

Images: West of Caversham Park House



Urn at western end of canal.



Canal to south-west of house, looking west towards woodland pleasure grounds.



Paddock to the south of the lawns, looking north-east towards woodland pleasure grounds.



Listed temple to south-west of the house.



Boundary of BBC Written Archives Centre, adjacent to western boundary of the site.



Site of proposed care home to the west of the historic house.



Woodlands to the west of the house and the proposed care home site.



Site of proposed housing to the west of the historic house. The roof of the BBC Written Archives Centre is visible beyond the hedgerow.



Site of proposed housing to the west of the historic house. The upper storeys of housing on Peppard Road can be seen beyond a mature boundary hedgerow.



Early twentieth century cottages on Caversham Park Drive will have their settings enhanced.



Southern elevations of early twentieth century cottages on Caversham Park Drive.

West of Caversham Park House

To the west of the house, the landform is more level than the sloping hillside to the south. Adjacent to Caversham Park House there is area of low rise buildings and associated parking dating from the 1980s century which detract from the visual setting of the house. Further west, an area of mature woodland is an attractive landscape area that also provides visual separation between the house and buildings to the west, including the BBC Written Archives Centre on Peppard Road and the proposed affordable housing area adjacent to Peppard Road. To the north of this woodland, and south of the access drive, there is an area of open grass with poorly managed orchard trees, together with an avenue of trees adjacent to the drive itself. West of this, also on the drive, are the lodge and early twentieth century houses.

The proposed development area lies adjacent to the western boundary of the park, with its western boundary comprising a hedgerow adjacent to Peppard Road. The area itself comprises semi-improved grassland with a mixture of scattered trees. Trees in this area are generally young and do not contribute to the historic character of the parkland.

In summary, the area to the west of Caversham House includes a mixture of land uses predominantly dating from the 20th century that do not contribute to the historic character of the park. Important areas for retention include the woodland to the west of the ancillary buildings and also the trees and buildings associated with the driveway that leads to the house. Visually, this area is relatively well concealed by the woodland to the west and south, Caversham Park House to the east and the lodge houses and parkland trees to the north.

North of Caversham Park House

To the north of the house, the landform is again more level than the hillside to the south and was set out as a cricket pitch during the twentieth century. The associated pavilion remains to the west of this area, together with associated car parking. To the west of the pavilion, and north of the access drive there is an area of open grass, with a variety of trees, including some veterans. Many of these are large specimens that contribute to the historic character of the parkland, although views through to 1960s housing on the edge of the park erodes the strength of its overall landscape character.

To the north of the house there is an open, grassed area occupied by the former cricket which complements the setting of the house to the south, and continues to appear as an integral part of the parkland.

To the north and east of the former cricket pitch there is an area of trees and rough grassland. These appear to date from the time of the adjacent 1960s development of Caversham Park Village to the north and comprise a mix of native and ornamental species. Whilst they are not an historic feature they form an important visual screen from the housing area immediately beyond.

To the immediate north and north-east of the house, the access driveway expands into a long parking area that extends almost to the site boundary. This is also associated with mid twentieth century landscape planting beds and cycle stores as well as scattered tree planting that also appears to date from the late twentieth century. These features all detract from the northern frontage of the house, although an area of scrub/young trees immediately to the north of part of the parking area does function as a visual screen.

At the eastern end of this parking area, mature trees provide further visual enclosure to the north, east and south and provide a more established leafy character to the area.

In summary, the area to the north of Caversham House is level in character and generally well enclosed by existing mature trees, although there are glimpses of the late twentieth century housing beyond. Features associated with the twentieth century uses of the park have eroded its integrity, especially adjacent to the house, including extensive areas of parking, *ad hoc* ornamental shrub and tree planting and buildings such as cycle stores. Whilst the area of the former cricket pitch dates from the twentieth century, its open grassy nature complements the parkland character.

Images: North of Caversham Park House



Northern approach to Caversham Park House, looking east.



Site of proposed housing to the north-east of the historic house, looking south-east.



Northern elevation of historic house. Entrance dominated by hard-standing.



Parking to north of Caversham Park House, looking north-east towards proposed housing area.



Mixed tree planting within parkland to north of Caversham Park Drive screens views to/from adjacent housing.



Mixed tree planting on north-eastern side of park screens views to/from adjacent housing.



Former cricket pitch, to north of Caversham Park House, looking south-east.



Former cricket pitch area to the north-east of Caversham Park House, looking south.



Parkland to the north of Caversham Park House.



Images: East of Caversham Park House



Area for proposed development to east of house, looking south-west. Woodland to south provides visual enclosure.



Area for proposed development to east of house, looking south-west. Woodland to south provides visual enclosure.



Area for proposed development to east of house, looking east to mature vegetation adjacent to Lowefield Road



Mature planting to north of eastern development screens views



Area for proposed development to east of house, looking west.



Area for proposed development to east of house, looking west.



Area for proposed development to east of house, looking west.



From lawns to south of house looking north-east towards the eastern development area. Mature vegetation screens views.



Looking northeast along vista towards disused gate by Lowfields Road. The left-hand side of this path and hedge form part of the eastern development area.



Looking south-west from pathway to the south of the development area along axial path leading to the listed temple.



