



## Landscape Design Strategy and Masterplan

**PHASE 2 'The Farm' BESSBOROUGH , CORK**  
for ESTUARY VIEW ENTERPRISES 2020 Ltd.

March 2022

Project:	BESSBOROUGH Phase 2 'The Farm' Apartment Development
Description:	<p>Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Limited intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for permission for a strategic housing development at Bessborough, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork.</p> <p>The proposed development provides for the demolition of 10 no. existing agricultural buildings /sheds and log cabin residential structure and the construction of a residential development of 140 no. residential apartment units over 2 no. retained and repurposed farmyard buildings (A &amp; B) with single storey extension and 3 no. new blocks of 3-5 storeys in height, with supporting resident amenity facilities, crèche, and all ancillary site development works. The proposed development includes 140 no. apartments to be provided as follows: Block C (9 no. 1-bedroom and 25 no. 2-bedroom over 3 storeys), Block D (34 no. 1-bedroom &amp; 24 no. 2-bedroom over 3-4 storeys), Block E (27 no. 1-bedroom, 20 no. 2-bedroom &amp; 1 no. 3-bedroom over 4-5 storeys). It is proposed to use retained Block A and Block B for resident amenities which include home workspace, library, lounge and function space.</p> <p>The proposal includes a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the adjoining Passage West Greenway to the east, connecting into the existing down ramp from Mahon providing direct access to the greenway and wider areas, as well as new pedestrian access to Bessborough Estate to the north including upgrades to an existing pedestrian crossing on Bessboro Road.</p> <p>The proposed development provides for outdoor amenity areas including publicly accessible parkland, landscaping, surface car parking, bicycle parking, bin stores, substation, public lighting, roof mounted solar panels, wastewater infrastructure including new inlet sewer to the Bessborough Wastewater Pumping Station to the west, surface water attenuation, water utility services and all ancillary site development works. Vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided via the existing access road off the Bessboro Road.</p>
Location:	Bessborough Cork
Client:	Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Ltd.
Doc Title:	Landscape Design Strategy and Masterplan
Status:	SHD Planning Application
Revision:	P.0

## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development

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## SHD PRE- PLANNING CONSULTATIONS - RESPONSE TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA OPINION

Multiple design alterations have been made since the tripartite meeting in response to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) and Cork City Council's (CCC) comments.

The changes to the proposed planning application are itemized in ShipseyBarry's Tri-Party Alteration's Report.

Specific response to the landscape design related comments and clarifications sought by Cork City Council and An Bord Pleanála are summarised in this introductory chapter.

### An Bord Pleanála's Opinion (ABP-311382-21)

#### Item 1

*Further consideration of the status of the proposed development as a Strategic Housing Development, as defined in section 3 of the Planning and Development (Housing) & Residential Tenancies Act 2016, as amended, having regard to the land use objectives set out in the Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 relating to these lands.*

*A detailed statement of consistency and planning rationale should therefore be submitted, clearly outlining how in the prospective applicant's opinion, the proposed development is in compliance with local planning policies having specific regard to the zoning objective of a significant part of the site as ZO12 'Landscape Preservation Zones' - SE4 Bessborough House – to preserve and enhance the special landscape and visual character of landscape preservation zones.*

#### Response:

The SE4 Planning Objectives are described as follows:

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

The zoning objectives in relation to 'Reinstate the Historic Landscape' is a key driver in the positioning of buildings and in the approach to the landscape.

The approach to landscape design takes its cue from the historic evolution of the site; and the recommendations and guidelines provided in the Historic Landscape Assessment that was undertaken by Forestbird Design prior to the commencement of this project.

The report by Forestbird identifies the key Landscape Preservation Zones with the most important being the area to the south of Bessborough house (identified as A on the adjacent diagram). Zone A includes a number of important historic landscape features namely the icehouse, folly of a partial castle keep and a manmade pond containing five landscaped islands.

Zone B includes the historic perimeter walls, native woodland buffer and a looped circuit track inside the stone walls.

Zone C falls outside the ownership of the applicant but includes the farmyard built in the later half of the 1800's and the walls of the original parterre / kitchen garden.

Analysis of historic maps and aerial photographs, provides a clear picture of the most significant historic landscape features which we have sought to preserve both in this application and in the planning application for Phase 1 The Meadows.

#### The primary historic landscape features are identified as:

- The open pastoral landscape bisected by an entrance road running north– south. (predates 1840)
- The buffer of stately native trees in the dense woodland to the perimeter of the site. Many of these trees are still the original trees planted in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- The looped track around the perimeter stone wall now locally known as the Bishop's Walk. (predates 1840)
- The manmade pond comprising five islands (predates 1840)
- The Icehouse (predates 1840)
- The Partial Castle Keep or Folly (circa 1840-1899)

The landscape response to the zoning objectives identifies in ZO12 and SE4 Bessborough House are detailed in Chapter 04 of this report.

Chapter 02 provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of the landscape .

Chapter 03 outlines the zoning objectives

Chapter 04 provides a detailed response to the three primary zoning objectives and also demonstrates the preservation and safeguard the special landscape assets identified in table 10.2 namely J, G, C,B, I

J - Historic Landscape including monuments and historic routes  
G - Landmarks – land forming the setting to existing landmark buildings  
C - Tree Canopy  
B - Water / River Corridors  
I - Institutional Open Space

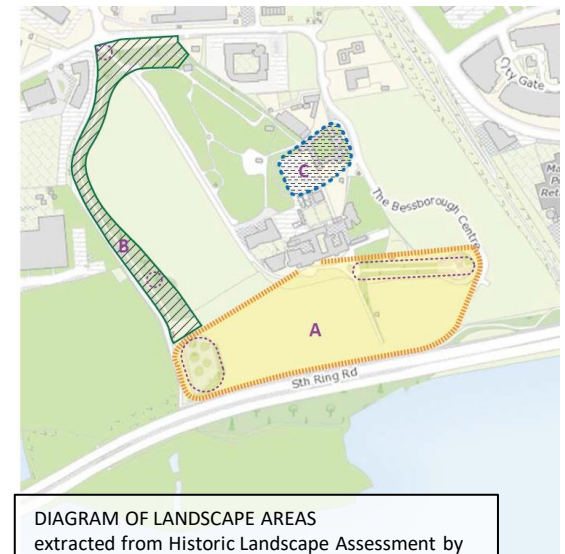


DIAGRAM OF LANDSCAPE AREAS  
extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird, August 2020. Refer to Appendix.



## SHD PRE- PLANNING CONSULTATIONS - RESPONSE TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA OPINION

Furthermore, Pursuant to article 285(5)(b)

### Item 1

*The application should be accompanied by an appropriately detailed Masterplan / Design Statement which should set out a coherent strategy for the overall development of lands within the prospective applicant's ownership at Bessborough. The Masterplan should describe the overall response to the historic context and landscape setting of the lands, and the relationship between developments within different character areas in terms of their design and layout and the influences thereon.*

A Masterplan incorporating the three proposed phases of development is described in ShipseyBarry's "An Bord Pleanála Opinion Response Report"; as well as in their Design Statement.

An annotated Landscape Masterplan overleaf provides a framework for the approach to landscape design and incorporates the anticipated development in broad-brush strokes for Phase 3 which will be the subject of a future planning application.

The purpose of the Landscape Masterplan is to identify the key landscape features or assets and seek to safeguard them in all three phases of development.

The landscape plan and initial planting that was implemented on the site prior to 1840 remained largely intact until the 1950s as can be evidenced by historical maps and photographs.

Significant changes occurred after 1990 with the construction of the Ring Road, the creation of a Heritage Park to the north of the house and the construction of significant institutional buildings.

**Refer to the sketch masterplan overleaf which highlights the important landscape assets.**

The approach adopted in this landscape masterplan and in the development of the site, focuses on safeguarding and showcasing the landscape assets and creating a new public amenity on the site.

Many of the historic landscape features are under threat from vandalism and neglect and the existing stock of trees require careful management and replenishment with appropriate native trees if this historic landscape is to be preserved.

Development of the site in the less historically sensitive parts of the site, provides a resident community to take ownership and manage the conservation and maintenance of the grounds.

**Ceding a large portion of the site to Cork City Council or another stakeholder provides the city with a new neighbourhood park.**

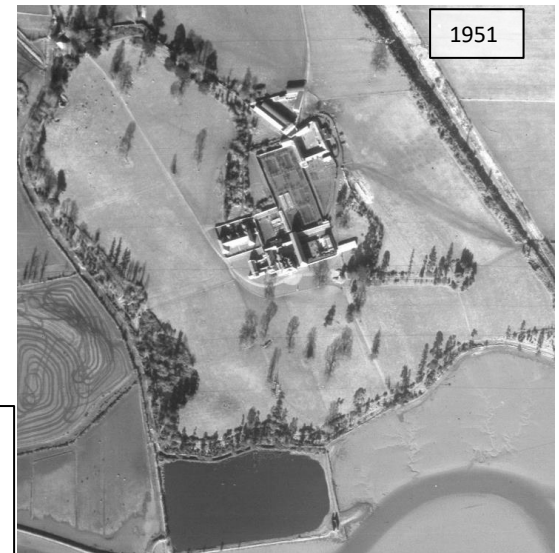
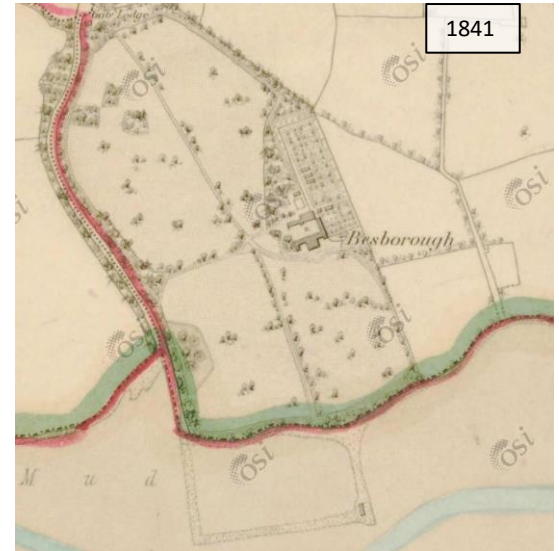
The proposed development of the site will deliver large areas of public open space within the mature landscape setting, as well as making provision for a new pedestrian bridge to connect to the Passage West Greenway.

The proposed development will unlock what is currently a private, inaccessible and isolated site.

The proposals offer great amenity to the public and achieves many of the aspirations of connectivity, permeability as well as the promotion of a well connected, integrated, sustainable community.

### OVER A CENTURY APART....

The 1841 Ordnance Map and the Aerial photograph taken in 1951 show that the primary landscape elements remained intact until 1950 with significant alterations occurring from 1990 onward.



