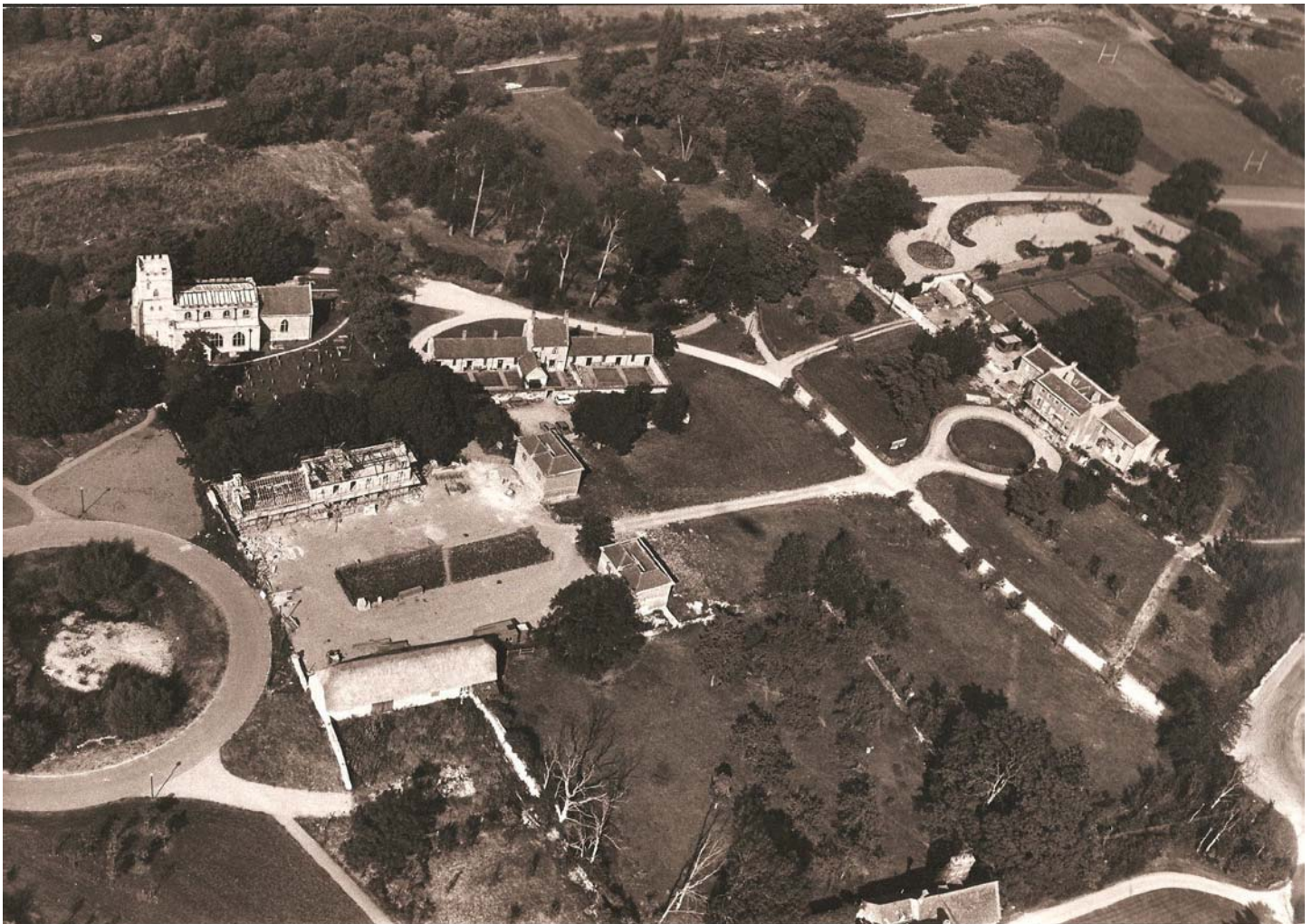


Figure 5.10 Aerial photograph from the 1970s showing the replanting of the avenue and recently constructed paths, roads and car park for the Art Centre. Some of the elms and beech trees which are now lost are also visible.

5.5 Loss of Original Planting Design

The planting is a key aspect of the character and quality of the place.

The range of species available to the Georgians and the way they used those species were distinct and different to the way we plant today. Almost all of the Georgian planting has gone, excepting possibly a few trees, but the general arrangement of Grounds (Wilderness, Ponds and Garden) is discernable as well as the Parkland beyond the ha-ha.

Most of the trees near the Manor are from one of three different phases of planting. These are; the few remaining trees from the designed C18 landscape; the majority of trees from the significant replanting during the early days of Milton Keynes Development Corporation; and, more recent planting by The Parks Trust and natural regeneration.

Several of the historic trees that do remain are crowded by other trees, which significantly reduce their landscape value. The Wilderness would have extended up to the walls of the Manor, and there would have been fewer trees fronting the Manor.



Figure 5.12 The veteran small leaved lime is overcrowded by more recent planting and natural regeneration.

The MKDC planting had to respond to the immediate need to restore the structure of the landscape after the loss of many mature elms to Dutch elm disease. This included re-establishing the avenues fronting the Manor. With no plans of the original planting design the species used reflected those in vogue at the time rather than species identified as being used at the time when the Grounds were originally designed. Very recent research and publications have today made this information more accessible to enable gardens to be restored with planting appropriate to the period of the original layout of the Grounds. The National Trust and English Heritage have been leading the way with this type of restoration. Recent planting at Stowe is designed to restore the planted character to something close to the original design.



Figure 5.13 Restoration replanting at Stowe

Since the planting by MKDC the Parks Trust has managed the pre-existing landscape with care, and also planted several specimen trees to the rear of the Manor in the parkland. Several of these are perhaps more appropriate within the Wilderness than the Parkland area, although the significance of the ha-ha threshold was difficult to interpret without better historical information.

