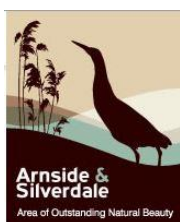


Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB  
Historic Designed Landscapes  
Phase 2: **Ridgeway Park**  
**Care & Management Guidelines**

September

2015

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Special thanks to Sue Hunter of the AONB and Richard Camp of Lancashire County Council  
for helping with contacts, information and continuous support.

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# 1. Introduction

These Care and Management Guidelines form the second part of the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Historic Designed Landscapes Phase 2 research project and accompany the Phase2 Ridgeway Park Research Report.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Care and Management Guidelines

Management plans are often an integral part, indeed a requirement, of new or renewed designed landscapes particularly where grants have been approved. These normally relate to designated or listed landscapes on the Historic England register or areas such as Conservation Areas, a local authority designation. These gardens are neither on the register nor within a Conservation Area; as such, the guidelines should be viewed as recommendations for the care of those landscapes and not as a requirement.

It is the intention of the project to provide useful guiding principles which will act as a sustainable approach to the care and management of the gardens. There are many facets to the word sustainability including climate change, change of ownership, divided landownership, natural degradation and renewal. The guidelines have considered these issues as well as current and longer term resource implications as a key component for the sustainability of these important historic designed landscapes.

## 1.2 Approaches to Conservation

Every site is unique, and while there is advice from many specialists, there is no single approach to dealing with the qualities and issues of a garden. Ideas and theories that underpin gardens evolve slowly, normally reflecting past designs and allowing them to evolve within a more modern idiom. Mark Treib elaborates on this in that 'unlike architecture and painting, modern landscape design made no cataclysmic breach with the past. It retained, for most part, the materials and many of the conceptual structures of previous eras: the site as the point of departure for the design, for example. Gardens and public spaces in traditional forms continued well into the twentieth century...' <sup>1</sup> Treib's point is relevant to any period as change in the garden is slow and evolving, and often imperceptible.

The first point is to recognise and understand what we have and what constitutes a garden. It is as much physical and geographical as it is intellectual and theoretical. There are concepts or ideas that form the basis of the physical composition and it is critical to understand these.

## 1.3 Evolution of Gardens

There are distinct differences between what a garden looks like, how it is used and how it performs in different design periods. Most gardens of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the AONB demonstrate a specific spatial form, function of space and the use of ornament. These gardens are often show pieces to view, to display plants and to demonstrate the owner's good taste and position in society. They followed an accepted pattern and there are many physical features associated with the period. Yet even in this brief time frame, there is an evolving pattern from the

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<sup>1</sup> Treib, Mark *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review* MIT Press, Cambridge Mass. 1993 pxi

Victorian/Edwardian to the Arts and Crafts period and then a brief foray into modernism.

Perhaps the most significant change is the way gardens evolved from being show cases for plants and decorative features, to ones that were more associated with pleasure. Ornament remained important within the garden, however, it was more restrained and controlled as compared with the earlier period. Essentially there was a reaction to the often excessive exuberance of the Victorian age. This same reaction was seen in architectural form and in interior design. There were key figures that influenced the form, use and structure of the garden. J C Loudon and his wife had a major impact on the garden both in layout and the use of plants. Edward Kemp, later than Loudon, wrote 'How to Lay-Out a Garden' in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This work was a major reference to the new middle classes and half a century later Thomas Mawson continued to refer to the principles set down by Kemp in his 'The Art & Craft of Garden Making'. Many gardens were influenced by William Robinson's 'The English Flower Garden' that went through innumerable editions. It was in stark contrast to 'The Formal Garden in England' by Regional Blomfield who advocated an entirely different approach. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the continued influence of Mawson, but also of Gertrude Jekyll who promoted a newer approach to planting. There was no single answer, no single style of garden.

There was great choice and variety and as a result many gardens reflect what Loudon identified as the mixed style: formal and informal in parts. Few gardens are of a single style and all have been altered by various owners as the gardens develop, mature and decay. The garden we see today reflects the changes enacted by both nature and man which is part of the natural development of a garden. Gardens may be considered as living exhibits that have both beauty and utility and that the very nature of the garden is change. A garden will never be as it started, but an evolving entity.

## **2.0 Understanding the Heritage**

### **2.1 What Heritage Means**

In its simplest form, Heritage is about valuing something from an earlier period. How old and what it is, is contentious and debateable. Even more difficult is what to do with something that is considered a heritage asset. These assets cover not only parks and gardens but buildings as well; but, in an expanded form, heritage can include furnishings, printed matter and even languages. There are organisations related to almost every area that campaign for the conservation and preservation of these assets. Gardens are no exception.

There are issues associated with the term as it can become a 'flag waving' exercise for the protection of virtually anything. Certainly the tourist industry has capitalised on this in marketing literature. Despite this, a heritage asset is something which has perceived value with reference to its historic relevance. In terms of gardens, the value is identified due to its importance within a number of categories such as uniqueness, rarity, association with individuals, ecological diversity, special collections of garden ornament and/or plant species, representative of a period of thought and design, designer, completeness, location, etc.



These assets are often only recognised as important if they have been identified by a specialist society, charity or government body such as Garden Trusts, National Trust, and Historic England. However, there has been increasing concern about those gardens that are not recognised by a national body. The European Landscape Convention refers to the importance of 'everyday landscapes'. This denotes the broader scale landscape as well as small and unrecognised landscapes which can be the walk to school or shops with overhanging trees and wildflowers or well-tended gardens, to larger scale areas such as Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB.

Heritage supports an individual's national and local identity; it provides a sense of place, a form of psychological DNA about who we are and from where we come. Our parks and gardens support many aspects of our daily lives giving pleasure and places for recreation. They are places where memories are formed and where we return in later life. Tatton Park in Cheshire demonstrates that gardens are indeed more popular than buildings with the public. The Park has over 700,000 visitors per annum, yet its impressive Georgian mansion has only 40,000 visitors per annum. The majority are return visitors to the gardens, whereas few return to the mansion. From the earliest stages of civilisation, gardens were and still are, a reflection of an earthly paradise. Francis Bacon<sup>2</sup> wrote that 'God almighty first Planted a Garden...As if Gardening were the greater Perfection'.

## **2.2 Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB**

In partnership with Lancashire County Council, detailed research has been carried out on several gardens within the AONB. The initial purpose was to discover what existed in the area and then to consider what the best possible action was in order to identify, assess and conserve the most important historic designed landscapes. These landscapes are seen as a special aspect of the AONB and are considered to be important character defining elements of the greater landscape. It is important to recognise and retain the qualities and specific character that these landscapes contribute to the region.

There are no plans to impose conditions for the restoration, conservation or preservation of these gardens. The 'Care and Management Guidelines' has been produced for owners to consider options and the best approach for caring for those gardens. The AONB Partnership welcomes positive and sensitive action by the current owners that is carried out in accordance with local planning policy and would be pleased to advise owners on their actions at an early stage.

