

Ampney Park
Landscape Report



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Designations (See Separate Document)



1. Introduction

1.1 Design Approach

The design approach at Ampney Park involves both an adherence to the historic, romantic setting of the parkland and formal gardens, as well as a contemporary assessment and improvement of the biodiversity outputs and ecological outputs of the site as a whole. The garden and landscape design will utilise both native and species, and look to create a romantic atmosphere where nature abounds and the landscape and waterway is given a chance to thrive. Our clients, and therefore this proposal, aim to create a landscape that is in harmony with the environment and community, while being sensitive to existing ecologies.

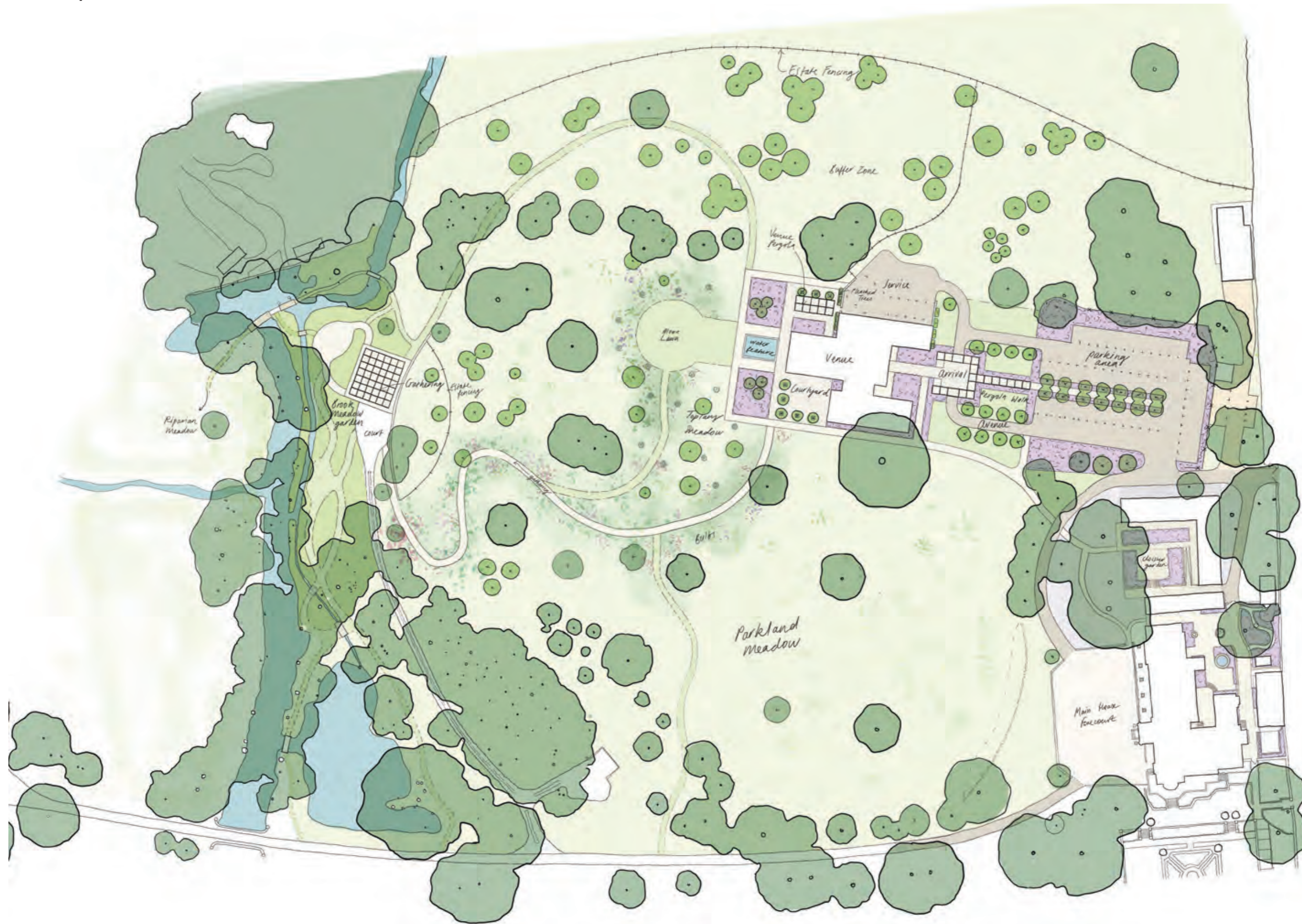
1.2 Executive Summary

Ampney Park is a Grade II listed manor house, situated in the village of Ampney Crucis in the south Cotswolds. Set within formal gardens and surrounded by wooded parkland, the gardens at Ampney Park date back to 1620, when the original manor house was built. Part of the parkland has been developed for equine use - an outdoor riding arena was installed in 2002. The current proposal looks to remove these more recent additions in the parkland and instate a new venue for events and garden spaces with associated accommodation.

The aims of the landscape proposal are to incorporate new garden and landscape areas into this scheme, with the view to both honour the existing historic grounds and refresh and invigorate them to allow a flourishing of both biodiversity and aesthetic value. The project presents a unique opportunity to enliven the grounds at Ampney, with the introduction of new flower borders around the venue buildings, enriched meadows with bulbs and wildflower seeds in the main parkland, new ornamental tree planting, new hedges and topiary, and a naturalistic riparian area along the brook. The landscape masterplan will also include buffer zones and the development of patches of scrub in the north parkland, which will increase the habitat capacity of the parkland for wildlife. The gardens and surrounding landscape will be a place for visitors to enjoy and connect with the unique landscape that surrounds Ampney Park.



