

Lea Fields Crematorium

Landscape Strategy - Phase 2

Stage 3 Report

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1.1 Introduction

Plincke Landscape have been appointed to provide Landscape Architectural services for the further development of the Lea Fields Crematorium site, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire on behalf of West Lindsey District Council.

The landscape and site design for Phase 2 (to RIBA Stage 3) has been developed from the original brief through site appraisal and team meetings between client, management and landscape architect. During this time, the site design and layout has been amended to take on board client and management input.

Stage 3 (Developed Design) is part of an ongoing design process, following on from Stage 2 (Concept Design) and preceding Stage 4 (Technical Design). It is envisaged that the Stage 3 framework design will be developed over a series of phased developments during the next 10-20 years.

The following points represent the main elements in consideration of the site and landscape design:

- Provision of appropriate settings to compliment the various anticipated site uses.
- Development of areas for memorial gardens and strewing cremated remains
- Ancillary function room building for wakes or similar to be located separately to the main Crematorium
- Additional overflow and ancillary parking provision.
- Siting of site entrances and access to new facilities
- Consideration of visitor routes and traffic flows through and around the site.
- Making use of existing site topography and features including woodland, meadow grassland and ponds
- Making use of site views across the wider landscape



2.1

Site Context

The site is located approximately five kilometres south of Gainsborough on the A156 Gainsborough Road between the settlements of Lea to the north and Knaith to the south, and sixteen kilometres north west of Lincoln.



Situated on a rise, the site has a low point of +8.4m AOD in the south west corner and a high point of just over +19.1m AOD on the broad plateau which occupies the eastern portion of the site. The landform falls gently away from the plateau in all directions to every boundary. On slopes to the south and west the slope gradient is between 1:10 to 1:20.

Occupying most of a former arable field on a rise above the flood plain of the River Trent, the site is bounded with mixed deciduous and conifer woodland to the north and east, mature hedgerow to the west, and intermittent groups of tree and shrub vegetation to the south. A ditch, Lea Marshes Main Drain, runs along the southern site boundary.

2.2

Site Appraisal

The site has been recently developed as a Crematorium with associated access and facilities including a car park, service yard and remembrance chapel building.

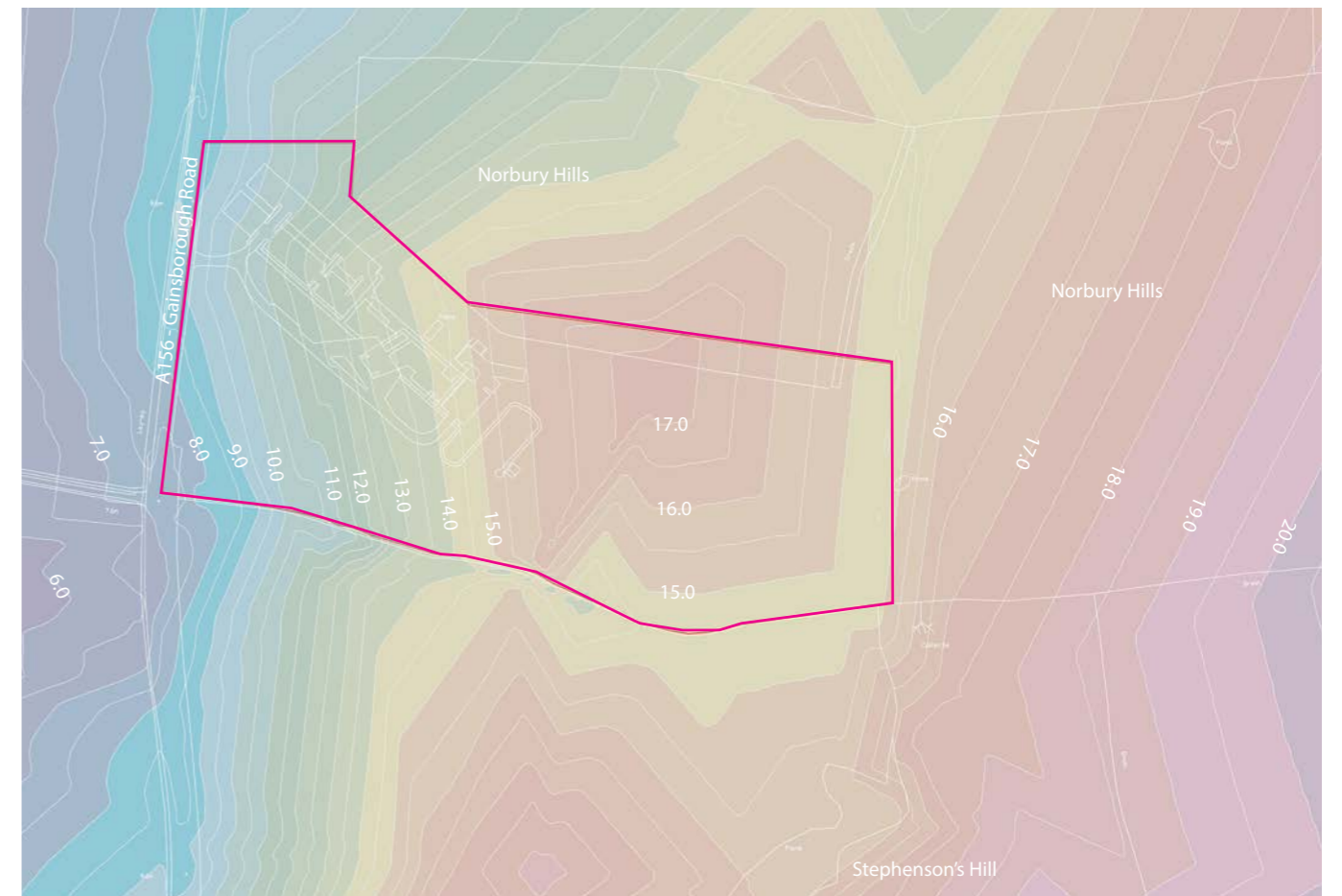
The extensive grounds largely comprise of wild grass meadow, with isolated tree planting and two pond features. The larger pond, to the south-west corner of the site, provides surface water attenuation while the smaller, to the south-east corner of the site, is designated as a wildlife pond. Non-native ornamental planting is limited to the building curtilage and car park area.