## **2.3 Historic England**

English Heritage has undergone restructuring and is now divided into two parts: English Heritage (EH) and Historic England (HE). English Heritage is responsible for managing and promoting sites that it owns. Historic England is responsible for grants and for guidance to owners, listing of parks and gardens, and developing and implementing government policy. The recent changes have seen several national lists or registers combined under the National Heritage List for England (NHLE). This

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<sup>2</sup> Bacon, Francis *Of Gardens* 1625 'God almighty first Planted a Garden. And indeed, it is the Purest of Humane pleasures. It is the Greatest Refreshment to the Spirits of Man; Without which, Buildings and Pallaces are but Gross Handy-works: And a Man shall ever see, that when Ages grow to Civility and Elegancie, Men will come to Build Stately, sooner than to Garden Finely. As if Gardening were the Greater Perfection.'

includes lists for buildings, scheduled monuments, battlefields, wreck sites, world heritage sites (UNESCO) and parks and gardens. Currently there are approximately 1600 parks and gardens on the register, a substantial contrast to the near 1 million buildings or structures on the buildings register.

HE is reluctant to add more parks and gardens to the current list as they wish to deal with a manageable number, unlike the large number of listed buildings which is a major administrative problem. While their guidelines refer to several considerations for listing, there is little likelihood of a park or garden being added to the register unless it is exceptional and under immediate threat. This usually refers to substantial development that affects the site. Overgrown gardens or those with poor maintenance are not normally considered to be a threat. They also refer to town gardens that are 'ambitious'<sup>3</sup> in their design and detail, meaning that 'lesser' gardens are unlikely to be considered.

It is useful to understand some of the key points from the *Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide: Urban Landscapes*. This gives a better understanding of their criteria and regulations. The following are selected notes from HE website that relate particularly to gardens in the AONB.

#### **Date and Rarity**

- Sites with a main phase of development post-1840 which are of special interest and relatively intact...
- Special selection criteria is required for sites from the period after 1945
- Sites of less than 30 years old are normally registered only if they are of outstanding quality and under threat

#### **Further Considerations**

- Sites which are influential in the development of taste, whether through reputation or reference to literature
- Sites which are early or representative examples of a style or layout or a type of site, or the work of a designer (amateur or professional) of national importance
- Sites having an association with significant persons or events
- Sites with strong group value with other heritage assets

In addition to these guidelines, HE will take account of condition, planting and ornamental features within a garden. In terms of grading, the register is divided into three bands or grades of significance. The three grades are Grade I (of exceptional interest), Grade II\* (of more than special interest) and Grade II (of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them). Over 35% parks and gardens are Grade I and II\*; however, only 8% of buildings fall into these categories.<sup>4</sup> Unlike the Register for Buildings, the Register for Parks and Gardens does not offer statutory protection.

#### **2.4 Parks and Gardens Data Services (PGDS)**

This is a database that provides free public access to 6,500 records of designed parks, gardens and landscapes of which over 5000 are in England. Established in 2007 as a partnership with the Association of Garden Trusts and the University of York, the

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<sup>3</sup> English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide: Urban Landscapes* 2013 p14

<sup>4</sup> English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide: Urban Landscapes* 2013 p16

database has been developed through volunteer time from members of county garden trusts, local authorities, individuals and other heritage organisations. The database covers far more than private gardens and includes plant nurseries, community gardens, botanical collections, urban green spaces and many other forms of designed landscapes. In addition, there are over 2000 biographies of people associated with gardens, a glossary, and articles.<sup>5</sup>

The level of information on each garden within the database is extremely variable and is dependent on the individual who provided and downloaded the information. The database is simply a source for information which should be verified by other sources prior to any use of it as the information may not be correct. It is not a register as operated by Historic England and has no official or legal status; however, contained information may be used as material consideration. At present, only Ridgeway Park, listed as Greywalls on the data base, appears on the PGDS. There is very little information as it was part of a desk-top study for English Heritage by Bennis and Dyke (1989).

## **2.5 Local Authority Heritage Lists**

Referred to as Local Listing, local authorities are responsible for drawing up local lists of heritage assets that they consider to be of local importance. The focus has been traditionally based on the methods and criteria of English Heritage and mostly related to buildings and structures, although not of national importance. However, Councils may set their own criteria for local listing. Baroness Andrews stated that local lists 'recognises that the importance we place on the historic environment should extend beyond the confines of the planning system to recognise those community-based values that contribute to our sense of place'. She also promotes the list as 'playing a crucial part in helping to conserve or even enhance local character'<sup>6</sup>. It is intended that the local community has an active role in the development of these lists.

The Local Lists serve as a 'recognition of local distinctiveness and character to ensure that these values are taken into account when changes affecting the historic environment are proposed'<sup>7</sup> and is backed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF recommends that Local Planning Authorities set out 'a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment' in their Local Plan<sup>8</sup>. While the Local Lists of heritage assets do not offer statutory protection, it does mean that that they may be of 'material consideration' in planning matters.

## **2.6 Garden History Society & County Garden Trusts**

There are a number of societies involved in the conservation of gardens as well as specific trusts for individual parks and gardens. The Georgian Society, The Victorian Society and The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Society have some interest in gardens, however their focus is mostly on structures and associated artefacts. The primary society for parks and gardens in terms of research and publications is the Garden History Society (GHS). It is the oldest learned society in the world that is concerned with the history of parks and gardens. The society has a large number of historians and academics as members with peer-reviewed publications. The Association of Garden Trusts (AGT)

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<sup>5</sup> [www.gardenhistorysociety.org](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org) accessed 10 June 2015

<sup>6</sup> English Heritage *Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing* May 2012 p5. Baroness Andrews was the Chair of English Heritage

<sup>7</sup> English Heritage *Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing* May 2012 p6

<sup>8</sup> English Heritage *Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing* May 2012 p7

supports County Garden Trusts (CGT) in each county of England. The county trusts vary in terms of their activities but most offer visits and talks to their members, as does the GHS. Some are active in research, dealing with planning applications, publication and education.

The AGT and the GHS have merged to form a larger and stronger voice in the protection of our parks and gardens. The GHS is a statutory consultative body on development or change to parks and gardens on the Register of Parks and Gardens; this role has been passed to the new joint society and is known as The Garden Trust. The Parks and Gardens Data Services will be part of their responsibilities.

In terms of value, The Garden Trust is a primary source for published research and information. Local advice will still operate through the local membership of the CGTs which will operate independently, but under the auspices of The Garden Trust. Within most CGTs, there are historians, landscape architects, architects, horticulturalists and planners which may be able to offer advice directly to owners, or direct them to a professional organisation that can help. Depending on the issues, Lancashire County Council and organisations such as the Royal Horticultural Society, Society of Garden Designers, the Landscape Institute, the Royal Town Planning Institute and others may be of assistance.

## **2.7 Adaptability & Change**

Gardens, more than any other heritage asset, are subject to change through the actions of nature and man. The change is often slow and imperceptible as we fail to see the ingress of nature through growth and decay, the influx of dominant or invasive species, or the even intentionally adding new plants to an existing garden. The fourth dimension of time is deceptive and unnoticed.

The very essence of a garden is change through the seasons and the years, as well as hours of the day. As such, the initial design should be considered as a starting point of the garden and not the finish. Plants that were introduced at the earliest stage have often performed better than expected, grown larger than ever anticipated or have taken over a garden like an invading army. Others are quite the opposite and have never grown well. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, John Claudius Loudon said that the life of a garden is about 25 years. As such, a garden should be reassessed in terms of its historic fabric, condition, economic issues and purpose. Structural features are often easier to deal with while planting often proves more difficult. There will be the need to remove overgrown plants, hard prune others and re-plant entire sections of a garden. Areas that were sunny are now in shade will need different types of plants to reflect changing conditions.