1.3 Masterplan



2. Landscape Proposal

2.1 Venue Building

The thoughtfully clustered layout of the proposed venue building has given rise to a collection of enchanting outdoor spaces, each infused with unique characteristics and purpose. This innovative design concept has laid the foundation for a captivating array of features within the upcoming venue.

The venue will boast an inviting entrance area graced by a charming pergola, surrounded by courtyards, lush gardens, and a captivating water feature. The landscaping plan strikes a delicate balance between romance and contemporary aesthetics, featuring a diverse palette of flowering perennials and grasses, both indigenous and ornamental. This carefully curated selection ensures a prolonged flowering season, offering visual interest to visitors and wildlife even during autumn and winter. Climbers will gracefully drape the pergola and building façades, creating a harmonious transition between the natural and built elements. Additionally, meticulously trimmed topiary and shrubs will add further layers of intrigue and structure to the landscape.

A processional pergola leading from the car park to the arrival forecourt will lend a strong sense of order to the garden. Over time, this planted structure will transform into a vibrant, 'green' living feature. The pathway, paved with natural stone and flanked by flourishing plantings, will provide an enchanting approach to the venue. The forecourt itself will serve as a welcoming space for guests.

To the south of the venue, a courtyard will capitalise on the scenic open views, overlooking the parkland meadow and the main house of Ampney Park. Meanwhile, the northern courtyard, offering glimpses of the north parkland, will provide a sheltered retreat, particularly advantageous during the warmer months.

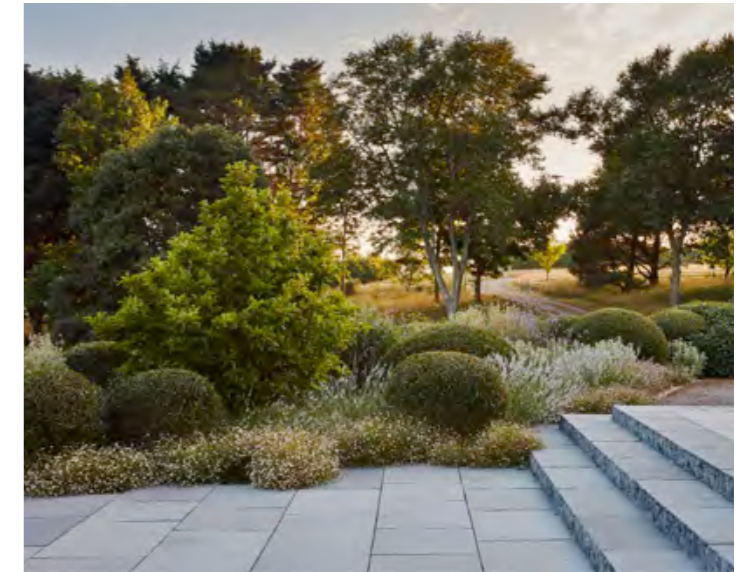
The strategically positioned water feature will serve as a picturesque frame for the west-facing venue glazing, leading to an expansive lawn area enveloped by a topiary meadow. This topiary, a nod to the formal gardens of the main house, will provide year-round visual interest and structure, particularly during the winter months. The service area to the north will be screened by Cotswolds stone walls and pleached trees.