Higher areas on site are relatively exposed and visible to surrounds, particularly from the A156 Gainsborough Road to the south and west, river plain.

The Crematorium Act 1902, does not permit any crematorium being developed with a 200 yards (183m) of any existing dwelling or 50 yards (46m) of any public highway.



Site context aerial photograph - NTS



Site context topography (OS Mastermap - 0.5m contours) - NTS

2.3 Phase 1 Development

The Landscape General Arrangement Plan, below, shows the Phase 1 site design of Lea Fields Crematorium at completion. The layout is organised around a principal axis path that connects all site areas and destinations together.

Pedestrian and vehicle routes are segregated. The main landscape spaces are: The arrival space (4 and 6) the protected view (6); and the memorial gardens (13 and 15). Most of the site is maintained as open meadow allowing uninterrupted views out across the wider landscape from the main arrival spaces.



Phase 1 Landscape Design Concept Plan



Phase 1 General Arrangement Plan

- 1. Chapel
- 2. Crematorium
- 3. Admin block
- 4. Main arrival space
- 5. Protected view garden
- 6. Entrance area gardens
- 7. Water feature
- 8. Floral Tribute
- 9. Entrance of congregation route
- 10. Cortege waiting area
- 11. Cortege departure area
- 12. Staff and visitor car park
- 13. Terrace gardens
- 14. Main car park for congregation
- 15. Memorial gardens
- 16. Site entrance
- 17. Remembrance chapel
- 18. Service yard
- 19. Access road
- 20. Attenuation area
- 21. Wildlife pond
- 22. Meadow grassland

3.1 Opportunities and Constraints

The relatively high elevation of the central and eastern areas of the site provide both constraints and opportunities, with existing and future development potentially exposed to near views from without the site, while also providing broad and dramatic vistas across the river valley plain.