The use of a garden can also change from its initial concept but it is perhaps the economics of a garden that dictate change more than anything else. A garden that had six gardeners may now only have one, or it is the home owner that has to manage the garden personally. This clearly places limitations on the entire garden in terms of its management and appearance. Provided that a garden is sensitively managed, it is possible to retain a quality that responds to its concept and allows it to co-exist within the confines of economic restraints.

## 3.0 Setting Goals and Objectives

### 3.1 Approaches to Conservation

It is only in recent years that there has been a good level of information related to historic parks and gardens in terms of their conservation. There are numerous publications from English Heritage<sup>9</sup> as well as other organisations such as UNESCO, the Historic Houses Association, and learned societies such as the Victorian Society and the Georgian Society. There are different approaches to conservation as well as different terms in use often with no absolute agreed meaning. However, in the UK the term 'conservation' is generally used as the standard term to cover a number of distinct approaches.

Frank Clark, first President of the Garden History Society at its 1968 conference stated the need to understand and promote the values and traditions of great gardens. 'The inheritance of traditions confers both to an indigenous culture and responsibilities to the new generations that inherit it...Variety of visual experience, forms that are rich in association, forms that are expressions of richness and complexity of nature, forms that allow the process of life to go on; all of these are as important now as they were 200 years ago'.<sup>10</sup> Clark also encouraged owners not to be too pedantic when conserving a garden as the very nature of a garden is about change.

Conserving a building is complex and a garden even more so. A key principle in conservation is that work should be reversible. A garden may be lost to nature, but it is recoverable in parts. A garden may be lost to functional features such as a tennis court or even a car park, but these are often reversible actions. However, a garden that is lost to a new building or a road is lost forever.

There are a number of terms that follow and an attempt has been made to clarify their meaning. No doubt there will be different interpretations of these terms but it is important to have an agreement on these when developing ideas, or in discussions with others including conservators, designers, planning officers, conservation officers, garden historians, gardeners, and the public. This will also provide the owner with a strong base for setting and developing goals and objectives.

Few gardens are suitable for one action or method and most will contain aspects from several different approaches. In any conservation approach, concessions are made but it is important to retain the idea and spirit of the garden. Dealing with an historic designed landscape requires a more considered approach than a normal garden

**3.1.1 Conserve** This is the most standard approach and suitable for most gardens. It allows for flexibility by identifying and safeguarding those features which are most important and relevant to the garden. Conserving permits new planting and features, and the removal of plants and features to achieve a unified whole that reflects the most important stages or periods of the garden. It is a

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<sup>9</sup> Most publications are authored by English Heritage; however, they are undergoing a rebranding exercise from dividing it into two divisions. Most publications regarding conservation will be rebranded and published under Historic England. Numerous publications are available for free on line as PDFs.

<sup>10</sup> Jellicoe, Goode & Lancaster *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* Oxford University Press, 1987 p 126 (Article on Conservation and Restoration of historic Gardens by Mavis Batey)

sensitive and balanced approach that responds to the historic fabric and modern needs.

**3.1.2 Preserve** A term that is rarely used in the UK but it is still widely used in other countries. Preservation maintains the current features and conditions; it is a means of stabilising and preventing further decay. While preservation is often more associated with structures, in terms of the garden it is only used in occasional incidences and normally for built features. It is not possible to preserve plants within a garden as nature itself constantly changes them.

**3.1.3 Restore** This is a case of putting something back into the garden and to bring it back to its perceived original form or condition. The process of restoration requires change of the existing features and planting. It is questionable if true restoration can ever be achieved as original plants and other materials of a period are unlikely to be available. The earlier a garden the less likely that there is information such as an accurate planting plan. There is always the question of what date to restore a garden.

**3.1.4 Enhance** Gardens often have key features which have been partially lost due to vegetation or decay. These features may be 'tidied up' to make them read more clearly in the landscape. This is generally a very low level of intervention and can be associated with the idea of stabilising and enhancing an aspect of the garden in part.

**3.1.5 Stabilise** Generally meant to maintain a garden in its current condition and to prevent further deterioration. This may be done in whole or in part of the garden.

**3.1.6 Creative Conservation** A term used by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe that encourages new ideas or interventions within the historic fabric of a garden. Jellicoe was particularly successful with this approach at Sutton Place in Surrey.

**3.1.7 Rehabilitation** to revitalise a garden often with new uses while retaining some of the historic character.

## **3.2 Levels of Intervention**

The reality of conserving a garden is one of great commitment of time, understanding, physical labour and depleting bank accounts. Conserving a garden is a matter of understanding what there is now, what there was, when and why things changed, and developing an approach which is an informed judgement. Every garden is individual and has its unique qualities as well as problems; each requires an approach that is tailored to that garden, to available data, and to resources that will ensure its long term sustainability.

It is generally not advisable to attempt to conserve a garden in a short period of time. A phased approach to reveal the garden both through on site investigation and the discovery of documentary evidence will result in a more considered solution. Time is required to discover the garden as well in making decisions.

The following examples demonstrate different approaches to conserving a garden. Even in its purest form, there are many concessions and at time questionable decisions to achieve the results



**Hampton Court - Restoration:** Above left shows the Privy Garden in 1975 prior to its restoration which is seen above right in 2005. This is the most comprehensive restoration of a garden in England. It required the destruction of a mixed period garden as well as the ancient yew trees which were contemporary to the original garden of William and Mary in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The replacement yews can just be seen in the 2005 photograph as small evergreen cones. Despite the apparent authenticity of the design, there was no planting plan so the planting is based on the ideas of the period, engravings, paintings, diaries and ledgers that show certain plants were purchased for the palace, but there was no indication as to where the plants were located.



**Sutton Place Creative, Surrey – Creative Conservation:** Jellicoe promoted the idea of new ideas in an historic designed landscape based on the premise that those landscapes are products of many generations of ownership, their ideas and aspirations. He believed that it was fitting for an owner to add something of their time to the garden, a similar principle used by the Historic Houses Association.

The garden to the top left is called the Paradise Garden with intimate spaces, heavily scented flowers, and a careful use of water for its sound effects. To the right is an oversized marble sculpture by Ben Nicholson that was specifically commissioned for the space. It sits in a position where a more traditional sculpture might exist yet changes the entire dynamics of the space, a space thought to have been originally designed by Gertrude Jekyll although there is no documentary proof for this claim.





**Cheadle Royal Hospital, Cheadle - Revitalisation:** originally built as a psychiatric hospital in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cheadle Royal was designed to imitate a country house with a formal access drive and formal gardens either side of the main entrance. The formal gardens were typical of the period with a perimeter walk, central feature and cross walks. It was one of the first institutional landscapes to be placed on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens.

Still used for the same purpose, the gardens fell into disrepair and the Friends of Cheadle Royal created a new garden, conserving the main walkway pattern but with new planting and seating areas. It was specifically designed for the Alzheimer's unit based on remembrance therapy and sensual stimulation.



**Trentham Gardens Staffordshire- Conservation:** There is almost every approach used in conservation within this garden. Above left shows part of the Italianate garden area with modern planting by Tom Stuart-Smith. His planting is far more exuberant than the original planting. Above right- Piet Oudolf used very modern planting in an area that is subject to flooding. Oudolf uses large swaths of grasses and perennials, a concept entirely different to the original gardens. In both examples, the planting is very much a modern interpretation yet fits comfortably within the framework of the gardens.

