

Carlisle House 2023

Garden Design

Garden Support Statement

Soft Landscaping Information

Date 25-4-2023

Author G. A. Adair



For: Turner Property
Hillside House,
Allcroft Rd,
Reading,
Berks
RG1 5DJ

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Carlisle House Soft Landscaping Information

The following information is to be read in conjunction with:

Weston and Co. Architects 18009-PL-03 C. 03, 08, 09, 17 and 18.

Soft Landscaping Plans, Drawing numbers:

Landscape Design Carlisle House 002 Issue G 24-4-2023

Courtyard Entrance P1 and P2 Yew Buttressed Path Issue D 24-2-2023

Planting Area Main Garden P3 Issue C 24-2-2023

Planting by House P4 Issue C 24-4-23

Planting P5 Issue C 25-4-23

The drawings P1 to P5 are larger scale and have the planting sizes, numbers and varieties of plants stipulated on the plans.

The original P1 and P2 drawings have been amalgamated into a new drawing, and been given a new issue and date. GA

The new soft landscaping proposals for Carlisle House will,

- 1.Create a usable garden space for the residents of Carlisle House.
- 2.Be functionable with bicycle storage and cleaning facilities.
- 3.Specific Parking and adequate turning area.
- 4.Create a welcoming and attractive entrance to the street aspect of Carlisle House.
- 5.To ensure that the new garden will help to 'secure the long-term future of the heritage asset' and, 'its continued use sympathetic to its conservation'. [PPS 5, HE7.5]
- 6.Create a welcoming and attractive entrance to the street aspect of Carlisle House and enhancing the local environment, thereby fulfilling planning policy CS7.

Location

Site of Carlisle House and listed curtilage shown in red.

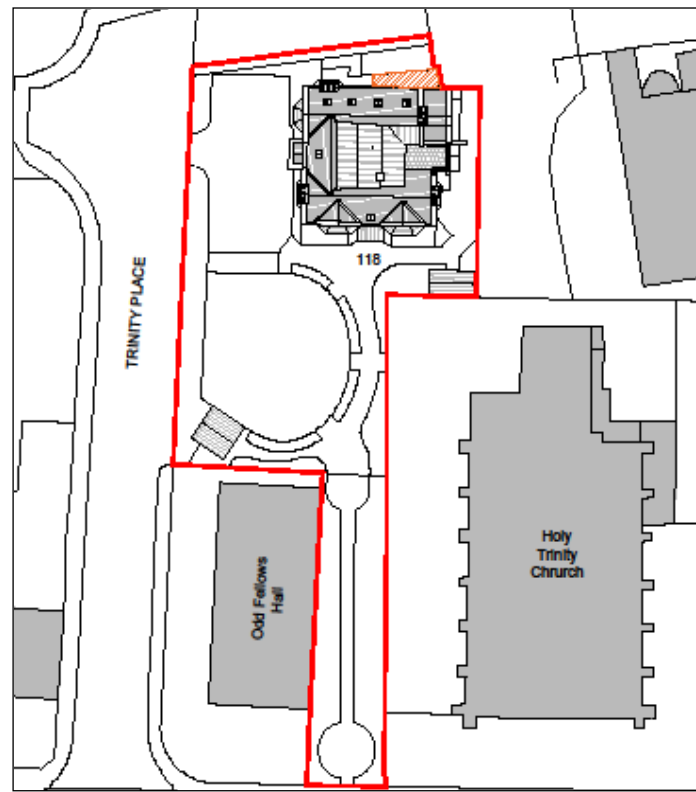


FIGURE 1 LOCATION AND BOUNDARY

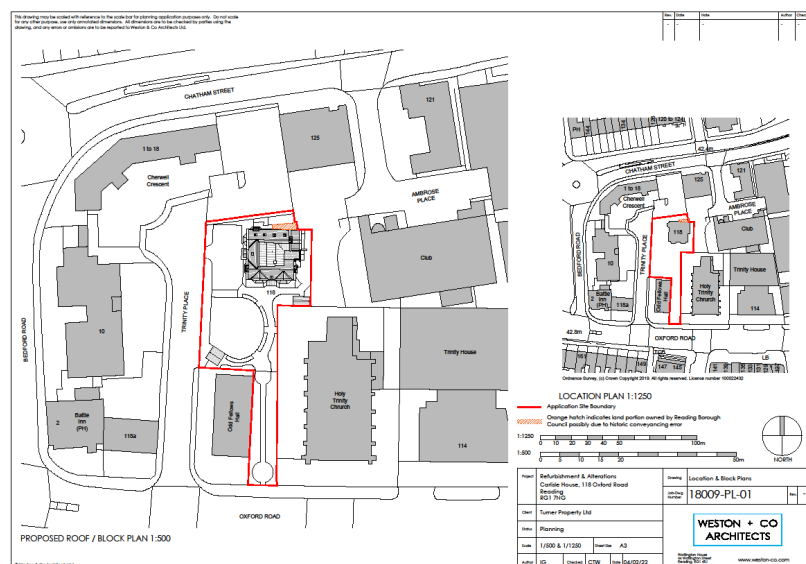


FIGURE 2 LOCATION AND BLOCK PLAN 18009-PL-01 WESTON AND CO

Introduction: Carlisle House

Carlisle House, 118 Oxford Road was built between 1840 and 1853 when it first appears on Surveys and maps of Reading Town. According to the biography and list of works of architect John Billing, 118, Carlisle House is listed as 'perhaps' designed by him. Originally the house was called Trinity Parsonage and was associated with the Holy Trinity Church adjacent to the property.

John Billing was recorded in the 'Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading' by Sydney M. Gold [1999] as having worked on both Trinity Church and Trinity School next to Carlisle House. The interior of Carlisle House includes arches, doorways and features with a heavy Gothic and ecclesiastically influenced detailing. It is therefore considered that John Billing is the most credible choice in this case as the architect.

Various people, some associated with Holy Trinity Church were resident over the years, but the most notable was the family of McCarthy Edward Fitt who purchased the house from Trinity Church in 1897. It was thought (by the ancestors of the purchasing family) that the name of the house was changed after the purchase of the property, but there is no specific date or proof when the name was changed to that of 'Carlisle'.