## MASTERPLAN

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY

**REINSTATE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE - OPEN UP VISTAS**  
Reinforce wooded perimeter and gradually open-up approach vistas with removal of trees to road edge (subject ONLY to agreed Parkland Management Plan)

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

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

**FARM GIRL MEMORIAL BENCH**  
Circular bench centered on specimen Magnolia tree

**MEMORIAL ARCHIVE CENTRE**

**ICEHOUSE**  
Restore the historic Icehouse

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

REMEMBRANCE PARK

**REMEMBRANCE PARK**

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

**REINFORCE WOODLAND SCREEN**

Reinforce buffer with ring road with new native trees

FOLLY

DESTINATION PLAYGROUND

BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development



## SHD PRE- PLANNING CONSULTATIONS - RESPONSE TO AN BORD PLEANÁLA OPINION

Furthermore, Pursuant to article 285(5)(b)

### Item 5

*The Arboricultural Impact Assessment should specifically address the viability of proposed tree retention having regard to potential impacts arising from proximity to site development works, including changes in ground levels and the water table.*

A full and detailed account of the impact of the development on existing trees within the site, as well as recognized methodologies for protecting trees to be retained; is given in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Arbor- Care Ltd (Professional Tree Consulting Service).

The approach taken by the Landscape Architect and Arboriculturist is to reflect a worst-case scenario to indicate the removal of any tree impacted by construction of the building or by underground services running through or close to root protection zones in the road to the west of Building C.

Several multidisciplinary team visits were made to the site, with attendances by the Ecologists, Engineer, Architect, Arboriculturist and Landscape Architect to identify the least impactful route for waste-water services through the mature woodland on the western boundary in order to safeguard two Yew trees growing close to the pump station.

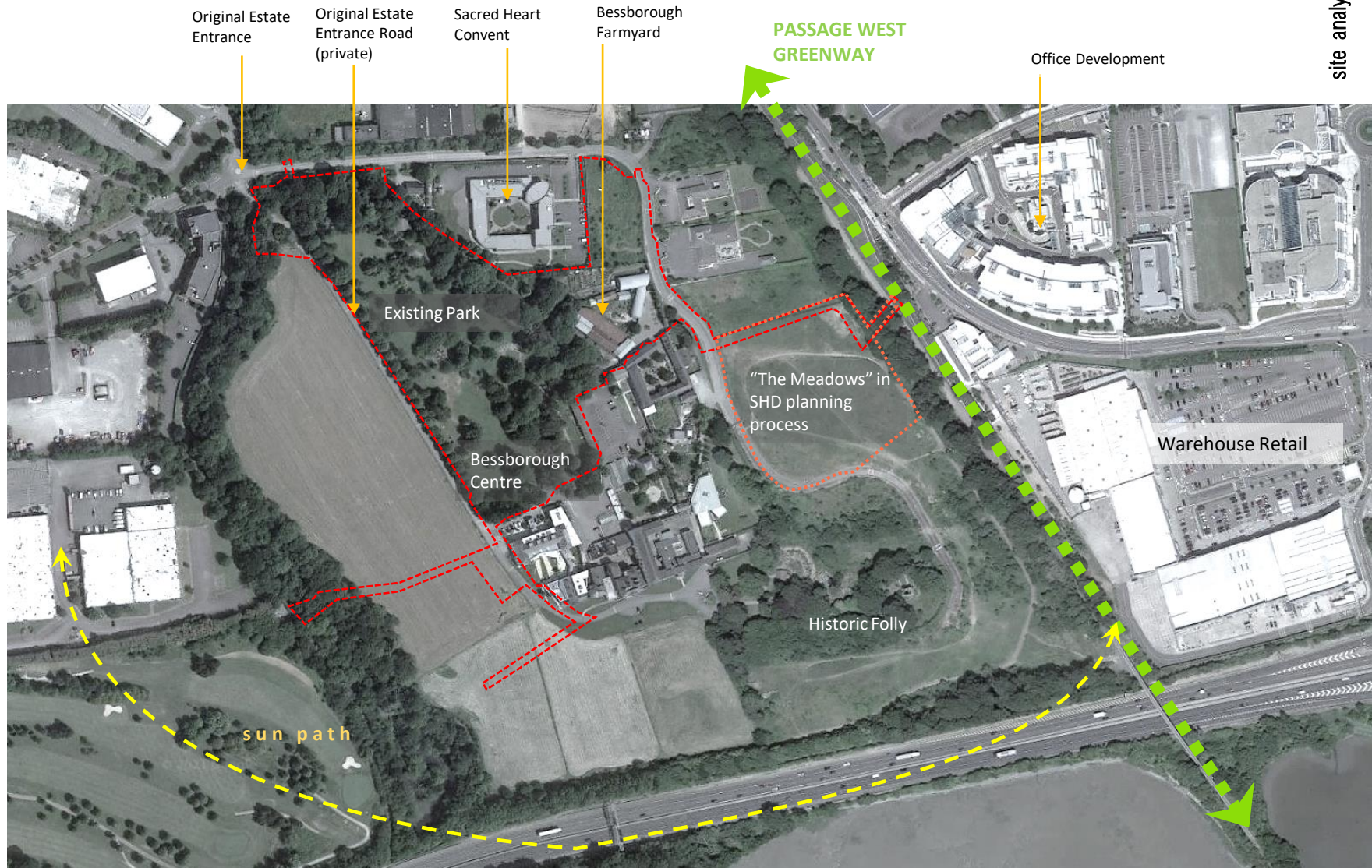
All tree protection works will be carried out in strict accordance with BS 5837:2012 which clearly sets out the procedures for protecting root zones and soil structure prior to any construction activity on site. A system of approving and monitoring tree protection methodologies will be put in place and maintained for the duration of the construction period.

A Parkland Management Strategy was prepared and has been submitted as part of this planning application, to develop a medium to long term strategy for the protection and long-term care of existing trees; as well as a programme for the planting of new trees to secure the longevity of this important historic landscape.

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

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

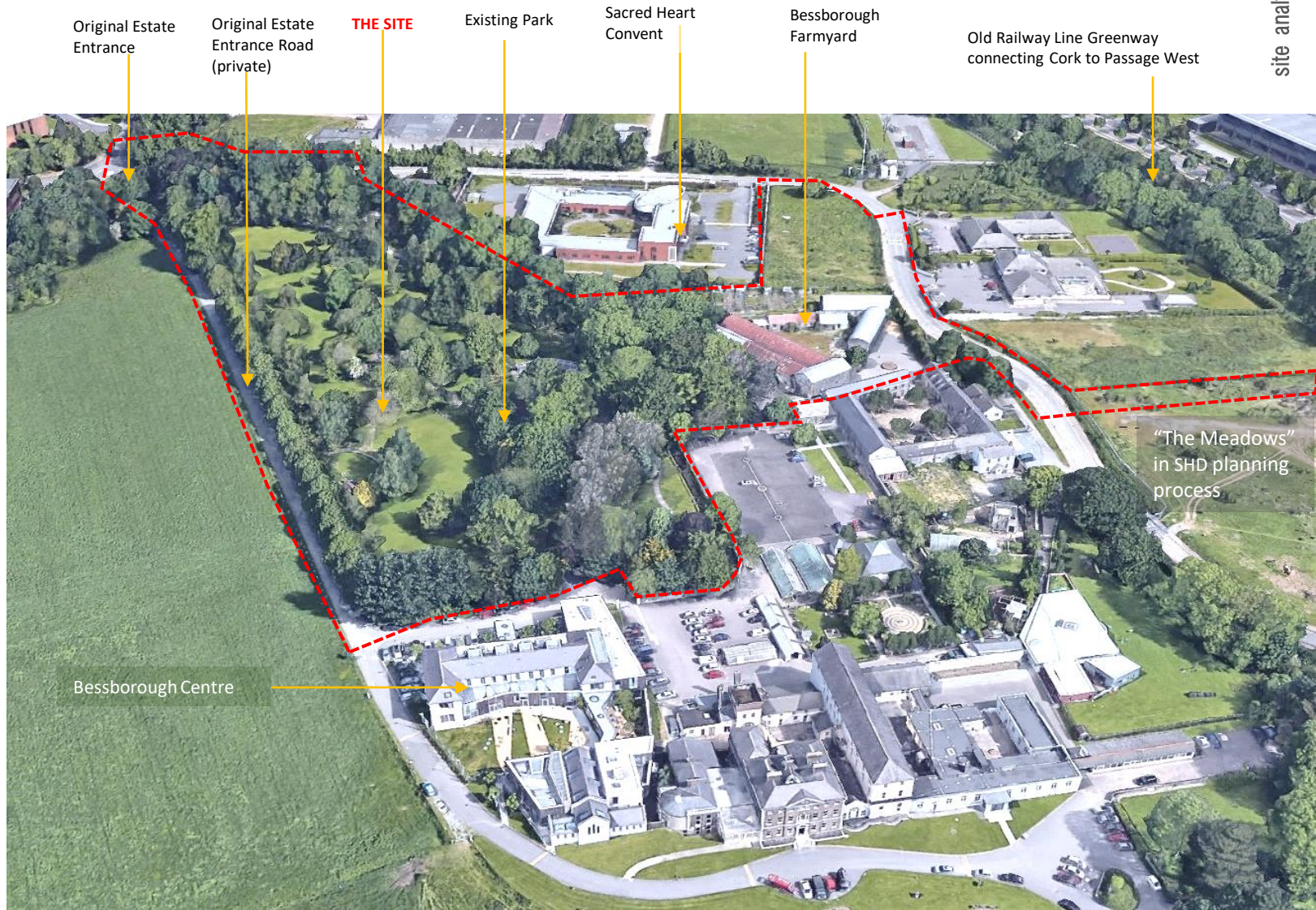




note: red line site outline is indicative

## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development





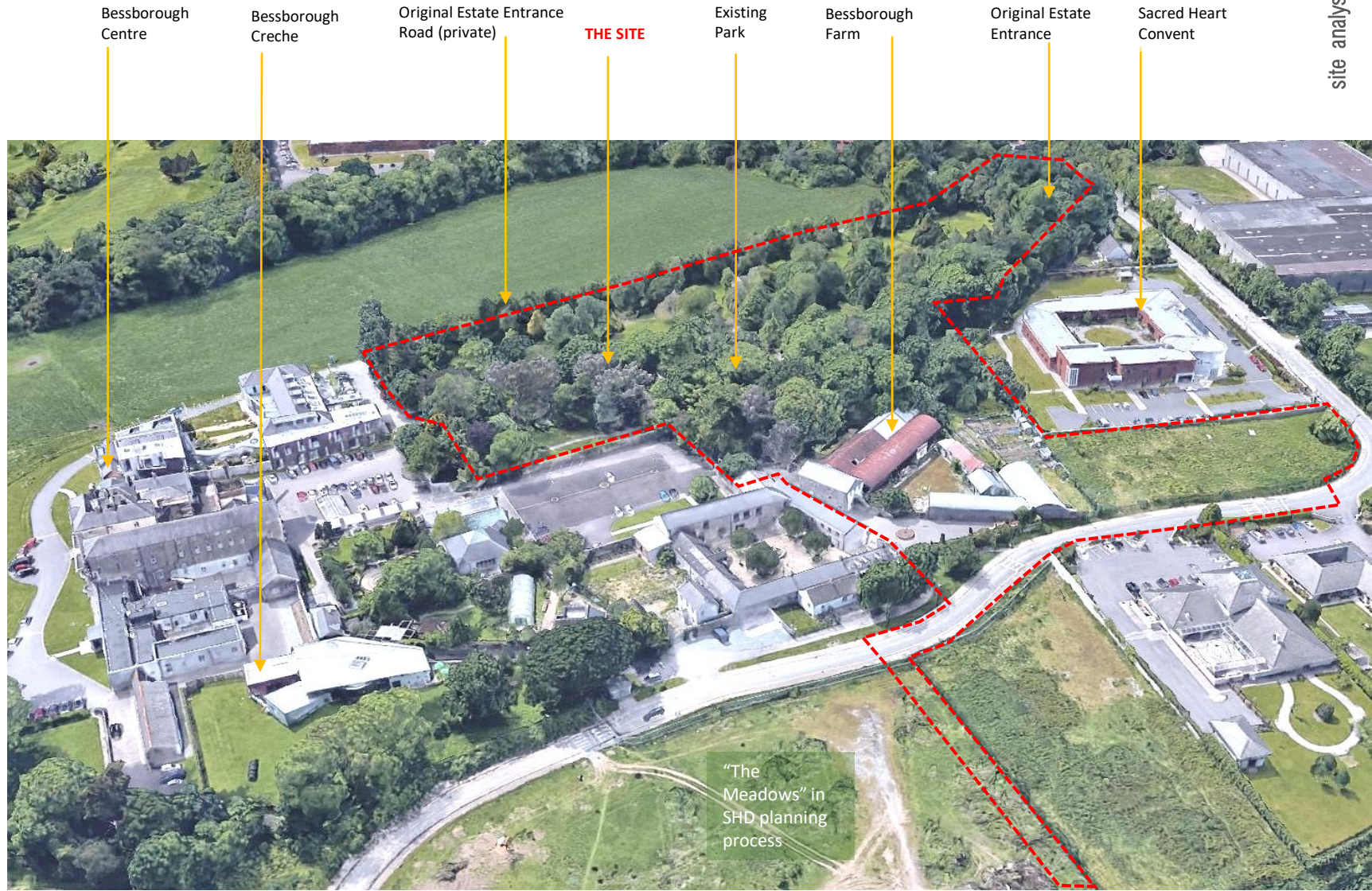
BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development

