

DRAFT

ASCOTT MARTYRS' MEMORIAL ORCHARD

- ASCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD, OXFORDSHIRE



CONCEPT PROPOSAL AND OUTLINE SPECIFICATION

By Louisa Hunter Simmonds

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Version 1

Introduction:

Ascott Under Wychwood originated from the Forest of Wychwood. The Martyrs were agricultural workers, all women, who were instrumental in establishing the National Union of Agricultural Workers; so a community orchard seems the right point of entry for a design process that will emphasize and commemorate this heritage. The essence and whole aesthetic within this new space should be both reflective and in admiration for the somewhat underpraised achievements of the Ascott Martyrs' ordeals in 1873. The orchard should act as a memorial space for them. Their story and sacrifice should not be forgotten. The orchard will help bring their memory to life with subtle features that utilize the space, over time, to its full potential in a simplistic yet reflective manner, forming a natural biodiverse environment for all wildlife that may inhabit it, and a scenic, picturesque and peaceful space for the community. The orchard will be productive in itself, but also offering simple opportunities for learning and education, within what might be described as an understated, natural, rural beauty, perhaps emblematic of the sixteen women. The idea is to create an open space that emphasizes harmony and, of course, union.

The design will follow a simple, yet elegant and sophisticated approach to orchard design, with inspiration taken from the Arts and Crafts Movement, that emerged towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, with notable design features for the orchard being the entrance way, enclosure and any garden furniture, such as a bench.

The idea is that Bloombridge LLP will fund and deliver the initial proposals for the orchard. What is imperative, though, is that the natural environment and space created is intentionally free and adaptive for future change. The initial proposals are therefore intentionally pared down, with an aim to create a beautiful space, but with numerous opportunities, in time, for the Trust and the community to add their own interpretation, to ensure the narrative offered by the orchard continues to evolve, have meaning, and stay relevant as a memorial to the Martyrs. In short, scope and flexibility for the evolution of the orchard is intentionally designed-in.



Design

Influences:

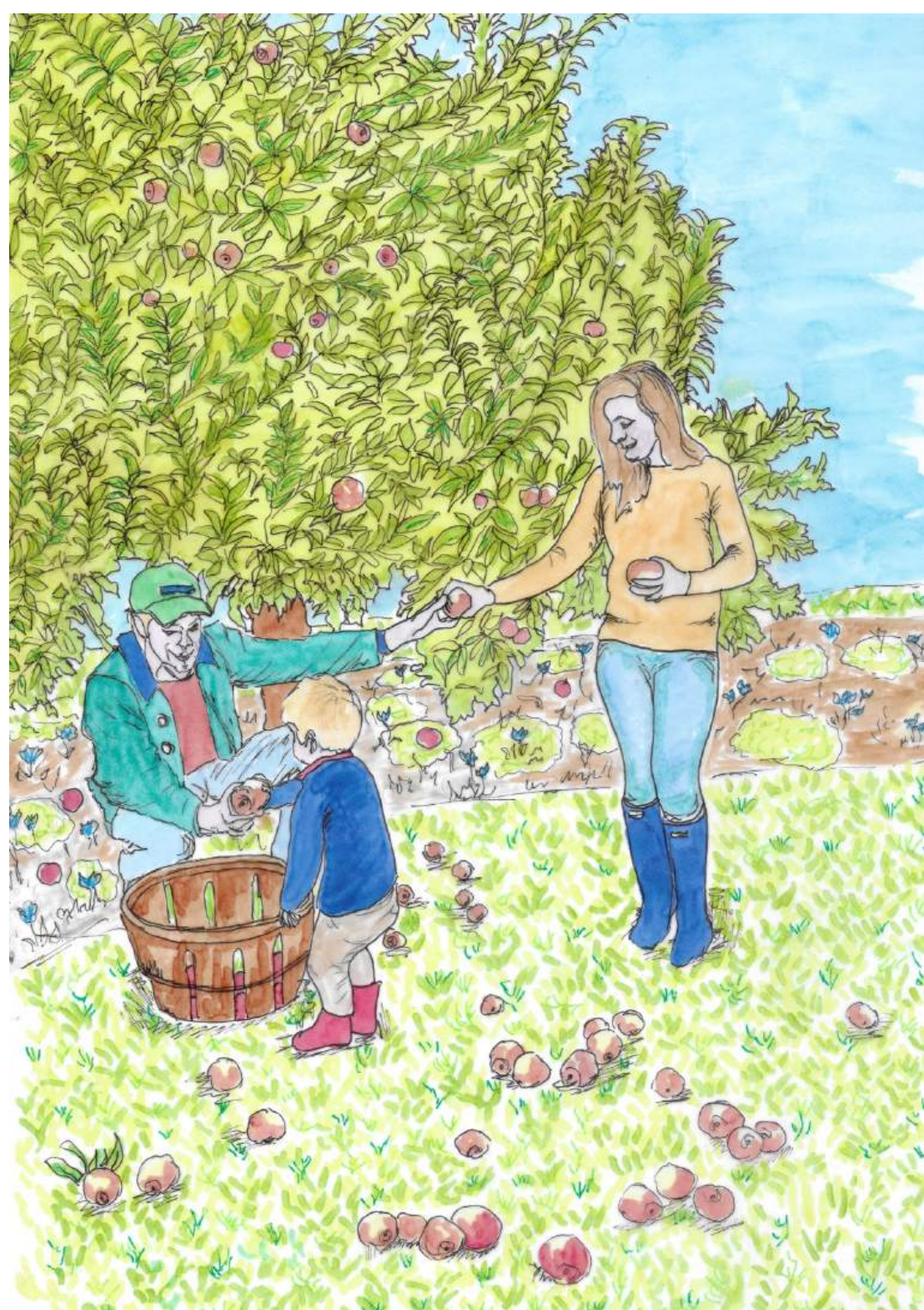
'The Old Garden' (1907 - 1914) at Hidcote Manor, Gloucestershire, acted as inspiration for the Martyrs' Memorial Orchard, being a typical English style garden that carries many similarities to the garden of 'Wychwood Manor' (1920s). Both these Nineteenth Century limestone houses are surrounded by beautiful gardens that have followed the Arts and Crafts Movement's ideals in layout and design. An Arts and Crafts garden is one that follows an approach to design rather than a specific style in itself. Thereby the orchard should be an individual, enclosed space allowed to be wild and naturalistic; being simple and appropriate in design for its location. Allowed to be open in aspect and free to develop, modestly enriched by fruit and nut trees and a species rich grass mix typical of a wildflower meadow, perhaps with humble flower borders. The initial proposals if for an overall appearance being both 'ordinary and rich' (William Morris). This will be enclosed by a two or three bar and stock proof fence and accessed by means of an Arts and Crafts inspired wooden gate, bespoke-designed (if possible).