Looking northeast along vista towards the eastern development area. The hedgerow and adjacent trees would be removed.



From the eastern end of the terrace looking northeast along vista towards disused gate by Lowfields Road. Foreground trees partially screen the development area.

East of Caversham Park House

To the east of Caversham House, the landform is also generally level. This area comprises a grassed area surrounded by shrubs and large mature trees. Whilst the maturity of the trees contribute to its historic character and setting, the area includes tree planting that dates from the twentieth century as well as a series of satellite dishes, and a large twentieth century greenhouse that all erode its historic character. To the south of this grassed area lies the green pathway and associated hedges which forms the physical and visual axis which terminates with the temple to the west of the house. To the east, this pathway also leads towards a redundant

gateway which joins Lowfield Road, however the presence of mature vegetation within this area shows that the connection of the path and gateway appears to have been overgrown for many years. Prior to the 1960s when Lowfield Road was laid out, this gateway would have led into the wider parkland beyond and historic mapping does not show it connecting to any footpaths or lanes in this area. South of the axial pathway lies an area of relatively dense scrub and woodland which extends down the hillside to the east of the lawns. Whilst this area lies in close proximity to both Caversham Park House and housing on Lowfield Road, the large trees around all of its edges provide a good degree of visual enclosure, giving the area a secluded feel.

5.3 Townscape Character of the Surrounding Area

Beyond the boundaries of the park itself, the built environment of Caversham and Reading forms an urban context which is very different from the rural setting that would have existed until the late twentieth century (see Figure 10). To the north, west and east, there is late twentieth century, low-rise housing that can be glimpsed from some parts of the northern area of the park.

Townscape Character to the West

At Peppard Road, to the west, housing predominantly comprises detached, low-density two storey properties set behind hedgerows and relatively generous front gardens. The eastern side of this road, comprises the large, low rise built form of the BBC Written Archives Centre and The Hill Primary School. These are set within generous grounds with mature trees along their road frontages, giving this part of the street a leafy character. The western frontage of Caversham Park also contributes to this street frontage, with a mature hedgerow along its western edge and the listed gate posts at the entrance to the park contributing to the street character. Whilst the Peppard Road area it is not a Conservation Area, however the setting of the listed gate posts are of importance. The western part of the Caversham Park site which fronts Peppard Road is not covered by the Registered Park and Garden designation (see Figure 2).

Beyond Peppard Road, the built form of Caversham extends to the north and west, with its medium density suburban housing within an undulating landform.

Townscape Character to the South

Whilst the parkland to the south of the historic house forms a more extensive open setting, the distant views towards the skyline of Reading town centre have compromised the original rural character of this part of the parkland as well as blocking views of the River Thames. In this wider area adjacent to the open parkland, there is a mobile home park (Harveys Nurseries, set within a walled Victorian garden associated with Caversham Park Registered Park and Garden), allotments (Henley Road Allotment) and a cemetery (Reading Cemetery and Crematorium). Whilst these land uses are open in character, they are all associated with an urban fringe location and form a transition zone between Caversham Park and suburban housing along the Henley Road corridor and Lower Caversham to the south.

Further south, the River Thames flood plain creates a distinct open corridor between Lower Caversham and Reading town centre. Here the landscape is dominated by extensive areas of disused gravel pits, now used for leisure purposes and bounded by business parks to the south. Beyond this, Reading town centre occupies an area close to the river, surrounded by a relatively dense grid of residential streets



Low density residential and institutional uses along Peppard Road to the west of Caversham Park



Urban fringe uses to the south of Caversham Park: allotments, mobile home park and cemetery

-  *Open Space, Parkland & Cemeteries*
-  *Low Density Residential*
-  *Medium Density Residential*
-  *Deciduous Woodland*
-  *Henley Road Allotment*
-  *Schools*
-  *Local shops*
-  *Filling Station*
-  *Golf Course*



Figure 10: Townscape Context:



Caversham Park Village to the north and east of Caversham Park

Townscape Character to the North and East

To the north and east of Caversham Park, the 1960s/1970s suburb of Caversham Park Village wraps around the historic park. This area is characterised by two storey terraces and semi detached residential properties with driveway parking and small gardens, occupying an area with undulating topography.

Streets are curved, and include a high proportion of cul-de-sacs. The townscape also includes a number of *ad hoc* public green spaces. The character of this area is very representative of development across the UK at this time and does not specifically relate to the adjacent parkland or wider Berkshire vernacular. The estate does however, incorporate some mature trees and road alignments around its boundaries that reflect original tree planting and paths associated with the original Caversham Park.

5.4 Landscape and Townscape - Baseline Sensitivity

Site Landscape Features and Character Sensitivity: Western Development Parcel

The review of the site shows that the area proposed for the affordable housing development in the western part of the site is not covered by the Registered Park and Garden designation. The landscape here is typified by semi-improved grassland and relatively young trees that contribute little to the historic character of the wider park. Using the definitions set out in Appendix A: Table A, the overall value of the landscape character here is judged to be **‘medium’**.

With regards to specific features, the hedgerow along its western boundary, on Peppard Road, provides an attractive frontage to the road, as well as a visual screen. This hedgerow is therefore judged to be of **‘medium’** value.