note: red line site outline is indicative



## SITE ANALYSIS

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY



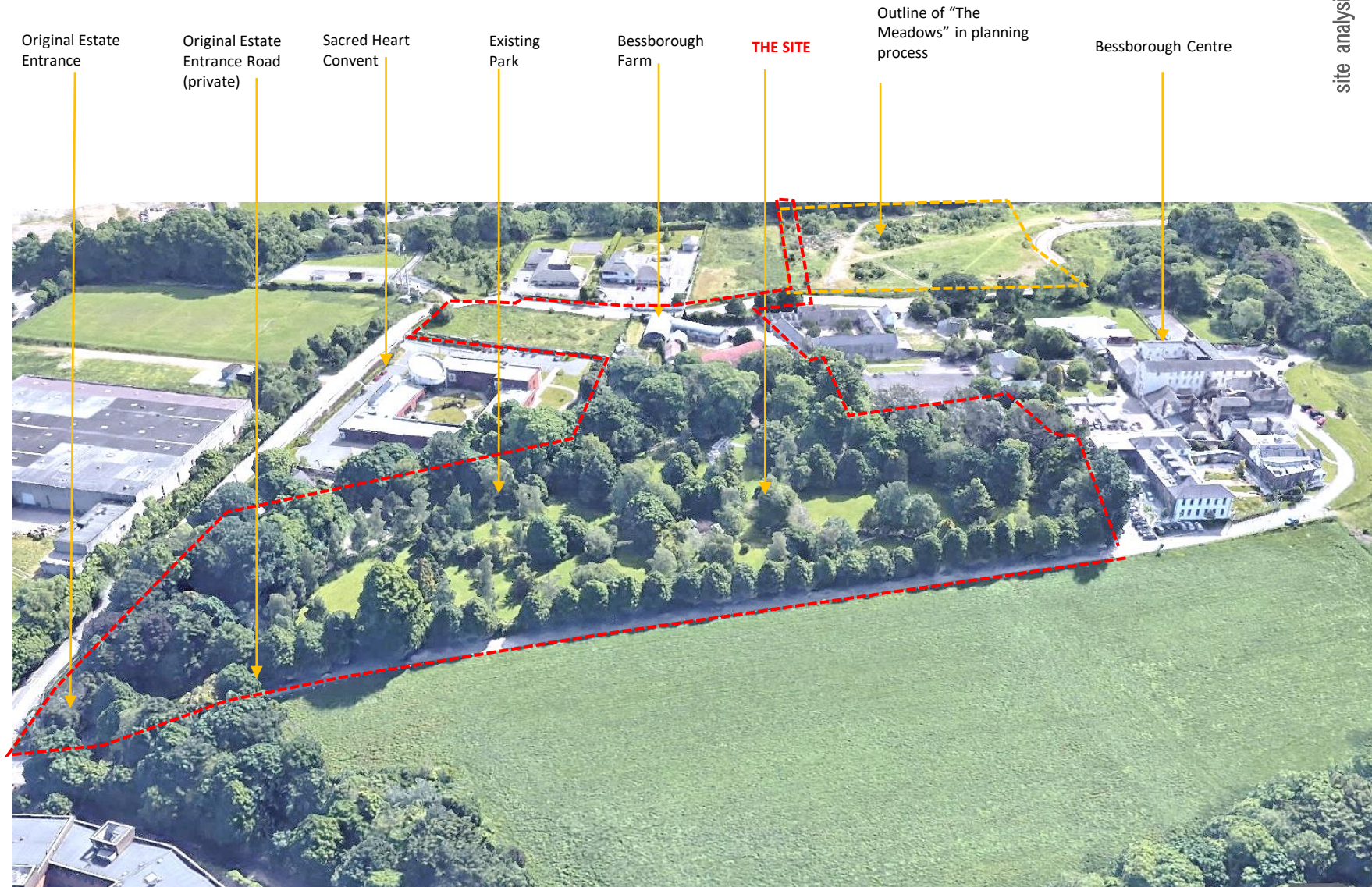
*note: red line site outline is indicative*

## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development



## SITE ANALYSIS

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY



*note: red line site outline is indicative*

**BESSBOROUGH** Apartment Development



## SITE ANALYSIS

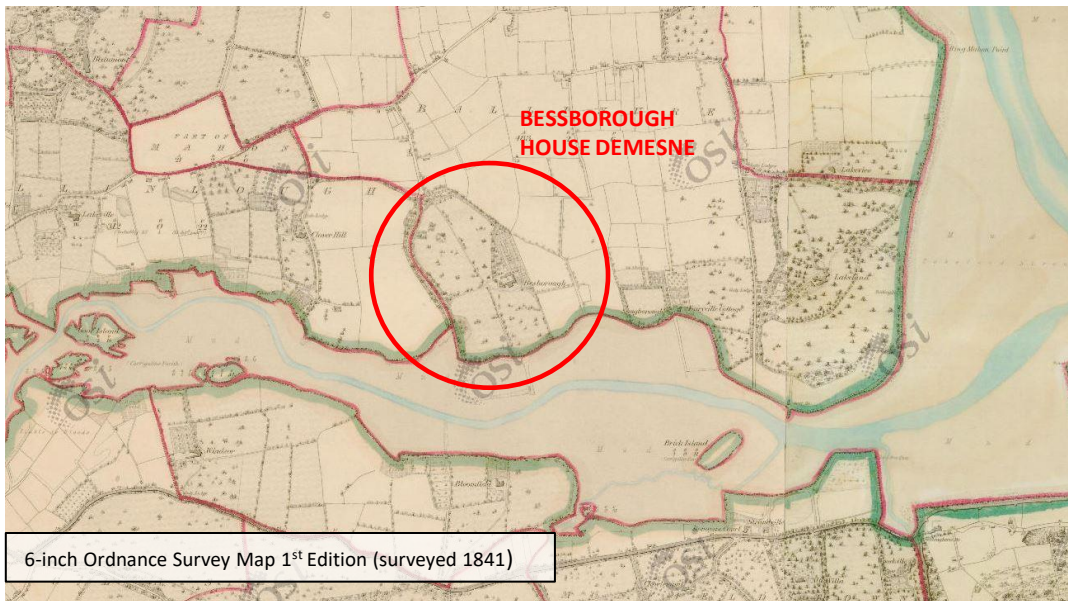
## LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY







Photograph of the Bessborough House,  
circa 1880's



6-inch Ordnance Survey Map 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (surveyed 1841)

## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development

### HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

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

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

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

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

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

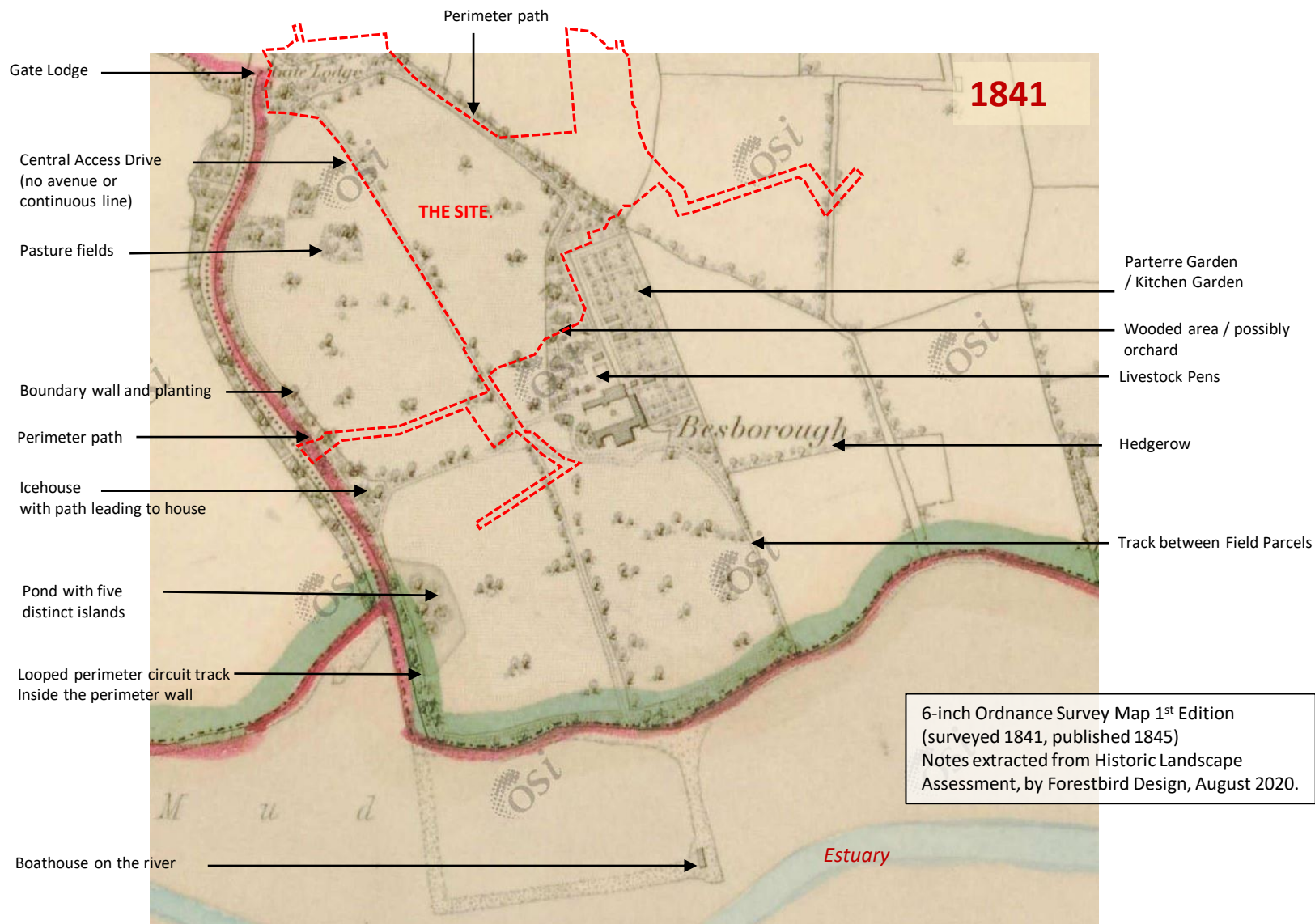
A distinct landscape feature comprising a pond containing five planted islands contrived on the western boundary has no clear function and may have been symbolic. The ordnance survey of 1841 shows that the pond would have been clearly visible from the house' but it is now lost in the dense thicket of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

The 25" Ordnance Survey published in 1899, shows the original house extended with new wings to either side of the house and three new farmyards to the north and northeast of the kitchen gardens and house.

