

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Conservation Management Plan

Gazetteer

Leonardslee Gardens

Conservation Management Plan 2023

September 2024

Revision 3: October 2024

Revision 3 - October 2024

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Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Understanding the Asset	8
3.0	Assessment of Significance	20
4.0	Issues and Policies	26
5.0	Adoption and Implementation	41
6.0	Gazetteer	43
7.0	Bibliography	127
Appendix		129



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

This document has been commissioned by the Leonardslee Estate to support their ongoing development of the site, which will review the overall management and presentation of Leonardslee Park and Gardens.

In the process of this study, much of the detailed history of the gardens has been comprehensively explored. This report, undertaken on behalf of Leonardslee Estate, provides the evidence base for recommended policies written with the aim of preserving and enhancing the character, appearance and special horticultural and historic interest of the site.

Donald Insall were appointed in August 2022 to undertake the Conservation Management Plan for the House and surrounding Estate buildings. This included an overview of the gardens in relation to the whole site. In May 2023 we were appointed to undertake a separate CMP of the gardens and park including an analysis of each character area of the gardens. Site visits to prepare the Gazetteer were made during June, July and August 2023. Key members of the client team, including the head Gardener were consulted during these visits, to support understanding of the management of the site.





1.2 Purpose, Scope and Content of the CMP

This document was commissioned to assist the Leonardslee Estate in their tasks of maintaining and conserving Leonardslee Gardens and to ensure that what is significant about it – its history, design, use, planting and materials – survives for future generations to use and enjoy. The Leonardslee Estate is responsible for works undertaken to the buildings, landscape and planting on the Leonardslee Estate.

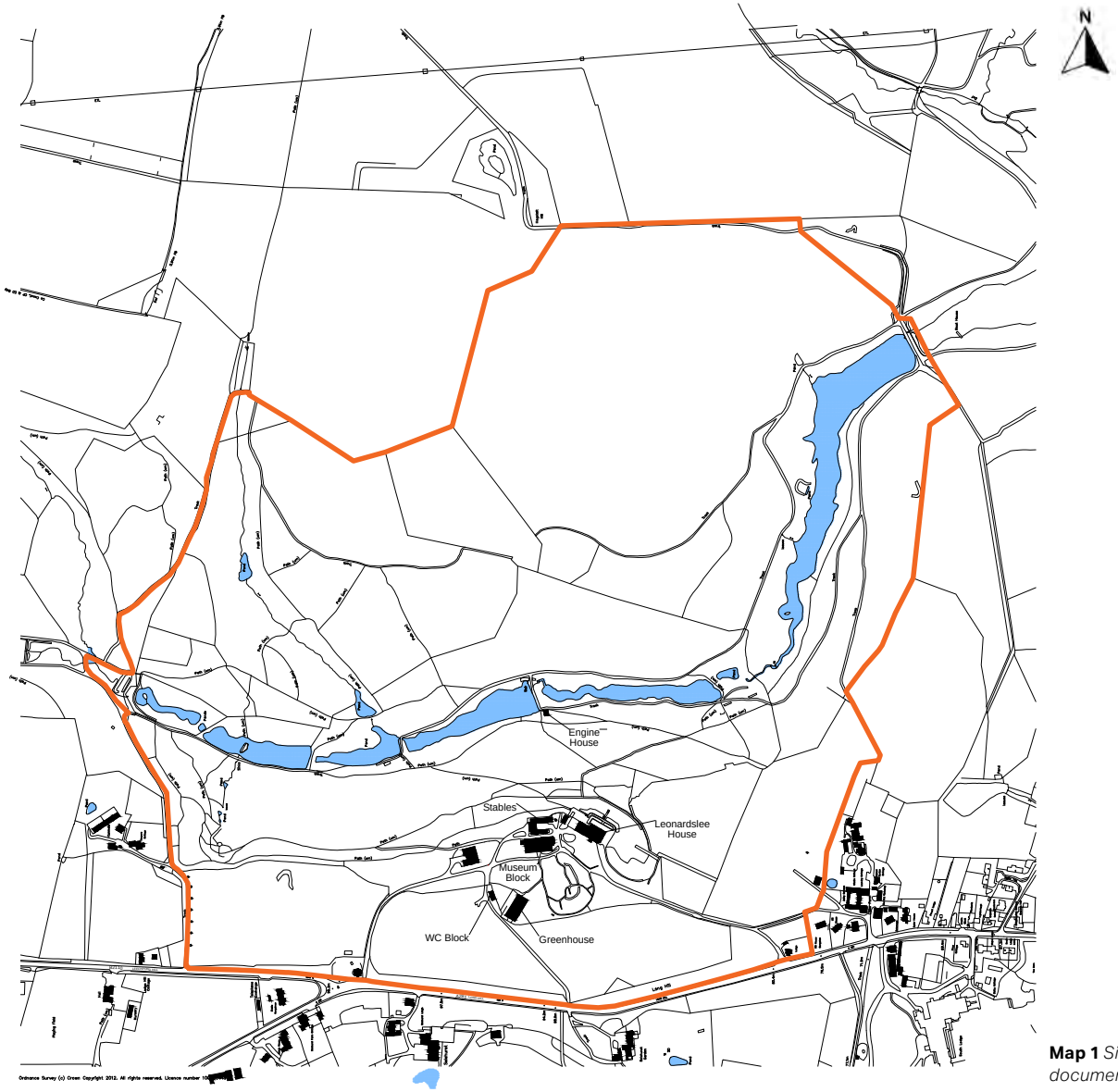
The intention of this document is that as and when works are proposed to the landscape, those planning and/or preparing to carry out the works should refer to the CMP. The CMP provides key information on the history and significance of the gardens and parkland, and adopted conservation policies for all these elements that can be used to guide their future maintenance and conservation. It also provides guidance on where more detailed sources of information might be found.