Existing trees and hedgerows to the north and south of this development parcel are also of ‘medium’ value, giving visual enclosure to this area, especially when viewed from the existing parkland and lodges to the north and east. Other trees and grassland within this part of the site are judged to be of **‘medium-low’** value.

With regards to ‘susceptibility to change’, the enclosure that the boundary hedgerows and woodland provide to this area of the site means that its overall character will be partially tolerant to the proposed housing development and of ‘medium’ susceptibility to change (see Appendix A: Table B.) When considered with the ‘medium’ value of the landscape character, the overall landscape sensitivity of this area is therefore judged to be **‘medium’** (see Appendix A: Table C).

Landscape Features and Character Sensitivity: Care Home Development Parcel

The proposed care home site is covered by the Caversham Park Registered Park and Garden designation and close to the Caversham Park House listed building. Overall, this area therefore has a **‘high’** landscape value, according to the definitions set out in Appendix A: Table A.

This development area is predominantly occupied by late twentieth century buildings and yard areas and benefits from integrating with the wider area by mature tree planting to the north and west in particular. It does not contribute significantly to the wider parkland landscape character and is therefore considered in landscape terms to be tolerant of the

type of proposed development. The presence of some large woodlands scale trees around the area would be susceptible to change if removed however, meaning that overall this area has a **‘medium’** susceptibility to change (Appendix A: Table B). Overall, the sensitivity of this proposed development area in terms of its existing landscape character and features is therefore judged to be **‘medium’**.

Landscape Features and Character Sensitivity: Northern Parkland & Development Parcel to the North-East of Caversham House

The Caversham Park Registered Park and Garden designation and listed buildings within its grounds, gives the parkland to the north of the listed house a **‘high’** landscape value, according to the definitions set out in Appendix A: Table A.

This area includes a number of mature veteran trees as well as an area of younger woodland planting that wraps around the northern boundary of the park, planted at the time of the adjacent Caversham Park Village housing development. The former cricket pitch and associated pavilion and parking is also a 20th century addition, as is the *ad hoc* ornamental planting and extensive areas of car parking close to the main house. The overall character of the parkland has therefore evolved significantly over the past century and is judged to have a **‘medium’** susceptibility to change (see Appendix A: Table B) based on its partial degradation and the presence of existing vegetation that can provide screening.

The development provides an opportunity for landscape enhancements to this part of the parkland (see Section 6), including habitat creation, tree planting, recreation and access opportunities.

Overall, the landscape sensitivity of the area of the parkland to the north of the house is therefore judged to be **‘Medium’** (based on the definitions in Appendix A: Table C).

Landscape Features and Character Sensitivity: Development Parcel in Eastern Parkland

The proposed development area to the east of the listed house is also covered by the Caversham Park Registered Park and Garden designation and is therefore judged to have a **‘high’** landscape value, according to the definitions set out in Appendix A: Table A.

This area includes a significant number of mature trees on all sides, giving it a visually enclosed, relatively remote character, despite its proximity to the listed building and housing in the Lowfield Road area. The character of this area predominantly reflects its twentieth century use by the BBC, with semi-improved grassland occupied by satellite dishes occupying the central area.

The overall character of much of this part of the park has therefore evolved significantly over the past century and any development here need not result in the loss of the important mature trees. This central part of the area is therefore is judged to have a **‘medium’** susceptibility to change (see Appendix A: Table B.)

The southern part of this proposed eastern development parcel has a stronger character, begin located closer to the historic vista/terrace that runs along the southern elevation of the house towards the listed temple to the west. The susceptibility to change of this area is therefore considered to be ‘high’.

Overall, the landscape sensitivity of the area of the proposed development parcel to the east of the house is therefore judged to range from **‘medium’** to **‘high’** (see Appendix A: Table C).

Landscape Features and Character Sensitivity: Southern Parkland

No development is proposed in the area of parkland to the south of Caversham House other than associated enhancements to the parkland, including the provision of a new footpath. As with the rest of the rest of the Caversham Park Registered Park and Garden this part of the site is judged to have a **‘high’** landscape value (see Appendix A Table A.)

Given the presence of mature woodland to the south-west and south-east of the house, the proposed development will generally be screened form the wider parkland with only glimpses of the care home and proposed housing to the east of the house from the terraced lawns to the south of the house. This degree of screening and lack of development means that the terraced lawns to the south of the house will have ‘medium’ susceptibility to change, based on the definitions set out in Appendix A Table B, while further to the south, away from the proposed built development the susceptibility to change will diminish to **‘low’**.

Overall, this gives the southern parkland a **‘Medium’** to **‘Medium-Low’** sensitivity, depending on the distance from the proposed development.

Townscape Character Sensitivity: West of Caversham Park

To the west of the site, the townscape of Peppard Road is judged to be of **‘medium’** value (see Appendix A, Table A). Whilst it is not a designated townscape, it benefits from a leafy character with views towards the entrance to Caversham Park with its listed gates and curtilage listed buildings along Caversham Park Drive.

Whilst there would be the potential for views of the new housing within the western development parcel, the existing hedgerow along the Peppard Road frontage and built form of the lodges to the north and BBC archives to the south would help screen views from the wider area. Overall this would give this townscape a **‘medium’** susceptibility to change (Appendix A, Table B) and overall, a ‘medium’ townscape sensitivity (Appendix A, Table C).