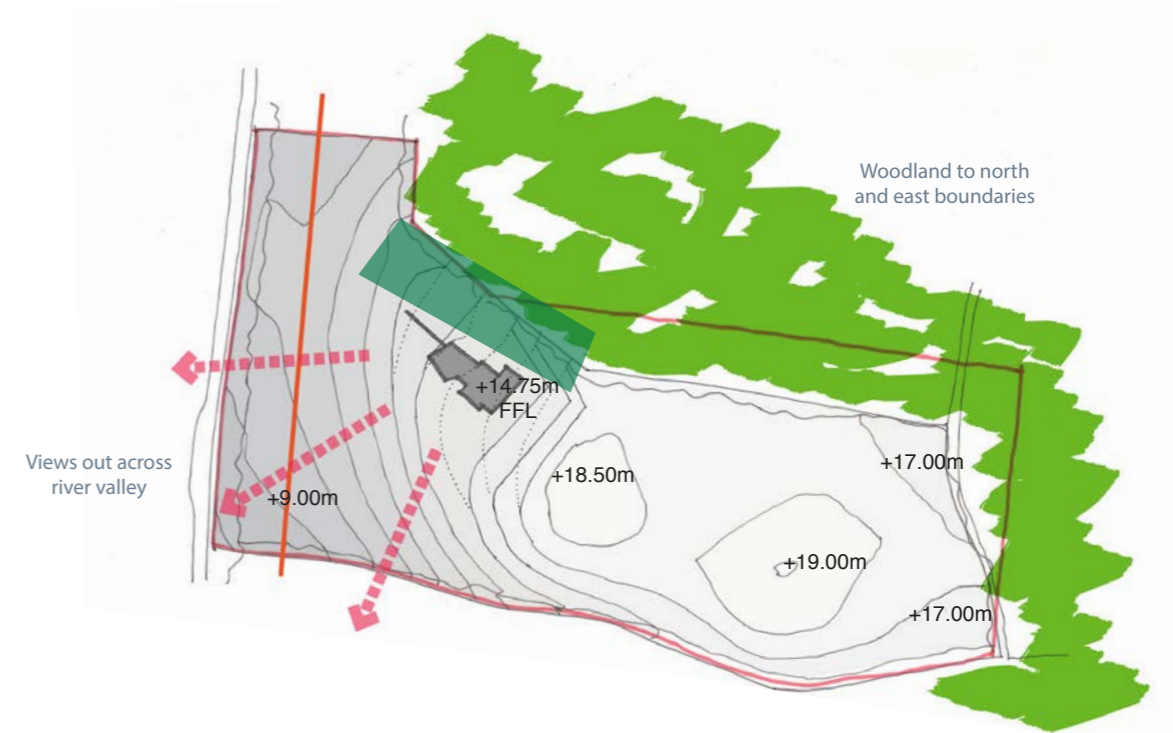
Existing vegetation including the woodland blocks to the north and east, and linear belts of trees and tall shrubs within hedgerow to the west and intermittent blocks along the riparian corridor of the Lea Marshes Main Drain provide full to partial screening of development. Additional woodland and hedgerow planting could be used to strengthen and extend the existing visual screening of development.

Boundary vegetation also provides a landscape and ecology benefit which should be protected from encroachment of development within tree root protection areas. Similarly, existing riparian and pond habitats have established and developing value as ecological assets, which may limit construction in these areas but provides opportunities for creation of attractive, biodiverse landscape features, with public access as appropriate.

Land within the eastern portion of the site, at between +16.5m AOD and +18.0m AOD, is partially visually contained by the higher landform (up to 19.0m AOD) to the west, and by vegetation to the north, east and south. Physically separate from the service and remembrance areas, with Chapel and Book Room some 200m and 140m distant respectively, this area has potential for development for appropriate ancillary use, for example function rooms for wakes, etc.

Vehicular access to the ancillary development could be obtained from near the site access, where a low-level route is possible at a distance from the main arrival space, and partly screened by landform. Pedestrian access would be obtained via the future Memorial Gardens path network, with further footpath connections possible from the nearby settlements of Lea and Knaith Park, which has a rail connection.

A second site access might be considered, to provide separation of cortege and congregant vehicles. An area of land to the north, currently offsite, could provide further parking capacity should this land be brought under the control of the Crematorium.



Site Topography Diagram NTS

- CONSTRAINTS**
- Site boundary
- Visual sensitivity - site views
- Visual sensitivity - external views
- Tree root protection area
- Ecological asset - wildlife ponds
- OPPORTUNITIES**
- Visual screening - hedgerow/trees
- Car park extension
- Ancillary development
- Vehicular access link
- Pedestrian access link
- Second site access
- Site extension



Opportunities and Constraints Plan

3.2 Stage 3 Concept/Vision Plan

Following review, site analysis and discussion with stakeholders, the design set out at Phase 1 has been extended and developed. As before, the design responds both to the site context and to the requirements of the new facility. The objective of the landscape strategy is to respect and retain the setting for the existing Crematorium facilities while the establishing an appropriate framework for new amenities and facilities which will tie in with the surrounding landscape.