An area at the top of the garden retains a more traditional layout of formal planting, but even this has a modern twist. There is a mixture of flowers, herbs and small vegetable plants which at first sight appears as traditional Victorian flower beds.



### 3.3 Primary Goals

How should we approach an historic designed landscape? James Rose referred to Francis Bacon's comment about gardens being made by God and the purest of human pleasures. He counters that by saying he made a garden and it was hard work!<sup>11</sup> In most cases, a garden offers no financial return, it creates financial, physical and emotional hardship yet it is something that uplifts the spirit, gives pleasure and provides identity.

It is not possible to retain, conserve or restore everything. Information is never complete or absolute, and a garden is constantly evolving. And of course, resources are almost always limited; this includes time as well as money, but also the appropriate materials, craftsmanship or skills may no longer be available. When deciding what course of action is to be pursued, it is essential to consider the care and management after the initial action. How will a garden be maintained, who will do the work, are the skills available, and how will it be financially resourced? This is in addition to the key question, what are you trying to do and to achieve?

To establish a primary goal, the above issues must be taken into account and developed with the ideas in Section 3.1 Approaches to Conservation. It is advisable to develop goals within the equivalent of a business plan and using appropriate advisors such as garden historians, arboriculturists, ecologists, and specialists in the conservation of structures and gardens (architects and landscape architects). A 'hybrid' approach is most likely to be taken including methods such as restoration, enhancement, creative conservation, etc.

### 3.4 Establishing Objectives

While goals are overall aims in terms of what you would like to achieve, objectives are what is required to achieve them and are more specific.

A garden may be divided into zones which reflect different approaches and priorities, as well as a level of intervention such as low, moderate or full/complete. Even in a small site, or sections of larger gardens, goals may have interim stages and be phased over a number of years. This responds to planting seasons, growth periods and also resource issues. There should be a level of flexibility to account for new discoveries and changes due to resource restrictions, legislation, climate change, plant diseases etc.

Examples of objectives:

- Increase and/or enhance bio-diversity; be specific about where
- Repair specific structures and to what level
- Removal of invasive species; which ones, why and where
- Reinstatement internal and/or external views
- Restrict or remove specific views
- Protection of natural elements such as limestone paving
- Identify and conserve spatial form
- Use of historically appropriate new planting/or use of modern species
- Tree survey to establish condition
- Felling of dangerous trees near footpaths and structures
- Replacement of over mature planting; define where and what

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<sup>11</sup> Rose, James *Gardens Make Me Laugh* Silvermine Pub, Conn, USA 1965

Every idea and action should be checked that it supports the goals and specific objectives. On a regular basis, the goals and objectives should be assessed and questioned as to how successful the actions are as there are likely to be amendments through time as more is discovered and understood about the garden.

## 4.0 Management Guidelines for Ridgeway Park

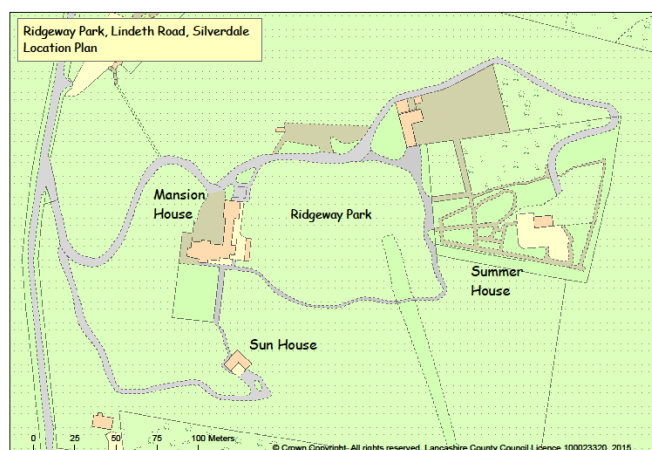
### 4.1 Introduction

The guidelines are concerned with the historic designed gardens/landscapes found within Ridgeway Park, originally known as Greywalls. The estate has been through several ownerships since initial construction in the mid-1920s and has recently been sold and divided into three ownerships. This is far from unusual but interestingly the three areas are very distinct in terms of structures, planting and spatial form. In terms of this report, the three areas addressed are: The Mansion, The Summer House and Sun House. It would not be appropriate to separate these as they were all part of the original Sharp estate and are physically connected with drives and woodland walks and in terms of the design concept.

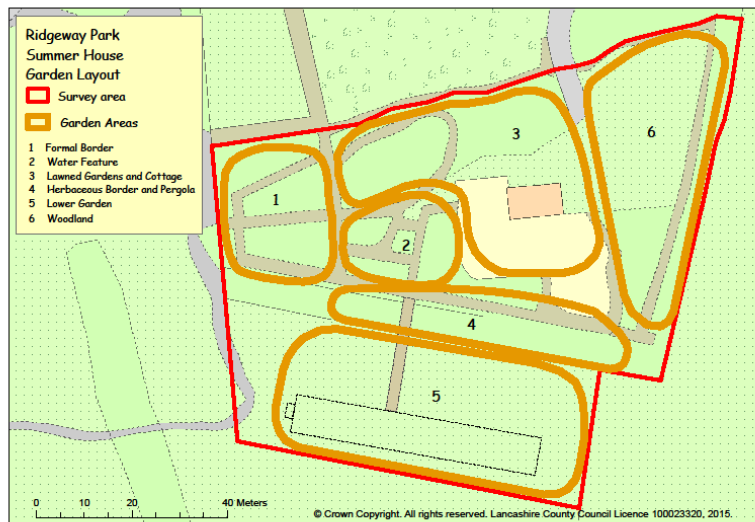
It is not uncommon for new information to appear during the research for this type of property and Ridgeway Park is no different. Recent photographs have come to light as well as a small collection of pencil perspectives of the Mansion and around the Summer House. The new owner of Summer House has made amazing discoveries through clearing much of the overgrown vegetation to discover an exemplary period garden. In addition, the lodge, now called Sun House has been cleared of much of its overgrown vegetation to reveal what are clearly designed garden elements. As a package, Ridgeway Park offers a unique garden within the AONB and one that is decidedly associated with the Arts and Crafts movement. Gardens are always associated with a time, taste and thinking of the time. Ridgeway Park is highly significant in its composition, its detail and the final home of one of the AONB's most eminent families.

The guidelines are presented for areas of the garden with a brief description and strategies for dealing with spatial form, planting, and structures. These three aspects are seen as being essential to the historic nature of the garden and are character defining details.

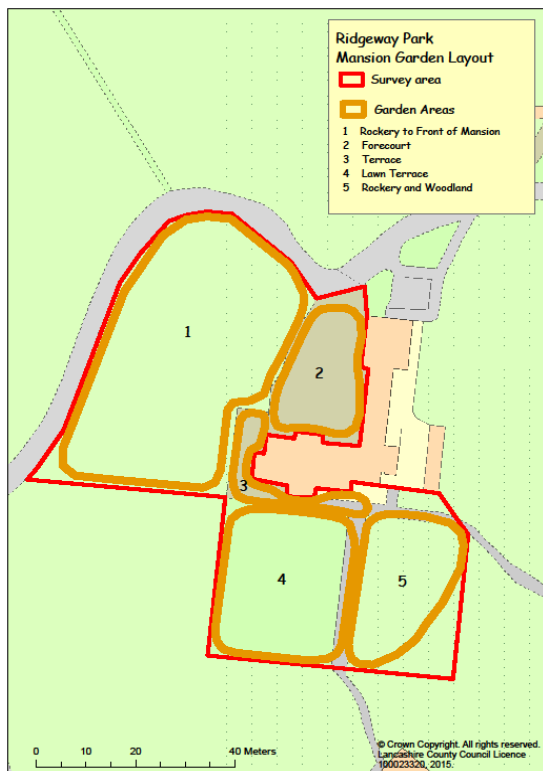
It should be noted that prior to any works being carried out, owners will need to have regard to any relevant planning or environmental designations, consents and legislation eg. protected species, habitats, felling licences etc. Consideration will need to be given to the use of herbicides in environmentally sensitive areas and will need to be used in accordance with good practice. Advice should be sought if in any doubt.