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

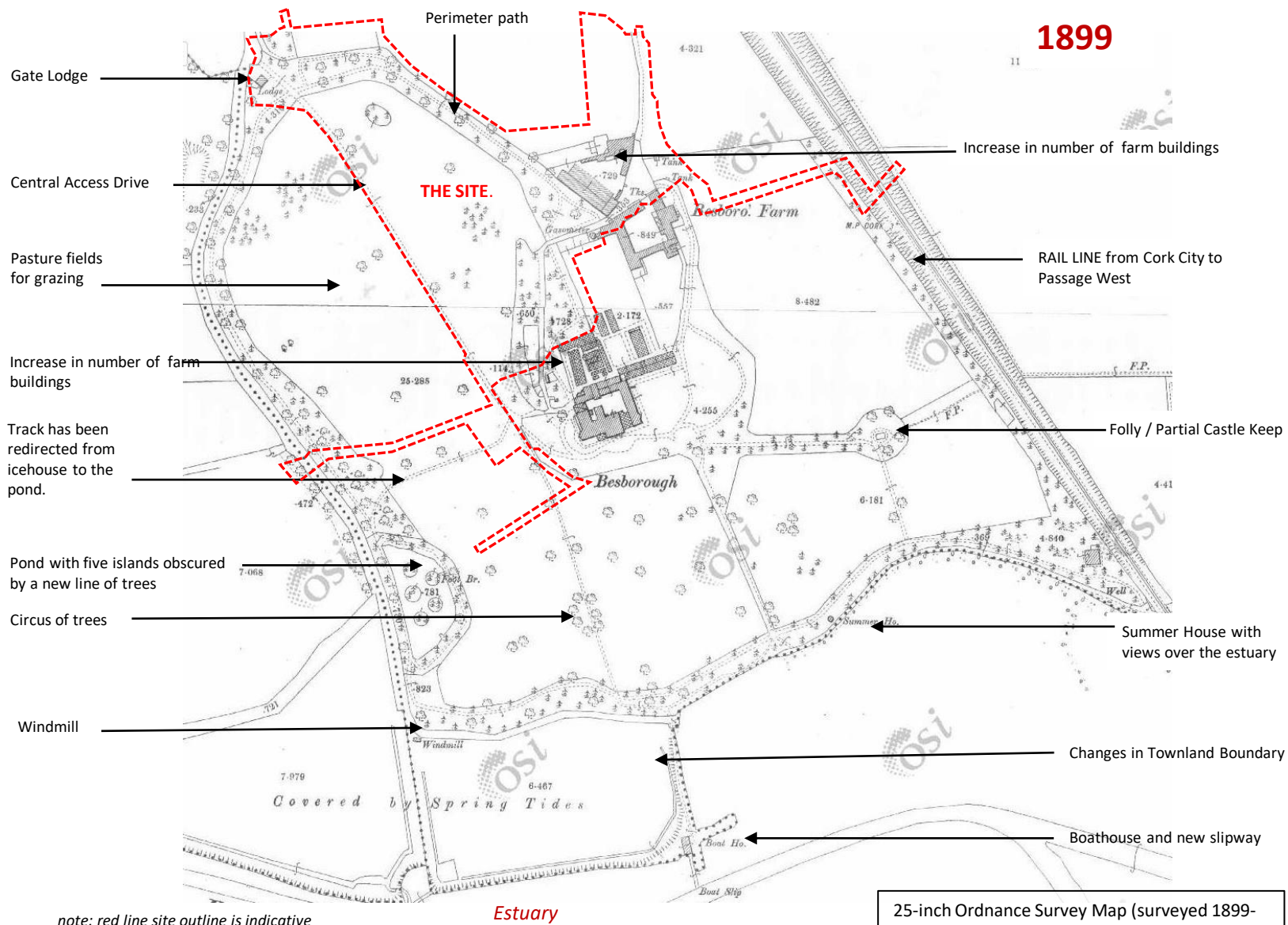
Historic maps clearly show that the relationship of the estate with the Cork Harbour Estuary was of significance in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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

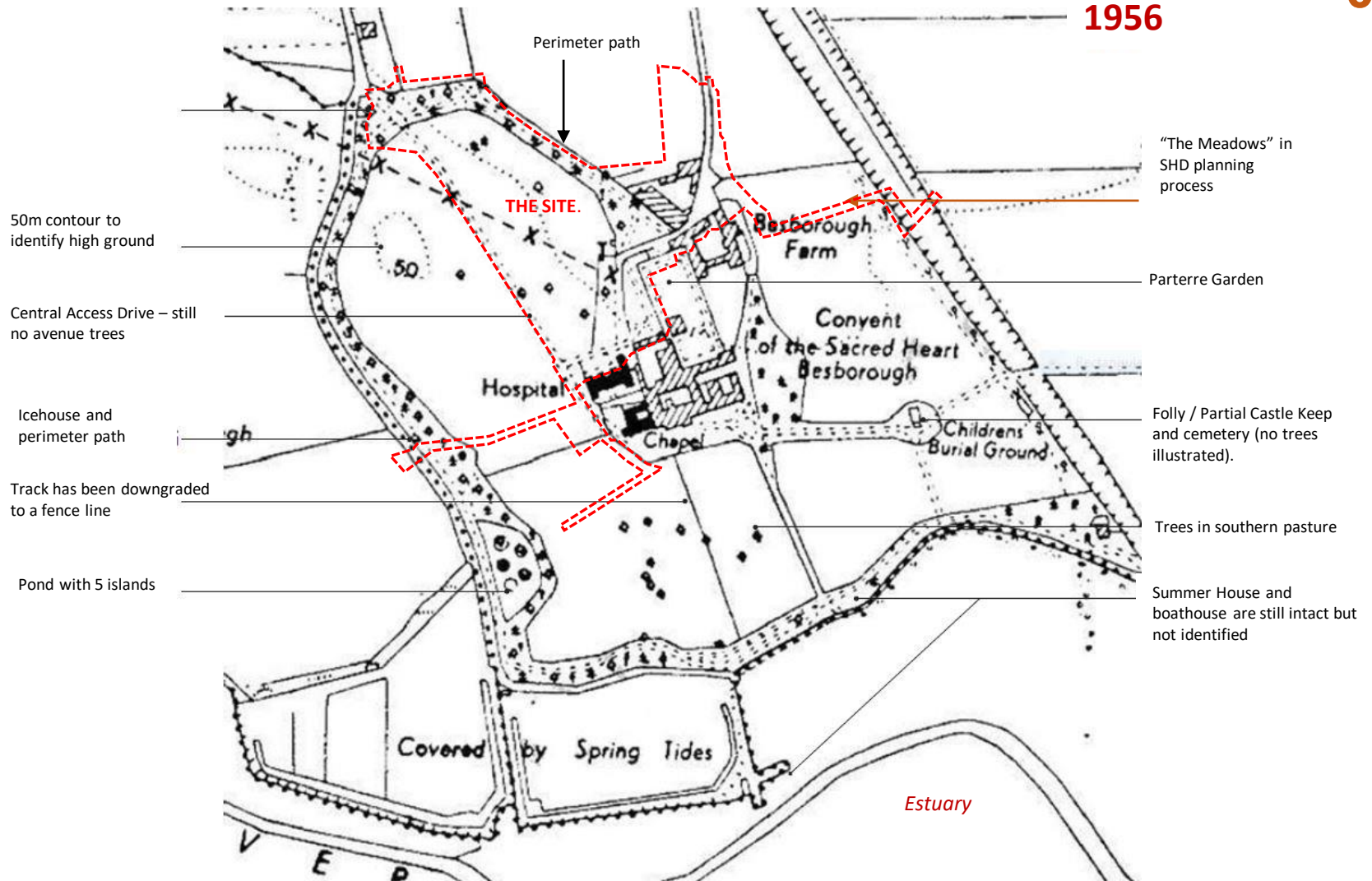


## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development





## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development



note: red line site outline is indicative

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

BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development





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



*Historic folly / partial castle keep*



*Icehouse on western boundary of the demesne*



*Historic pond with five planted islands*

Current photographs of the landscape features identified on historic maps

**ZONE B**

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

**THE SITE.**

"The Meadows" in SHD planning process

**ZONE C**

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

**AREAS OUTSIDE PRESERVATION AREAS**

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

**ZONE A**

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

*Estuary***DIAGRAM OF LANDSCAPE AREAS**

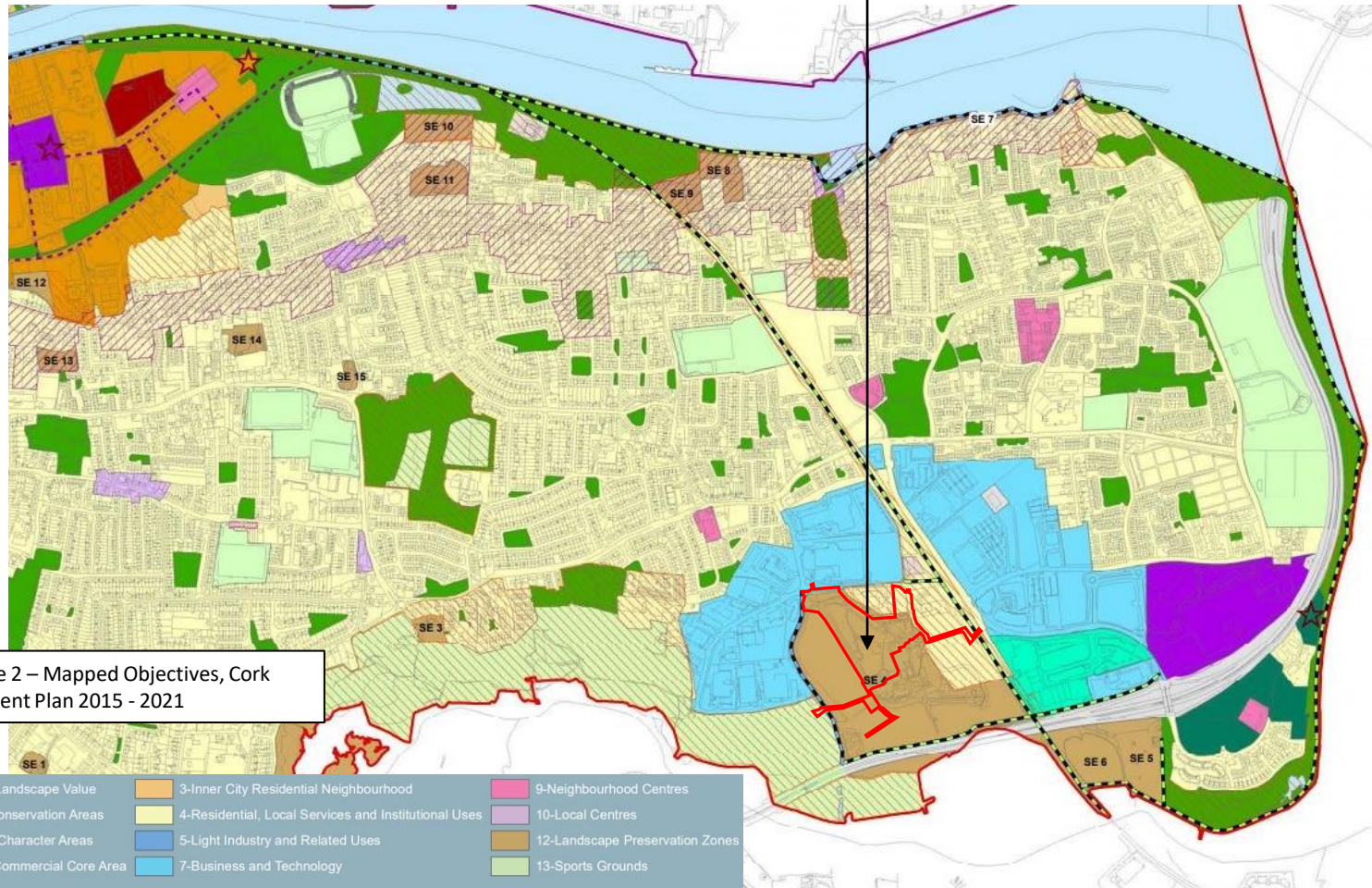
Notes extracted from Historic Landscape Assessment by Forestbird, August 2020. Refer to Appendix.