Venue gardens



Pergola



Courtyard

2.2 Outdoor Gathering Space

This garden space is envisioned as a seasonal ceremonial enclave featuring an outdoor pergola structure. The pergola's construction will mirror the elegant design of those found near the proposed venue, gradually evolving into a lush living feature. The strategic orientation of this area maximises its scenic potential, offering sweeping vistas across Ampney Brook and the meadows beyond.

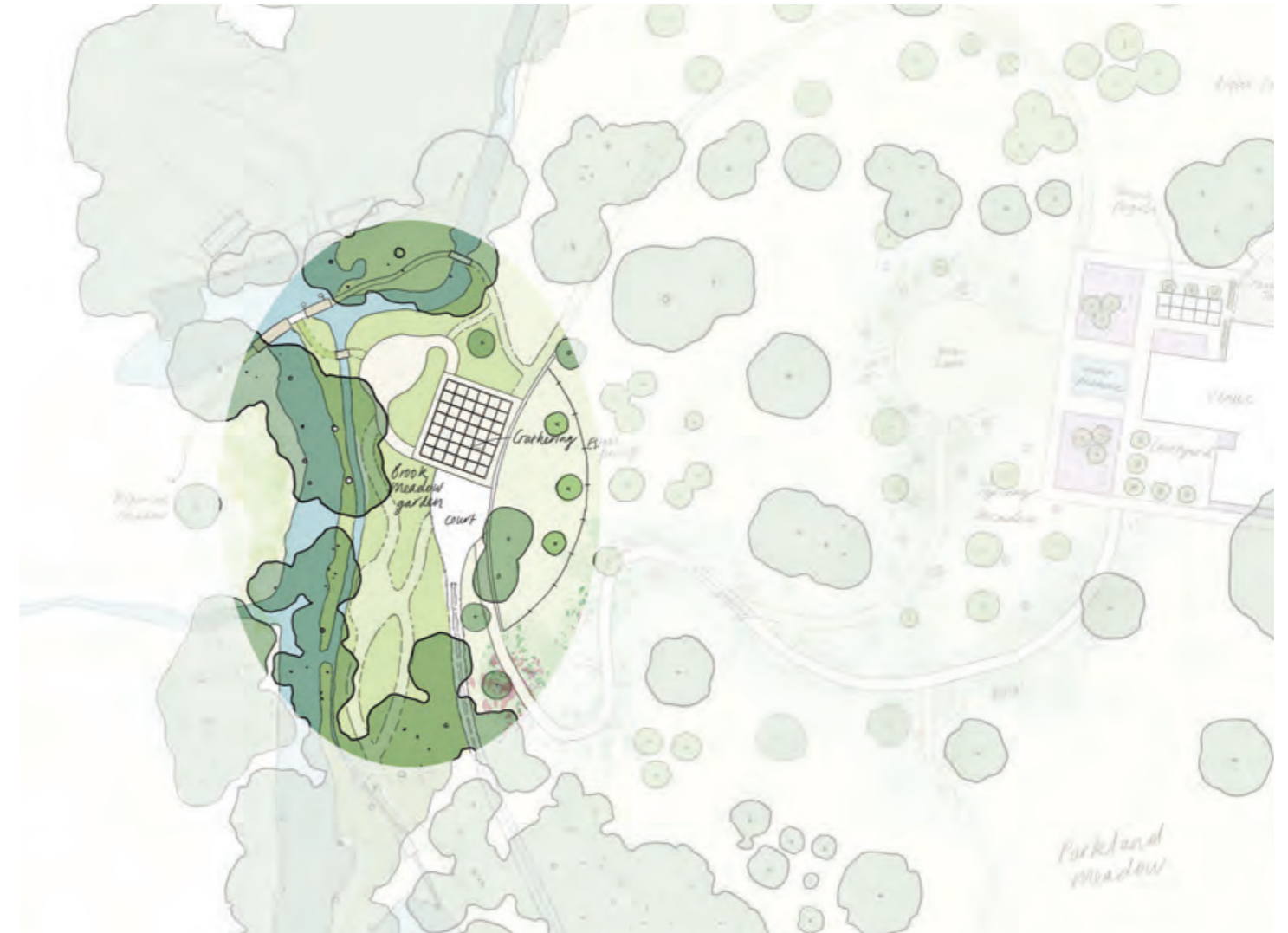
To enhance the environment, an introduction of new riparian planting along the existing damp marginal stream banks, within a proximity of 5 meters from the watercourse, creating a native wet meadow. This lush landscape will be embellished with clusters of irises, seasonal bulbs, and a variety of other perennials and grasses. Natural stone paving will grace the gathering areas, while simple mown or hoggin pathways will guide guests through the meadows to open spaces where they can gather. Any new crossings will be thoughtfully designed using locally sourced natural stone or timber materials.