**Map 1: Site Location Plan**



**Map 2: Summer House & Garden**



**Map 3: Mansion House & Garden**

© Maps courtesy of Lancashire County Council

**Note:** There is no detail map for the Sun House Garden as this has only been recently investigated.

## 4.2 Key Features

Spatial form, planting and structures are seen as being essential to the historic nature of the garden and are character defining details.

### 4.2.1 Spatial Form

A garden is comprised of spaces with specific design functions such as display, enclosure, surprise, shelter, ornament, leading or drama. Ridgeway Park has a variety of spaces that have distinctly different physical and visual qualities. The Mansion sits

high on a hill with open views of the bay. Conifers control part of the view while there is dense woodland to the rear of the house almost like a theatre screen. A formal terrace runs around two sides of the house. There are two significant open spaces, the forecourt and the terrace lawn. The Summer House is in complete contrast with small, intimate scale spaces enclosed by planting and land forms. There is a strong axis that runs from the entrance to the cottage and a number of cross-axes. There are a series of levels or informal terraces dropping down into the woodland. Originally with distant views to the bay, these views are now lost to woodland. At a less detailed and smaller scale, Sun House offers small scale former garden areas with a more naturalistic and informal flavour. It too has distinct spaces indicating former planting areas and garden features.

#### **4.2.2 Planting**

Planting is used to control and form the spatial sequence, give seasonal variety and control views. Much of the planting has been lost around the Mansion and Sun House through years of neglect, and the requirements for the last use as a school. There is some remaining ornamental planting above the main lawn of The Mansion, while only spaces for planting remain around Sun House. Large areas have grown up as semi-mature woodland blocking the original views to the bay as well as the reason for building on the site originally. The most significant remaining planting is in the gardens of the Summer House. There are some excellent specimen trees and shrubs as well as some which appear to be at the end of their useful life. Substantial clearing has taken place by the current owner to discover the nature and positioning of the plants.

#### **4.2.3 Structures**

Much of the structural form and detail of all the gardens is a result of land forms, natural and man-made. These forms are an intrinsic part of the gardens ranging from the formal stone terrace, walls and lawn of the Mansion, to the intricate layout of the Summer House gardens and to the more naturalised garden of Sun House. Limestone is often used as edgings and walls but boulders are a main feature at the end of the lower lawn of the Summer House. In addition, the Summer House has water features, pergola, walls and rockeries. Walks lined with limestone and occasional limestone steps run throughout the woodlands that link all three gardens. The Mansion appears to have had a substantial rockery garden to its front slope with stone edge paths and steps throughout the area.<sup>12</sup>

### **4.3 Guidelines**

The following is an assessment and recommendations for the care of specified features within the gardens of Ridgeway Park. While this section reflects the different ownerships of the overall estate, it is important to consider the relationship between the three garden areas. Consideration should be given to adjoining land owners prior to any action being taken as well as developing a good working relationship with the AONB Partnership.

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<sup>12</sup> Keer to Kent Issue Number 12, *The Building of Grey Walls* by Pater Sharp, Summer 1994, p.16. A photograph published with the article shows elaborate rock gardens to the front of the mansion and along the entrance drive.

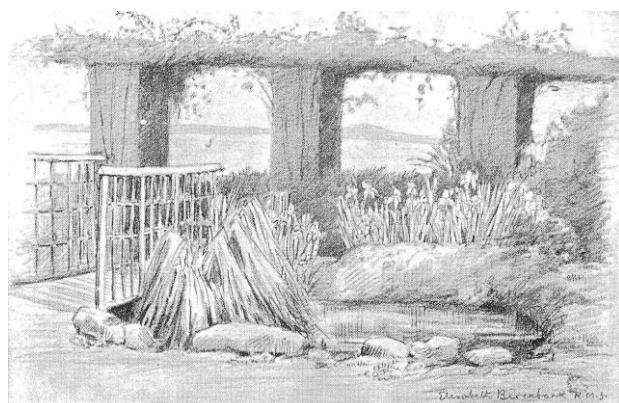
## 4.4 The Summer House Garden

### 4.4.1 Formal Border

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<p>1. Access to the garden is through a gate in a wall which opens to a narrow central avenue.</p> <p>2. Formal walk leads into the garden with a feature at the end.</p> <p>3. Spaces either side of the walk, one enclosed with planting, the other more open.</p> <p>4. Planted area is slightly lower and has sense of a secret garden</p>	<p>1. Surprise view should be retained as a major contrast with woodland and garden area.</p> <p>2. Space is fairly open and would benefit from detail planting to make a stronger statement. Remnant planting beds should be reinstated.</p> <p>3. Strong spatial form to left side of central walk with dense planting. Right side lacks definition and consider replanting to reinforce form.</p> <p>4. Retain quality.</p>
Planting	<p>1. Assume central path with borders either side were planted with herbaceous or annual planting. Important for definition of spatial form.</p> <p>2. Mature Japanese Maples, azaleas, camellias indicate imported soil. Some plants appear to have nitrogen deficiency.</p>	<p>1. Consider planting with lower maintenance herbaceous plants and mixed shrubs to minimise maintenance to accentuate spatial form.</p> <p>2. Apply leaf mulch and feed with ericaceous fertilizer on an annual basis.</p>
Structures	<p>1. Wall and gates</p> <p>2. Gravel walk with limestone edging is overgrown.</p>	<p>1. Wall should be checked on regular basis, particularly capping stones and repaired as necessary. Gate is in poor condition and in need of repair. Secondary gate entrance is in very poor condition and should be replaced with one suitable to period of the garden, or a clearly modern version.</p> <p>2. Clear path of vegetation and apply gravel surface. Gravel should be of similar colour and size to original. Keep weed free.</p>

#### 4.4.2 Water Feature

Feature	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A key feature and focal point at the end of the garden entrance and of the garden</li> <li>2. Small scale intimate space that has been opened up through removal of overgrown planting.</li> <li>3. Leads onto higher level of small ponds via limestone semi-circular steps.</li> <li>4. Cross-axis walks lead to the left to the lawned gardens and to the pergola on the right.</li> </ol>	<p>1-4. Spatial form leads to this as a major feature and focal point of the garden. Important to retain and enhance through planting.</p>
Planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Owner has cleared much of the overgrown planting which hid the water feature.</li> <li>2. Large formal conifers have been retained but lower parts pruned to open view.</li> <li>3. Some excellent specimen plants including Cornus.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Replant area with species suitable to display the water feature.</li> <li>2. Consider removal of these and replace with similar but a dwarf variety.</li> <li>3. Selectively retain.</li> </ol>
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Several ponds rising to the cottage lawn. Comprises rockery, rills, and presumably cascades.</li> <li>2. Top pond with PVC liner.</li> <li>3. Semi-circular limestone steps link lower and upper pond areas.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In need of full restoration and should be encouraged as a primary garden feature.</li> <li>2. Needs to be explored to determine if this is original to the design or a later addition.</li> <li>3. Some stones will need to be reset to provide a more even surface. Steps should be cleaned on a regular basis and kept weed free. Consider in some corners sowing appropriate wild flower seeds.</li> </ol>



Sketch No1 Pond & Pergola: Lowest pond with pergola behind (Section 4.4.4). Note rockery edge to pond, bridge and background planting which may be Iris. Pergola has planting along the length and climbers.