**BESSBOROUGH** Apartment Development



**THE SITE**

ZO4 – Residential, Local Services and Institutional Uses  
in area of High Landscape Value  
ZO12- Landscape Preservation Zone



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

*note: red line site outline is indicative*

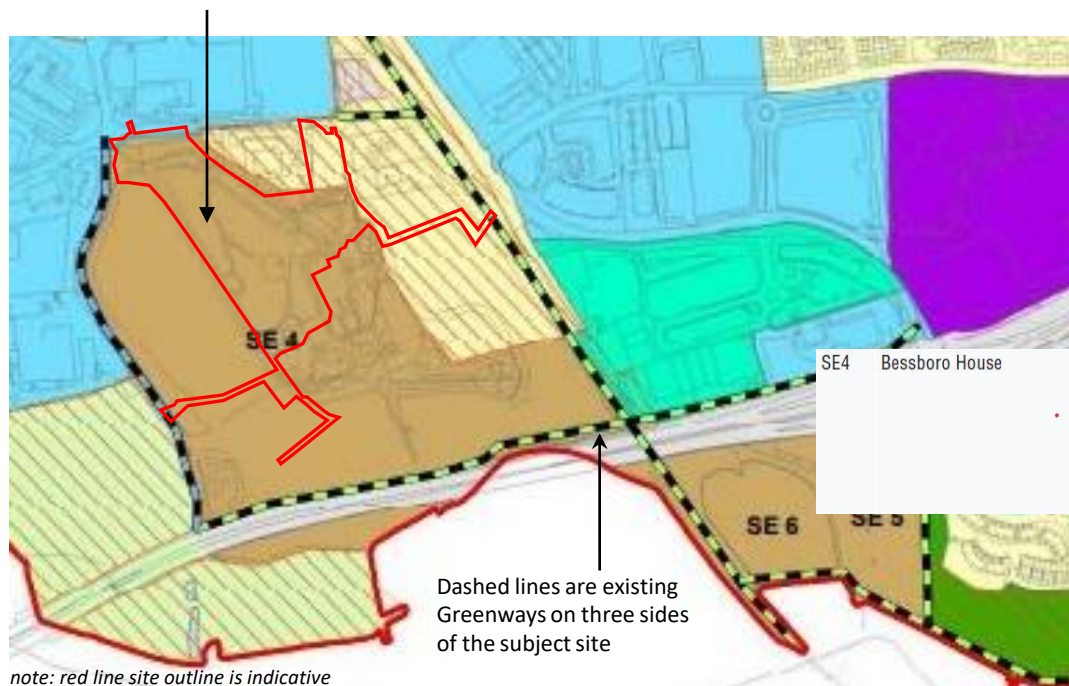
**BESSBOROUGH** Apartment Development



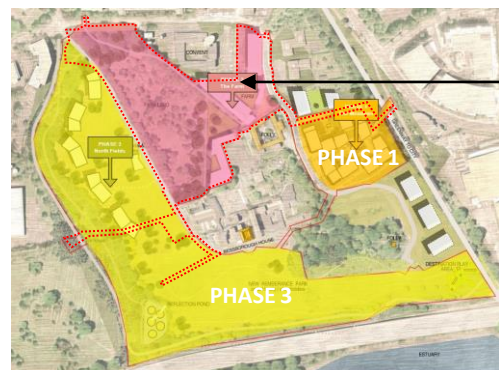
## PHASE 2 – SUBJECT SITE

SE4 Bessboro House

## PLANNING CONTEXT



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



Phasing diagram  
extracted from Design Statement  
by ShipseyBarry Architects

BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development

## PLANNING CONTEXT

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

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

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

J,G,C,B,I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reinstate Historic Landscape;</li> <li>To seek use of grounds as a Neighbourhood Park in context of local area plan (H);</li> <li>To allow development within the immediate environs to the north of Bessboro House consistent with the landscape and protected structure significance of the site.</li> </ul>
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The special landscape assets identified in Table 10.2 namely J, G, C, B, I are described in Table 10.1 as

J - Historic Landscape including monuments and historic routes  
G - Landmarks – land forming the setting to existing landmark buildings

C - Tree Canopy

B - Water / River Corridors

- Institutional Open Space

The proposed development in the subject application namely Phase 2 'The Farm' of this three-phase development is located north of Bessborough House and includes a triangular farmyard and a park which contains significant groups of mature trees.

A smaller portion of the proposed development falls into Zoned Objective 4 Residential, Local Services and Institutional Uses in an Area of High Landscape Value (pale yellow hatched area on the map).

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY



1841

#### The 1841 Ordnance Map

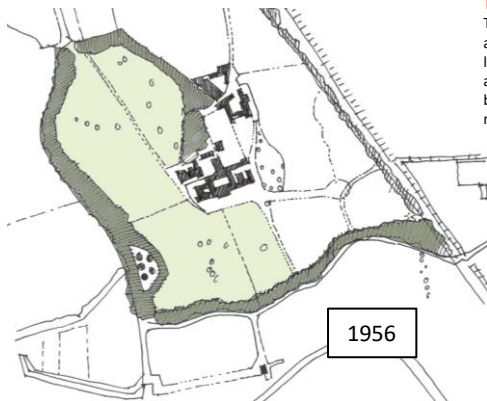
The site is divided into quarters with a defined edge of woodland to the perimeter. The access track from the northern boundary bisects open pastoral lands, affording bucolic views of the demesne with the house and its associated farm buildings in view. The icehouse and pond with five islands are evident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



1899

#### The 1899 Ordnance Map

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



1956

#### The 1956 6-inch Last Edition

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

## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development

### SE 4 PLANNING OBJECTIVE

The SE4 Landscape Preservation Zoning Objective is described as follows:

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

### TO REINSTATE THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

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

The cartographic sources include:

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

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

The site is divided into four field parcels dotted with clusters of trees which indicate that these fields were intended for grazing rather than crop production. The perimeter of the site is defined with dense woodland planting. The access track from the northern boundary bisects open pastoral lands, affording bucolic views of the demesne with the house and its associated farm buildings in view. A parterre garden and what appears to be a fruit tree orchard and small structures for livestock are located north of the house. The front of Bessborough House overlooks the gently scooped open grass lands down to the estuary. An icehouse and pond with five islands are clearly visible from the house in these early maps.

The 1899 Ordnance Map - Alterations and extensions to the buildings and the construction of a folly to the southeast of the house occurred over the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but this did not have a massive impact on the landscape setting.

The 1956 Ordnance Map - Following the acquisition of Bessborough House by the Sacred Heart Order, new convent functions began to appear. The new chapel, hospital and cemetery are clearly shown and annotated. The landscape and gardens of Bessborough House did not however, undergo much change until the 1980's and 1990's as can be evidenced in the aerial photographs overleaf.



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

## SE 4 OBJECTIVE TO REINSTATE THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Parkland Management Plan is included in this Planning Application as a means of managing the existing stock of trees and ensuring the introduction of new appropriate species of trees to ensure that this historic landscape is maintained and supplemented for future generations to enjoy.

The long-term objective of the Parkland Management Plan to be implemented over 20 years is to reverse the alterations made in the 1990s and gradually return the lands to a more open landscape with dense native woodland to the perimeter while still maintaining the amenity and natural habitat that the current landscape offers.

NOTE: The Parkland Management Plan is a working document and is subject to fuller discussion with Cork City Council. Any tree removals as part of this application are strictly limited to those trees identified in the Arboriculturist's Tree Impact Plan.





1995

Aerial Photograph 1995 (source OSI)

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



2005



2000



2013

## SE 4 OBJECTIVE - TO REINSTATE THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

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

The most significant of which was the construction of the N40 which severed the relationship between the house and the estuary on the southern boundary. Another significant change was the establishment of an amenity park in the field parcel north of the house.

Winding paths, a playground, folly structures and a new line of Lime trees along the approach road were introduced between 1990 and 2000 which diminished the open parkland quality of the grounds.