Landscape proposals seek to:

- Preserve an open aspect to the site to the south and west with a vista out over the river plain.
- Screen servicing aspects of the building such as maintenance areas and car parking provision.
- Provide a setting to enhance the visitor experience with gardens close to the facility.
- Create a framework for future development of memorial gardens and other ancillary facilities.
- Enhance the ecological value the site offers through creation of new habitats and extension of existing woodland and hedgerows.
- Ensure that the site contributes to the wider rural landscape mosaic within the Trent Valley.

The main axis path remains the principle organising feature of the landscape design as this creates a strong visual constant across the site as well as a useful route for access to site destinations.

Memorial Gardens are to extend along the axis in a series of garden 'rooms', each with its own distinctive character, accommodated within a coherent frame of hedges, and a consistent palette of paths, seating, and memorials.

Existing mixed coniferous/broadleaf woodland is extended into the site to form a series of glades and enclosure for ashes scattering areas and to assist in separating these areas from other site uses. Existing hedgerow will also be supplemented with new planting for visual screening of intervisibility between the A156 Gainsborough Road and the Crematorium.

To extend and strengthen capacity for future needs, existing car parking could be extended to the north. An ancillary building (Function Rooms) and associated car parking and access accommodated within the east of the site to provide an appropriate venue for wakes, etc.



Proposed Site Plan, NTS

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Crematorium | 11. Terraced garden | 22. Supplementary hedge planting |
| 2. Main Arrival Space | 12. Main car park for congregation | 23. Function Rooms |
| 3. Protected view | 13. Memorial Gardens | 24. Ancillary car park for mourners |
| 4. Entrance Garden | 14. Site entrance | 25. Footpath connection |
| 5. Main Axis / Path | 15. Children's Memorials / Ashes | 26. Second site access |
| 6. Water feature | 16. Service Yard | 27. Site extension car parking |
| 7. Floral tribute | 17. Access Road | |
| 8. Entrance of congregation Route | 18. Attenuation Area | |
| 9. Cortege pick up area | 19. Cortege waiting area | |
| 10. Staff and Gardens visitor car park | 20. Existing Woodland | |
| | 21. Proposed Woodland planting | |

3.3 Access and Circulation

The pattern of routes, paths and roads around the site are organised to create a coherent, legible circulation system which assists in wayfinding.

Visitors to the site can be grouped into the following categories with most visitors expected to arrive by vehicle:

- Congregation to the Chapel
- Funeral cortège to the Chapel
- Visitors to Memorial Gardens and Book Room
- Staff and service professionals
- Mourners to Function Rooms

One of the key objectives of the design is that consecutive congregations or those visiting the site for other reasons, are kept separate so that different visitors do not disrupt each others experience of their visit.

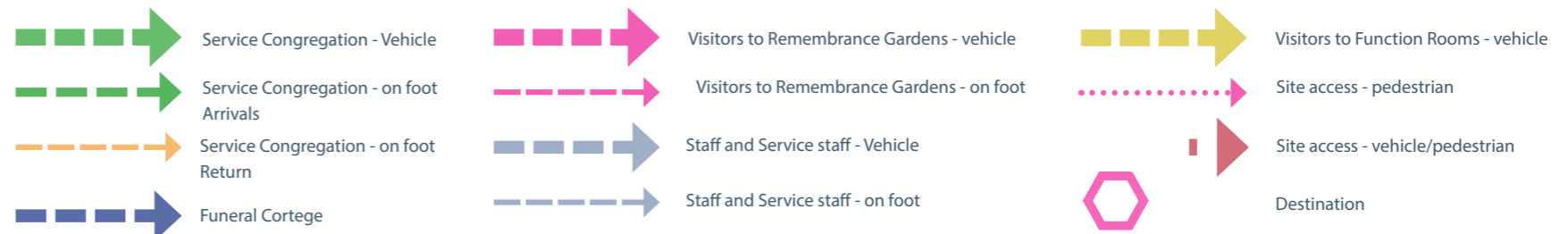
The routes give priority to the experience of congregation members and the funeral cortège. The main vehicle route leads into the main car park, with access to the arrival space (for the cortege) and visitor/staff car parking for Memorial Gardens and Function Rooms as a spur from this route.