Source: see reference 13 below

#### 4.4.3 Lawned Gardens & Cottage

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<p>1. To north side of the cottage there are linking lawns with planting and low walls to edges. Open and likely to have been this way originally.</p> <p>2 Area around cottage is lawn to the south side and would have had views of the bay.</p> <p>3. Woodland with walks and planting areas to the east side.</p> <p>4. West side links to the water garden and the main garden entrance.</p>	<p>1. Distinctly different spatial form and should be retained. A Yew hedge that formed to top boundary has gone.</p> <p>2. Simple and open space. Provides internal views of the adjacent lower area. Consider opening up long distant views.</p> <p>3. Walks need investigation and possible links to other areas of adjoining gardens. Reinstate walks where possible and propose new walks resulting from changes to ownership.</p> <p>4. Enclosed by Yew hedge which blocks view to lower water feature and likely part of earlier design. Retain and prune to keep under control.</p>
Planting	<p>1. Planting around the north side lawns in mixed condition.</p> <p>2. Far end of site (according to earlier photos) had a Yew hedge as a boundary.</p> <p>3. Woodland area has had some thinning and there are some interesting specimen shrubs.</p> <p>4. South side of the cottage is mainly grass leading to a slope (thought to have had a wall or rockery)</p> <p>5. Remnant Yew hedge behind upper pond and along part of the lawn.</p>	<p>1. Selective trees should be felled and consider replanting but retain open aspect of space. New shrub plantings would support spatial forms.</p> <p>2. This would have been an important defining element for the space. Recommend reinstatement.</p> <p>3. Consider opening up canopy further to allow more light to establish a good herbaceous layer. Identify specialist specimen shrubs to be included within any change.</p> <p>4. Lawn is in reasonable condition but could be improved. Slope is a maintenance problem and consider planting with low maintenance ground cover.</p> <p>5. Prune and maintain hedge. Consider where it should end as it seems to</p>

		have no reason in the lawn area.
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Main structure is the cottage although not subject to recommendations.</li> <li>2. Low free standing limestone walls to north side of the cottage with low plinths.</li> <li>3. Stone edging to paths and rockeries. Gravel walks.</li> <li>4. Rockery embankment Sketch No.2) which shows a limestone set of steps and used to retain slope. Most of this is lost.</li> <li>5. Upper pond and paving.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This has been changed substantially from the Sketch No.2 which is seen below.</li> <li>2. Ensure walls are in sound condition and particularly the capping stones are firmly in place.</li> <li>3. Stones should be fixed and replaced where necessary. Gravel paths as previously noted in 4.4.1</li> <li>4. This area needs to be rethought to either reinstate or to produce a new solution sensitive to the style of the garden.</li> <li>5. This appears to be alien to the garden form and should be investigated to determine if it is an original feature. Consider removing.</li> </ol>



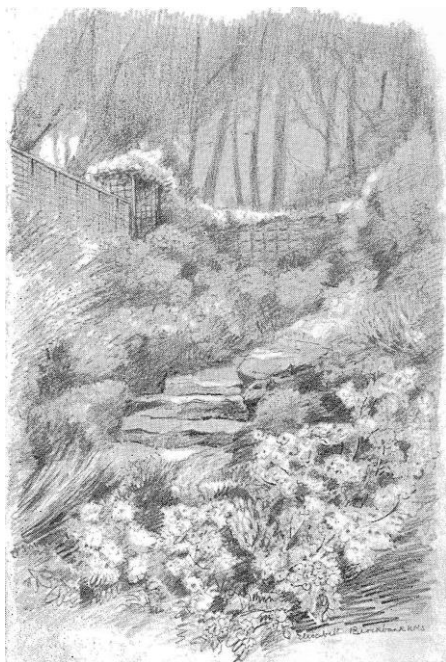
Sketch No.2: Cottage prior to remodelling shows a building and garden in the rustic or picturesque style. According to Peter Sharp's article in *Keer to Kent*, this before the garden. Spatially, the garden is open to the front. Boulders are used to retain the slope and a set of steps lead to the lower herbaceous border with the pergola. (Section 4.4.4)



#### 4.4.4 Herbaceous Border and Pergola

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Running below the level of the cottage and parallel to the main entrance walk, there is a long linear space with a pergola emphasising the linear nature.</li> <li>2. Space is open to grass at the east end while it connects to a smaller grassed area with some planting.</li> <li>3. A hedge along the southern side encloses the space with a gate towards the western end that connects to the lowest garden area (Section 4.4.5)</li> <li>4. Seat/feature at west end has been lost. This can be seen in the current owner's photographs from 1980s.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-3. The form of the space is much the same as photos (possibly 1980s) in the possession of the owner. However, it appears much wider and more open as there is a large amount of herbaceous planting that runs parallel to the space. This could be recovered as detailed below under 'Planting'.</li> <li>4. Replace with similar seat or feature in scale as this would then provide the much needed focal point to the area.</li> </ol>
Planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is mixed, overgrown planting to the rock embankment which is in the process of being cleared.</li> <li>2. Lonicera hedge to the south side is too large and apparently not original to the design.</li> <li>3. Loss of herbaceous planting.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommend simple planting after area is cleared of weeds and invasive perennial species. This would help to re-establish the spatial form.</li> <li>2. Lonicera could be cut back hard to a manageable size in late winter. Or, replace with a more easily managed plant or similar screening found in Sketch No.3</li> <li>3. Recommended to regain the spatial definition, shrub or permanent planting be used rather than herbaceous due to its high maintenance. Alternative solutions would be to use some form of mass ground cover planting.</li> </ol>
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rockery</li> <li>2. Pergola</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure all rocks are well bedded into embankment and stable.</li> <li>2. Overhead timber is out of scale with the structure and is a replacement. Sketch</li> </ol>

	<p>3. Lost timber screen (Sketch No.3) located where the Lonicera hedge is found.</p>	<p>No.1 gives impression of much heavier timbers. Recommend researching similar structures of the period to develop appropriate details. Stonework should be inspected and repaired or repointed as necessary.</p> <p>3. Recommend replacing Lonicera with timber screen as a period detail and to help define the space.</p>
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Sketch No.3: Timber trellis and stone walk and steps to lower garden area. The walk and steps are noted in the next section 4.4.5 as these have been recently uncovered by the owner.

Note the mixed planting and what appears to be flowering plants towards the front.