There is an opportunity to re-establish a more authentic 18th Century landscape character using plant species available and employed at the time. This would include a rich mix of evergreens and aromatic flowering shrubs and climbing plants. Species which were used by Woods in other gardens which would be considered for any replanting are included as Appendix 3.

The planting strategy would be part of enhancing the enjoyment of the Grounds and changing its character from a space that people primarily move through to one which is more attractive to visit, spend time and enjoy the qualities and character of the landscape.

5.6 Poor and Incomplete Interpretation and Signage

There is very little signage to the Manor Grounds. The main entrance off Marsh Drive only has a sign to the Memorial Hall.

The two interpretation boards near the Alms Houses are old and worn, and concentrate on the people and buildings. They do not provide any interpretation or information about the Grounds and its features, or any explanation of the designed landscape.

This lack of interpretative information has a direct bearing on how people use and enjoy the Grounds. With little information there is little recognition of what is significant or special, and also importantly where public space ends and private space begins. While the Grounds feel different than their surroundings this is left more to intuitive signals rather than explicit information.



Figure 5.14 Information boards concentrate on history of the buildings and people and do not interpret the landscape. There are no information boards at the entrances.

As a consequence there is little way-marking to find the Grounds and then little to help the visitor understand the Grounds and orientate around them.

High quality way-marking to each of the entrances and then attractively designed, map-based interpretation would improve the enjoyment of the park and its understanding. It will also allow an opportunity to explain the accessibility of parts of the Grounds and help identify the private areas.

5.7 Poor Safety and Security

The Manor Grounds have suffered from anti-social behaviour. This has included major incidents such as joy riding across the park, to minor damage such as dogs destroying specimen trees.

Anti-social behaviour is a significant issue as it has the potential to negatively impact on the quality of user's experience, and also on the physical structure and character of the landscape. Once an area has a reputation as being unpleasant, it is hard to change it back.

Significant parts of the Manor Grounds at present have a hidden, wild quality by default rather than by design, but these are also potentially unsupervised and under-populated areas, where problems can arise.



Figure 5.15 Secluded areas are used for summer drinking and sleeping

The permanently open gates to Marsh Drive do not define where cars are permitted. Most people use the car park, but some vehicles drive into the Parkland and Wilderness area making it significantly less attractive as a place to picnic or let young children run around. A key issue is the need to stop open access to all vehicles into the Manor Grounds.



Figure 5.16 Open gates to Marsh Drive enable vehicles to drive into park, making the area less attractive for legitimate users.



Figure 5.17 Open gates to Marsh Drive enable vehicles to park on the only path forcing pedestrians off the route onto grass.

Buildings have also experienced vandalism with the Doric Seat burnt down in the 1970's. The Alms Houses and the Manor have recently experienced major vandalism with many original glazed windows smashed in. The Tree Survey identified damage to young trees being caused by dogs ripping-off lower branches.

This issue can be addressed in part by extended footpath routes through the less well used areas, activity sensitive lighting around the Manor and other buildings, signage and natural surveillance from occupied buildings and public paths. Changes to the way the Grounds are used and perceived by users through well-positioned interpretation and signage would also help.



6.0 Vision and Themes

The Vision sets out the overall aspiration for the Grounds and the Themes provide a direction to help shape the key management proposals.

6.1 The Vision

“A more enjoyed and better understood place”

The Grounds of Great Linford Manor offer a significant asset to Milton Keynes in being a small-scale, designed historic landscape with free and open public access; **They are the lost gardens of Milton Keynes.**

There is, in our view, a tremendous opportunity to build on what remains and is known of the period to provide a destination of the type and character that is not available in the city.

The remains can form the basis for a careful and well-considered restoration of the Grounds to better reflect the original designed 18th Century character. We can draw from what we know of other Woods designed gardens and also the planting regimes used at the time. The scope exists to experiment and undertake live garden archaeology in re-establishing the appropriate planting. It can be a place to learn about landscape and gardens, and an inspiration for existing and new artistic activities. The existing owners are also keen to restore the early 18th Century Manor Gardens, which can add significantly to the setting and character of the Manor.

In this way the Grounds can become distinguished as somewhere special in the Milton Keynes Park network. The Grounds would once again be a Pleasure Ground rather than the loosely defined and rather municipal ‘park’ character, which predominates today. The restored and ‘re-created’ Grounds can be full of character, with seasonal colour and aroma, with new exotic specimen trees and shrubs, and evergreen trees to provide year-round interest.

This can make the Grounds a destination in the city, and with new signage and pedestrian routes, improved parking, interpretation and improved facilities (such as the café and toilets) recognised as a place to visit, to bring friends and relatives, and to enjoy.

Change should be subtle and incremental rather than radical and invasive. Some measures are a priority, such as clarity on the access and movement around the Grounds. Other measures need to respond to opportunities as they arise, such as replanting of the Wilderness, and will take many years to fully establish.

The aim is to carefully improve the Grounds as opportunities arise against an overall framework of informed restoration and re-creation.

In order for this to be a success the management regime must also change. Activity within the Grounds must be compatible with its special character and qualities. Users need to be respectful of its history, the significance of the place and the investment being made in its restoration, as well as recognising at its heart is the Manor, which is a private residence.

To help develop the vision, we identify **seven key themes** to structure the individual sets of proposals.

6.2 Guiding Themes

Theme 1:

Enhance the potential for people to **enjoy** Great Linford Manor Grounds.

The park will be better enjoyed if it is more welcoming, better defined and interpreted, more accessible and where the use of the park reflects its special character and qualities.

Important in this is establishing the Grounds as a distinct character area within the wider parkland system. The Grounds are different because of their history but also because they represent historic designed landscape, which is more enjoyable if it is revealed, enhanced and then understood and respected.