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

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

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

Aerial Photograph 2000 / 2005 2013 (source OSI)

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





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



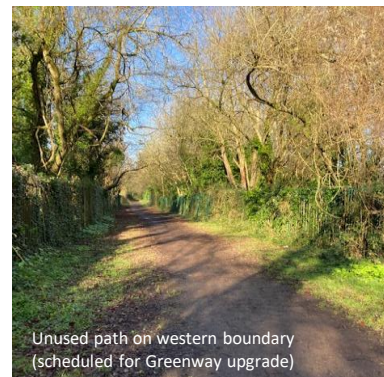
Historic Icehouse



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



Historic Pond with five islands



Unused path on western boundary (scheduled for Greenway upgrade)

## SE 4 OBJECTIVE - SEEK USE OF GROUNDS AS NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

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

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

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

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

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

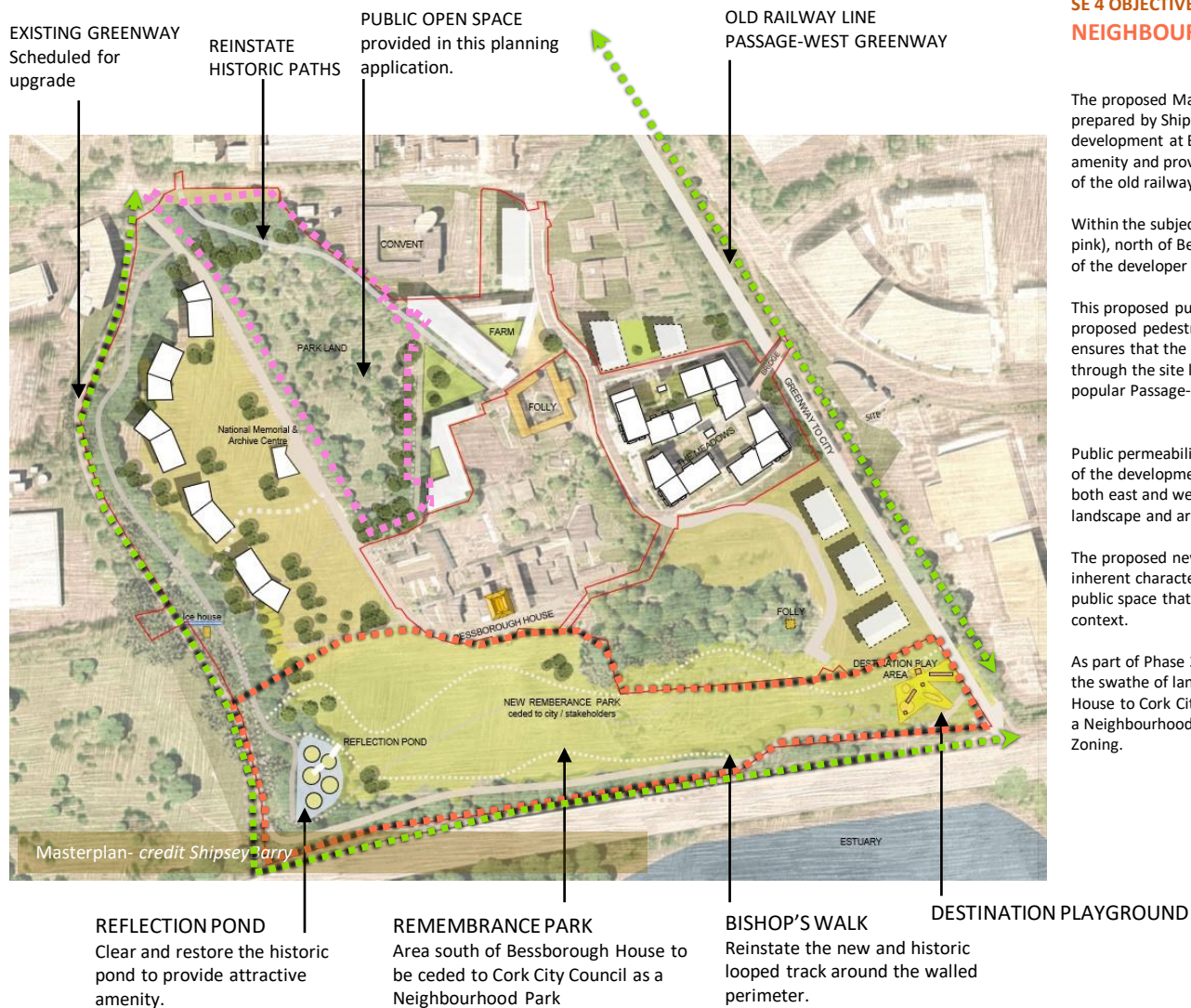
The Masterplan prepared by ShipseyBarry Architects (overleaf) indicates the Applicant's intention to cede a large area south of the house to Cork City Council or another stakeholder for use as a Neighbourhood Park.



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

## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development





## SE 4 OBJECTIVE - SEEK USE OF GROUNDS AS NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

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

Within the subject site (Phase 2), the existing park (dotted in pink), north of Bessborough House will remain in the ownership of the developer but will be treated as public open space.

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

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

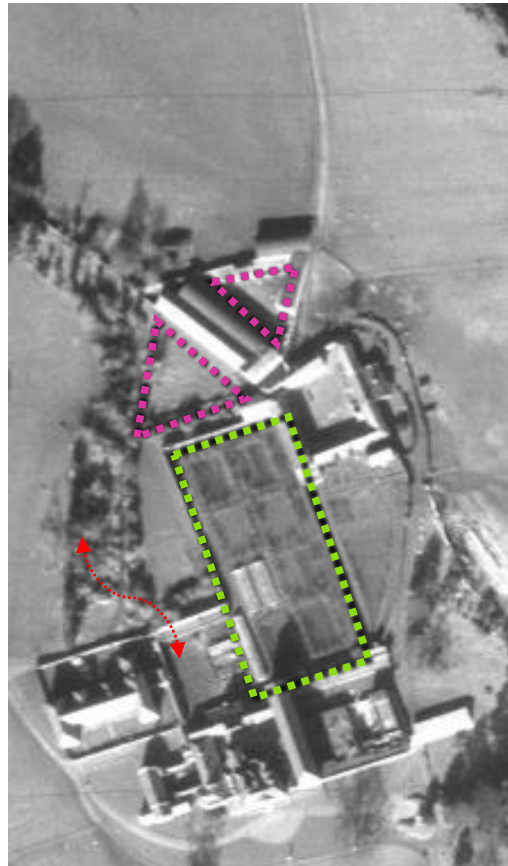
The proposed new public realm showcases the unique and inherent character of Bessborough, to create a wide variety of public space that optimizes the existing natural and historic context.

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

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



Aerial Photograph 1951 – illustrating historic spatial arrangement



Aerial Photograph 1951 – illustrating historic spatial arrangement

The proposed development has been revised since the S247 and Triparty Pre-Application Meeting to concentrate all proposed buildings in the area, just north of Bessborough House.

At Tri-Party Stage, three buildings were located north of Bessborough House; but having regard to comments made in pre-planning consultation meetings about reducing the built footprint in the park and maintaining the physical connection between the park and the existing extensions to Bessborough House; the proposed buildings have been reduced to a single block (identified as 'C').

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

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

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

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

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

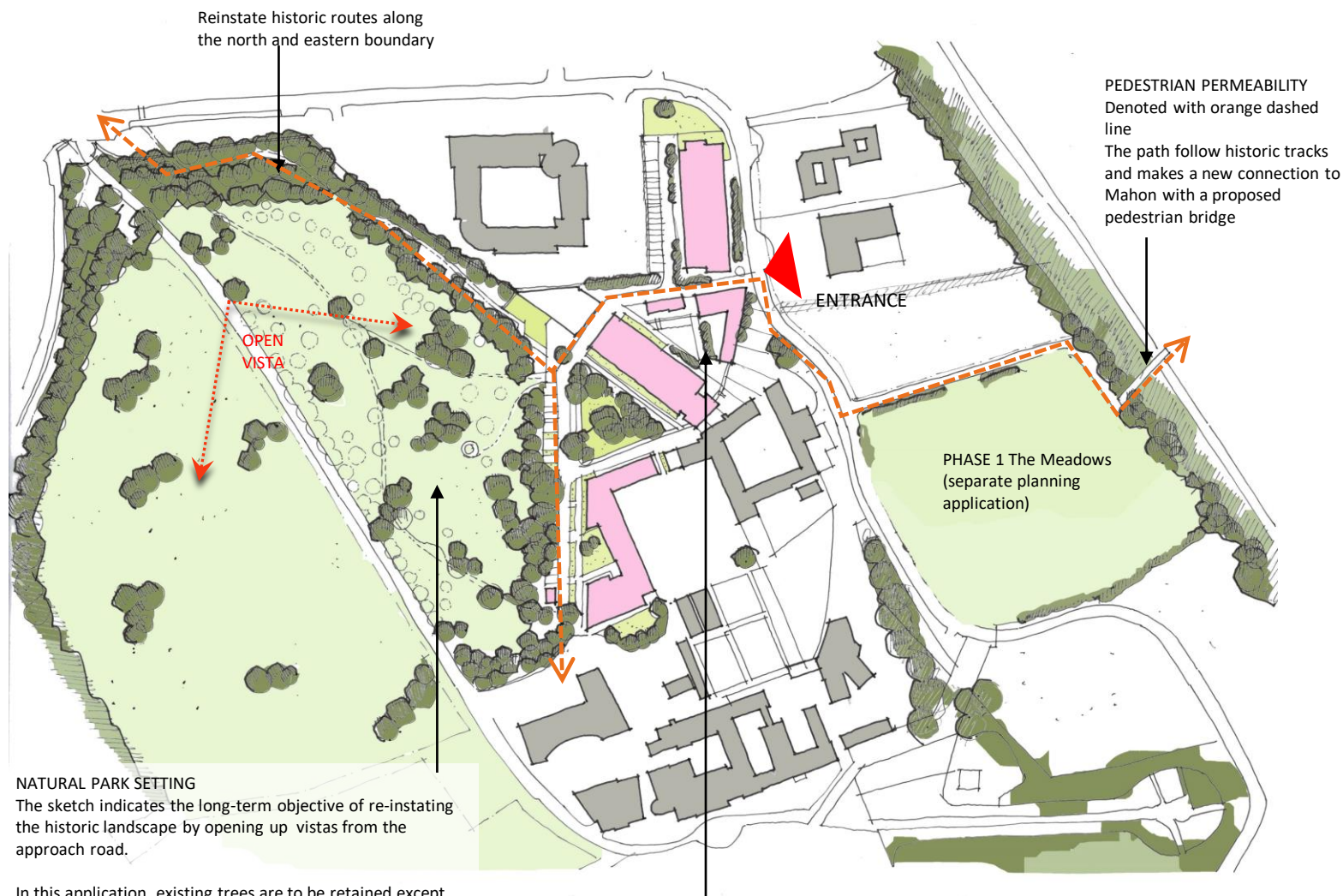
The character of landscape in these two different environments tries to capture the special quality that the site offers.