It is expected that the CMP should be reviewed on a five yearly basis. At this time, consideration of any new issues, changes in legislation and the nature of opportunities, or developments in approach to conservation should be addressed and policies revised to suit. It is less likely that significance statements should require updating; however, this should remain under review. Previous versions of the document should be retained as historical refence documents.

The CMP covers the entirety of the landscape area outlined in red on **Map 1**, Leonardslee House and estate buildings are covered under the separate CMP.

The CMP document contains the following:

- A description and history of the Gardens.
- An assessment of the significance of the site, with regards to Historical, Architectural/Aesthetic, and Archaeological considerations, noting also the overall designs, the designers/architects, and the occupants of the site.
- An assessment of the Issues and Opportunities which the site faces, to prevent loss of significance through decay or neglect, enhance it through measured change and improve understanding of significance via presentation and interpretation.
- Policies to address the Issues and Opportunities, which will ensure a constant framework for the management and conservation of the site and accord with current best-practice for conservation.
- Agreed statements for the Implementation of the Policies contained in the CMP. These are not included in the first draft, as they are developed through consultation over the first draft with the stakeholders
- The Gazetteer for the gardens and parkland, divided up into character areas. The intention is that, at completion of any project in a particular area, the Gazetteer will be updated with a brief description of the works including locations of any planting that has been removed and new plants added. In the first instance, this can be as an additional file note stored with the main document. It can then be collated with the main document at the recommended 5 yearly review.



Map 1 *Site Plan, the area cover by this document is outlined in orange (not to scale)*

1.3 Location and Ownership of the Site

Leonardslee House and Gardens, owned by Penny Streeter OBE, is located in Lower Beeding near Horsham, West Sussex. The Gardens are contained by Brighton Road (A281) to the west and estate fencing contains the boundary of the gardens to the north, east and south sides.

Leonardslee lies within the historic St Leonard's Forest, which had generally comprised open heath and woodland. The Forest originally belonged to the Crown and was let to various gentry from the 16th century. Charles II granted the forest to his physician, Sir Edward Greaves and the property later passed to the Aldridge family.

Most of the area remained as woodland and heath, with limited enclosure near the road. In 1801, a thousand acres of the St Leonard's Forest estate were sold to Charles George Beauclerk. A house, St Leonard's Lodge, was built shortly afterwards to the designs of John Johnson. At the same time, the layout of the gardens and some landscaping of the ponds began, and by the 1840s, an "American" garden was well established.

In 1852, the estate was bought by William Egerton Hubbard, who soon thereafter built the current house, renamed Leonardslee, to the designs of T.L. Donaldson, demolishing the 1800s house in the process.

The estate (and the house) was sold in 1888 to Sir Edmund Loder, 2nd baronet, who had married William Hubbard's daughter Marion some ten years earlier. He had lately inherited a large fortune from his father, Sir Giles. He set about making considerable improvements to the gardens and constructed the "Pulhamite" rockery. Sir Edmund was a noted plantsman and developed new hybrids of rhododendron. The gardens were widely published in Country Life and other journals. The rhododendron loderi was named in his honour.

Following the death of Sir Edmund's only son, Robert, in the First World War, and his own death in 1920, the house passed directly to Sir Edmund's grandson, Sir Giles Loder (3rd Baronet, 1914-99). The house was occupied by Canadian troops during the war, and returned to the family in 1947. Sir Giles being, like his grandfather, an enthusiastic gardener, focussed attention on the garden more than the house until he passed management of Leonardslee to his younger son, Robert (known as Robin), in 1981; by this time, the gardens were about 98 acres in extent and had become listed as Grade I on the Register of Parks and Gardens.

The gardens were closed in 2010 and the house and gardens put up for sale. Between July 2010 – 2017 they were owned by Leonardslee Estates Ltd. These new owners undertook a variety of works to the buildings; however the gardens were left to become overgrown. The house and gardens were kept closed to the public during this time.

In 2017 Leonardslee was again put up for sale when the existing owners went into receivership. It was bought by Penny Streeter OBE. Between 2017 and 2019 a huge amount of work was undertaken to restore the overgrown gardens to enable Leonardslee Gardens to reopen to the public in its former glory, which they did in 2019.

1.4 Legal Status of Site

Leonardslee is a Grade I listed Registered Park and Gardens.