Natural stone crossings



Native wet meadow flowers



2.3 Stables Courtyard

The envisioned development of the stables block will give rise to a new courtyard garden, reminiscent of the one that already graces the eastern side of the main house. This garden space will echo the same defining features as its counterpart, encompassing both the planting scheme and the choice of materials.

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What sets this space apart is its privileged location, offering sweeping westward views across the expansive parkland, framed by the majesty of mature trees. At its heart, the central area invites guests to gather and relish the garden surrounding or dining outside. The design incorporates a ramp, ensuring unrestricted accessibility to the accommodations, thus enhancing the inclusivity and convenience of the space.



Natural stone pavers and cobbles



Planting to match architectural style



2.4 Planting Approach

New planting to consist of a mix of arts & crafts style perennial planting, new naturalistic planting and ornamental grass matrixes, linking the gardens to the landscape beyond. The plant palette will consist of both native and exotic species, providing resources for wildlife as well as an extended flowering season. The historic gardens of the main house, feature various established yew topiaries, and this element will be echoed in new topiary elements that are juxtaposed within naturalistic meadows and grass matrixes, pulling the language of the historic garden through to the present day. New ornamental trees will be selected for blossom and autumn colour, with a focus on native tree and hedge species in the wider landscape.

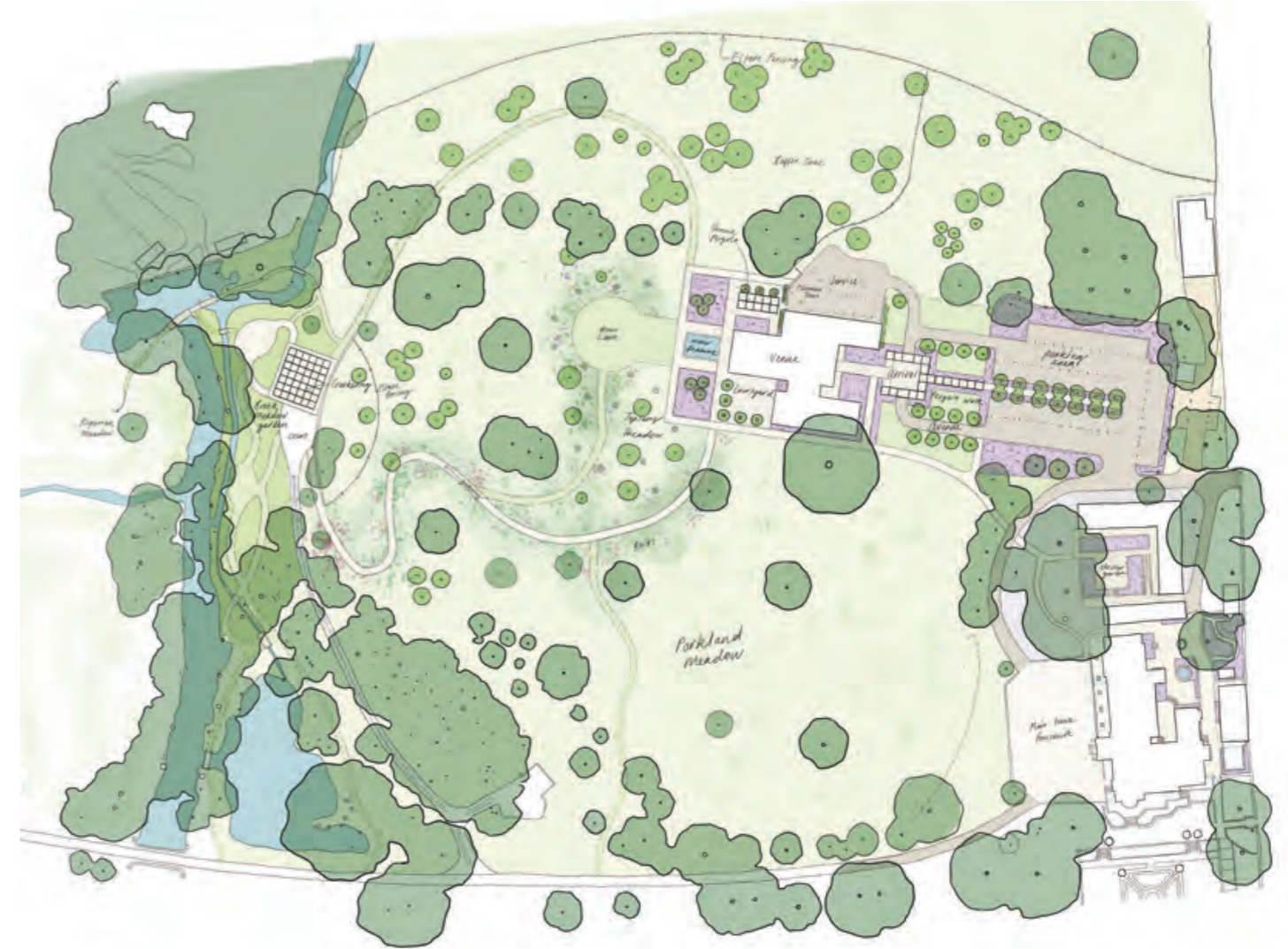
The aim is to naturalise the venue within the surrounding landscape, as well as enhance the biodiversity of the local ecosystem by attracting pollinators and other invertebrates, providing shelter and food for a number of different native birds, reptiles, bats, and other mammals. Additionally, there will be a focus on nectar-rich plants to encourage night-flying moths as forage for bats.



