

LANDSCAPING

The design of the gardens and landscape setting to Tocher Knowe responds to its dramatic natural setting and intrinsic biodiversity. It seeks to minimise disturbance to the ecology of the site. Beyond the immediate garden areas around the new house the focus will be on restoring and enhancing the value of the landscape by reintroducing active grassland and woodland management whilst establishing areas of native tree and shrub planting to further diversify and enhance the ecology of the site.

Thus, the alignment of the drive is essentially unchanged; it takes the visitor towards the house between two low knolls on either side of the drive, which will be emphasised by new groups of Scots pine, framing a view of the entrance to the new building. The parking / turning area near the house area uses much of the site of the demolished old house and the interface between drive and house is softened by entrance planting.

Ornamental planting areas are restricted to gardens immediately surrounding the new house. The principal rooms are arranged around a sheltered south-facing courtyard. The wider garden will be sheltered by a belt of dense shrubs and small trees planted near the western edge of the garden enclosure. A 'natural' linear water feature with a series of small ponds will be created to assist with SUDS drainage plans, which will also offer some wildlife benefits. A small orchard is proposed in the lea of the house on a sunny south-facing slope.

Moving away from the gardens immediately around the house, the landscape quickly transitions into the existing semi-natural setting of Tocher Knowe. The changes proposed within the remainder of the site are focused on conserving and enhancing biodiversity, with the addition of modest paths to enable access.

The main areas of acid grassland to the north and south of the drive will be actively managed to maintain and enhance the native flora and fauna, either by cutting or grazing. Renewal of existing fencing is proposed, to separate these areas from the garden and to divide the non-garden areas into three, similar sized, paddocks to enable grazing to be managed.

Along the eastern boundary, groups of small native trees and shrubs will be established to diversify habitat value. They will afford some filtering / screening of the new house in views from the road, but will be periodically coppiced or cut back and managed as hedgerow, to ensure vegetation does not interfere with the overhead power line. The existing stone boundary wall along the lane will be retained and maintained.

To the south, the visual impacts of the manège will be softened, and longer views framed, by native tree and shrub planting towards the bottom of the slope, but keeping the drainage ditch near the boundary clear. Native planting will grade into the predominantly birch woodland located on the site's western scarp. The birch woodland will be maintained with a grass and low herb understorey, enhancing its current habitat value by being managed more as wood-pasture. Deadwood will be retained for invertebrates as and when trees die back and new planting will ensure the retention of the birch wood as a landscape feature.

Area 2: Mixed native hedgerow species planting: total area 365 sq m
Indicative species:
Field Maple
Hawthorn
Hazel
Holly
Downy Rose

Spacings for each species and layout matrix are to be determined but at an average spacing of 1.5m c/s, density of 0.45 plants per sq m, this equates to 164 plants.

Area 3: Mixed native tree and shrub planting: total area 405 sq m
Indicative species:
Common Alder
Dogwood
Goat Willow
Grey Willow
Guelder Rose

Spacings for each species and layout matrix are to be determined but at an average spacing of 2m c/s, density of 0.25 plants per sq m, this equates to 100 plants.

Area 4: 15 no specimen / standard trees, native species selected from:
Bird Cherry
Common Beech
Downy Birch
Sessile Oak
Silver Birch
Scots Pine

Area 6: 8 no Scots Pine in 2 clumps on the knolls either side of drive

Landscape Proposals - Not to scale