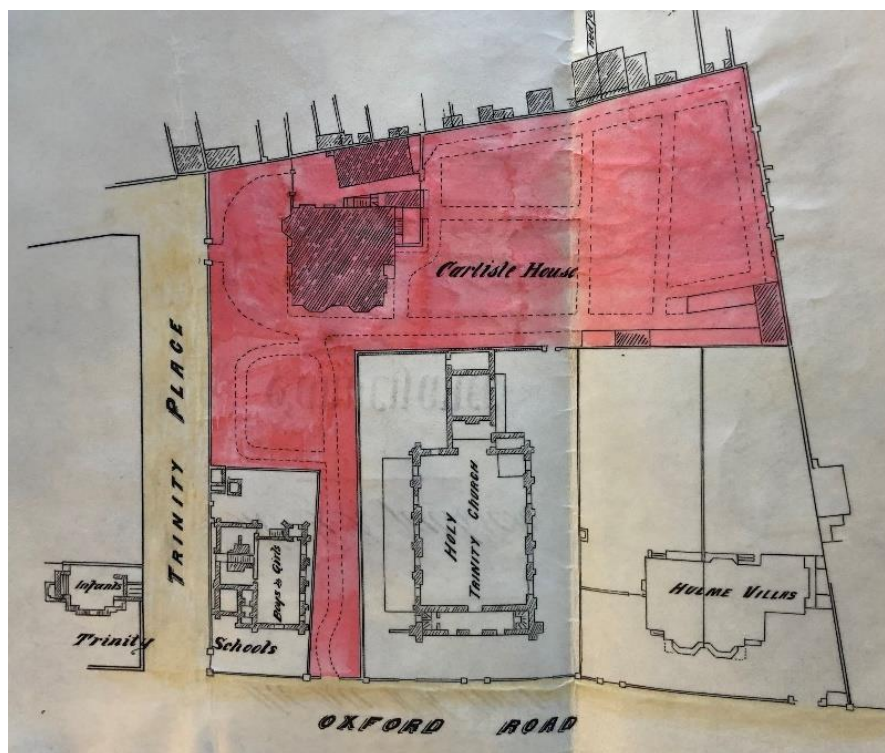


FIGURE 3 TITLE DEEDS IMAGE OF CARLISLE HOUSE 1897 COURTESY OF FITT FAMILY ARCHIVES

Above is a Title Deeds image of Carlisle House (1897) when the Fitt family bought the property. The boundaries have since changed considerably on the eastern side.

In 1901 McCarthy Edward Fitt moved to Carlisle House, living there until his death in 1915. His widow Selina (died 1934) remained there until 1925.

McCarthy Edward Fitt, an Officer of The British Brick Society, built the Reading Corporation Art Gallery, British Dairy Institute, Redlands and Wokingham Rd Schools and the Ladies toilets for the Kings Meadow Baths in Reading. He also built Henley Town Hall. He was a builder specialising in Monumental masonry. He had three children, Malcolm, Dorothy and Leonard. His sons Malcolm and Leonard were also builders and kept the firm name using the premises at Carlisle House as their base.

It is believed that much of the stonework found in the garden of Carlisle House originated from the time when the McCarthy Fitt family operated their building firm from the premises. The building yard remained there until 1969.

Circa 1937, the house was Converted into 4 flats, which were listed in the local directory. During the WW2 the house and yard were used as an emergency building depot repairing bomb damaged property in Reading.

In 1978 the house was listed as grade II by English Heritage / Historic England with the following entry description:

'Ashlar 2 1/2 storey villa with slate roof and extruded chimneys. 2 storey angled bays flanking present (modern) entrance and with gables above having 2 light windows to attic. Gabled porch to west.'

In 2020, the site of Carlisle House, was included in the enlarged Russell Street and Oxford Road Conservation Area appraisal. On page 30, paragraph 4.3 Trees and Green Landscape, the importance of 'Protecting and enhancing the areas green assets' is noted, also that 'Further greening is desirable'. The new garden design for Carlisle House is mindful of these directives and a great deal of thought has been taken to look to the future maturity of species which will significantly add to the 'Greening' dimension of the site.

The present owner Turner Property, is keen to create a garden for the Grade II Listed building, which recreates a sense of place and importance that the house once had. This new designed aspect will create a vista that pedestrians can enjoy and will enhance and revitalise the street scene, thereby ensuring a sustainable future for the house, listed curtilage and be an asset to the Conservation area and Reading's architectural Legacy.

1.1 Historical Evidence.

Historical evidence of the site reveals that 118, Oxford Rd, Carlisle House, Reading, Berks, once had a completely different feel to the demesne.

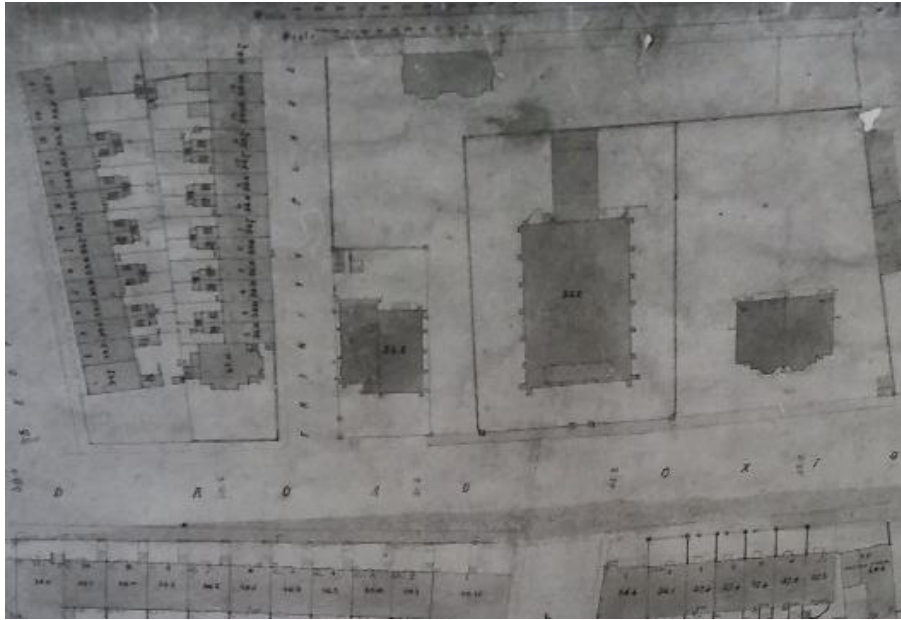


FIGURE 4 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP 1853

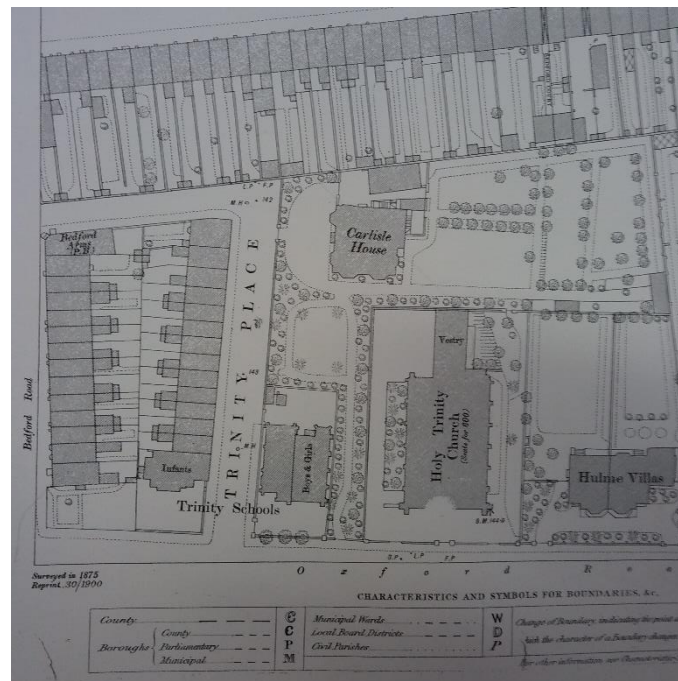


FIGURE 5 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP SURVEYED 1875, PRINTED 1879

Early postcard views show a smart street scene, walling, stone piers and railings in front of Trinity Church, giving a sense of place and an elegance to the views. The neighbouring school was also of similar architectural interest and was less dominant than its later replacement, Odd Fellows Hall which now totally dominates the site in a negative way in both scale and architecture. This later building has resulted in a dark and hidden street entrance to Carlisle House with large bushes and modern walling, not in keeping with the listing of Carlisle House and the curtilage boundaries that once surrounded the site. Maps and aerial photographs taken during the war show a more open entrance path from the house to the Oxford Road with very little trees save the Mulberry which is still on the site and will be kept as a mainstay of the new garden design.