Townscape Character Sensitivity: South of Caversham Park

To the south of Caversham Park, the urban fringe character of the townscape including the allotments and cemetery is judged to be of **‘medium-low’** value (see Appendix A, Table A).

The screening elements of Caversham House and its adjacent woodland mean that is unlikely that any proposed development would be visible from this area, giving this townscape a **‘low’** susceptibility to change (Appendix A, Table B) and overall

‘low’ townscape sensitivity (Appendix A, Table C).

Townscape Character Sensitivity: North and East of Caversham Park

To the north and east of Caversham Park, the 1960s/1970s estate of Caversham Park Village is not designated for its townscape character and has few distinct landscape features. It is therefore judged to be of **‘medium-low’** value (see Appendix A, Table A).

The screening elements of the existing trees around the northern and eastern boundaries of the parkland mean that is unlikely that any proposed development would be visible from this area, giving this townscape a **‘low’** susceptibility to change (Appendix A, Table B) and overall **‘low’** townscape sensitivity (Appendix A, Table C).



Vista towards the listed temple at the western end of terrace.

5.5 Potential Landscape Effects

Western Development Parcel: Landscape and Townscape Appraisal

The proposed housing to the west of Caversham House is centred on an area that does not have a strong historic character, comprising an area of semi-improved grassland and trees adjacent to an area of late twentieth century to the west of the site on Peppard Road. It has no direct visual connectivity with Caversham House. A hedge running along the northern boundary of the proposed housing area provides a degree of visual and physical separation between this area and the existing houses at the western end of Caversham Park Drive.

As described in Section 5.4, this area is considered to have a ‘medium’ landscape sensitivity.

A total of 28 trees will be removed to accommodate the new housing in the western development parcel, however other than one tree, a non native Eucalyptus (T144), these are all Category C (low) or Unclassified trees, comprising young and semi-mature, non-native and/or short-lived species trees of average physiological condition. These are shown in the accompanying *Arboricultural Impact Assessment* (Aspect Arboricultural) and comprise two birch (T90, T12), three cherries (T110, T111, T113), seven Norway maples (T92, T145, T150, T151, T154, T155, T162), two narrow-leaved ash (T148, T160), five horse chestnuts (T143, T147, T152, T153, T167), two lime (T149, T158), a cherry plum (T159), a beech (T141),

a red oak (T163), a field maple (T164), a sweet chestnut (T165) and an oak (T142).

The removal of this *ad hoc* collection of low value tree specimens will be more than compensated for by the provision of 32 new trees within this western development parcel, plus numerous additional trees within the wider parkland to the north of Caversham Park House. In addition, the existing orchard area to the north will be restored and enlarged, with appropriate pruning, and the planting of new trees to the south of the lodge houses. Whilst a detailed design has not been prepared for the area, the illustrative landscape strategy drawings are showing that approximately 44 new orchard trees will be provided.

No boundary hedgerows will be removed other than approximately 4m to accommodate two new pedestrian paths to provide links to Peppard Road.

Whilst the character of this area will change from an area of open grassland to a new residential area, the buildings and associated public open space will be sensitively designed to complement both Peppard Road and the adjacent parkland. New buildings will be similar in massing to existing properties to the west and will be set back a similar distance from Peppard Road, behind a generous corridor of communal green space, fronted by the existing hedgerow. The new homes will be clustered around a central leafy courtyard which will

accommodate parking areas that form an integral part of the townscape. Generous areas of verge and grassed space provide space for the incorporation of new street tree planting within the central space as well as along the Peppard Road frontage. New shrub planting around parking areas and within the open spaces will also further soften the area and integrate the new buildings with the surrounding landscape.