#### 4.4.5 Lower Garden

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<p>1. Separate and of a completely different scale to the rest of the garden.</p> <p>2. Linear terrace with limestone pavement to the north side and woodland to the south side.</p> <p>3. Enclosed and directs view to eastern end.</p> <p>4. Connected to main garden by set of limestone steps.</p>	<p>1-5. An important and distinctive area. Sketch No4 shows the scale of space and that it was originally open at the eastern end.</p> <p>New planting would help to show the spatial form</p>

	<p>5. Recent clearing of trees and undergrowth has revealed the scale of space</p> <p>6. Distinctive change of scale at eastern end with placed limestone boulders.</p>	<p>6. Spatial form is more intimate and acts as a focal point.</p>
Planting	<p>1. Encroaching woodland has filled most of the space until recent clearance. Woodland at eastern end will remain as it belongs to the National Trust.</p> <p>2. There are two mature trees on the limestone slope shown in Sketch No.4.</p> <p>3 Also shown are herbaceous plants and a Dianthus edge planting (confirmed from photos in owner's possession). All detail planting has been lost.</p>	<p>1. Continue clearance until spatial form is clear and sufficient light for good plant growth.</p> <p>2. Important to retain and keep in good condition.</p> <p>3 Consider some understory planting which will reflect the scale and visual properties shown in Sketch No.4.</p>
Structures	<p>1. Limestone steps from herbaceous border (4.4.4)</p> <p>2. Placed limestone boulders at eastern end and rockery with steps/walk in far northeast corner.</p> <p>3. Trellis fence can be seen in Sketch No.3.</p> <p>4. On the south side, there are some clearly defined entrances to the woodland walks through the use of boulders and edging stones.</p>	<p>1. Maintain and clean on a regular basis.</p> <p>2. Recommend surveying this area to determine if there is a specific pattern. Keep stones in present positions and consider appropriate planting such as ferns between boulders and to help define routes and seating areas.</p> <p>3 Recommend replacing trellis and planting.</p> <p>4. Clear undergrowth to establish routes for paths and maintain in conjunction with neighbouring land owner.</p>



Sketch No.4: Extremely informative in terms of spatial form, planting along edges of the lawn, clear and open limestone pavement, open scale of space to the end and to the right. Sketch No.3 shows a detail of planting, steps and trellis fencing in the far left corner.

#### 4.4.6 Woodland

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enclosed with high tree canopy and thin herbaceous layer</li> <li>2. Small openings either natural or planned along some of the walks</li> </ol>	1-2. Some opening of spaces and thinning of the canopy would diversify species and provide a more interesting spatial sequence.
Planting	1. Remnant planting along edge near the cottage but generally naturally regenerating woodland.	1. Identify those exotic species worthy of retaining.
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Large boulders have been used to create features mostly near the cottage and on the slope going down to the lower garden.</li> <li>2. Some woodland paths have rough stone edging.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Route should be cleared of invasive species and reinstated.</li> <li>2. Clear paths of debris and invasive plants.</li> </ol>

#### 4.5 Mansion Garden

##### 4.5.1 Rockery to Front of Mansion

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	1. Recently cleared large open slope leading up to the main house. Provides an imposing position for the house and offer views to the bay.	1. Retain and keep clear as a large scale open space. Consider new planting which could frame the views from and to the house.
Planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mostly rough grass and a few remaining small trees after clearance. Daffodils and primrose have naturalised parts of the area. Arum italic is prevalent along woodland edge.</li> <li>2. Appears that the area was originally a highly detailed rockery planting.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage natural regeneration of selected species. Conifers to north side of the drive are a latter addition according to photo in <i>Keer to Kent</i> article. Removal and replanting with more appropriate species should be considered.</li> <li>2. Sketch No.5, although rough, gives an idea of the quality of the space. There is evidence of planting in the sketch. <i>Keer to Kent</i> article shows a highly developed and complex rockery. Photo of Windyridge in Silverdale gives an indication of how the garden</li> </ol>

		may have looked; however, this is an extremely high maintenance garden. Recommend limited planting to enhance area by defining main areas such as steps or bends in the paths. Control grass/herbaceous layer by strimming.
Structures	<p>1. Entrance and drive</p> <p>2. Limestone rockery with designated walks and steps throughout the area.</p>	<p>3. Good spatial sequence of house hidden, partly revealed, and eventually completely seen when visitor reaches top of the slope. Keep the sequence and enhance with some modest planting.</p> <p>2. Maintain as an important historical feature.</p>



Sketch No.5: Steps leading from the stone terrace can be seen centre right. Note some boulders are shown and planting style is certainly semi-natural or wild. The wing to the left of the house is earlier than later extensions and more in scale than the current extension.



Windyridge, Silverdale: The house is probably slightly later than Ridgeway Park, however the setting is very similar. A large open space to the front with the house sitting above the front rock garden. Ridgeway probably had a garden of this type but it is extremely high maintenance and not for the faint hearted!

### 4.5.2 Forecourt

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	1. Essentially a car parking area that is poorly defined but functional and offering good views to the bay.	1. Recommend a complete redesign of this area that reflects the scale and use as a private home.
Planting	1. Planting against the building has been removed since the sale of the property.	1. Recommend new planting to help form the space and visually soften the later extension.
Structures	1. Area paved in tarmac with newer block paving near the entrance.  2. Stone wall and gate forms an entrance point to stone terrace.	1. Recommend single type of paving with possible different edge detail to unify the whole.  2. Provides a good, almost secret, entrance to the terrace and frames the distant view. Retain.

### 4.5.3 Terrace

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	1. Narrow, linear space wrapping around two sides of the house with views to the bay and over the lawn (4.5.4) and enclosed by a low stone wall to the west side. 2. Wall has been removed from the south side and terrace widened. (Sketch No.6)	1-2. Retain spatial form.
Planting	1. There is no planting of significance on the terrace.	1. Consult Sketch No.6 for planting style and grass strip as period details.
Structures	1. Low wall (Spatial form above 2 can be seen in Sketch No.6) along with plinths and statues.  2. Terrace has been widened when wall was removed and a small rockery built in its place.	1. Wall is important for spatial definition and control. Recommend reinstating the wall as an accurate period detail. 2. Recommend reinstatement of the low wall and removal of the rockery.



Sketch No.6: There are several important features to this sketch: the distant view, planting against the house, narrow grass strip between planting and paving, low stone wall, statues and probably steps to lower garden.

The wall has gone but it appears to have been replaced with stone paving as there is a clear distinction in the stone pattern on site.

The statues may well have been lead which is the type that was used in the Sharp's previous home Hazelwood.

#### 4.5.4 Lawn Terrace

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Slight change of level between the stone terrace and the lawn. Separated by an area of mixed low planting and a rockery.</li> <li>2. Lawn is a relatively large rectangular space with a stone wall to two sides and a raised planting area and walk to the east side. Views towards the bay.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommend removal of rockery and replace with low stone wall as in Sketch No.6. This will provide better spatial form and lessen maintenance.</li> <li>2. Retain as a very simple space. If planting is desired, consider a single tree or a piece of sculpture but the main focal point is the view.</li> </ol>
Planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planting in rockery area.</li> <li>2. Planting to the east side along raised walk is in poor condition and has had some conifers removed.</li> <li>3. Ericaceous planting to far side of walk.</li> <li>4. Lawn</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommend removal if new wall is built; or simplify planting for easier maintenance.</li> <li>2. Replant with low-medium height shrubs, or as a flower border. Consider replanting some upright conifers as these are important in leading the eye along the path and defining the space.</li> <li>3. Requires selective pruning and fertilize on annual basis as this is probably imported soil.</li> <li>4. This should be a fine quality turf. Recommend a new turf lawn is installed. Check that drainage channels are clear prior to laying.</li> </ol>