Topiary meadows



Perennial borders



2.5 Trees

The proposed landscape design embodies a deep respect for the existing flora and fauna, seamlessly integrating with the site's mature trees and shrubs. We've undertaken a meticulous assessment of the estate's significant trees, followed by the implementation of a comprehensive plan aimed at conserving and invigorating these majestic specimens.

In the north field, the vestiges of historic tree lines can still be traced through a handful of mature Lime trees that stretch from north to south, roughly bisecting the north parkland's heart. This presents a unique opportunity to reinstate this historical tree line and resurrect some of the estate's older axial connections. Strategically, new trees and shrubs will be placed to the northwest of the venue and north of the entrance arrangement, effectively screening the proposed from view at Crucis Park. To ensure year-round coverage, we'll deploy a variety of deciduous and evergreen species, planted in clusters. The revival of an existing, well-established holly hedge will play a pivotal role in enhancing the proposed entrance arrangement. Furthermore, our approach to additional planting within the parkland meadow will be considerate of the existing views and tree placements, preserving the landscape's natural beauty.



Preserve existing lime avenue



Respect existing tree RPA's

2.6 Car Park

The parking area will be strategically located onsite of the existing horse arena. A row of trees planted in an east-west orientation will align with the historic axis of the footpath. To seamlessly blend the parking area with its natural surroundings and reduce the visual impact from both the arrival point and the main house, it is planned to employ a naturalistic planting scheme. This scheme will incorporate a variety of shrubs, perennials, grasses, and small trees. A sound buffer screen will surround the area to the north and west.



Planted buffer



Hoggin surface



Ferns and stone elements

2.7 Parkland Meadow

The proposal involves the removal of all equestrian fencing, with the previously grazed paddocks rejuvenated into native meadows through the seeding of local, native seeds to promote natural processes. This area will be meticulously managed, employing specific meadow maintenance practices, to facilitate the flourishing of wildflower meadows. Additionally, seasonal bulb plantings within these wildflower meadows will be introduced, creating added fascination for both wildlife and visitors. Pathways and clearings will be thoughtfully defined through strategic mowing.