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





**PROPOSED NEW TREES** 116No. Trees  
comprising 40 non-native trees and 76 native trees

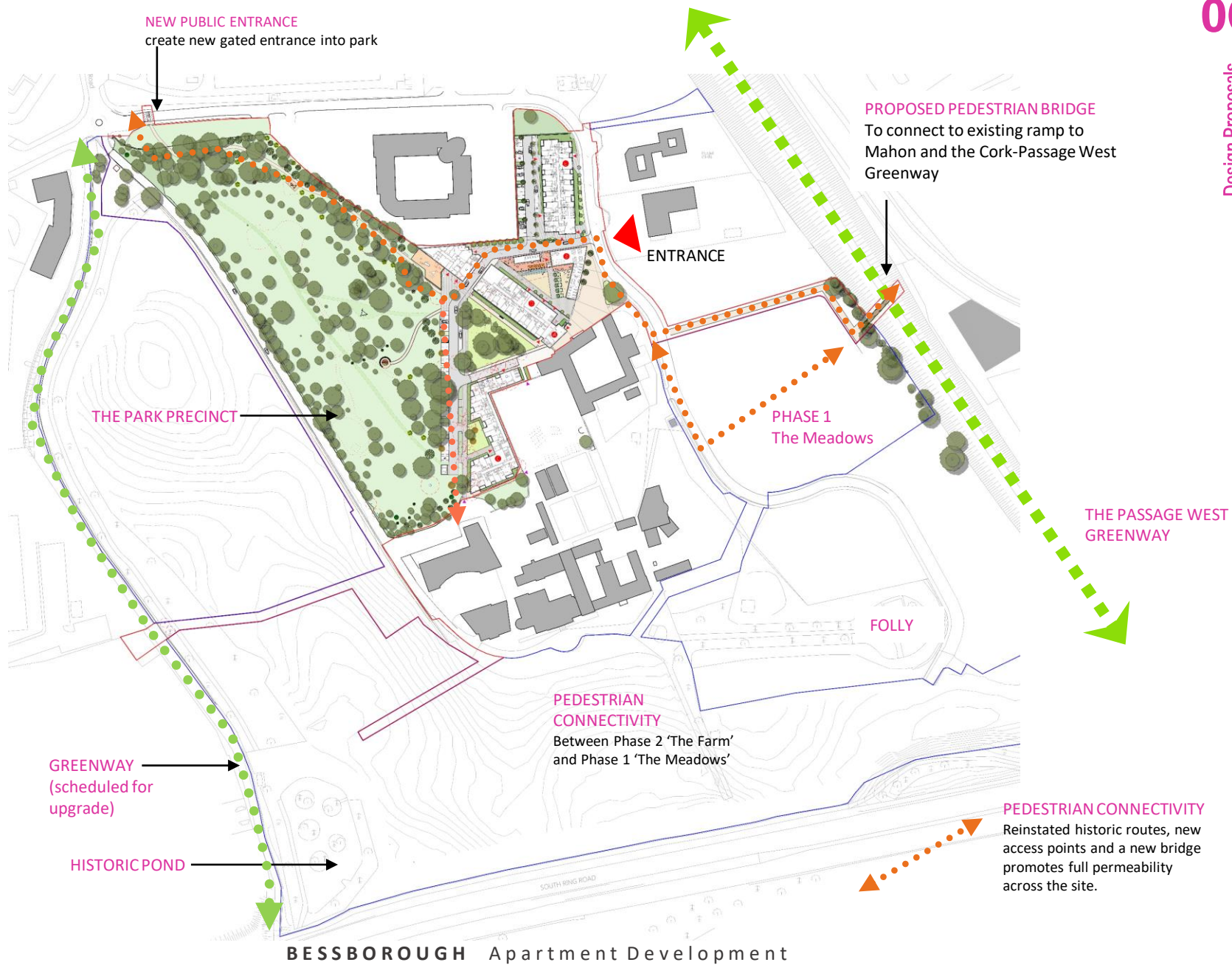


In this application, existing trees are to be retained except those impacted by the development. Careful management of the park over decades will eventually achieve a more open landscape.  
In the short term, existing paths and structures introduced in the 1990's are to be removed and re-seeded with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

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

## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development







## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development



## THE FARM PRECINCT

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

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

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

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



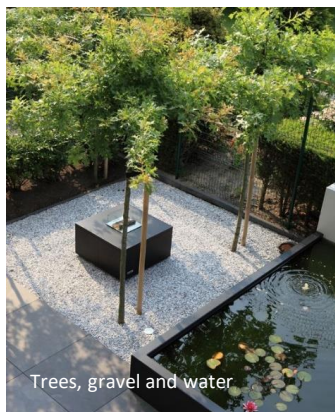
Image of proposed water feature in the courtyard  
credit ShipseyBarry



## THE FARM COURTYARD



## LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY



## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development





Image of proposed landscape treatment in the park -  
credit ShippseyBarry

## THE PARK PRECINCT

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

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

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

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

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

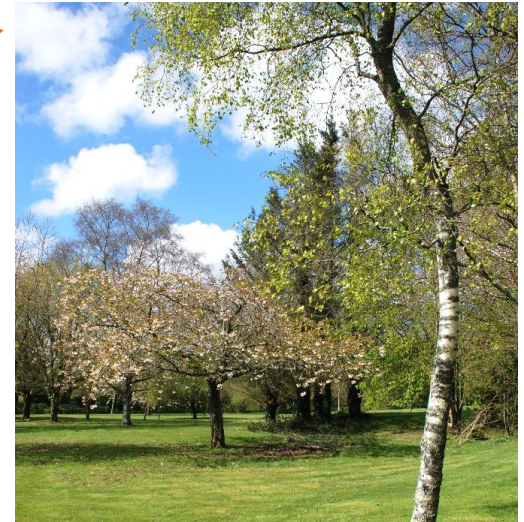
Very little new landscaping is proposed as the existing palette of trees and lawns will be retained and enhanced with new native trees to replace those trees lost at a ratio of 2:1.

A Parkland Management Strategy is recommended to ensure that the condition of trees is surveyed on an ongoing basis and that new tree planting supports the objective of reinstating the historic landscape.



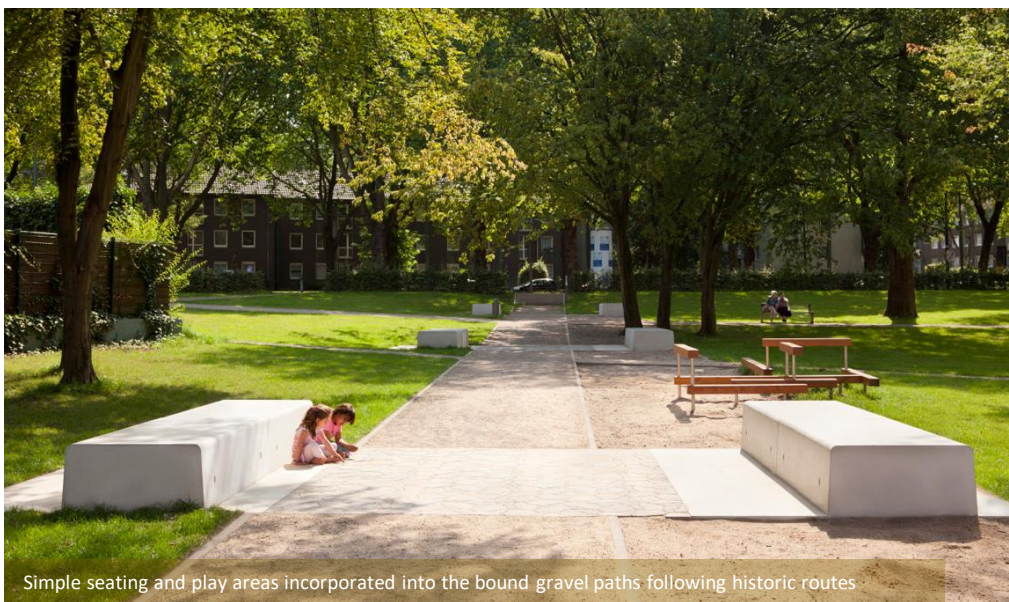


BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development



Photograph of the existing track through the park





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

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & COMMUNAL AMENITY

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

A proposed new entrance in the historic stone wall near the Bessboro Road roundabout will ensure good public access and permeability through the site. New public routes through the park and through the Phase 2 development, to the proposed new pedestrian bridge provides continuous connection through the site linking the greenway on the western boundary to the Cork – Passage West Greenway on the eastern boundary

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

The provision for public open space at over 63% of the developable site area (this excludes the long service runs incorporated in the red line)

This figure far exceeds the requirement to provide a minimum of 10% of the total site area as stated in Section 16.2 of the Development Plan.

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

The old farmyard courtyard accommodates many communal functions such as meeting rooms, workspace, hot desking hubs etc. as well as a sunroom.

Pocket parks comprising lawns beneath existing trees are provided within the park for the exclusive use of residents. These lawns include informal, natural play equipment and are well overlooked.

<b>SITE AREA</b>	<b>51,250 sqm</b> (51.3ha)
<b>DEVELOPABLE AREA</b>	<b>42,842sqm</b>
<b>PUBLIC OPEN SPACE</b>	<b>27,136sqm</b>
<b>63.3% of DEVELOPABLE AREA</b>	
<b>COMMUNAL AMENITY SPACE</b>	<b>2,563sqm</b> (exceeds min requirement of 830sqm)

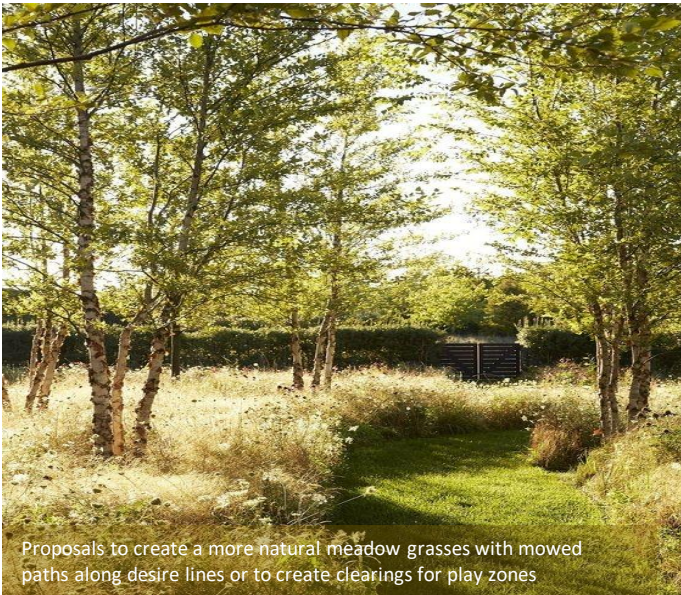


## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development





View of current park with manicured lawns



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



Bird nesting boxes



Bat boxes



Bat boxes

## BIODIVERSITY

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

Given that the zoning objective permits development immediately north of the house, a total of 51 No. trees will be impacted by the development. Fortunately, the vast majority of these (40No.) of the trees to be removed are non-native with limited biodiversity value.

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

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

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

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

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





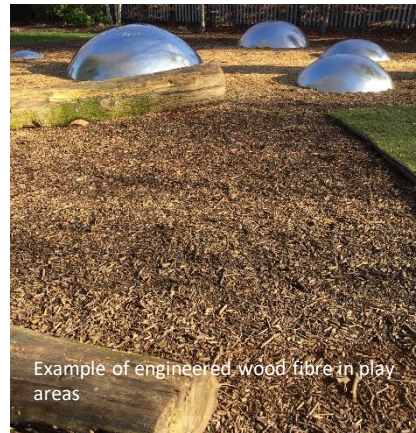
Samples of bound gravel to paths in the Park



Salvage stone cobbles and clay bricks to the Farm courtyard.



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



Example of engineered wood fibre in play areas

## HARD LANDSCAPING / PAVING

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

### Materials associated with the Farm Courtyard:

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

### Materials associated with the Park:

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

### Materials associated with the Vehicle:

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

### Materials associated with Playgrounds

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





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



Polished concrete block benches in the Farm



Loose furniture



Corten planter boxes



Bicycle Stands

## STREET FURNITURE

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

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

### Seating / Benches

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

### Tree grates / grilles:

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

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

### Bicycle Racks

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

### Planters / Raised Beds

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

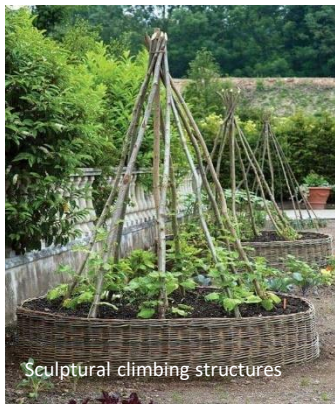
### Water features

Shallow water features are formed with salvage bricks.

### Loose furniture

Modern, bright and stackable.