Visitors to the Grounds will enjoy the experience if the Grounds have better more clearly defined entrances, interpretation and way-markers, and facilities so that longer stays are possible, such as a café and toilets. Facilities such as well positioned benches to appreciate the scene and views, and rebuilding of garden buildings such as the Doric seat, perhaps as a modern recreation, would also help re-animate the landscape.

Theme 2:

Establish the Grounds of Great Linford Manor as a **destination** within Milton Keynes -valued for its strong sense of place and distinctive character and identity.

Milton Keynes has many different and stimulating landscapes. Indeed its landscape is one of its most identifiable and recognisable characteristics, giving it a special identity as a Garden City. Landscape is an essential element in the life and imagination of the city. And yet there are few designed historic landscapes within the city, and none that are readily accessible or promoted as destinations.

The Grounds can be a significant destination if they can be defined more closely, with much-enhanced interpretation and signage and a clear graphic language for interpretation, and ensuring that visitor facilities are easily accessible such as parking and possibly the café. The annual Waterside Festival has an important role in this, which might be extended to other events and informal activities such as sculpture exhibitions, like the one in 1982.

Theme 3:

Reveal, Restore and Re-Create the elements and sense of the 18th Century Pleasure Grounds

The aim is to create a garden which can be managed and enjoyed in the 21st Century, but which gives a flavour and experience of the character of a 18th Century landscape. This is a three stage process. Firstly, the remains of the designed park should be revealed and protected. Secondly, where appropriate, careful restoration can take place, such as at the ponds, terraced gardens and ha-ha. And then, thirdly, a greater sense of the 18th Century landscape can be re-created by judicious re-planting.

Recreating the planted character and views would be a key element of this. The planted character would be distinctly different from the rest of Milton Keynes parks being designed as a detailed landscape to be walked within and enjoyed with incident, intimacy and visual delight, bringing the character and sense of the 18th Century pleasure ground to life.

Theme 4:

Provide improved access routes to serve the Manor House

The Manor is currently being restored again as a private residence. The Manor's relationship to the Grounds is clearly fundamental to the integrity of the site and it is important that this relationship is maintained despite the house being private and the park being public. Artificial divisions are not appropriate and would erode this integrity. The shared routes lead to conflicts with vehicles using footpaths and restricted access to the front of the Manor. Shared routes have not worked well and compromise both the public's enjoyment of the Grounds and the viability of the Manor. Changes to improve the relationship need to be made and include widening the High Street route to allow vehicles and pedestrians to share the route comfortably, reorganisation and rationalisation of routes fronting the Manor to allow access to the Manor and reduce conflicts; with bollards, signage and detailed landscape management to the front of the Manor to make it clear to visitors that it is a private residence.

Theme 5:

Improve **interpretation and understanding** of the Grounds

The Grounds would be better enjoyed and understood with clearer well-positioned and well-designed interpretation particularly at the entrances, with way-marking and individual signs and interpretation at each significant location within the Grounds. Major interpretation panels are needed at the two principal accesses for the public, at the Marsh Drive car park and at the stables car park. These locations should have two comprehensive explanatory plans and histories. Smaller panels are appropriate at the High Street and Canal entrances. Smaller and discrete panels may be appropriate at specific locations such as the Manor, the ponds and Wilderness to explain their particular features. Trees might also be numbered to help in their identification.

The interpretation should be attractive, well-designed and consistent with the family of Grounds furniture including signage, seating, way-marking and lighting.

Theme 6:

Develop a role as a place for **education, the arts and learning**

Future management and proposals should aim to create a landscape that is exciting and interesting to engage an interest in the history of the buildings, landscape and the natural world.

The quality of the interpretation can have a major bearing on this. The Grounds should also be easily accessible and welcoming to children and the less mobile. An educational package and teacher's notes would support school visits to the Grounds, as might an interactive App.

There is an opportunity to develop a route through the park, which explores a time-line starting with the limestone outcrop fossils and the spring, explores the various phases of the history and remains, and considers the recreated modern landscape.

All areas should continue to be managed and planted to protect the existing wildlife value of the Grounds and enhance the bio-diversity.

Artworks is a significant occupant of the Grounds and provides teaching and working spaces for artists and creative professionals. There is potential for this artistic resource to be a more significant element in the attraction of the place, which might include for instance greater presence of art in the Grounds in the form of sculpture and displays, involvement of artists in the re-created landscapes and buildings such as contemporary recreations of the Doric gazebo or boathouse. In this way the skill, knowledge and creativity of local artists can help animate the place consistent with the framework provided by the historic designed grounds.

Theme 7:

Design out **Anti-Social Behaviour**

The Grounds can only be enjoyed if they feel and are safe and secure, and without fear of vandalism and damage. Increased surveillance will arise naturally as the grounds are used more, and recognised as being a special and distinct place. Less populated areas will be drawn back into the Grounds, and known vulnerable areas such as the canal edge and Wilderness will become more active and therefore self-policed.

Redesigning the access from Marsh Drive so that vehicle access is limited to the car park area would change the character of the Parkland and Wilderness making them more relaxed traffic-free environments with paths that are not also used by vehicles.

At the front of the Manor low key signage, new routes and landscape management measures will help communicate the private use of the Manor and hopefully discourage some of the more intrusive behaviors. Further measures may be necessary to secure the Manor Gardens to avoid unregulated access.

The potential new and replacement lodges would also increase permanent occupation of the site and its natural surveillance and act as a further deterrent to anti-social behaviour.

The situation will need to be monitored as the Plan progresses and if necessary more active measures employed, such as patrols and CCTV.



7.0 The Proposals by Area

The proposals are described according to each component area of the Grounds

The proposals are described below by component area of the Grounds and shown in the indicative Master Plan **Figure 7.1** and Key Diagram **Figure 7.2**. The Master Plan illustrates the ultimate scheme for the site if all the proposals are implemented and when the planting has matured; this could be some 20-30 years hence. The Key Diagram shows the individual projects in a simple notation and is cross-referenced to the project schedules below.