Our commitment to preserving the health and longevity of the mature trees in this area is unwavering, recognising their significance as enduring landmarks at Ampney Park. Continuous monitoring will ensure their continued presence for generations to come. Furthermore, the introduction of newly planted trees will not only enhance the overall landscape but also provide future generations with the opportunity to relish these remarkable trees.



Wildflower meadows



Seasonal bulbs



Mown paths



2.8 Buffer Zone

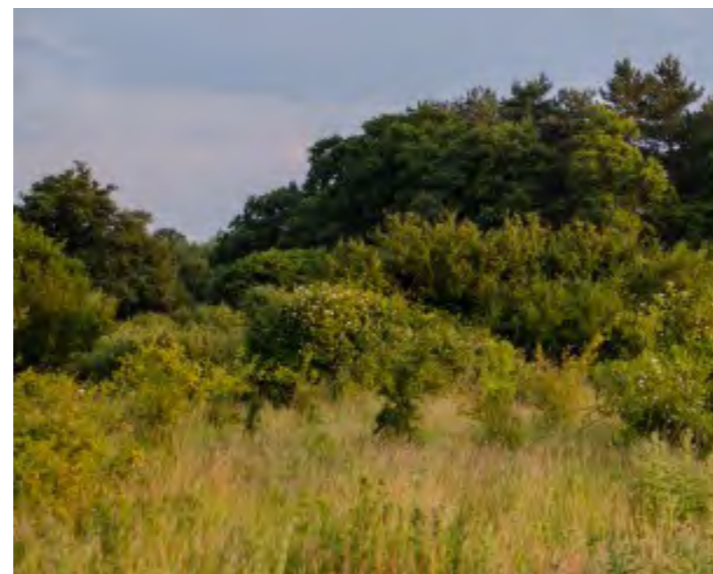
Areas of the north parkland to be cordoned off with fencing to allow for vegetation to naturally regenerate, providing habitat and food source for wildlife. New native tree species, such as oak, to be planted in pockets in the north field to help increase biodiversity. The establishment of a mixed wood pasture, with areas of grassland, groves, and open grown trees, will provide a mosaic of habitats.



Scrub



Estate fencing



Wood pasture

2.9 Materiality

The selection of materials will harmonise with the rich historical character of Ampney Park and the broader Cotswolds region. The utilisation of local walling stone and gravel/hoggin for the pathways is proposed. The incorporation of permeable hoggin pathways is designed to facilitate proper drainage while ensuring accessibility across the entire site. These hoggin pathways have been thoughtfully minimised, allowing guests to navigate Ampney Park seamlessly. For paths traversing meadows, a more minimalist approach will be employed, simply maintaining mowed paths.

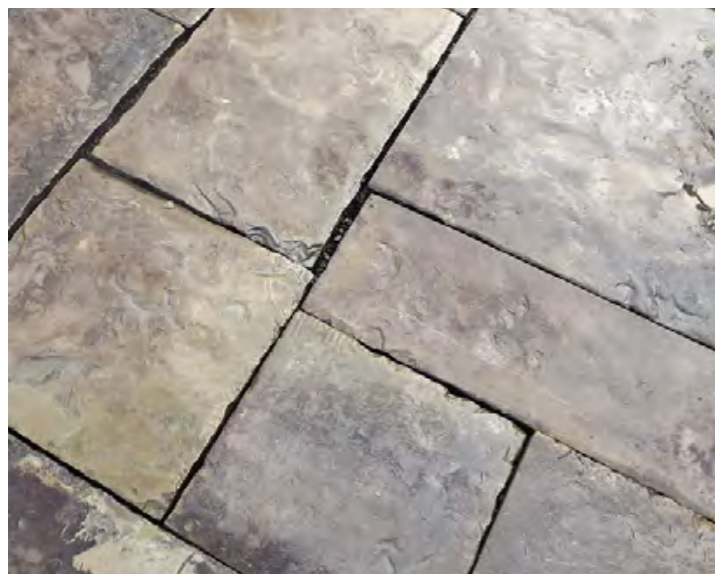
In line with our commitment to sustainability, hard surfacing will prioritise permeability whenever feasible, enabling efficient water flow. Non-permeable surfaces will be employed sparingly. Natural stone will be prominently featured throughout the site, harmonising with the existing materials at Ampney Park and the proposed venue. Lighting will be kept to a safe minimal to preserve the dark skies in the area that is so valued to neighbours and wildlife.