Further design influences, in form rather than function, comprise The Orchard (Granchester), in the words of Rupert Brooke to remain 'forever England', and the Mead Tea Gardens just outside Bath. These are simple spaces, enjoyed for their natural beauty, quintessentially English.



Benefits of a Community Orchard:

- ▶ Act as a community asset with the ability to act as a gathering space for the local neighbourhood, so all ages and groups can come together in a beautiful setting.
- ▶ The orchard is not predominantly for the fruit itself but about the place and space for people to come together and connect with nature in a peaceful open space.
- ▶ Provision of vital, easily accessible green space.
- ▶ Having limited upkeep, with easy maintenance sympathetic to the wildlife.
- ▶ Generate an environment where traditional skills of fruit growing can be learnt and understood, in a fun and inclusive way.
- ▶ Orchards act as a haven for wildlife of all types - plants, insects, small mammals etc, all being allowed to thrive and flourish, benefiting the environment with higher levels of biodiversity.
- ▶ A sustainable space, through management and opportunities for evolution of the design and embellishment of the orchard over time, hopefully helping to create a recognised site of continuing interest in years to come.
- ▶ Fresh local produce can be grown and distributed.
- ▶ Perhaps over time, creating a usable space in the outdoors, acting as a focal point for community activities. The orchard could evolve to be used in multiple ways, e.g - outdoor classroom, or an area to play games and exercise.
- ▶ Provide an educational resource and space for children (and adults).
- ▶ Promote the historical significance of the Ascott Martyrs, perhaps linking with the District Council's culture and tourism strategies.
- ▶ Promote the benefits of health and wellbeing, with fresh produce and outdoor exercise for people of all ages, or just a space providing time to reflect.
- ▶ An aesthetically pleasing space with a connection to the outdoors.
- ▶ Generate an ecologically desirable recreational space.