The implementation of the proposals would be phased, with proposals aiming at addressing current access and interpretation issues prioritised.

Projects marked  are of lower priority.

Management Plan Areas

7.1 M Manor Grounds

The proposals aim is to establish the identity of the Manor Grounds and improve its interpretation.

- M1** Prepare a **Public Realm Design Strategy** to co-ordinate the design of street furniture and hard landscape elements including: benches, tables, bollards, sign boards, bike stands, finger-posts, gates, lighting bollards and columns, fencing, road and path surfaces.
- M2** **Prepare interpretation materials to include:** Map based Information boards; leaflets, way-marking signage and possibly interactive materials downloadable through The Parks Trust web-site including a school teacher's pack.
- M3** Review the **lighting** of buildings, security lighting and the lighting of paths for effect and to improve safety and security.

7.2 ME Manor Entrance

The proposals aims to retain and enhance the existing high quality landscape and address the issues of pedestrian and vehicle conflicts, and the need to provide better amenity for the Manor at the front.

- ME1** Provide **new signage** at High Street entrance and the Art Centre, which provides information about the Manor Grounds and clearly indicates public and private space.
- ME2** **Widen the main path** between the High Street entrance and main entrance to the Manor to reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.
- ME3** Define an **amenity zone** in front of Manor with signage and possibly two round bollards matching those seen on walls around the Manor Grounds;
- ME4** Provide a new **path to manor courtyard** to reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflict, and remove existing redundant path.
- ME5** Provide low-key **access to Manor woodland** for maintenance from front of Manor.
- ME6** Consider revising **grassland management** to help define the amenity zone fronting the Manor, create mown path through longer grass to Artworks entrance.
- ME7** Consult with Artworks and MK Council to **revise car parking within stables courtyard** to restore the strong visual axis through the stables courtyard.
- ME8** Prepare avenue and tree replacement plan to re-establish historic tree location. Consider using elms regenerated from Dutch elm resistant strains as part of Great British Elm Experiment.
- ME9** Explore ways to **increase bio-diversity** and **visual interest** of grassland, consider bulb planting.

7.3 SP The Spring Head and Ponds

The proposals aim to enhance the ponds and springhead as features and improve access. In addition, the aim is to reveal the ponds as a linear landscape feature down the valley side by enabling access to the ponds north of the canal. The restoration should be balanced against the potential to maintain an element of the enchanting, hidden character of that area.

Manor-side:

- SP1** Include the ponds within a selective **scheme of archaeological investigation** to gain additional information about the original design of the ponds, bridges, bank design, area between ponds and Wilderness and the small cascade.
- SP2** **Dredge ponds** to remove accumulated silt, ensure clay lining is not damaged, recover any stone at the bottom of the pond.
- SP3** **Remove trees** in poor condition, improve visibility of ponds by crown lifting trees around pond.
- SP4** Restore the **springhead and associated rill** as features.
- SP5** **Restore stone walls** to pond 1 and repoint.
- SP6** Design and build **replacement bridge** reflecting the period possibly including a seat.
- SP7** Prepare detailed **planting scheme around ponds** so that they are less overshadowed and re-establish the authentic landscape character of the period.
- SP8** As pond 1 becomes less overshadowed consider **ornamental pond planting** including water lilies used in Georgian period.
- SP9** **Redesign path access** around the ponds to enable access along the canal edge, to springhead and pond edges.
- SP10** Provide additional **seating** with views across ponds.
- SP11** In longer term consider area between pond and low wall to the east and tree line to the west for more **ornamental species** appropriate to a landscape of the Woods era.

Ponds beyond the Grand Union Canal;

- SP12** **Survey trees** to establish condition.
- SP13** Remove poor and unsafe trees.
- SP14** **Dredge pond** to remove silt, ensure clay lining is not damaged, use material found to help guide restoration.
- SP15** **Restore cascade** and culvert.
- SP16** Establish **crossing** over Grand Union Canal.
- SP17** Restore accesses from Grand Union Canal **towpath down to pond**.
- SP18** Enable safe access from **railway route** down both embankments to ponds.
- SP19** Establish **routes through woodlands** around Manor Grounds and across Wolverton Road.
- SP20** **Raise canopy of existing trees** and manage to reduce overshadowing of pond, remove brambles and scrub.
- SP21** **Undertake planting** with appropriate species of the period, and to retain the lost, hidden and wild character of this part of the Grounds.



Figure 7.3. Example of high quality water feature at Rousham - spring outfall could be detailed in a similar manner.

Almshouses Area

The proposals aim to create a better relationship of the Grounds and the Artworks facilities. The Almshouses are Grade 2* listed and used as artist studios, however from the Manor Grounds side they look lifeless and unoccupied, which may be a contributory factor in problems of recent vandalism. Artworks Business Plan identifies the opportunity to invite the public to see the artists at work as part of the visitor experience.

SP22 Liaise with Artworks to ensure **visible information** on the use of the Alms houses today and on the work of studio artists.

SP23 Reinstate the **small terrace** in front of Alms houses as suggested in 1881 OS map, consider using for seating and artwork displays.

SP24 Provide Artworks **direction signs** to promote access down the side of the Alms houses to Artworks facilities.

SP25 Consider with Artworks the **need for lighting** to make the area less susceptible to vandalism.