Natural stone cobbles



Cotswold dry stone walling



Natural stone pavers



Cotswold chippings



3. Wider Estate Landscape



3.1 Formal Garden

The existing formal gardens will be preserved and revitalised to accentuate their innate charm. To refresh these gardens, a diverse array of bulbs and perennial flowers to the borders will be introduced, guaranteeing the long term interest of the historic garden. Additionally, we're embarking on a comprehensive tree and bulb planting initiative across the garden, building upon the stewardship of the previous owners.

Our commitment extends to safeguarding the well-established planting, including shrubs, trees, and hedges, which have become integral to the landscape. Environmentally sensitive management practices have been adopted, fostering biodiversity and ensuring that Ampney Park remains a haven for nature to flourish.



Formal garden at Ampney



Established yew topiary



Arts and crafts paving



Highlighted in purple

3.2 Woodland and Hedges

In the broader context of the entire site, our planting strategy is carefully crafted to embrace the authentic rural character inherent to Ampney Park's environment. Scale and layout of the vegetation will be used to create pleasing vistas while ensuring privacy is maintained. Our approach emphasises the use of predominantly native species, with ornamental and exotic planting confined to the confines of the venue and historic formal gardens.

Preserving the existing woodland is a priority, the intention is to manage it in a manner that allows for natural regeneration. Furthermore, our management plan includes measures to restrain and prevent the proliferation of invasive evergreen species, such as laurel and *Rhododendron ponticum*, and to address potential threats to native species like ash, particularly considering the ash die-back issue. As part of our commitment to enhancing the ecosystem, a native sub-canopy species like hazel and holly could be introduced.



Surrounding woodland pockets



Woodland along the brook



Native Hazel



Highlighted in green

3.3 Hydrology - Water System

The water system coursing through Ampney Park is a truly unique habitat, offering a wealth of sustenance, shelter, and forage to numerous species. Its significance cannot be overstated, as it provides a precious resource in the form of clean water and serves as a vital lifeline for the rich biodiversity relying on this aquatic ecosystem.

To safeguard this invaluable asset and ensure the well-being of the watercourse, alongside a hydrology expert there is the committed to addressing certain challenges that have arisen, particularly concerning sediment accumulation and weed proliferation in the larger lakes. Our proposed solutions include measures such as dredging and silt removal, which will aid in the restoration of the watercourse, fostering a healthier aquatic environment.

Additionally, we plan to introduce marginal and aquatic plantings strategically along the streams and in the vicinity of the lakes. These plantings will not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also play a crucial role in silt removal and water filtration, further fortifying the ecological balance of this remarkable water system.



Chalk rich water



Sluices on site



Leet



Highlighted in blue

3.4 Riparian Meadow

Nestled to the west of the brook, the natural wet meadow is a precious habitat adorned with the exquisite beauty of native wildflower species. The stewardship of this area demands a sensitive touch, carefully balancing preservation with enhancement to nurture a thriving tapestry of wildflowers and bolster biodiversity. It's not just a haven for wildlife but also a picturesque visual treasure, captivating those who glimpse it from the tranquil gathering space on the opposing side of the brook.

To further harmonise the landscape, we propose the strategic planting of several trees and shrubs along the southern bank of this meadow. This green screen will not only shield the proposed entrance from the view of Crucis Park but also serve as a harmonious transition, preserving the setting and natural beauty of the meadow.



The riparian meadow



Highlighted in lime green

3.5 North Parkland

The management of the parkland will be executed with precision through carefully tailored grazing regimes. This approach serves a dual purpose: safeguarding the majestic historic trees and fostering the flourishing diversity of wildflowers within the meadows. To ensure the protection of newly planted trees, we will install suitable fencing as a precautionary measure.

Strategic augmentation of canopy cover will be thoughtfully integrated throughout the parkland, harmonising the landscape and enhancing its ecological richness. Additionally, the importance of allowing marginal scrub to regenerate, while simultaneously implementing selective removal of non-native evergreen species in strategic locations.

Furthermore, there's an exciting opportunity to restore the historical tree axis, defined by the remnants of stately Lime trees. This restoration project holds the promise of reviving a cherished element of the parkland's heritage, adding to its allure and historical significance.