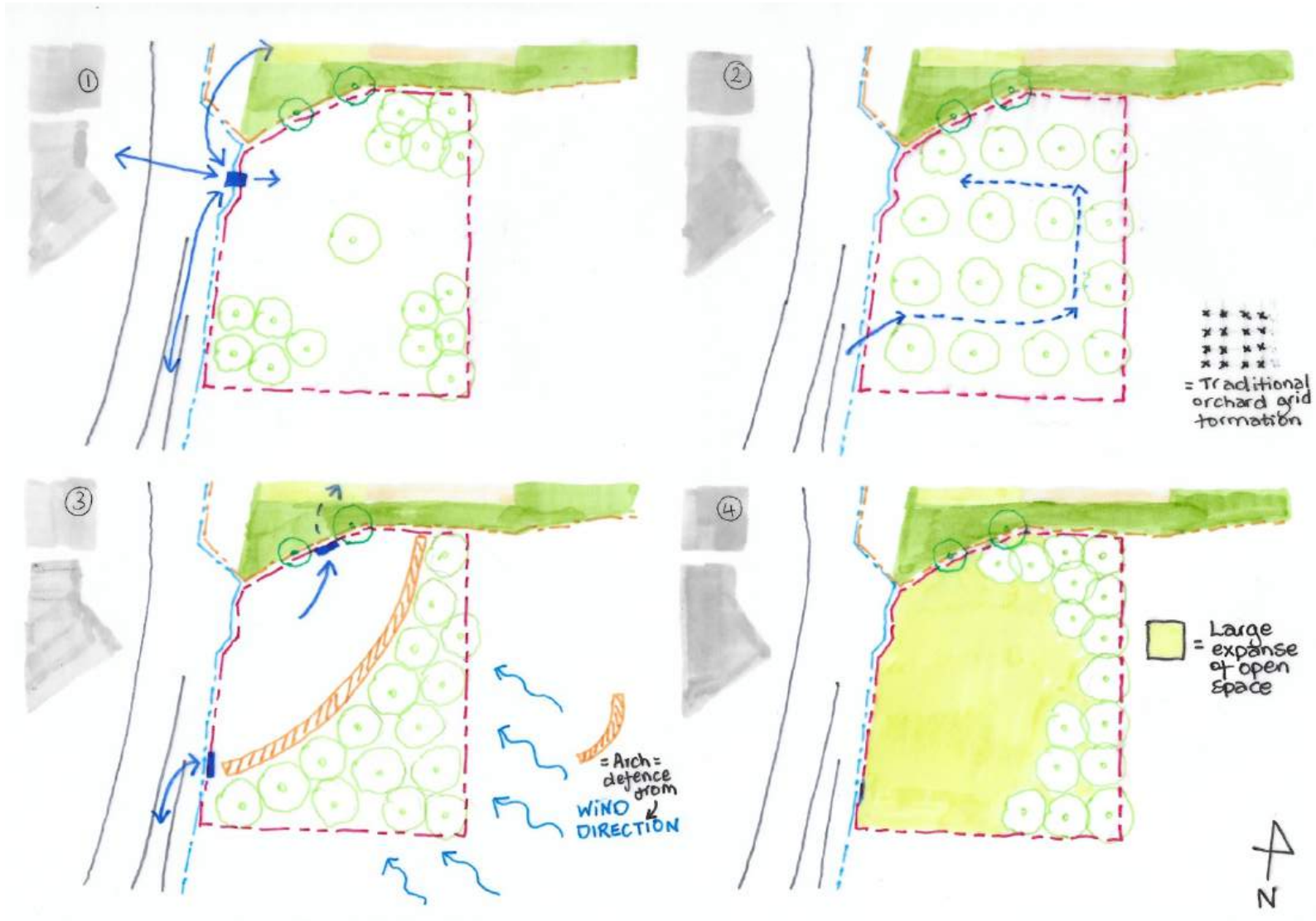


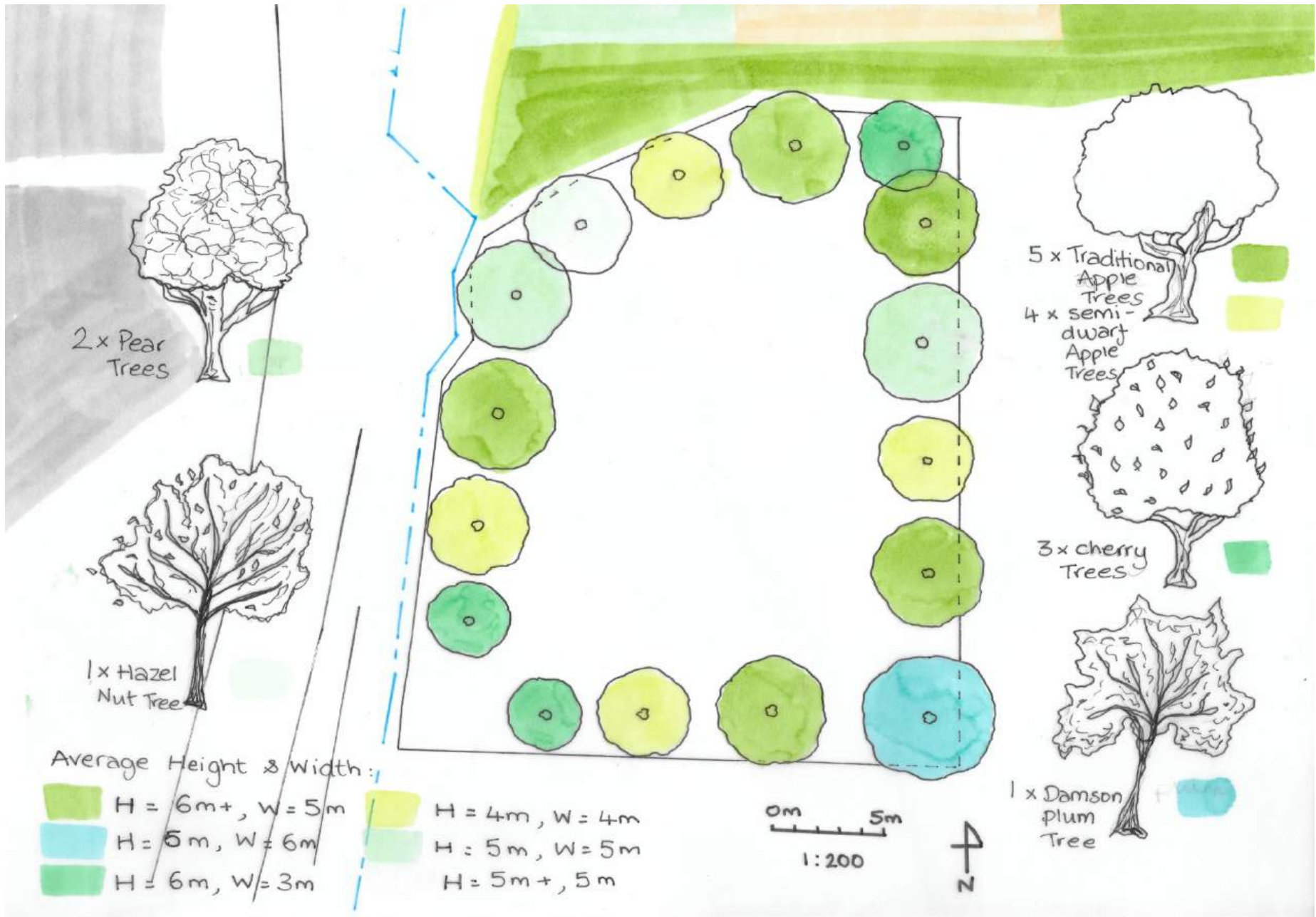


Location within
Ascott Under Wychwood

Phase 1 Design Brief

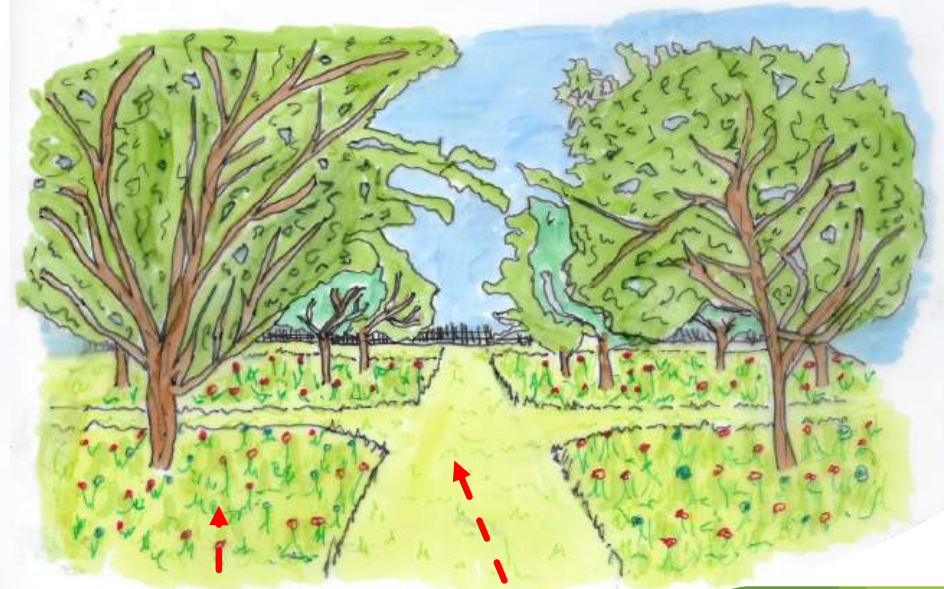
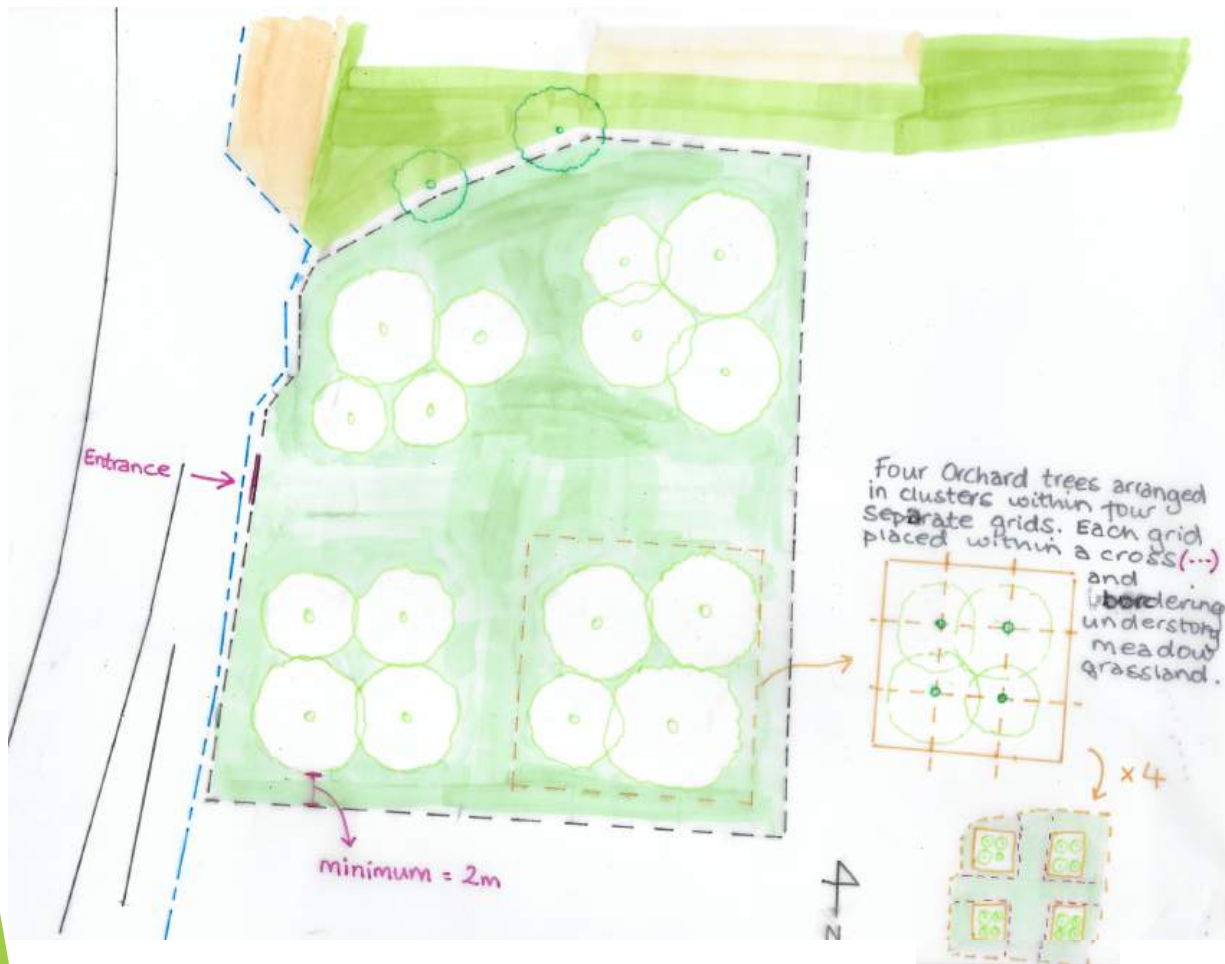
- ▶ Guidance will be sought from the Trust on whether the project is referred to as an 'orchard' or 'memorial garden', or perhaps even the 'memorial orchard'.
- ▶ Initial analysis suggests that the space is better suited to an orchard than a garden, so our working title is 'Ascott Martyrs Memorial Orchard'.