From the car park visitors are directed on foot onto and along the main axis path, this leads through gardens toward the large paved space in front of the chapel. After a service the congregation exits through the protected view, past the floral tribute, returning to the carpark via a 'chicane' dividing the courtyard from carpark. This circular route ensures that consecutive congregations do not meet.

The funeral cortège joins the congregation at the entrance to the chapel. Cortège vehicles return to the main carpark and a collection area outside the Floral Tribute.

Visitors to the Memorial Gardens and Remembrance Chapel are directed toward a separate car park and from there walk either up steps along the main axis path, or follow a path winding up a slope through gardens to the Remembrance Chapel/Book Room and around a series of garden 'rooms' via footpaths and mown lawns.

Professional site visitors and staff are directed towards the gardens carpark and the administrative (north-eastern) wing of the main building. The service yard provides an area for large vehicle turning.



4.1 Memorial Gardens

During development of Lea Fields Crematorium Phase 1 it was envisaged that an area beyond the Remembrance Chapel/Book Room be set aside as a space for Memorial Gardens. On review it was decided that, for reasons of economy, this area would not be brought forward but reserved for development during later phases, in accordance with need and budget.

The Stage 3 design now proposes a framework for the future rolling out of memorial gardens over many years, establishing a framing structure of tall hedges and a path network that will shape and provide access to a variety of different memorial gardens.

Examples of garden types might include the following:

- 'Terrace' - formal steps with linear hedge/shrub beds
- 'Parterre' - formal geometric hedged beds
- 'Kitchen Garden' - semi-formal beds with herbs/fruit
- 'Islands' - organic-shaped mixed herbaceous beds
- 'Orchard' - fruit trees and flowering bulb grassland
- 'Glade' - lawn enclosed by native meadow/woodland

Stepped access will be provide a direct route for the more able-bodied, both directly to the Remembrance Chapel/Book Room and also indirectly via the visitor parking area to avoid interference between funeral services and ashes scattering ceremonies.

















To visually screen the gas tanks from visitors, and for additional security, a vehicle gate matching adjacent timber hit-and-miss fencing will be installed across the service yard entrance.

Memorial structures such as the existing barbicans and tree sculptures will be located at key nodes within the path network for maximum visibility and accessibility. Benches will be provided by these memorials and at other suitable locations for rest and reflection, accompanied by bins for waste/recycling.



General Arrangement Diagram

KEY

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | Site boundary |  | Footpath - asphalt |
|  | Existing specimen tree |  | Footpath - self-binding gravel |
|  | Proposed specimen tree* |  | Steps - aggregate-faced concrete |
|  | Existing woodland |  | Vehicle gate - timber to match fence |
|  | Proposed woodland |  | Memorial - barbican |
|  | Meadow grassland |  | Memorial - tree sculpture |
|  | Ornamental gardens* |  | Bench/seat - circular |
|  | Formal native (hornbeam) hedge |  | Bench/seat - straight |

* Subject to future detailed design

6.0 Proposed Scheme - Materials

6.1 Hard Landscape Framework

The Phase 1 development has established a palette of hard materials which provide a template for further proposals under Phase 2, including any future memorial gardens and function room facilities.

For visual coherence and legibility, additional hard landscape features shall maintain the same palette of materials where pre-existing examples exist, or use complimentary new materials that are sympathetic to the developed landscape and the intended use.

A hierarchy of surface material treatments will be continued, with high-quality aggregate finish block paving to principal pedestrian routes and shared surfaces, transitioning to functional but smart asphalt paths and roads within the approaches and minor access routes.

Parking bays will be distinguished by the use of pre-cast concrete block pavers in a 'natural' finish and, where required, overspill parking will be surfaced with permeable paving such as grasscrete or other cellular paving.

Pedestrian access within the wider landscape, notably the memorial gardens, shall be paved with a combination of simple self-binding gravel (eg. hoggin) finishes and mown paths to signify a quieter, less-trafficked environment in harmony with the surrounding countryside.

External hard surfaces and furniture will be robust and be made from recycled and sustainable materials where possible.