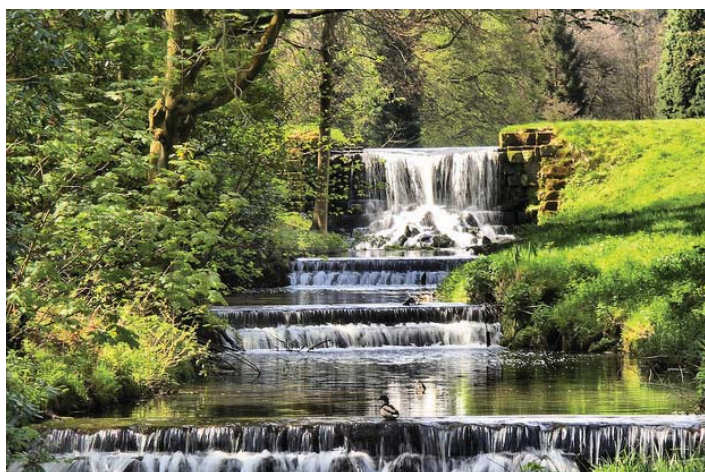


Figure 7.4 Cascade at Harewood House is a significant feature of the grounds.



Figure 7.5 Example of an authentic 18th Century Bench used for restoration of a Georgian garden in Bath.

7.4 W The Wilderness

The proposals aim to address the current issues, which are primarily associated with access, and restore the character and extent of the Wilderness. The restoration would increase the diversity, visual interest and accessibility. Views would be restored and attractive places to sit created increasing enjoyment of the Manor Grounds.

W1 Create **separate routes** for vehicles and pedestrians within restored landscape(see also P1 and P2)

W2 Create new **sinuous paths** to enjoy the Wilderness.

W3 Create **access along the canal** and to the veteran lime tree.

W4 Remove overcrowded and **poor quality trees**.

W5 Establish specific **planting and management scheme for the Wilderness** inspired by and using species known to be used by Richard Woods.

W6 Create **meadows with seasonal mown paths** and bulb planting.

W7 **Establish route** alongside of the ha-ha and manage planting with crown lifting to create views out over the parkland.

W8 Create **new seating area** at the location of the Doric seat.

W9 Provide **new seating** throughout the area to a design appropriate to the 18th Century designed landscape.

W10 Provide **interpretation of features** including the Doric seat, veteran lime and ha-ha.

W11 Investigate **limited tree removal on high ground adjacent to north bank of canal** to open up views from the Doric seat;

W12 Consider opportunities to add **ornament and sculpture** to the gardens to add distinction and interest.

7.5 P Wider Parklands

The proposals aim to restore the ha-ha as a division between different landscape character areas. The arboretum planting will be managed to enable well spaced trees to grow to maturity with a path through the trees. The longer term management should favour trees of shape and character typical of parkland planting. The ha-ha would also be more clearly visible as a feature in the landscape. The proposals improve the access off Marsh Drive and resolve the conflict between vehicle and pedestrian/cycle routes.

- P1** Create **improved vehicle access and parking area** off Marsh Drive.
- P2** Provide **new pedestrian access** from Marsh Drive with direct connections to Great Linford District Park.
- P3** Create **entrance area** with interpretation for the Grounds.
- P4** Create associated **planting scheme** reflecting the objectives of the landscape restoration.
- P5** Continue **access along Grand Union Canal**.
- P6** Create **footpaths** to allow appreciation of individual specimen trees such as Tulip Tree.
- P7** Manage **arboretum planting** to enable trees to become well spaced specimens.
- P8** Long term management to favour **trees of shape and character** typical of parkland planting..
- P9** **Remove and replant** certain specimen trees to more appropriate locations where possible.
- P10** Carry out scheme of **archaeological investigation** to inform restoration of the ha-ha and new access proposals.
- P11** Ensure **crossings of the ha-ha** enhance the line as a feature.

7.6 MG Manor Gardens

The proposals aim to investigate ways to increase the understanding, interpretation and appreciation of the historic landscape, whilst at the same time creating a new garden with a private character, which can be managed and enjoyed as part of a private residence.

The Manor Gardens are in four parts.

Terrace Gardens

- MG1** Undertake scheme of **archaeological investigation** to inform restoration and re-creation of the Gardens.
- MG2** **Extend terrace** adjacent to house in line with that suggested by 1881 OS map.
- MG3** **Recreate walks** along raised terraces to north and south to create circular walk.
- MG4** Explore creating **palestre** along southern garden wall, providing seating in sun and shade with extensive use of scented climbing plants.
- MG5** Explore long-term **restoration of parterre gardens** including an Excedra on the higher end terrace.
- MG6** Undertake tree management proposals to **protect feature cedar tree**



Figure 7.6 Existing path along line of ha-ha.

Kitchen Garden

MG7 Investigate re-establishing **fruit trees** on walls and within central area as suggested by 1881 OS map;

MG8 Explore restoration of walled garden with fruit trees, seating and possible **wildflower meadow**.

Woodland Grove

MG9 **Actively manage** woodland as recommended by Tree Survey;

MG11 **Under plant woodland** with native spring bulbs;

MG12 Continue to **involve local schools** in activities, particularly bulb planting.

Entrance Courtyard

MG13 Enhance the entrance **courtyard** and allow sufficient vehicle visitor parking and turning space.

MG14 Consider a paved **garden entrance** with ornamental planting. Include seating area, to enjoy west facing wall and evening summer sun.

MG15 Investigate the reinstatement of **historic north wing extension** to the Manor House to provide garaging and workshop facilities.



Figure 7.7 Pond walled garden at Claydon House



Figure 7.8 Example of a palestre on the wall of a walled garden at Hare Hill.