‘Ascott Martyrs Memorial Orchard’ Design Proposal

Alternative 'Ascott Martyrs Memorial Orchard' Design Proposal



- ▶ The orchard trees could be arranged within four grids, with sets of four varying tree species within each grid.
- ▶ Tree placement should be a minimum of 2m from the orchard edge to allow people to flow throughout and around the entire orchard.
- ▶ A native understory of meadow flowers below the trees should be separated by a natural grassland path around the borders and centrally in a cross form. Arranged in this manner allows a central open expanse for group activities, games, having picnics etc, to take place in the centre, as well as creating the opportunity for movement throughout.
- ▶ In time, if the trust sees fit, this central space could provide the location for picnic tables or benches.

Tree Species

- ▶ The space is sufficient to contain a small community orchard that can easily be managed by the local community, with the ability to be self-sufficient with minimal upkeep. It is imperative to maintain and further improve the current attractive location for the ultimate use and satisfaction of the local community and visitors. With the inclusion of:
- ▶ Sixteen native orchard trees of varying species with specific varieties to be chosen based on local heritage. Each tree will be representative of one of the Oxford Martyrs.
- ▶ Varieties: Fruit and Nut (For Review):
- ▶ **9X Apple Trees**
 - ▶ Representing the Moss family - planting 5X traditional and 4x semi-dwarf apple species.
 - ▶ 5X traditional apple trees expressive of the Moss mothers with symbolism of 'wisdom, good health and future happiness' [thepresenttree.com].
 - ▶ 4X dwarf apple species representative of the remaining Moss family - younger generation, the dwarf species having the representation of youthfulness.
- ▶ **3X Cherry Trees**
 - ▶ Representing the Pratley women.
 - ▶ 2 of which had infant children, therefore the symbolise 'birth and beauty' is fitting [bbg.org].
- ▶ **2x Pear Trees**
 - ▶ Representing 'Lavinia Dring' and 'Martha Smith'.
 - ▶ Pear trees symbolising 'prosperity, good health and future happiness [...] divine sustenance, abundance and longevity [thepresenttree.com] as well as immortality and sacrifice making them appropriate for the eldest Martyrs - 44 and 45.
- ▶ **1x Damson Plum Tree**
 - ▶ Representative of 'Fanny Honeybone' the youngest of the Martyrs with the tree's allegory of young beauty and 'perseverance and hope'. [ThePresentTree.com].
- ▶ **1x Hazel Nut Tree**
 - ▶ For 'Rebeca Smith' in symbolism 'of peace and health' [Aboutnuts.com].
- ▶ Other tree possibilities: crab apple, quince, walnut, medlar etc



Benefits of Tree Planting:

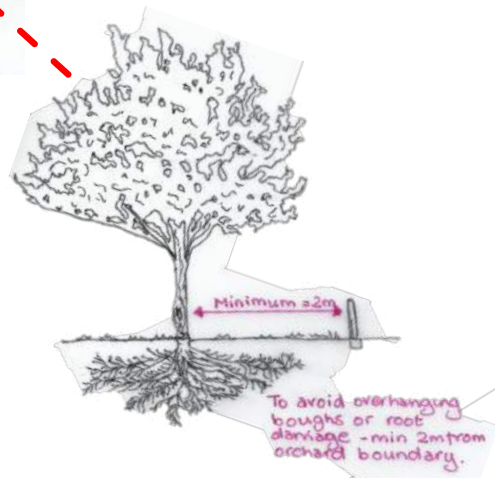
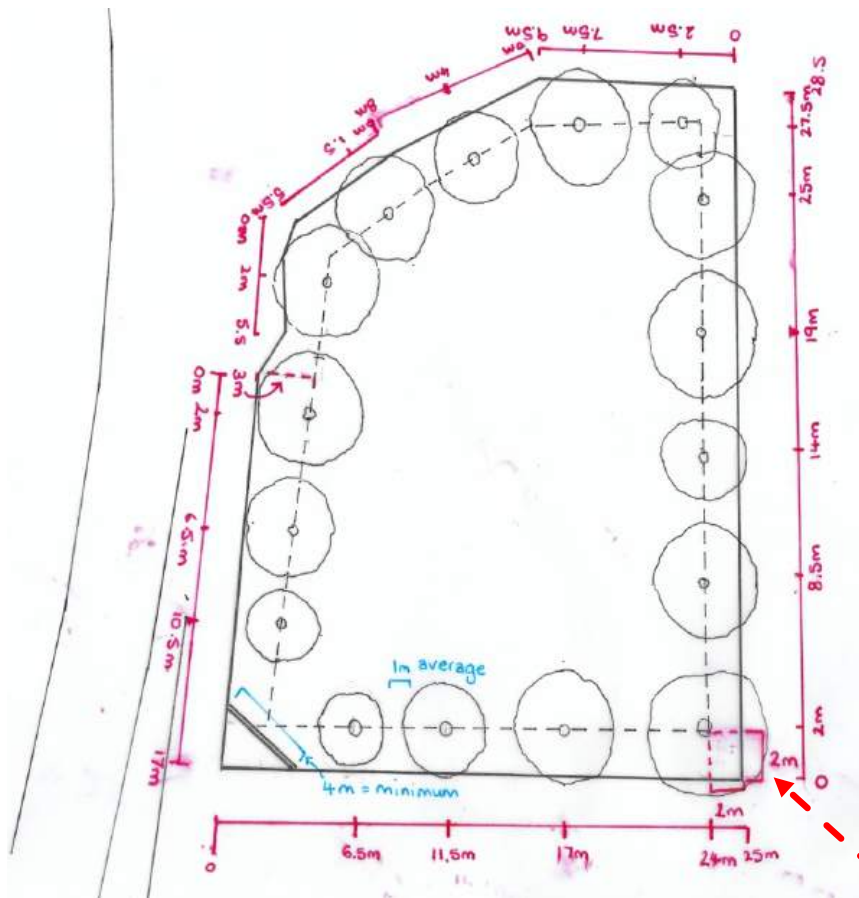


- ▶ Manipulating the combination of both fruit and nut trees benefits one another's growth and is ecologically desirable.
- ▶ The inclusion of trees will conserve and enhance the scenic quality and rural character of the location.
- ▶ Nut trees especially have the tendency to attract small mammals and all these tree varieties have a positive environmental impact for multiple wildlife species. All helping to conserve and develop the site's biodiversity.
- ▶ These trees require minimum upkeep, so they will quickly attain an environmentally and economically sustainable management level for their location.
- ▶ The assortment of species will have differing blossoming rates and times in bloom. Generating a prolonged display of blossom, with a greater aesthetic appeal within the orchard, extended from February to May.
- ▶ Orchard trees have the tendency to develop cavity holes over time and act as prime nesting environments for birds, promoting wildlife within the space.

Tree Planting

- ▶ Prime planting time for these trees is nearing the end of November until the end of April weather depending.