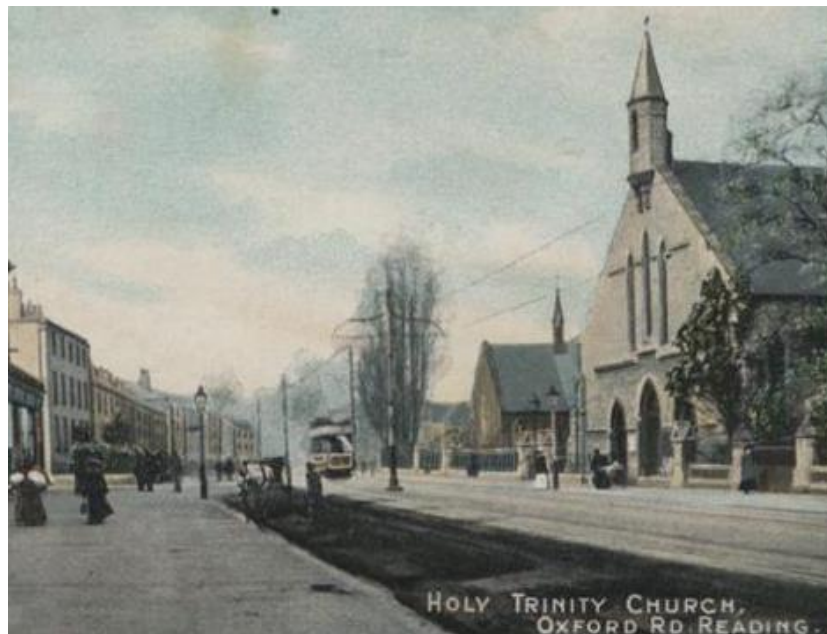


FIGURE 6 EARLY POSTCARD IMAGE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH AND STREET SCENE
APPROX EARLY 1900S



FIGURE 7 IMAGE TAKEN IN 2020 OF THE SAME SCENE GA

Postcard Views show the railings and piers that were the original entrance to the garden.



FIGURE 8 IMAGE OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH 1900s, COURTESY OF READING MUSEUM 1978.440.2



FIGURE 9 DETAIL SHOWING THE RAILINGS AND PIERS THAT WERE THE ORIGINAL GARDEN ENTRANCE

Aerial photographs taken during the war show a straight less overgrown entrance path from the house to the Oxford Road.

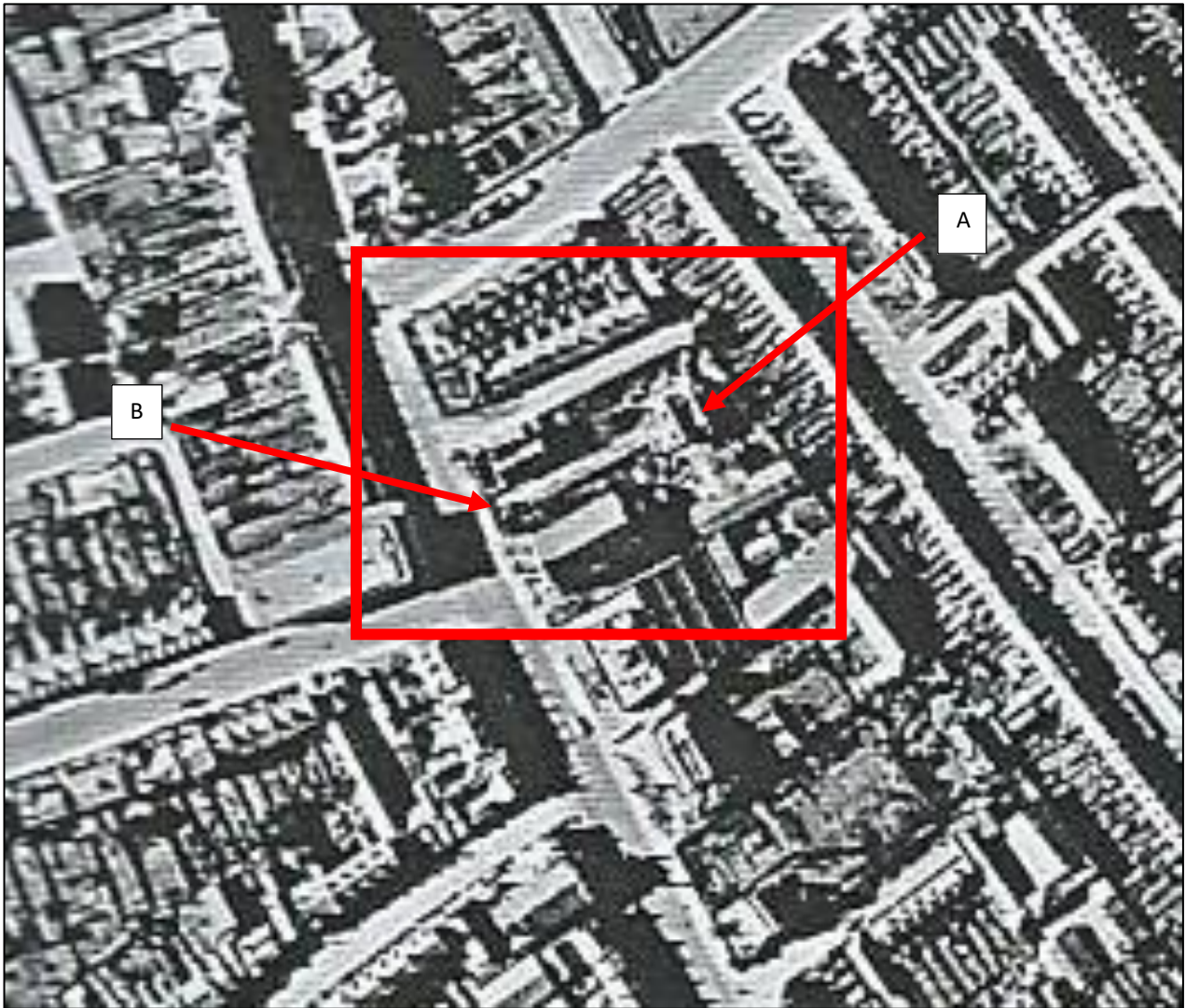


FIGURE 10 VERTICAL AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF CARLISLE HOUSE. IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL MONUMENT RECORD US/7PH/GP/LOC208 FRM 5039 8TH MARCH 1944

Carlisle House 'A' is shown in the red square. Red arrow 'B' is centred on the gate from Oxford Rd showing a wide path and no Sycamore trees. The garden has a more open and sunny appearance.