Signage



PCC steps



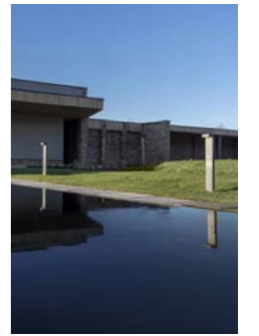
Barbican memorial



Tree memorial



Lighting columns



Lighting bollards



Litter/recycling bin



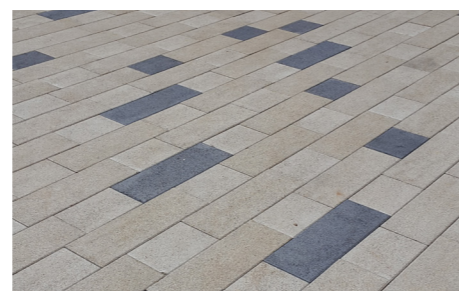
Curved bench



Straight bench



Seat with backrest



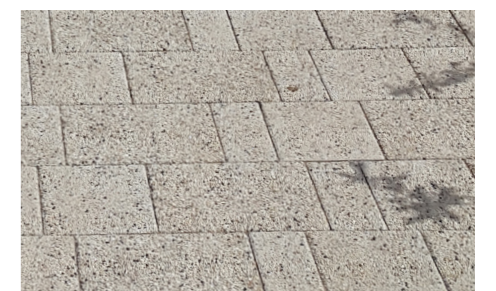
PCC block paving - shared surfaces



PCC block paving - parking bays



Self-binding gravel - minor footpaths



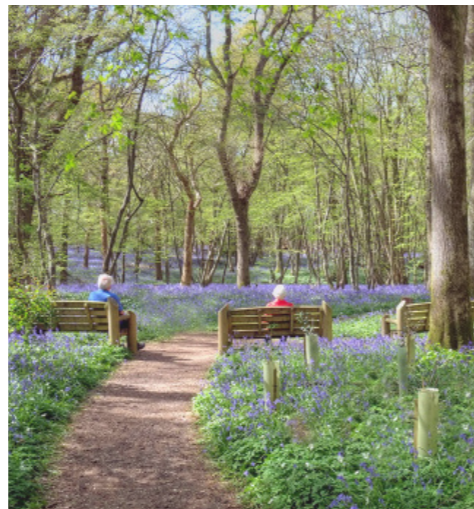
PCC block paving - principal footpaths

6.0 Proposed Scheme - Materials

6.2 Soft Landscape Framework



Native coniferous/broadleaf woodland planting managed for containment and screening



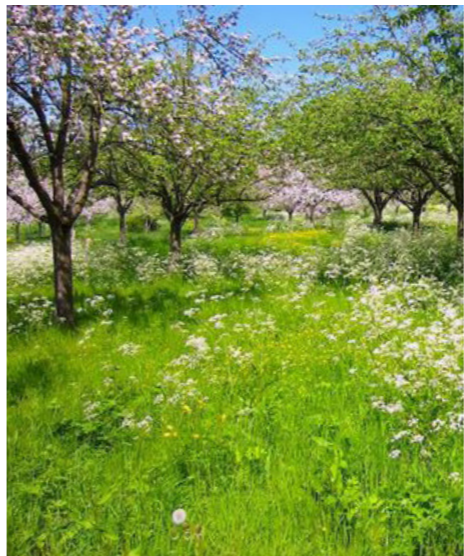
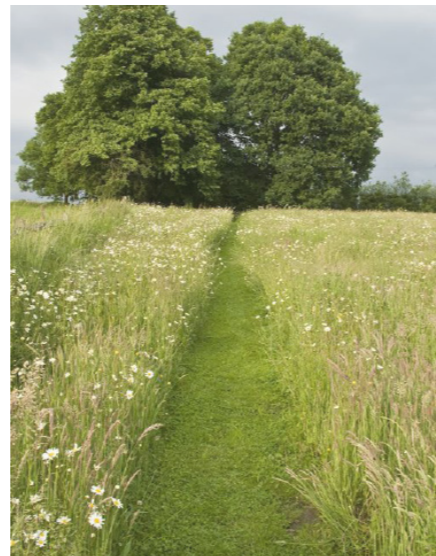
Smaller or multi-stemmed trees near entrances and paths



Mixed borders with multi stemmed trees proposed for gardens



Tall hedges and lawns to define spaces



Mown paths, flowering meadow and informal tree planting at transitions to native woodland and grassland



Wild grassland managed as meadow for biodiversity