Tree Placement

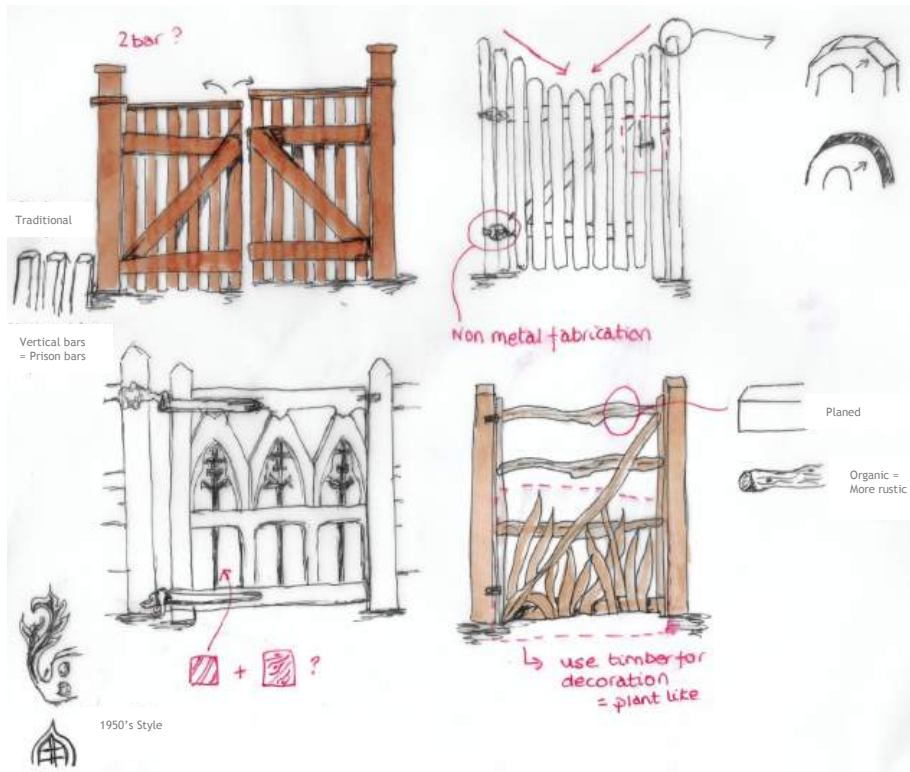


- ▶ Each tree will be placed in accordance with its maximum standard size and scale so as not to act as hindrance to a nearby tree, ensuring they do not need to compensate for light and water and can all grow to their prime.
- ▶ Consideration of each species' maximum size and scale has been taken into consideration to allow space for all sixteen trees for sufficient growth to benefit from all the nutrients required. Placement around the edge will create an inclusive feel within the orchard. Along with providing an additional defence from wind, their placement on the borders could generate an open internal central space for communal activities to take place.
- ▶ The soil being clay rich below will not hinder the tree growth.
- ▶ Help reduce water pooling due to water absorption from the roots, benefiting the ground's strength and saturation levels.
- ▶ Tree arrangement will be dependent on tree heights and canopy spans for maximum natural sunlight within the orchard and limited shadows internally. Planting in rows of differing species along the borders ensures a diverse aesthetic and ensures an austere or gloomy environment isn't created. This could arise if trees are placed in close proximity groups. Varying scales will also allow for outlooking views into the surroundings. The main view looking east onto the High Street brings a sense of connection to the village.



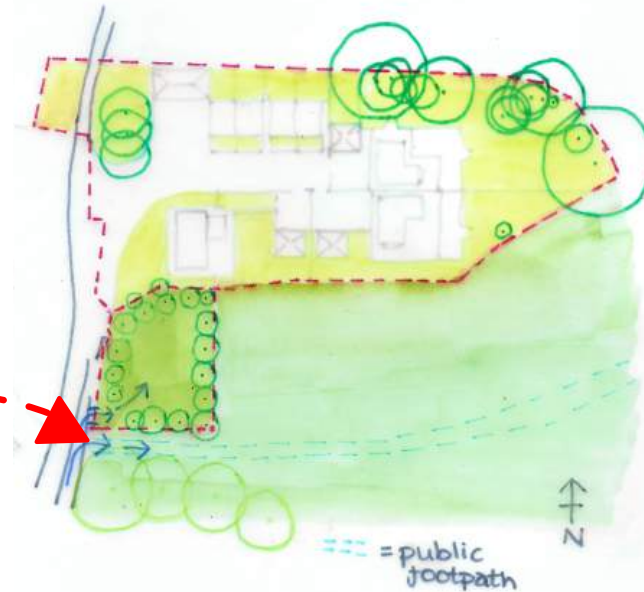
Entrance

- ▶ The main route into the orchard for all local residents and visitors is direct along the High Street (public highway), being both inclusive and inviting with ease of access. Installation of a pedestrian gate will allow access and stop unwanted wildlife. This gate will be left unlocked to always allow access.



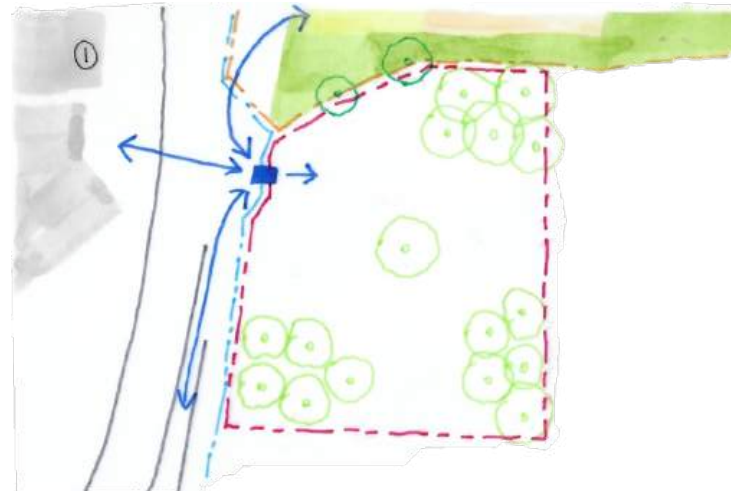
Gate

- ▶ The gate is a paramount feature, generating the initial feel and excitement for what's within. Opulent decoration on a traditional and attractive timber gate will create an appealing consensus on approach, being both welcoming and intriguing. A timber gate is reflective of the materials used by the Arts and Crafts Movement, following the gardens intentional theme. Being simplistic yet symbolic in design, manufactured beautifully it will set the first impressions.
- ▶ A traditional hard wood will be used, due to its durability and aesthetic qualities.



- ▶ The public footpath is located further west along the high street. Additionally the gate will constantly be left open to allow ease of access within the orchard.