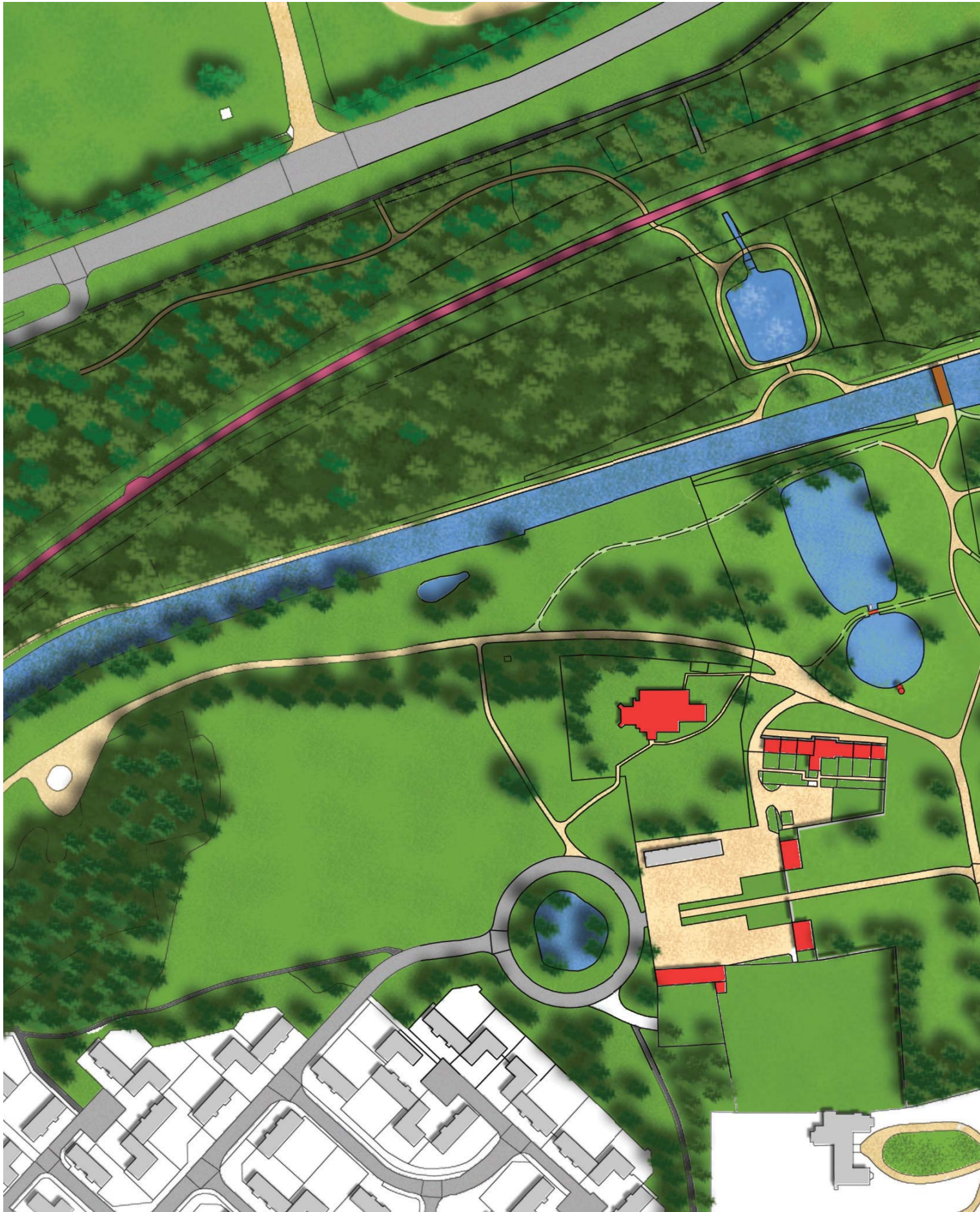
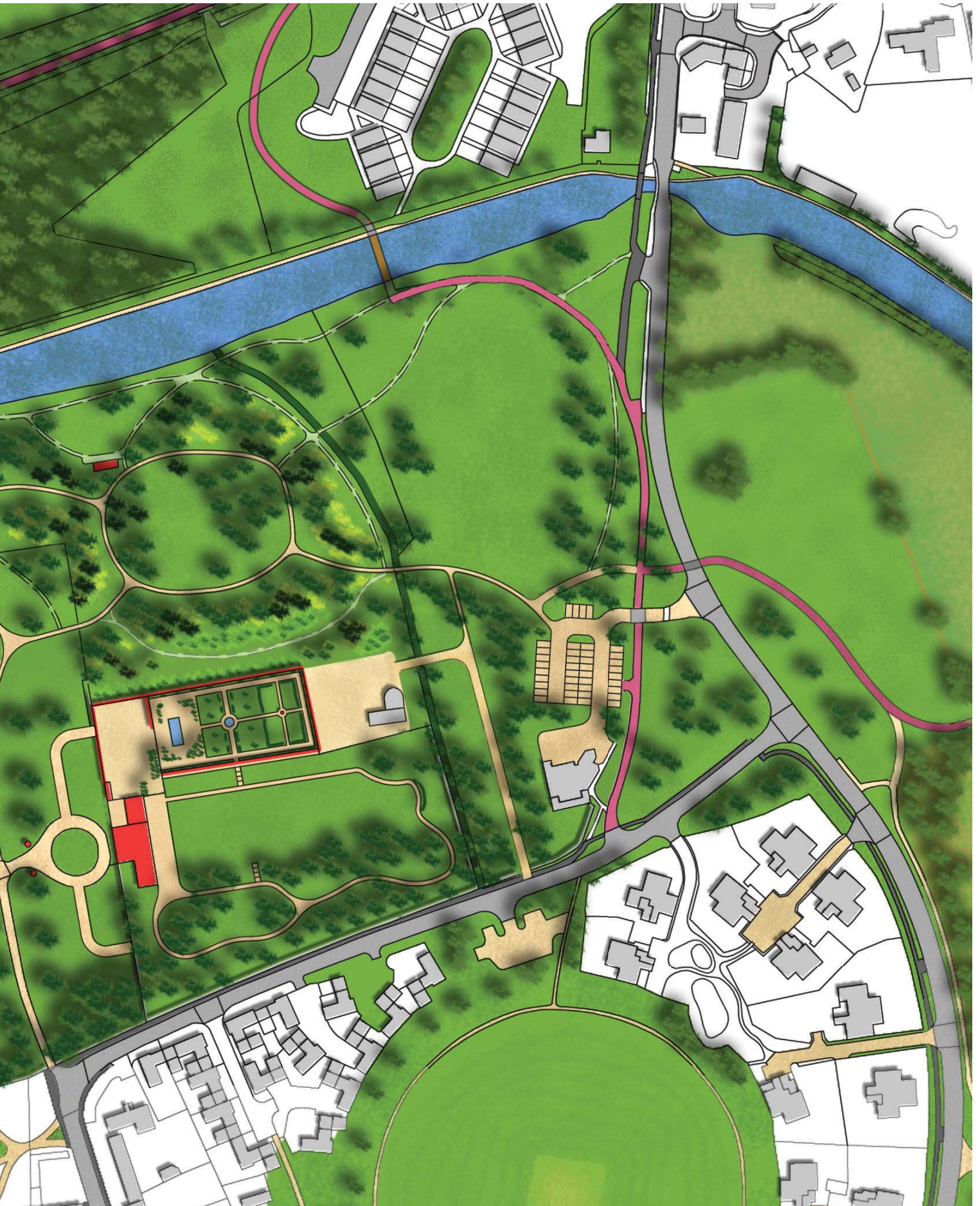