This photograph was taken in 1970. The elegant façade of Carlisle House can clearly be seen from the path and garden.



FIGURE 11 IMAGE OF CARLISLE HOUSE SEEN FROM THE GARDEN 1970. COURTESY OF READING LIBRARY



FIGURE 12 IMAGE TAKEN IN 2020 SHOWS MOST OF THE GARDEN IN SHADE DUE TO SELF-SEEDED SYCAMORES GA

By 2020 the view is very different. The architecture can no longer be seen and the self-

Seeded Sycamore trees have become dominant and cast large shadows across the garden, limiting the type of plants that can survive in such conditions. The Box hedging has become wider, taller and has at some point experienced Box Blight.

Since the 1970s the garden has been cared for in a non-structured way by various tenants. This has resulted in haphazard planting, and overgrown trees and shrubs.

The replacement of the Trinity Boys and Girls School next door to the west of the site, with the building of the Odd Fellows Hall has also had a detrimental effect. The once elegant railings of the street entrance to Carlisle House are so overgrown by shrubs and in such shade that the resulting aspect is a dark and hidden alley way. The modern walling is also not in keeping with the stature of the listing of Carlisle House and the curtilage boundaries that once surrounded the site.



FIGURE 13 THE GARDEN ENTRANCE BY ODDFELLOWS HALL TO CARLISLE HOUSE RESEMBLES A DARK ALLEYWAY GA



FIGURE 14 EXISTING ENTRANCE TO THE GARDEN FROM OXFORD ROAD IS CURRENTLY MODERN BRICKWORK GA

Large self-seeded Sycamore trees on the east of the site have been left to grow out of hand and are now damaging the boundary wall between Carlisle House and Trinity Church. They have previously been pollarded but their re-growth does not allow much light in to the garden. The garden used to have a much lighter airier more elegant feel, and this is what we would like to retrieve. A more elegant garden to enhance the elegance of Carlisle House. Therefore the removal of the Sycamores would be preferred so that ornamental trees more suited to a garden of this listed stature can be planted. Rootguard barriers in the tree planting pits of new trees will divert the roots away from the wall.

Sycamore trees causing damage to walling and causing shade in the garden in Carlisle House



FIGURE 15 LARGE SELF-SEEDED SYCAMORES ARE NOW DAMAGING THE WALLING GA



FIGURE 16 CARLISLE HOUSE SEEN BEYOND THE DAMAGED WALL CAUSED BY SELF-SEEDED SYCAMORE TREES

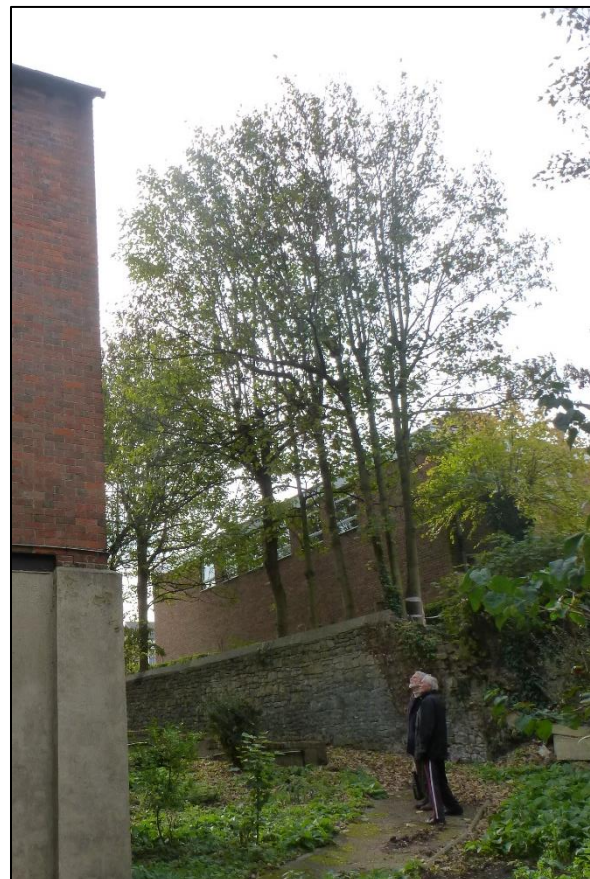


FIGURE 17 LARGE SELF-SEEDED SYCAMORES ARE NOW DAMAGING THE WALLING GA

2.1 Present Day

The Present Garden Space and Design Proposal

The garden design proposal has a positive not harmful impact on the significance of this site. Using the Planning Policy Statement 5, (PPS 5) 'Planning for the Historic Environment' as guidance, we have taken on board specific criteria to form our methodology.

A quotation from Introduction PPS 5, the Government's objectives 7. states:-

'the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations'

We believe that the new garden design will:

'enhance the Setting of Carlisle House by establishing a garden which reflects the architectural heritage of the site'.

2.2 Planting

At present the site shows a tired group of planting. Large shrubs at the gate to the Oxford Road are overgrown, and box hedging (although giving structure to the garden) is of an age where it is struggling. Also, in light of the Box Moth problem in Reading, we feel it prudent at this stage to choose some plants which will cause less maintenance problems in the future.

The dominant Mulberry tree is central to the existing lawn but has been encroached upon by various attempts to create a series of borders. There have also been attempts at making features of interest by using various large pieces of architectural stone and by-gone artifacts. This has decreased the lawn area in a negative, piecemeal way. Other attempts at creating small borders nearer the house have been made by tenants.

The Mulberry tree in the central lawn will be kept as a mainstay of the new garden design.

2.3 New Planting

To be kept simple using specific families of plants that require pruning at different times of the year. This helps to segment maintenance in to seasonal divisions. Plants will provide colour, texture and form throughout the year to encourage biodiversity, providing nectar, seeds, and nesting material for wildlife. The planting will be augmented by seasonal bulbs.

Bat boxes and bird boxes will be spread within the garden to help the diversity of mammals and birds.

Landscape Design Carlisle House 002 Issue G 24-4-2023



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4.1 Street Scene, Courtyard Entrance P1 And P2 Yew Buttressed Path
Issue D 24-2-2023