Highlighted in red

3.6 Habitat Creation and Target Species

Observations and directives produced in the ecological appraisal will be noted and incorporated into the landscape design response. The appraisal identified four protected species within a 2km radius of the site, namely the great crested newt, the brown long-eared bat, the common pipistrelle, the soprano pipistrelle and the natterer's bat. Habitats suitable from various birds such as the tree creeper, woodpecker and great tit were identified, as well as favourable conditions for water voles, otters, dormouse and potentially white-clawed crayfish. The following biodiversity enhancement directives are listed in part 6.4 of the appraisal:

- Provision of bat roosting opportunities across the site. Built-in bat boxes could be considered for any new or replacement buildings and bat boxes could be placed on trees on site.
- Provision of bird nesting opportunities across the site.
- Any new tree planting should include a mix of fruit trees, including apple, pear *Pyrus* species and cherry *Prunus* species. This will enhance the foraging resource on site for badger, birds and invertebrates, which in turn will enhance foraging resources for bats.
- To replace refuge habitat if brash and log piles are removed, log/rock piles could be recreated within undisturbed, less intensively managed areas of the grounds, to provide refuges for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.
- A wildflower meadow could be created to replace part or all of the existing paddocks, to provide resources for pollinators, which in turn will enhance foraging for bats and birds.
- Climbing plants, such as honeysuckle *Lonicera* species, which are night-scented, will attract night-flying invertebrates and enhance foraging for bats.



Natterer's bat



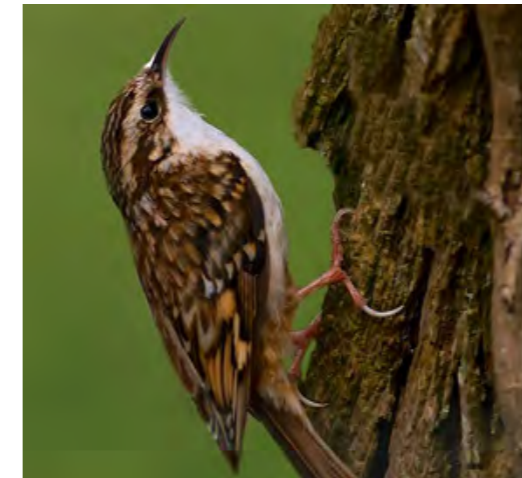
Common pipistrelle



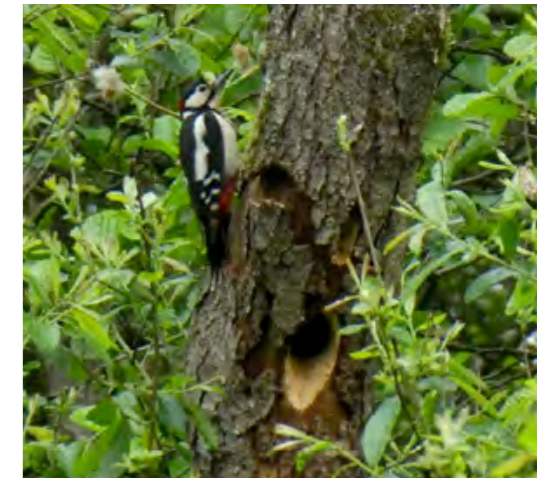
Soprano pipistrelle



Great crested newt



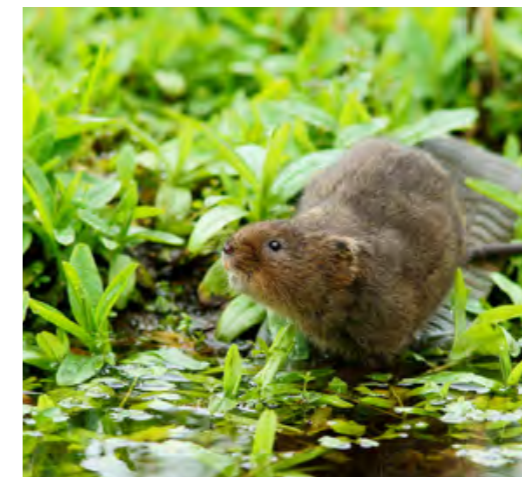
Tree creeper



Woodpecker



Otter



Water vole



White-clawed crayfish