Structures	<p>1. Main stone wall to west and south sides with protective fencing to the top.</p> <p>2. Rustic stone wall and path to east side of the lawn is in need of refurbishment.</p>	<p>1. Inspect wall for structural movement and ensure capping stones are secure. Recommend removal of fencing and repairing holes with appropriate mortar mix.</p> <p>2. Repair/reset stones to wall and to path edging. Clear debris and weeds from path and re-gravel. Consider use of pre-emergent weed killer.</p>
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#### 4.5.5 Rockery and Woodland

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<p>1. Dense canopy woodland with low herbaceous layer; hence, good sightlines through the woods.</p> <p>2. Connects to the main lawn with walk and visually by some view-points to take advantage of view to the bay.</p>	<p>1. Maintain open aspect beneath the canopy.</p> <p>2. Retain connections and keep viewing positions open.</p>
Planting	<p>1. Naturally regenerated woodland with herbaceous layer kept low by grazing deer.</p> <p>2. Ericaceous planting in rockery adjacent to path.</p>	<p>1. If deer are restricted, this will change the nature of the understory. Consider effect, what you wish to achieve and how to do it.</p> <p>2. Prune to reveal some of the boulders and to increase width of the path.</p>
Structures	<p>1. Informal walks through the woodland.</p> <p>2. Viewing point outlined in stones overlooking the lawn and bay.</p> <p>3. Rockery between path and woodland.</p> <p>4. Concrete path leading from stone terrace into the woodland.</p>	<p>1. Important part for the entire site and should be kept clear of vegetation and edges reset where necessary.</p> <p>2. Remove any intrusive vegetation and inspect to see if there is a man-made surface such as gravel or stone.</p> <p>3. Thin vegetation to expose some of the stone work.</p> <p>4. Out of character to the place and period. Remove and replace with appropriate materials.</p>



## 4.6 Sun House

Sun House, formerly the lodge, was not considered initially in the Phase 2 project. It has been included here as it is an important part of the entire estate and had defined garden areas. The nature of the site is completely different to the garden areas of the Mansion or the Summer House. It is a much wilder, but a no less refined composition of spaces, features and designated planting areas. It has more in common with William Robinson's *The Wild Garden* than the work of Mawson or other leading design advocates of the time. There is still clearing and research to be done on this site but the cleared areas demonstrate the quality and importance of this building and its associated garden.



**Sun House Photos 1-2:** Photo 1 shows placed boulders to retain slope and provide planting areas. Photo 2 to the right of the house shows placed boulders forming an island with vehicle circulation around it.



**Sun House Photos 3-4:** Photo 3 shows the natural limestone pavement that has been recently exposed. The wall to the top of the slope separates the property from The Mansion gardens with an opening in the wall and a footpath that connects the two garden areas. In the far corner behind the house, out of shot, is a small garden area. Photo 4 is set deep in the woodlands and according to Peter Sharp that was originally an alpine house. This would indicate that the area was in full sun, not in a woodland area.



**Sun House Photos 5-6:** Top left shows a designed and cleared walk through the woodland area. There is an opening where the boulders have been purposely placed. This type of walk and opening occurs throughout the woodlands on all three properties. Photo six shows a stand of wild orchids between Sun House and the stone wall to the south that overlooks the bay.

#### 4.6.1 Drive and Frontage

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An open area with the house set higher than the approaching drive.</li> <li>2. Cleared and open area to the east (right) of house with designed area for cars and planting defined by placed boulders</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain and consider further thinning of trees that partially block view to bay.</li> <li>2. Area 'a work in progress' and spatial form would be better defined with planting and bound gravel or similar surface to the drive area.</li> </ol>
Planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A few selected shrubs/trees have been retained.</li> <li>2. Earlier planting beds lacking any planting.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-2. Recommend developing a planting scheme/plan for the entire area. Consider approach advocated by William Robinson.</li> </ol>
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Placed boulders forming planting areas and/or used to stabilise slope to the front of the house.</li> <li>2. Interesting rockery area to left front of the house and built into the slope. Possible water feature.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expose boulders from invasive vegetation.</li> <li>2. Area needs to be cleared and researched prior to any decisions.</li> </ol>

#### 4.6.2 Limestone Paving and Rear of House

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limestone pavement provides a dramatic opening in the woodlands and a major feature.</li> <li>2. Area to rear of house, narrow and leading to small garden area and path to The Mansion.</li> <li>3. Stone wall at top of slope gives definition to the space.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retain as cleared and open feature</li> <li>2. Retain for service, sense of secrecy and retention of an historic feature.</li> <li>3 Retain and allow to be seen as a component of the design.</li> </ol>
Planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A single tree has been retained in the limestone pavement.</li> <li>2. Area behind house cleared but further invasive species in back corner</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adds drama and scale to area. Recommend no further planting in the limestone until dormant seeds and rootstock are under control. Area/crevices could then be seeded with suitable wild flower mix.</li> <li>2. Clear area and recommend advice as above.</li> </ol>
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limestone paving is a natural structure.</li> <li>2. Limestone wall</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage as recommended in 'Planting' above</li> <li>2. Inspect and maintain on a regular basis. Recommend placing a gate for deer control in the wall opening.</li> </ol>

#### 4.6.3 Woodland and Walks

Features	Notes	Recommendations
Spatial Form	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Variety of walks and open spaces with high overhead canopy and low herbaceous layer.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommend retaining current quality. This will change if deer control measures are introduced.</li> </ol>
Planting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural woodland regeneration and grazed by deer.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider longer term management in terms of thinning and introducing other species for diversification.</li> </ol>
Structures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Placed boulders to define routes and open spaces.</li> <li>2. Alpine house is in a ruinous state.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommend that these are exposed to view more clearly by clearing moss and vegetation.</li> <li>2. Stabilise to prevent further decay.</li> </ol>

## 5. Conclusions

Despite being a divided estate under three owners, it is remarkable how the spatial form and features continue to work together. There have been major efforts in clearing overgrown areas and opening up garden spaces that have not been seen in decades, yet there is still much to do. It is essential that each owner considers the longer term implications of managing their gardens. Large rockeries are highly labour intensive and can be quickly overgrown. Woodland areas change more slowly, yet they too evolve and change. Where deer controls are introduced, this will have a major impact on the gardens as well as the herbaceous layer of the woodlands. As it is now, deer have become a major, although unintended, management tool. The woodlands would be very different without them. However, it is impossible to have a good garden with them using a very limited palate of plants that they will not graze.

Ridgeway Park is probably the last large estate in the AONB and is unique and special in many ways. Some aspects may never return such as a full clearing of the woodland to allow the open views, particularly from the Summer House. The spatial form of the gardens are most easily brought back at Sun House and The Mansion, although the large open slope/rockery to the front of The Mansion needs some serious thought. The Summer House relied heavily on summer planting of annuals and herbaceous plants along with its structural features to achieve its spatial form. It is unlikely to be recreated as it originally was, but the spatial forms could be indicated through alternative approaches and planting concepts.

Ridgeway Park has entered into a completely new phase, another layer of garden for a different time and requires change that is sensitive to its heritage fabric. Gardens are at their most interesting when layers of ideas and thinking are added, which means change. A major principle in conservation is that work should be reversible and that future generations may put something back, or indeed add something new to the fabric of the garden. It is seldom possible to achieve everything that one desires for numerous reasons. Consider that any action taken is fully documented for future generations, but also that something can be left for future generations to do in the garden.