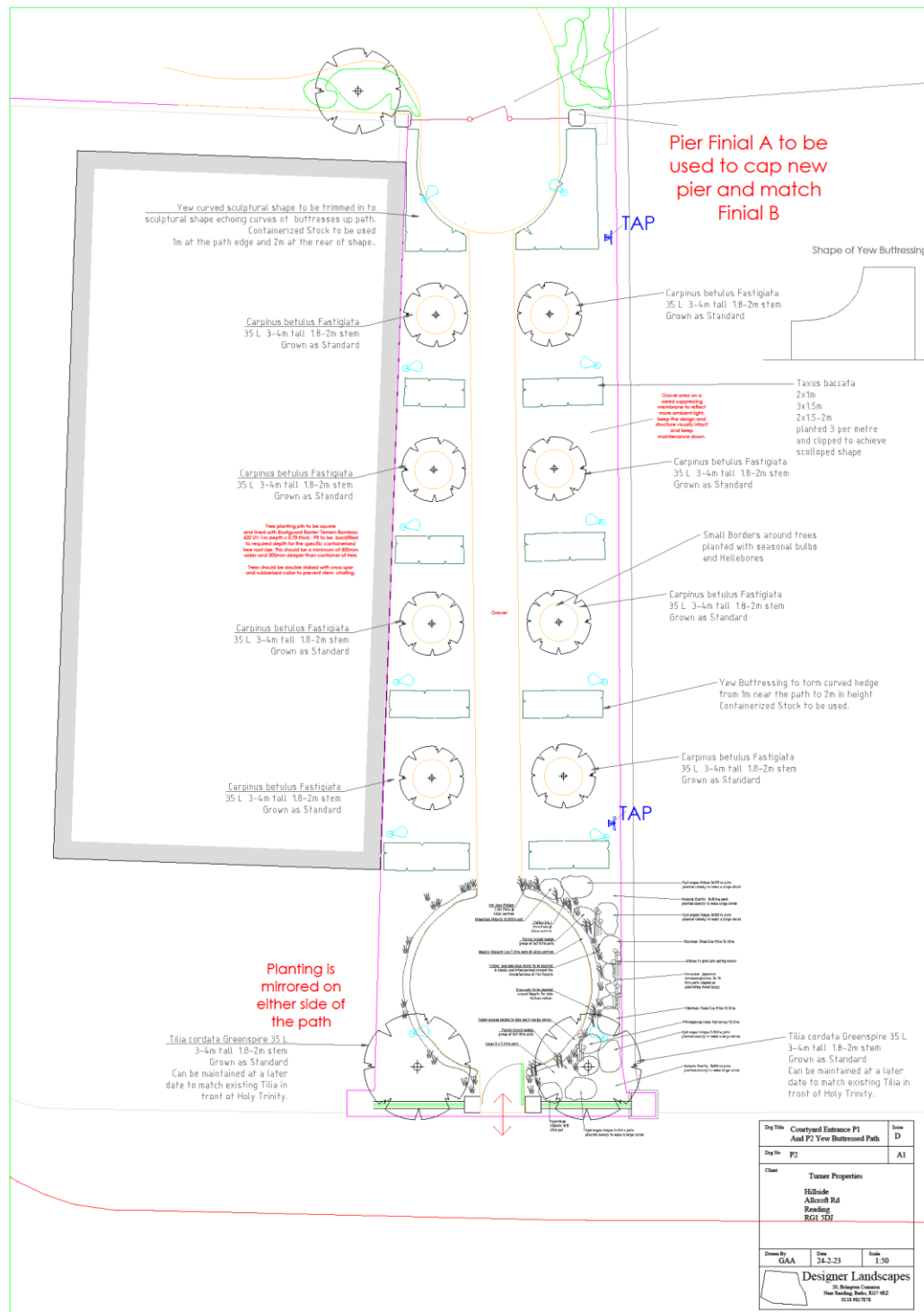


FIGURE 19 COURTYARD ENTRANCE P1 AND P2 ISSUE D 24-2-2023 GAILA ADAIR

The existing wall and gate will be replaced by railings and gate (see Weston and Co 18009-PL-17) which will re-align and re-define the pedestrian route from the road to the house, giving a 'sense of place' to the site. The pedestrian will be guided from the street in to a small circular courtyard with planting colour from spring right through to winter. The railings will provide continuity with the existing western boundary which at the moment are hidden by overgrown shrubs.



FIGURE 20 OVERGROWN HEDGE HIDES ORIGINAL PIER AND RAILINGS GA

Two *Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire' trees have been chosen to provide continuity of street scene with the existing *Tilia* in front of Holy Trinity Church. The new curved buttressed shaped yew hedging at the northern end of this courtyard helps to provide interest and prevent the area from becoming a wind tunnel. The avenue of *Carpinus Betula Fastigiata* each side of the path help to provide much needed greenery in the vicinity of Oddfellow's Hall and mitigate the loss of the *Sycamore* trees.



**FIGURE 21 COURTYARD AND PATH SHOWING NEW *TILIA*
AND *CARPINUS* WITH VIEW TO THE HOUSE GA**

To keep maintenance down yet provide interest up the narrow strip of land leading to the house, we will use a series of yew buttressing and hornbeams. This is also a design reference to John Billing the architect whose style of work at the house shows a strong ecclesiastical and Gothic influence and sits well in style, alongside Holy Trinity Church which he also worked on.

The new path, gravel areas and hedging will act as mini courtyards, light and airy, with bulbs and seasonal groundcover planted at the bases of the hornbeams within circular metal

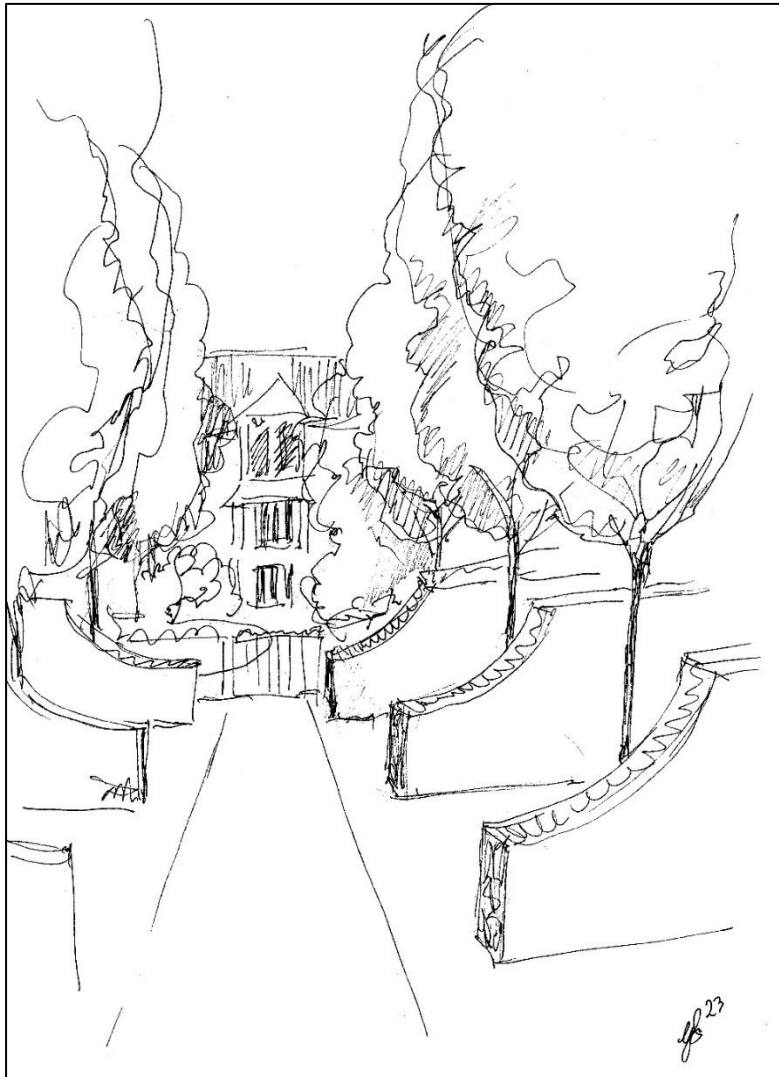


**FIGURE 22 YEW BUTTRESSING AND STANDARD CARPINUS
EITHER SIDE OF PATH TO CARLISLE HOUSE GA**

edging. The metal edging will also help to keep watering from dissipating away from the tree roots until they have established themselves. The new path will point towards the right-hand side of the western bay window, similar to the original line. If the path had been aligned to the centre of the western bay window then this would have created a pinch point by the pier on the corner of the garden wall, (on the left) by the Oddfellows Hall.