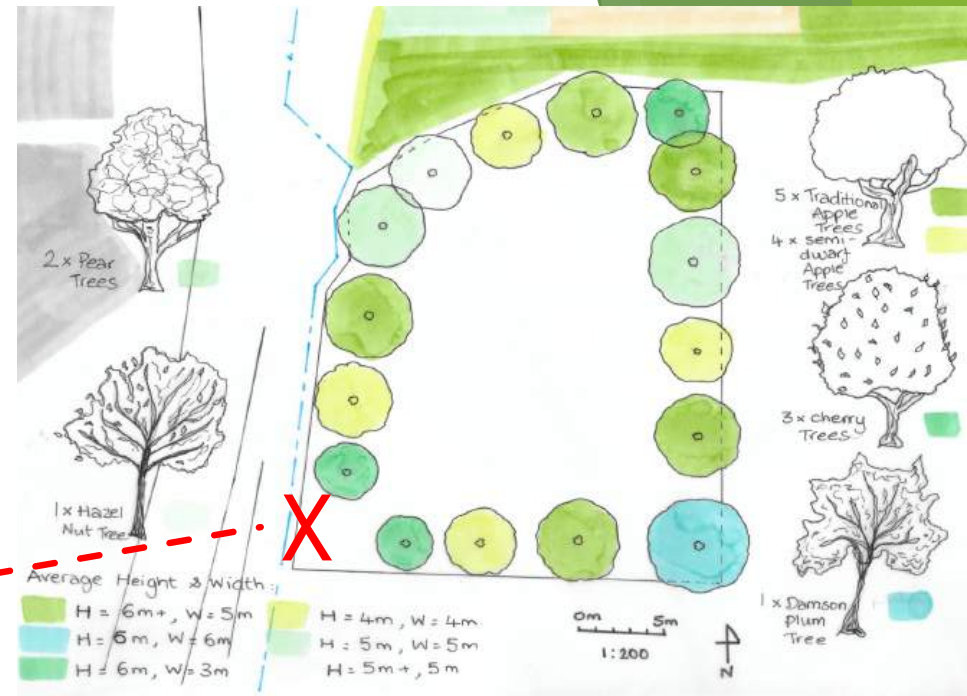




- ▶ A small level foot bridge made from railway sleepers could cover the small ditch running in front of the orchard on the west wing allowing ease of access. The wooden sleepers will meet health and safety regulations, being fully sufficient and accessible to all, with ease for both pushchairs and wheelchairs.
- ▶ However would require tree placement to change and the hedge row to be partially cut back.

Access and Tree Placement

- ▶ Dependent on the access to the memorial orchard will result in a differing tree placement. A single tree placement switch will make this easily possible and won't hinder the design's aesthetic.



X = Entrance

Fencing

- ▶ The orchard will be set back from the road, 'walled' by the row of defensive hedges along the west wing. On the south side a line of trees is presently acting as a natural green wall. However, a two-bar or three-bar stock proof fence will be installed to create an enclosed space and stop unwanted animals on all sides. This fence will be fitting to the location and not act as a hindrance to the aesthetic or impose on the space.
- ▶ This will provide a quiet, pleasant area for people to come together and appreciate the surrounding space within the orchard. It will also help provide an excellent environment for the internal nature to thrive.





Flowers

- ▶ The predominant colour theme of the flowers used will be red and blue, representative of the Martyrs' story.
- ▶ Red is used to symbolize the 'red flannel petticoats' the Martyrs received from Queen Victoria, along with a pardon, after their release from prison. The blue is representative of the 'blue silk' the Martyrs received to make a dress, given by the 'Agricultural Union'. This simple yet planned colour scheme will generate a beautiful aesthetic and bring educational benefit to children as the story can be shown through the design narrative. Examples of flowers that could be used are native bluebells and red poppies, that also represent sacrifice and remembrance. This colour theme was also used in the 'Old Garden' within the 'Hidcote Manor Gardens' of the 1950s.



- ▶ An understory meadow of grassland with a seed mix can be sown to create a natural and beautiful array of colour and differing assortment of species. These flowers prosper surrounded by fruit trees and both aid each other's growth.
- ▶ All flowers planted will be wild and native species being self-sufficient with minimal maintenance.
- ▶ The use of bulb flowers will add continuous colour to the orchard, in months from February - May, when they should be in full bloom. This is when most wildlife is duller in colour and not in its prime. Generating a yearly continuation of colour having a positive impact on the aesthetic.
- ▶ All bulb flowers planted will be perennials, so not to create a cost factor in subsequential years for the community. The benefit of autumn bulbs is they tend to spread and grow stronger each year they grow.
- ▶ The flowers used will not be overly garish or overpowering with an aim of creating a simple and sophisticated aesthetic, fitting the natural location.



Maintenance

- ▶ The orchard has been designed for minimum, low cost maintenance.
- ▶ The fruit and nut trees will need pruning from time to time, but this is not difficult or expensive, and the produce yielded from the trees will encourage a desire to care (also a natural benefit each autumn).
- ▶ Planning will impose a five year maintenance obligation on Bloombridge LLP or, in the alternative, Bloombridge will pay a commuted sum direct to the Trust to cover the same.



Conclusion

- ▶ There are numerous possibilities for this space to further develop and evolve, with endless opportunities. This is a brief overview of some ideas to help the Trust decide how they wish to take forward the design and progression of the orchard.
- ▶ The intention is that the Memorial Orchard will evolve organically in line with the wishes of the Trust and local community and, hopefully, it will be visited by local schools and history enthusiasts from time to time. Our initial concept has been designed as a canvas to respond to, and evolve from, the interests expressed by these parties.

Richard Cutler
07771 968227

richard@bloombridge.com

Louisa Hunter Simmonds