Figure 7.1 Illustrative Master Plan



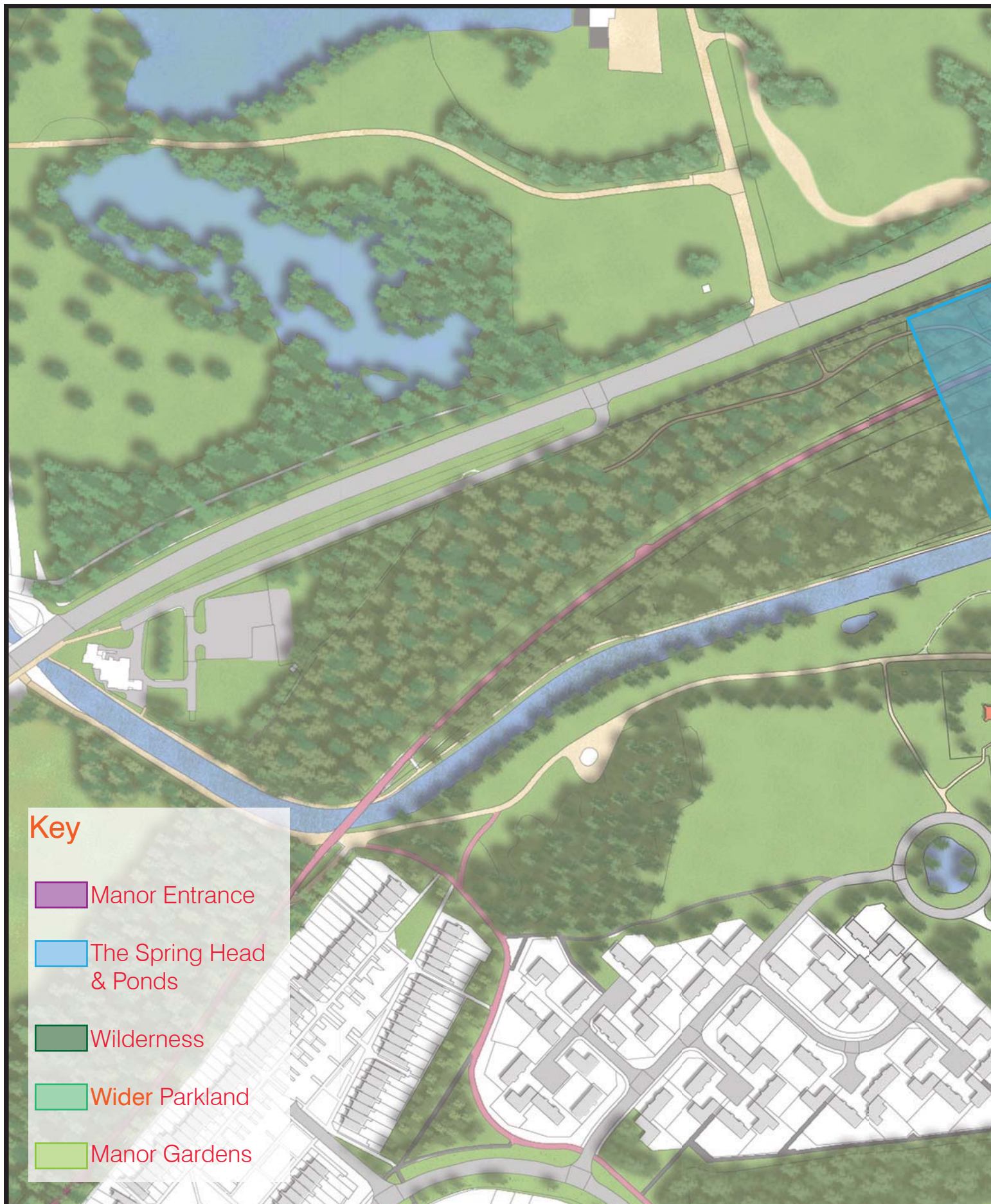


Figure 7.2 Key Diagram





8.0 Next Steps

The next steps are described to help move the Management Plan forward

There are 6 key steps that need to be taken to help implement the Management Plan.

8.1 Further Studies and Investigations

Further studies and investigations are required to inform the Plan and restoration proposals within the Grounds. These include a programme of archaeological investigation including a geophysical survey of the terraced gardens, ha-ha and area between the ponds and retaining walls where change is or may be proposed. This work should be scheduled to inform the detailed design proposals.

8.2 Consultation

The Management Plan should be consulted upon and refined in the light of the comments received. The Plan is a management tool, and therefore should flex and change as issues and circumstances change. The Parks Trust might consider making the Plan available on its web-site and publicising the Plan locally through exhibitions, leaflets and presentations.