A new pier (with a small stretch of supporting walling) is to be built on the right-hand side of the garden opposite the existing pier on the left. This will provide symmetry and frame the view of the house. In between these piers will be railings and a gate leading in to the rest of the garden. Construction to be concreted block with stone facing to match the existing walling.

The finial taken from the corner of the wall and put on the new pier will match the opposite pier on the left. A spare finial not being used in the garden, will go back on the corner pier as shown and explained on Landscape Ideas Carlisle House 002 Issue G 24-4-2023.

The pier finials that will form the new gated entrance in to the garden

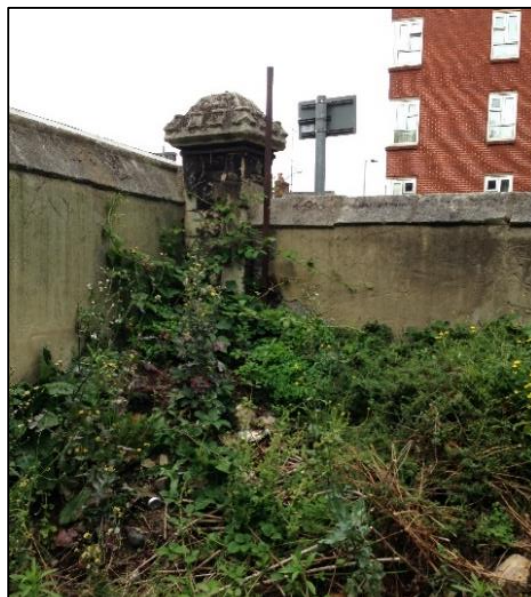


FIGURE 24 FINIAL TO BE REPLACED AND USED ON THE NEW PIER OF THE GATED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS GA



FIGURE 23 EXISTING FINIAL TO STAY GA

5.1 Planting Area Main Garden P3 Issue C 24-2-2023

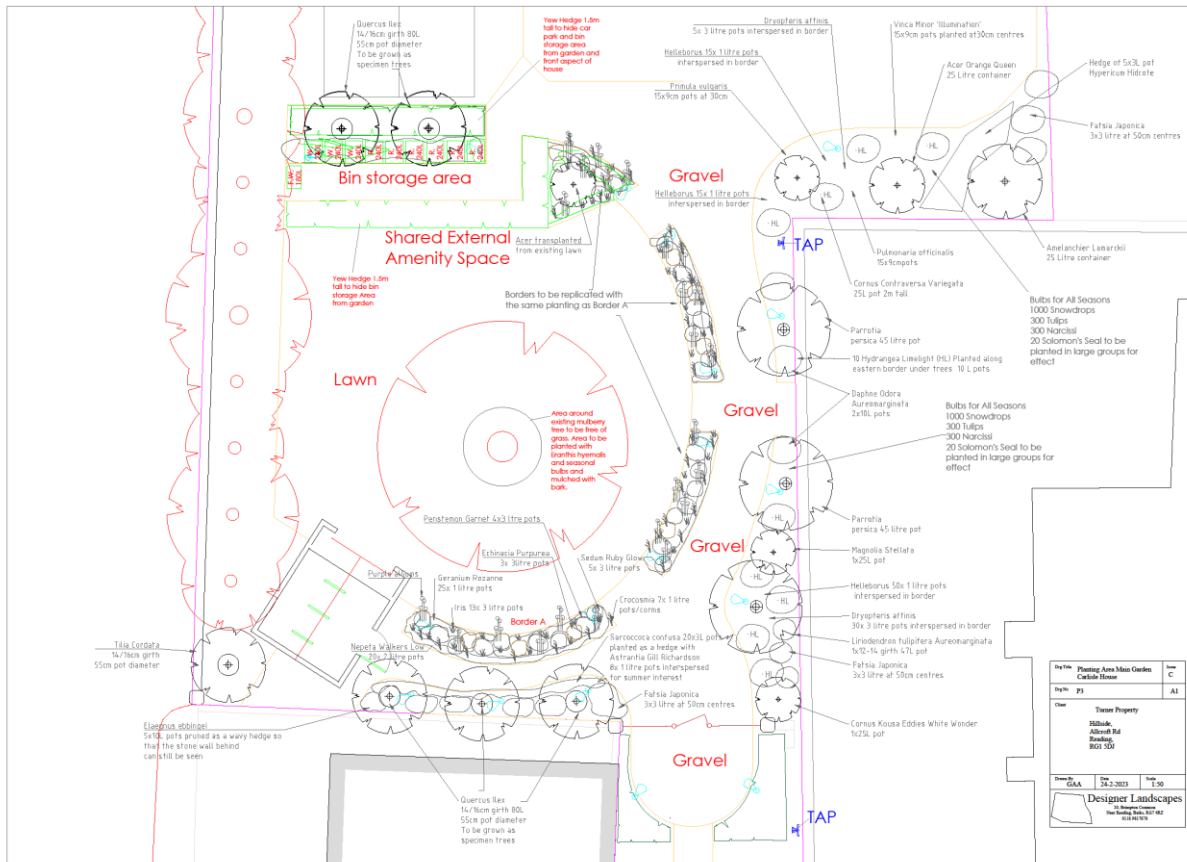


Figure 25 Planting P3 issue C 24-2-2023 GAILA ADAIR

The main garden will have a more open feel with repeated planting patterns to provide continuity and flowing texture and colour. The haphazard planting beds will be removed and the area will return to lawn. The Mulberry tree will be at the centre of the design, providing sculptural interest and maturity. The borders will now be on the edge of the lawn and there will be a new pathway to the new Cycle Store/Garden Loggia Seat building.



FIGURE 26 VIEW OF LARGE MULBERRY TREE THAT FORMS THE FOCAL POINT OF THE WHOLE GARDEN AND NEW DESIGN WESTON AND CO

A significant row of lime trees run along the inside of the west boundary. There is one missing in the corner which we will replace. It is proposed that these trees are regularly trimmed to keep to just above the highest pollarded height like a high hedge. This still gives privacy to the garden of Carlisle House from a series of tall apartment buildings to the west and to the north but it keeps regular maintenance achievable.



FIGURE 27 POLLARDED LIME TREES ON THE WESTERN BOUNDARY WESTON AND CO



FIGURE 28 LARGE SELF-SEEDED SYCAMORES CAST GREAT SHADE OVER MUCH OF THE GARDEN
WESTON AND CO

On the eastern boundary are the self-seeded maple trees which have taken over this side of the garden, casting much of it in shade.

The new Quercus Ilex trees by the south wall have been chosen to provide all year round form and colour which will help disguise the starkness of the Odd Fellows Hall. We have chosen planting that will not hide the wall which is an important feature of the garden. The plants can easily be pruned. A new path leads to a Cycle Store / Garden Loggia Seat Building.