Sculptural climbing structures



Paths between fennel, rosemary and wildflowers



Brick paths and simple raised beds



Image of planting in raised beds - credit ShipseyBarry

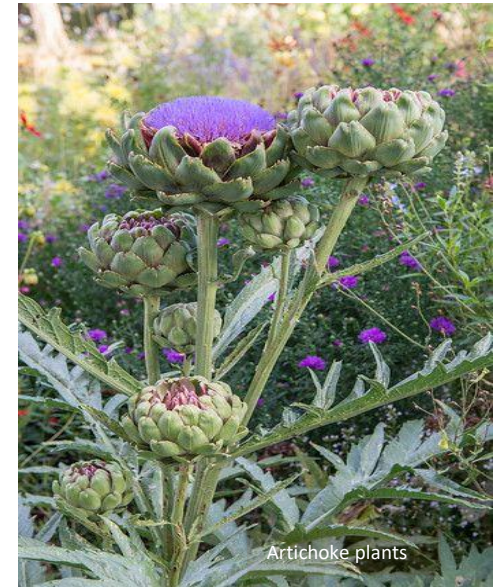
### KITCHEN GARDEN PLANTING - FARM COURTYARD

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

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

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

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



Artichoke plants





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



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



*Quercus robur* – European Oak



*Tilia Cordata* – Lime tree



*Betula pendula* – Silver Birch



*Fagus sylvatica* – European Beech

## TREE MANAGEMENT in THE PARK

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

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

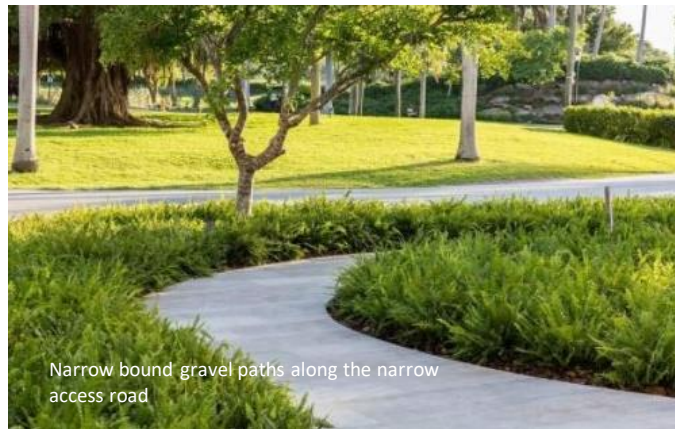
It is recommended that a new generation of native and naturalized evergreen and deciduous trees are planted at a ratio of 2 new trees to every 1 existing tree proposed for removal due to the impact of the development or the condition of the tree.

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

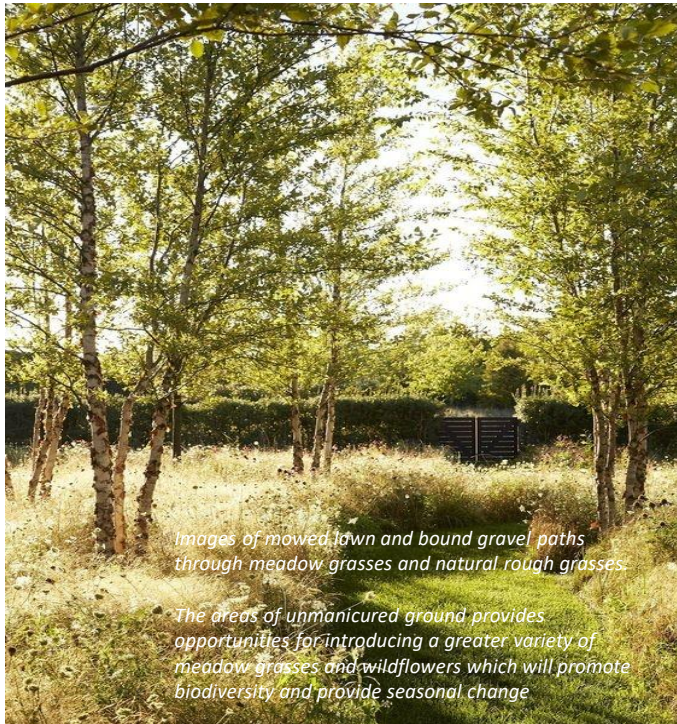
The purpose of the Parkland Management Strategy is to gradually open up visas into the park by thinning out unattractive, inappropriate trees and replacing with new trees on the perimeter and in groups on the west side of the entrance road.

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



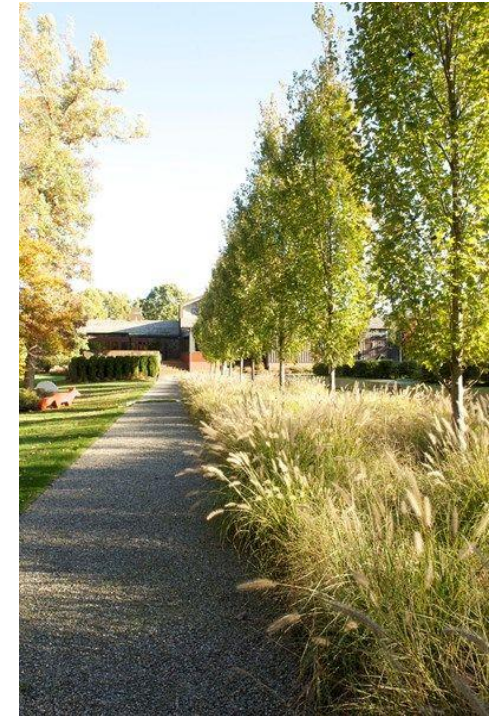


Narrow bound gravel paths along the narrow access road



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

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



#### NATURAL UNDER PLANTING – Wild grasses and Meadows.

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

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

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



# HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT


August 2020

Besborough House Demesne  
Ballinure, Mahon, Cork



Altling Cottage  
Ballybranagh  
Clayne  
Co. Cork  
[www.forestbirdesign.com](http://www.forestbirdesign.com)

**BESSBOROUGH** Apartment Development

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

## 1 - INTRODUCTION

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

## 2 - METHODOLOGY

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

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

Historic Landscape Assessment  
Besborough Demesne, Ballinure, Mahon, Cork 

## 3 - SITE BACKGROUND

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

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



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

## 4 - WHAT IS A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT?

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

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

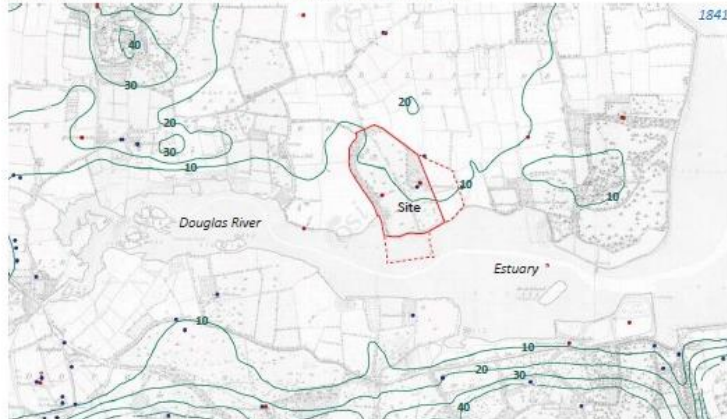
- Historical written and map references pertinent to the site and environs
- Original landscape extent of the demesne and land use pertinence
- Identifying a period of landscape significance and landscape trends during this time
- Overview of the types, ages and arrangement of the trees on site
- Evolution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

Historic Landscape Assessment  
Besborough Demesne, Ballinure, Mahon, Cork 



### 5 - LANDSCAPE SETTING

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



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



Historic Landscape Assessment  
Besborough Demesne, Ballinure, Mahon, Cork



### 6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS

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

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



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

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

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

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

Historic Landscape Assessment  
Besborough Demesne, Ballinure, Mahon, Cork





## 6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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## 6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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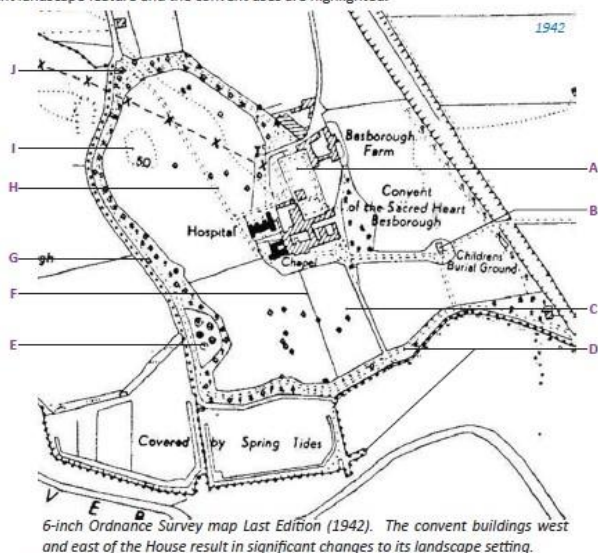
## BESSBOROUGH Apartment Development



## 6 - HISTORICAL REFERENCE MAPS

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

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



- 6-inch Ordnance Survey map Last Edition (1942). The convent buildings west and east of the House result in significant changes to its landscape setting.
- A - The walled garden appears intact and de-cluttered, perhaps for resident use.
  - B - Association with the Folly has been altered by attaching an area of solemn commemoration to it. It is of interest that trees are not shown along the avenue, despite significant specimens having been present.
  - C - Trees are still shown within the southern pasture.
  - D - The Summer House, Boat House and slipway are unmarked, but appear intact.
  - E - The pond is still clearly identified with 5 islands and a buffer of planting to all sides.
  - F - Former tracks to the Ice House and estuary appear to have been downgraded to fencelines.
  - G - The Ice House is visible on the map, adjacent to a clearly defined perimeter path.
  - H - Despite the advent of the motor car, the entrance avenue does not illustrate upgrading from a track. Avenue tree planting is still not indicated.
  - I - 50' contours appear on the map, identifying the site high point. Former tree planting has been removed.
  - J - The Gate Lodge, mature tree planting and concave entrance are extant.

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## 7 - CURRENT LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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



Item: Entrance Piers  
Comments: Scale and offset to each other  
Category: 4

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

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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## 7 - CURRENT LANDSCAPE INVENTORY



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

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

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



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

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

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



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



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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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## 7 - CURRENT LANDSCAPE INVENTORY



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

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



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



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



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

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



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

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



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

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## 8 - IDENTIFYING LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE

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



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

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

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

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

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

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## 9 - IDENTIFYING THE LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE

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



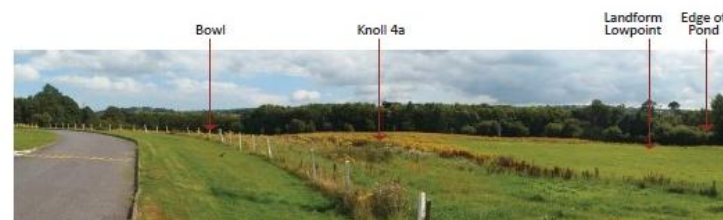
Diagram depicting an accurate extent of the proposed Landscape Preservation Zone. The base image includes structures, landscape features, 1m contour lines and aerial extent of tree canopies.

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

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

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

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



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

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## 10 - LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION ZONE MITIGATION MEASURES

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



Diagram illustrating mitigation measures to improve amenity and interpretation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 11 - REFERENCE IMAGES



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



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



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



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

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## 12 - CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

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



*End of Report*