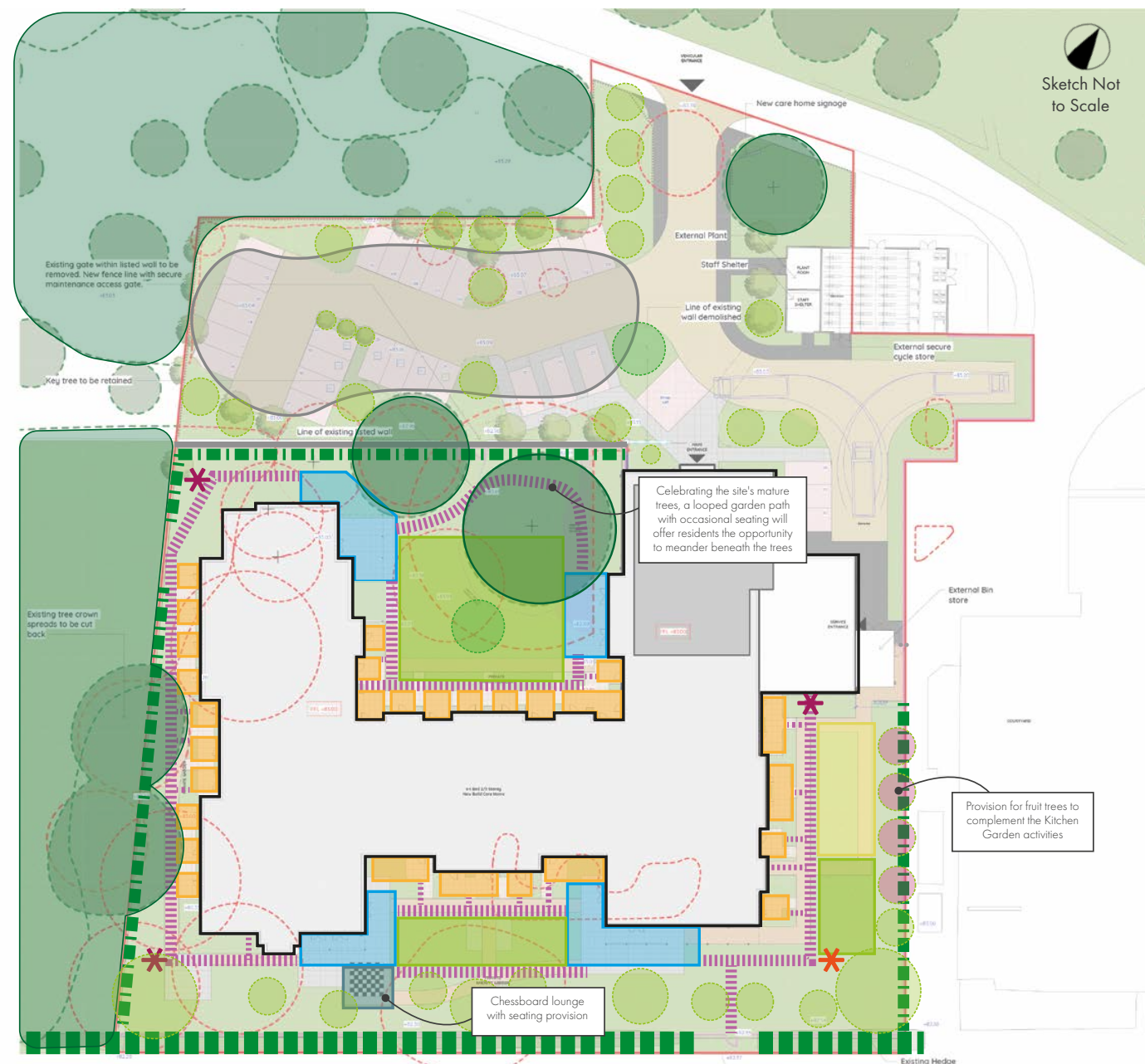
Based on the definitions set out in Appendix A, Table D, the proposals would result in an effect of ‘low adverse’ magnitude and ‘minor’ significance (see Appendix A, Tables D and E) on the landscape character of this part of the parkland, but wider associated enhancements to the wider parkland, such as the restoration of the adjacent traditional orchard would provide further compensation for this (see Section 4).

Pavilion Extension and Parkland to the north of Caversham Park House

To the west of the existing pavilion there will be a small extension to include a cafe and Interpretation Hub. Visually this will sit behind the existing pavilion to the north-east and retained mature trees to the south and west, meaning that it will not form a dominant element in views from the surrounding area. The existing car parking in this area will be re-configured and include an additional area of spaces that will extend to the north, towards the retained tennis court. These spaces will also benefit from some screening by existing retained trees to the west and east, and also from additional new shrub, hedgerow



Figure 11 Landscape Strategy: Western Development



- Parking Courtyard** - Offering low level planting the parking court will be framed by formal hedge and tree planting that will compliment the wider parkland setting
- Communal Lawns** - Formal lawns with opportunities for seasonal events and informal recreation appropriate to the end user and care programme
- Private Terraces** - Formed by a series of private patio gardens, these will allow residents to gain access to the communal gardens from their individual suites
- Communal Terraces** - Aligned to the internal building design, the communal terraces will provide a series of outdoor activity areas allowing residents to interact and socialise
- Kitchen Garden** - Provision for a greenhouse and raised planters providing opportunities for residents to benefit from gardening / horticultural therapy

- Sensory Walk** - Surrounded by sensory planting, incorporating a mix of sizes, textures, colours, seasonal variation and scents, that will support the residents well-being and encourage them to interact with the natural environment. Pathways formed by block paving will create pleasant routes for residents to venture out into the garden. To alleviate the dementia residents who are more at risk, all pathways have focal furniture at the end to ensure that there are no dead ends, reducing the risk of dementia residents from becoming lost within the gardens.
- Existing Hedge** to be retained and enhanced
- Existing Trees** to be retained
- Proposed Hedge**
- Tree Planting Provision**
- Focal Features**
 - Arbour Seats**
 - Gazebo**



PRECEDENT IMAGES

Figure 12: Care Home: Landscape Proposals Sketch (Courtesy of Deacon Design)

and tree planting around the car park extension. These works around the existing pavilion will necessitate the removal of eleven trees together with parts of several groups of Category C shrubs (G17). The trees to be removed comprise a Category C red oak (T36), tulip tree (T37) three ash (T40, T61, T62), a horse chestnut (T41) and two silver birch (T42, T60) and a Category B sycamore (T43) and a silver maple (T65). The Category C trees do not contribute to the historic character of the parkland and their removal would enable a more cohesive approach to be taken to the structure of the planting around this area. Thirteen new trees are proposed around the new car parking, pavilion extension and within the parkland immediately to the east of this area, together with an area of formal shrub beds and hedgerows around the car park. This new planting will create an attractive setting to the pavilion extension and car park and ensure that there will be no net decline in landscape character or features here. Overall the change here is judged to be ‘neutral’.