5.2 Cycle Store/ Garden Loggia Seat Building

The Cycle Store Garden Loggia Seat building will consist of a Green Oak timber frame construction which makes design references to an ecclesiastical lytch gate structure. The pointed arch references the Gothic Revival style of Carlisle House and the historical Church context of the site. The rest of the material palette comprises Ashlar stonework plinths, oak featheredge cladding and a natural slate roof which also reflects the roofing material of Carlisle House itself. The Loggia will create an interesting view from the house and a place to sit and view the house from.

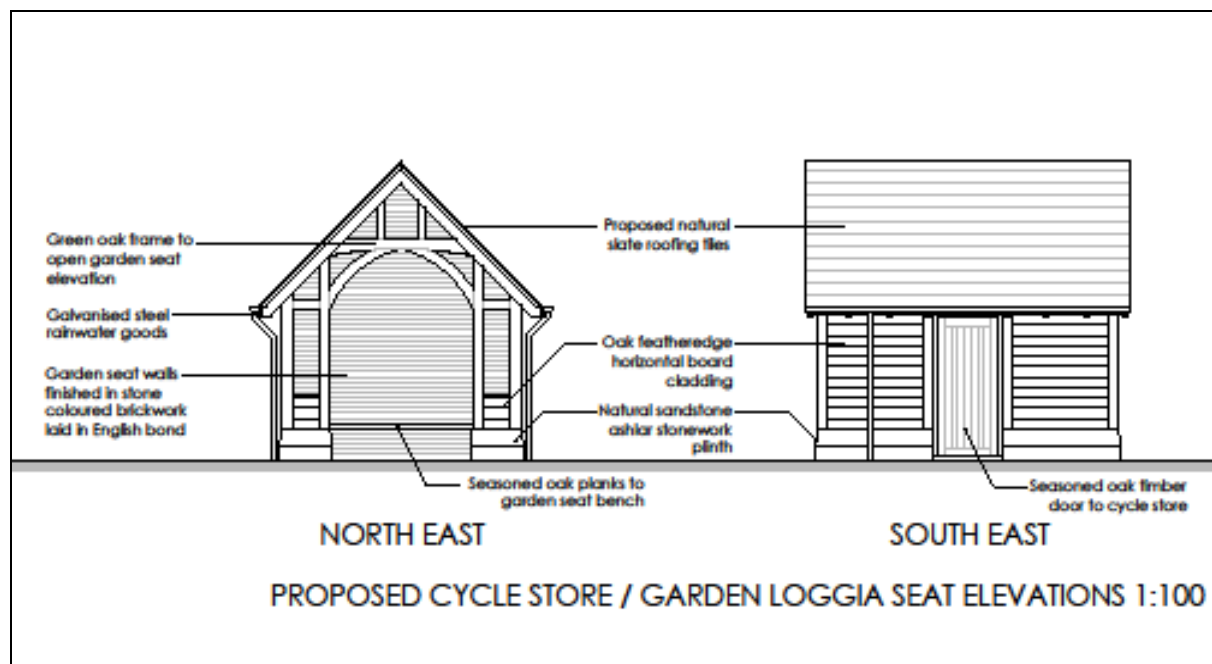


FIGURE 29 PROPOSED CYCLE STORE/GARDEN LOGGIA SEAT BUILDING WESTON AND CO

6.1 Planting By House P4 Issue C 25-4-2023

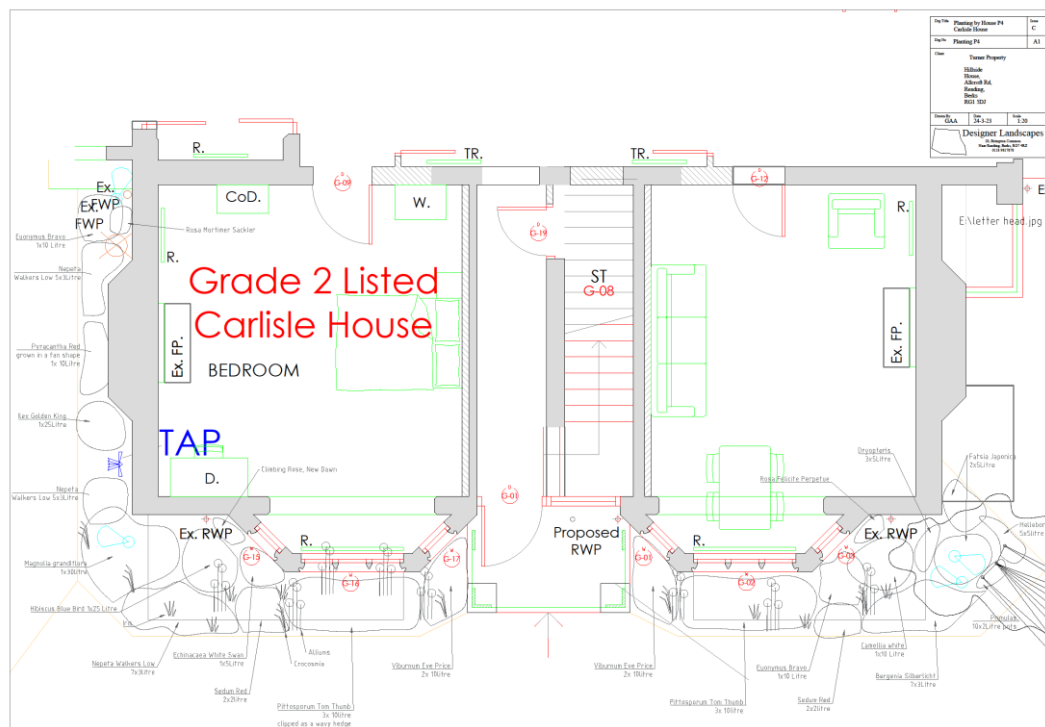


FIGURE 30 PLANTING BY HOUSE P4 ISSUE C 25-4-2023 GAILA ADAIR

The planting by the south face of the house is to be kept simple yet colourful with fragrant roses adding further benefit to the entrance.

Another plant of interest is an arching Magnolia by the south east corner of the house. This mature plant will be kept and a supportive archway structure will be made to support its branches. This will help to stop any damage in the future from branches becoming too heavy and also allow tenants access underneath in to a courtyard area.



FIGURE 31 MATURE EXISTING MAGNOLIA ON THE SOUTH EAST CORNER OF THE HOUSE TO BE SUPPORTED BY A NEW IRON ARCH GA

7.1 Planting P5 Issue C 24-4-2023

Main entrance and Parking.