8.3 Detailed Design

Several of the proposals will require further levels of design to develop the thinking before they are implemented. This will include the detailed design for instance of:

1. Marsh Drive altered access and car park;
2. Detailed design plan for access to the front of the Manor; and
3. Detailed planting plan and tree management; strategy for the Wilderness and avenue.

8.4 Approvals

The Management Plan falls within the designated Conservation Area, and several of the proposals potentially affect the setting of the Manor, which is a Listed Grade 2* building. Planning, conservation area and listed building consent will be required for the changes. The Management Plan provides the context and justification for the proposals.

8.5 Funding

The funding package for the proposals will need to be determined in detail. This may include resources directly from the Parks Trust, from the owners of the Manor or through partner organisations such as Milton Keynes Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Sponsorship might also be sought from environmentally conscious local businesses and support provided by volunteers.

8.6 Monitoring

The Management Plan progress and success will need to be monitored and reviewed over time. We recommend that the Plan is reviewed every 5-years against past achievements and likely potential in the following 5 years. A monitoring statement should be prepared and consulted upon.



Appendix One

Contacts

Parks Trust on behalf of the Joint Clients

David Foster
Chief Executive

The Parks Trust

1300 Silbury Boulevard
Campbell Park
Milton Keynes
Bucks
MK9 4AO

T: 01908 233600

E: info@theparkstrust.com



Appendix Two

Historical Sources

The main chronological facts presented here have been collated from various printed and manuscript sources. The most important published works of reference for the site include the Victoria County History for Buckinghamshire (volume 4) and various publications relating to the history of Great Linford Manor and village. These latter include D C Maynard & R J Zeepvat, *Great Linford* (Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series No.3, 1992), Paul Woodfield, *A Guide to the Historic Buildings of Milton Keynes* (Milton Keynes Development Corporation, 1986), Robert J Williams, *St Andrew's Church, Great Linford: A Brief History* (1983) and *A Conservation Plan for Great Linford Arts Workshop Milton Keynes* (The Architecture Studio, August 2004). There are also unpublished (and partially uncatalogued) archives located at the City Discovery Centre, which relate to the Milton Keynes Development Corporation and their purchase and development of the site, which have also been important. The Great Linford Manor house accounts (Bucks CRO, D/U/4/1-20) and the early estate maps of 1641 (Bucks CRO, BAS Maps 49) and 1678 (Bucks CRO, BAS Maps 50), deposited at the Buckinghamshire Record Office at Aylesbury, also shed light on the evolution of the estate over time. A garden plan of 1761 relating to the neighbouring property of Little Linford (Bucks CRO, MA/275) has also been consulted, in the light of familial links between the two estates.



Appendix Three

Richard Woods - Plant Lists

There are no planting plans showing the number of plants and where they were planted, but the species being used can be understood by lists of species provided at a number of Woods gardens which have survived.

A plant list survives for Hartwell House near Aylesbury, but no plan of the gardens. The numbers are included to give an indication of the dominance of different plants. In particular the large numbers of evergreens and flowering shrubs/small trees gives a distinct feel, of the character of the planting. The lower part of the list shows curiosities purchased in twos, these were expensive and exotic plants, many were recent introductions from North America.

Hartwell House - Buckinghamshire dated 1759

200 Laurels
100 Laurustinus - *Viburnum tinus*
100 Hollies
100 Phillyrea - mock privet
50/100 Lilac
50/100 Phlomis
50/100 Laburnum
50/100 Spanish broom
50/100 Honeysuckles
50/100 Bladder sennas
50/100 Sweetbriars - *Rosa rubiginosa*
50/100 Philadelphus
50/100 Spirea
20 White daphne
20 Hibiscus
20 Persian lilac
10 Common junipers
10 Oriental coluteas
10 Striped laurel

Curiosities

2 False indigo - *Amphora fruticosa*
2 Scarlet horse Chestnuts - *Aesculus pavia*
2 Catalpas
2 Carolina poplars
2 Gleditsias
2 Sweet gums
2 Scarlet maples
2 Sugar maples
2 Tulip trees
2 Scarlet oaks
2 Benjamin trees
2 Tackamahacas - *Polulus balsamifera*
2 Angelica trees - *Aralia spinosa*
2 2 Balm of Gilead firs
2 Hemlock spruce
2 *Crataegus uniflora*
2 *Crataegus crus-gali*
2 Oley aster *Elaeagnus angustifolia* (Russian olive)
2 Agnus castus / chaste tree - *Vitex agnus-castus*
4 Portugal laurel - *Prunus lusitanica*
4 Arbutus - *Arbutus unedo*
6 Judus tree - *Cercis siliquastrum*
2 Double pomegranates - *Punica granatum*

Adapted to different gardens at Buckland in Berkshire where he used many similar species but far more roses

Illustrated Typical Planting List

Special exotic species were generally from North America and planted in prominent locations as a feature and curiosity

Quercus robur - Oak



Large Tree

Catalpa bignonioides



Special - Exotic Tree

Cercis siliquastrum



Special - Exotic Tree

Fagus sylvatica - Beech



Large Tree

Liriodendron tulipifera - tulip tree



Special - Exotic Tree

Castanea sativa - sweet chestnut



Large Tree

Crataegus crus - galli



Special - Exotic

Colutea arborescens - bladder senna



Special - Exotic

Syringa vulgaris - Lilac



Colour & Scent

Lonicera periclymenum



Colour & Scent

Philadelphus



Colour & Scent

Rosa rubiginosa - sweet briar



Seasonal Interest

Prunus lusitanica



Evergreen structue

Amorpha fruticosa - False Indigo



Exotic

Picea abies - Norway Spruce



Evergreen Structure

Ilex aquifolium



Evergreen Structure

Pinus strobus - Weymouth pine



Exotic Evergreen
Structure

Phillyrea latifolia



Evergreen Structure