To the immediate north of the house, 17 trees will be removed, together with an area of formal shrub planting appearing to date from the late 20th century. Some of these tree removals will be to accommodate new parking spaces, but the majority of the removals are to restore the historic character and open up views in this area of the park. The trees here predominantly date from the mid 20th century and were planted during the time of the BBC occupation. They are generally not native and comprise small ornamental species that were popular in garden planting during the 1950s to the 1970s. Species here are all Category C and comprise six cherries, (T68, T69, T72, T174, T179, T185), a rowan (T71), a weeping birch (T184), a Deodar cedar, (T183), a field maple (T180), two purple plum (T175, T177), a hornbeam (T176), three purple Norway maple (T170, T173, T178) and a black walnut (T171). A further black walnut (T172c) in this area will be retained however, given that it is Category A and has a memorial plaque. The rationalisation of

trees in this area is beneficial in terms of the restoration of the historic parkland and setting of the house. To retain open views to and from the house only three new trees will be planted immediately close to its northern entrance, but instead a further 17 trees will be planted to the north-west and between the new parking bays to the east of the pavilion and a further four trees within the parkland to the south-east of the proposed bowling greens. Overall then, the removal of the 17 trees to the north of the house will be replaced by a total of 24 new trees, giving a net increase 7 new trees in this area.

Care Home Development Parcel: Landscape Appraisal

The proposed care home will occupy an area already occupied by buildings and parking areas dating from the late twentieth century. Whilst the development takes place in a registered park and garden the overall landscape sensitivity for this area is ‘medium’ given that it is currently occupied by areas of hard-standing and late 20th century buildings associated with the BBC occupancy of the property (see Section 5.4.)

The proposed development has been designed to minimise the removal of existing trees and will result in the removal of approximately 14 no. trees and potentially three small groups of trees. These are predominantly Category C trees or early mature Category A and B, including a Category B beech (T88) and two Category A beech (T513 and T518,) a Category C ash (T105) and three Category A ash (T511, T512 and T514) a Category A hornbeam (T517), and Category C Turkish hazel (T106), yew (T132) and sweet gum (T107). The groups of trees include to be removed would include a group of early mature Category B beech and ash (G16) together with part of a group of Category C apple, pear and cherry trees (G3).

To compensate for these removals 36 new trees will be planted around the proposed care home parking area, and gardens (see

Figure 12 Sketch Landscape Proposals opposite) Additional orchard trees will be planted within the existing area of orchard to the west (see p.38 and Figure 11 above). This orchard will also be extended westwards, to ensure that there is no net loss of orchard area.

In summary, the majority of trees to be removed to accommodate the new care home are either of low quality or are relatively young. Whilst T511, T512, T513, T514 and T17 are all Category A trees, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment states that these are all ‘early mature’ trees of ‘average or ‘below average’ physiological condition. The Assessment considers that their high value is conferred given their component of a wider collection only, rather than as individual specimens. Given that these trees lie adjacent to mature woodland to the west, the retention of this woodland beyond means that the overall contribution that the woodland makes to the backdrop of this part of the site will remain.

The care home has been carefully designed to retain a mature Category A English oak tree (T131) and Category C sycamore (T133), which will both be retained as focal features within the northern parts of the gardens. In addition, the new grounds will provide a green setting to the new building, including lawns, ornamental shrub areas and private patio spaces. The new building and grounds will be of a far higher quality than the existing *ad hoc* buildings and parking areas built for the BBC within this area and will be designed to respect the built form of the adjacent listed Caversham House. Based on the definitions set out in Appendix A, Table D, the change in the landscape character of this part of the site and its wider parkland as a result of this part of the development would be of ‘low’ beneficial magnitude and ‘minor’ beneficial significance, despite the removal of a small number of trees (Table E).

Development Parcel to the North-East of Caversham House: Landscape Appraisal

The conversion of Caversham House will be accompanied by significant enhancements to the grounds to both the north and south as set out in Section 4. These elements will all complement the country house character of the property, compared to the semi-institutional character that this external area currently has.

The proposed housing to the north-east of the house will also allow the rationalisation and removal of the large car parking area that currently occupies this area. Two new apartment blocks will be placed to the north of the existing belt of mature Category B oak trees here. These are set back from the adjacent historic house, ensuring that views of the property from the grounds to the north and east will not be compromised. The proposed buildings will be subservient to the main house in terms of their massing, but will appear as new, complementary elements to Caversham Park rather than an extension to the existing townscape of Caversham Park Village beyond.

To the north of the current parking area, there will be an access to mews style development enclosed by three further two storey apartment blocks. These will create a semi-formal courtyard. This area currently comprises grassland with semi-mature trees and does not have a strong parkland character.