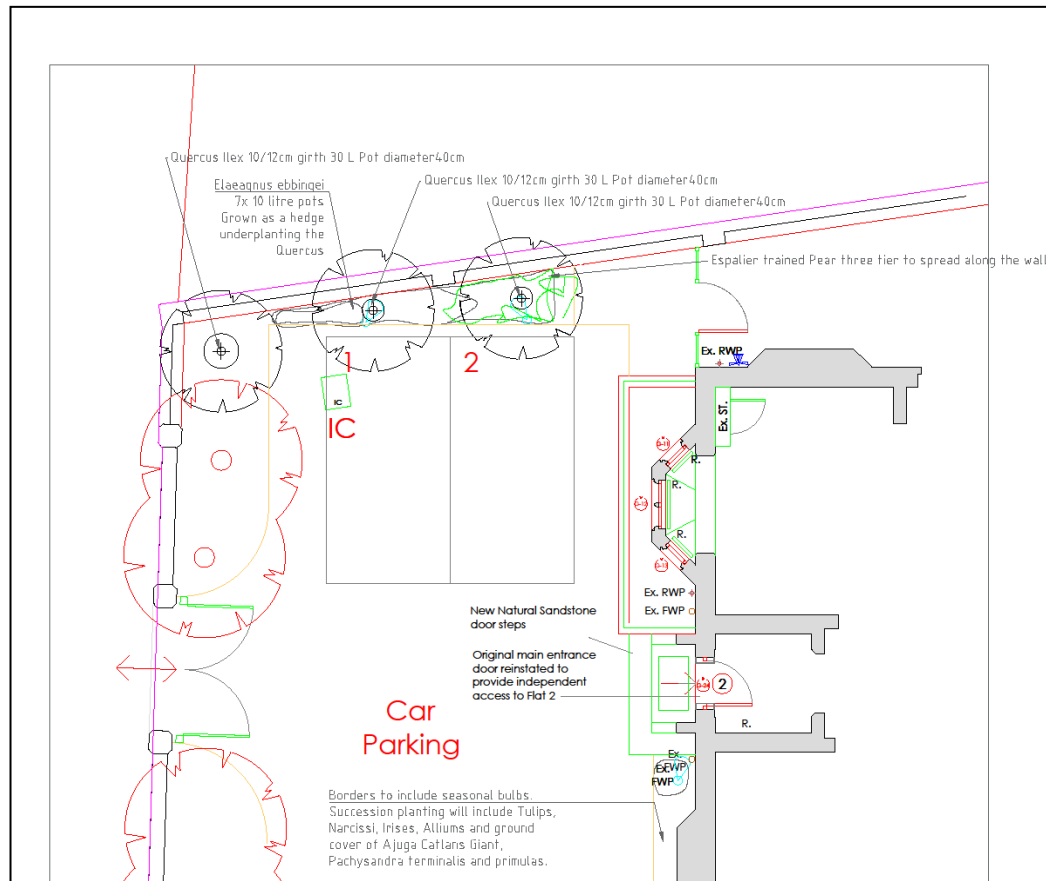


FIGURE 32 PLANTING P5 ISSUE C 24-4-2023 GAILA ADAIR

The planting around the car parking area is simple for ease of maintenance and to form privacy from nearby flats.

There will be no planting in the courtyard areas on the north and east of the house. This is because the areas are small, have wall footings and underground services below the ground so there is very limited scope for planting that will survive and mature. It is proposed that these areas are kept unplanted so that tenants can use the areas for seating or create their own planters. Water Butts and Taps will be provided for each apartment to use.

8.1 Conclusion

Our research has shown that the circumstances of Carlisle House have materially changed over the years and it is therefore considered by us that a new garden design, pulling on some of the existing historic features, could breathe a new vitality to the site and offset the negative effects of 20th century building encroachment.

We believe this would enhance the architecture of Carlisle House and return a 'sense of place' back to the property which will ultimately prolong the longevity of the building and become a positive asset to the borough of Reading.

9. Services

9.1 Lighting and Water

To help improve security, lighting is to be provided for paths and access areas. The style of lighting is yet to be chosen but it will not interfere with any flight paths of bat populations living in the area, especially adjacent to the church.

9.2. Water- Irrigation

Irrigation systems are known to silt up in just a few years and are indiscriminate with watering. The systems water all plants at the same rate. Some plants like it drier and some wetter. Therefore, the proposal is to initially create a rich planting medium and thick areas of mulching. Mulching will keep moisture in the soil and biodiversity with worms, insects and beetles. Once the garden has been planted and assessed, some areas or plants/trees may need a more structured watering. These areas can be targeted specifically. This methodology also allows irrigation pipes to be laid without the likelihood of being punctured by planting tools. Conduits are to be left underneath paths to link borders for lighting cables and irrigation. Water butts linked to down pipes on the site will be a major source of hand watering also.

10.1 Planting Density and Numbers

Comprehensive planting plans are supplied in drawings P1 and 2,3,4 and 5.

As a rule of thumb, 1 litre plants will be planted at 200mm centres in large swathes, 2 and 3 litre herbaceous planted at 300mm centres in triangles of three, with 5 and 10 litre herbaceous at 500mm centres.

11.1 Arboricultural Information

Tree sizes have been stipulated on the planting plans.

New trees of girth sizes up 12cm-14cm girth, (Nurseries either work in girth size or pot size) to be double staked and strapped. We have chosen slightly younger trees as they will get off to a quicker start and will have smaller planting pits. Larger trees and the necessary larger planting pits can result in the trees drowning in water as the pits act like sumps.

12.1 Tree Pit Information

Tree planting pits to be square and the sides lined with 'Terram Bamboo 420 UV 1m depth x 0.78 thick Rootguard Barrier, the strongest geotextile membrane with 25 year warranty. This will protect the newly planted tree roots from penetrating to the nearby footings of walling. Pits to be backfilled with topsoil to the required depth for each containerised tree, a minimum of 300mm wider and 300mm deeper than the size of container that the tree was grown in. Trees to be double staked with softwood 70mm diameter stakes (with 1m minimum clear of the ground) with cross spars and rubberised collar to prevent chafing.

'Terram Bamboo 420 UV 1m depth x 0.78 thick Rootguard Barrier to line the inside of the east garden wall just below ground level as an added measure to protect the walling.

Hornbeam trees in the yew buttress areas to have Everedge Rings of 1100mm diameter, to act as watering collars around each newly planted tree. This will help the water to seep in to the root ball in a more controlled manner instead of running off and away from the area.

12.2 Tree Protection

Existing trees during building work are to be protected from any machinery by Heras fencing positioned just beyond the accepted Tree Protection Zone or Root Protection Areas.

This is calculated by multiplying the trunk diameter at Breast Height by 12, e.g. if the DBH is 50cm then the TPZ will usually be 6m radius measured from the centre of the trunk.

13. Topsoil

The existing borders will be augmented where needed with 6mm screened topsoil. Where the quality of soil is dry and poor, new leaf mould, compost/well-rotted sterilised manure and fine shingle (no larger than 6 mm) for aeration will be added prior to planting.

This to be at a ratio of 1 part shingle to 4 parts soil to 1 part composted manure.

Reference Sites

Due to Coronavirus Restrictions beyond my control I have not been able to access some research first hand, and specific reference sources have been limited. Thanks go to Weston Architects for getting initial information for the project.

Beeptwo.com/family history

Berkshire Records Office

Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading. Sydney M Gold

British Brick Society

David Nash Ford's Berkshire History

English Heritage

Fitt Family Archives

Get Reading

Kelly's Directory

Macaulay's Berkshire Directory

National Monument Record

Reading Borough Council

Reading Chronicle

Reading Museum

Reading Town Library

Smith's Directory

Snare's Directory

The Churches of Britain and Ireland