To accommodate the new apartment block to the north-west of Caversham Park House, a number of trees will be removed. These are predominantly young or early mature scattered trees that are classified as Category C or U. These comprise a group of early mature goat willow (G1), two small groups of mixed group of semi mature native and non-native trees such as oak, beech, horse chestnut, hazel, hawthorn, whitebeam, alder,

rowan, wild service, Norway Maple, poplar, hornbeam, cherry plum, cherry, field maple Lawon cypress, Scots Pine, cherry, holly and ash (G9 and G11), and a number of individual trees, namely two cherries (T278, T280), a western red cedar (T279), two goat willow (T282, T283), three silver birches (T284-T286), three limes (T287, T288, T292), three horse chestnuts (T289, T293, T298), four field maples (T290, T291, T294, T295), two ash (T297, T302) two whitebeam (T305, T310, T312) a Hybrid Cockspur thorn (T306) and a Lawson cypress (T308). Only two Category B (moderate) trees would be felled, T307, an early mature whitebeam and T309, an early mature variegated western red cedar.

To compensate for the removal of the 27 individual trees and three groups of trees to accommodate the apartments to the north-east of the house, their loss will be more than compensated for by the planting of a well-structured series of 53 no. garden and forest-scale specimens, which can include native species such as oak and beech. Some of these will be planted to the west of the new apartments and will further integrate the new homes with the parkland setting. In conjunction with both the conversion of Caversham Park House and the associated apartment blocks to the north-east, the proposals will make enhancements to the parkland to both the north and south of the house as set out in Section 4.

The landscape sensitivity of the area to the north-east of the house is judged to be ‘medium’ (see Section 5.4). Based on the definitions in Appendix A, Tables D and E, the proposed residential development to the north-east of the house would initially result in an effect of ‘medium’ adverse magnitude and ‘moderate’ significance on the landscape character of the this area. When considered with the associated landscape enhancements to both this area and the wider area of parkland to both the north and south of the house, the residual effects of the development within the north-eastern part of the

parkland would be of ‘medium beneficial’ magnitude and ‘moderate beneficial’ significance. The overall effects on the northern parkland alone would be of ‘high’ magnitude and ‘major’ significance.

Development Parcel in Eastern Parkland: Landscape Appraisal

To the east of Caversham House, a courtyard development is proposed. This is inspired by an historic stable block and will occupy an area currently covered by semi-improved grass, a glasshouse and satellite dishes. The new buildings will be oriented to reflect the alignment of Caversham Park House itself, with the forming two semi-formal courtyards. Car parking areas will be situated within the courtyards, ensuring that no cars are visible from the surrounding parkland.

This area is well concealed by existing mature trees on all sides and this structure will be retained, helping to conserve the relatively remote feel to this part of the park, despite its proximity to both Caversham Park House and Lowfield Road. The layout has been designed to minimise the removal of trees and will retain and respect the historic vista and associated hedgerow to the south. Eight trees will be removed in association with the western apartment block, however some of these are Category U and should be removed for safety purposes in any event.

A Lawson Cypress (T235) would be removed to allow access to the parking area to the immediate east of the historic house, however this is a Category C tree of low historic importance. To accommodate the western block of apartments, two yews, T225 and T226 would be removed, however these are young, category C trees. A Category B horse chestnut (T196) would also be removed to accommodate the building, however this is of poor structural condition and appears to have low vigour

according to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. A beech (T197) would also be removed to accommodate this building, however this is a Category C tree considered to be of reduced potential due to its proximity to adjacent tree cover. Two further Category C trees, semi-mature trees (T201 and T202) a Deodar Cedar and pin oak respectively, would be removed to accommodate a new car parking area to the east of this building.

The main courtyard building would also result in the removal of 19 trees. These are all Category C semi-mature or early mature trees that appear to date from the late 20th century. These comprise a hornbeam (T240), three English oak (T245 - T247), a Cedar of Lebanon (T249), five Norway maples (T250 - T52, T254, T255), a black walnut (T253) three limes (T260, T261, T486), a sycamore (T262), three horse chestnuts (T248, T263, T265) and an ash (T264).

The introduction of housing in this part of the Registered Park and Garden would initially have an effect that is of ‘medium’ adverse magnitude and ‘moderate’ adverse significance (see Appendix A, Tables D and E), with the area that is currently dominated by satellite dishes and twentieth century planting replace by two new courtyards. Whilst 24 existing trees will be removed to accommodate this, in general these are of low quality and not mature. The planting of 16 new trees in this area (and parkland enhancements in the wider area to both the north and south (see Section 4) would more than compensate for this, meaning that the overall negligible effects of the development are judged to be of ‘medium beneficial’ magnitude and ‘moderate beneficial’ significance.

Landscape Features and Character Appraisal: Southern Parkland

Whilst there will be no built development to the south of the

house, the scheme provides a commitment to enhancing the parkland and grounds to the south, as set out in the Landscape Strategy (see Section 4). This will include:

- The restoration/enhancement of existing hoggin paths through the areas of woodland to the south-west and south-east of the house. The path through the western wood will be available to members of the public during daylight hours, thereby allowing public access into an area that is currently restricted.
- Repair works to the ‘ha ha’ wall and removal of scrub species here to open up views. The introduction of a mown grass path around the southern parkland. This path will allow public access into a landscape that is currently inaccessible and will therefore be a beneficial landscape asset.
- The management of the parkland and field to the south of the ‘ha ha’ as wildflower meadow.
- The planting of new hedgerows around the southern part of the parkland, adjacent to the Cemetery. This will provide visual separation to both land uses and help restore the parkland character of the area.
- The planting of clumps of forest-scale trees within the southern parkland. Whilst there is no known mapping of the Capability Brown designs for this part of the park, the aim will be to reflect how the parkland may have been designed at this time. Tree species will be native, primarily comprising oak and beech. Whilst detailed planting plans will be subject to a planning condition, the Illustrative Landscape Strategy is showing the potential for planting approximately 250 new trees in this area.
- Woodland management/restoration within the western

and eastern woodlands to the south of the house. This will include the removal of any unsafe elements as well as species such as laurel. Whilst the overall structure of the woodlands will remain, the management of the south-western woodland will seek to open up views of terracing that are believed to date from the Stephen Switzer parkland design. The precise aspects of this woodland management will be subject to a detailed proposal as a condition of planning consent.

- The retention of the large satellite dish within the north-eastern corner of the southern parkland. This will reflect the history of the BBCs occupation of the site and will be accompanied by interpretation.
- The restoration of the small pond garden to the south-east of the house. This dates from the BBCs occupation and does not contribute to the heritage value of the parkland. It can be enhanced to provide an attractive areas for residents to enjoy however.

Overall, the proposals provide the opportunity for a ‘high beneficial’ change to the landscape of the parkland to the south of the house. Given the ‘high’ sensitivity of the parkland, this would result in a ‘major’ landscape benefit to this area of the site based on the definitions set out in Table E.

5.6 Potential Townscape Effects

Townscape Character Sensitivity: West of Caversham Park

When viewed from Peppard Road, the western development parcel is partially concealed by the built form of the BBC Written Archives Centre, buildings on Caversham Park Drive and a mature hedgerow along the site frontage. Whilst the upper parts of the proposed buildings may be glimpsed from Peppard Road they will form part of a logical leafy frontage that is typical of the built form elsewhere along the road. The new homes will front onto the street with a similar set-back to the existing housing on the eastern side of the street. No boundary hedgerows will be removed other than a short strip to provide a pedestrian access. Whilst the character of this parcel will change from open grassland to a new residential area, the buildings and associated public open space will be sensitively designed to complement both Peppard Road and the adjacent parkland. The leafy frontage to Peppard Road will be conserved, with the proposed vehicular entrance to the housing coming from Caversham Park Drive to the north rather than adding a new entrance from Peppard Road for example.

Overall, the development will have ‘negligible’ adverse indirect effect on the townscape character to west of Caversham Park.

Townscape Character Sensitivity: South of Caversham Park

The proposed development will not be visible from the area to the south of Caversham Park and will therefore not result in any direct or indirect changes to the townscape character of this area. The introduction of new planting in the southern part of the adjacent to the cemetery will provide a leafier backdrop to this area.

Townscape Character Sensitivity: North and East of Caversham Park

The proposed development will be glimpsed from the Lowfield Road area during the winter months. Given the existing urban character of Lowfield Road and retention of the mature belt of trees around the park boundary, changes to the townscape character here will be indirect and of ‘negligible adverse’ indirect magnitude and significance.

A landscape and townscape appraisal has been undertaken to ascertain potential effects on the landscape character and features of the site and surrounding townscape. This is not a heritage assessment, which is covered by the Montagu Evans Heritage chapter of the Environmental Assessment. Instead this appraisal focuses on changes to the existing landscape and townscape character and features.

5.7 Landscape and Townscape Appraisal Summary

The appraisal shows that whilst the introduction of new housing within and adjacent to the existing registered parkland has the opportunity to have an adverse effect on existing landscape character and features, the eroded character and low quality landscape assets of some of these areas and their secluded nature mean that the proposals need not result in a significant adverse effect on the existing landscape character. Instead some of the development provides the opportunity to replace existing low quality buildings and extensive parking areas with high quality buildings and associated circulation spaces and gardens.

Whilst the change from parkland to housing will have a 'moderate' adverse effect in the areas of parkland where new housing is proposed to the north-east and east of the house, when considered with the landscape enhancements within the wider parkland, the overall effects will be of significant benefit. Beyond these areas of proposed built development, the scheme will be accompanied by significant enhancements to the existing parkland to the north, including new parkland and orchard tree planting and ornamental garden areas around existing and

proposed buildings. To the south of the house, the proposals will also introduce a new circular footpath route around the park which will provide public access to an historic landscape that is currently private, the restoration of the ha ha wall, the management of the woodlands, wildlife enhancements to the existing pond and the management of the parkland as a wildflower meadow. Additional planting of approximately 250 new forest scale trees within the southern parkland will help reinforce its character as a Capability Brown landscape and overall there will be a net increase of approximately 340 trees within the site area. Overall, the proposals will result in a 'major beneficial' effect on the parkland landscape to the south and 'moderate beneficial' effect on the landscape to the north. The proposed development will therefore result in a net beneficial landscape effect on Caversham Park.

Due to the existing woodland screening around the site and strategic positioning of the proposed development there will be no significant direct or indirect effects on the townscape or landscape character and features of the surrounding area.



*'Overall there will
be a net increase
of approximately
340 trees'*