The Crabtree conservation area is to the south and Leonardslee lies at the western edge of the High Weald AONB. Leonardslee is within Horsham District Council area, and subject to the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF).





1.5 Authorship of the CMP

This CMP has been written by a team of experienced specialists in the field of heritage conservation from Donald Insall Associates, Conservation Architects and Heritage Consultants. The Practice has authored CMPs for some of the UK's most prestigious buildings and sites, including the Palace of Westminster, the Westminster World Heritage Site, The Mansion House in the City of London, Keats House at Highgate, Osterley House and Park and many others.

The authors are:

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We particularly acknowledge the information supplied and time given in showing us the gardens by Jamie Harris, head gardener, in preparing this document.



2.0 Understanding the Asset

2.1 Illustrated Timeline

c. 1685



Charles II grants St Leonard's Forest to his physician, Sir Edward Greaves.

c. 1801



St Leonard's Lodge, designed by John Johnson, built within one thousand acres of the forest sold to Charles George Beauclerk. He started to develop the ornamental Gardens and walled kitchen garden.

1852



The estate is bought by William Egerton Hubbard, who built the present Leonardslee House to the designs of T.L. Donaldson (illustrated).

1888



The estate is sold to Sir Edmund Loder, 2nd Baronet by his in-laws. A keen gardener, he expanded the gardens including introducing the first hybrid rhododendrons and the Wallabies first arrived.

1890



The Rock Garden was constructed by James Pulham & Son using 'Pulhamite' for Sir Edmund's alpine collection.

1902

The Pinetum is created.

1907

The gardens were open to the public for the first time.

1920



Sir Giles Loder (Sir Edmund's grandson) inherits at the age of 6. The Dowager Lady Loder looks after the running of the gardens until 1945.

1946



The estate passes to Sir Giles Loder, who continues planting the gardens.

1945-1950s

The market garden produced fruit and vegetables which were sent to Covent Garden Market.

1947



The house is returned to the family, after being occupied by Canadian troops during the war.

1952



The Coronation Garden is planted.

1957



Camellia Grove is planted by Sir Giles

1965-66

The house is no longer within economic maintenance and is reduced. This included the removal of the Billiards Room, and the greater part of the service wing.

1981



Robin Loder (pictured) inherits management of the house, and the family move out. The building is converted into offices by Eurotherm. The gardens remain in the possession of the Loder family.

1984

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Leonardslee is recognised as a Grade-I Registered Park and Garden.

1986



The Red House is built by Robin Loder beside the entrance drive.

1987

The great storm caused significant damage including the loss of thousands of trees, and the unique 1902 Pinetum. Robin Loder took advantage of the opportunity to redesign parts of the estate and introduce new planting, glades and vistas.

2000



Robin plants Maple and Oak Tree walks to celebrate the Millennium.

2005

Robin Loder retires, children Peter and Mary continue until 2008 when the estate was put up for sale.

2010

The gardens are sold by the Loder family to Leonardslee Estate Ltd, they are closed to the public in June 2010. Proposals were made for partial relandscaping and alterations to the buildings in the gardens, which were not implemented and the gardens left to grow wild

2017

LEONARDSLEE
LAKES & GARDENS

The estate is sold to entrepreneur Penny Streeter OBE, and an extensive schedule of restoration commences. The House and Gardens are reunited in single ownership.

2018



The Pinotage Vineyard is planted.

2019

The gardens reopen to the public.

2.2 Description of the Gardens

Please refer to the accompanying Section 2.3 History and Development of the Gardens for an overview of the history and development of the gardens and parkland.

Leonardslee House and the other buildings within the gardens are included in the House Conservation Management Plan.

Leonardslee has one of the largest and most spectacular woodland gardens in England and has one of the finest collections of mature rhododendrons, azaleas, choice trees and shrubs. The gardens are situated in Lower Beeding at the end of the ancient forest of St Leonard, the gardens have a background of old oak, beech and birch intermingled with conifers. The soil is of a light loam over sandstone. The valley is sheltered against the strongest winds from the north and east. The soil, being free from lime, particularly suits the ericaceae family of plants to which group belong the rhododendrons and azaleas, as well as camellias and magnolias.

The gardens were developed from 1888 by Sir Edmund Loder, though some of the conifers, particularly the large Californians Redwoods and Wellingtonias Sequoia date from an earlier period. Sir Edmund was a great lover of natural beauty, and in making the garden and planting the many trees and shrubs he took great care to produce superb colour effects without losing the wild character of the settings.

At the foot of the valley a small stream flows, spreading out at intervals into a series of 7 lakes, which are developed from the ancient 'Hammer Ponds' used in the iron ore industry. They were built to store water which provided the power for the hammers and other machinery. These lakes greatly add to the setting and give rise to marvellous views and reflections. The valley slopes face east and west, so neither is exposed to the hottest part of the day. The garden is also particularly well shaded by surrounding woodland against cold wintery north easterly winds.

The Great storm of 1987 felled the Pinetum, along with about 80% of the trees in the garden. This allowed the natural removal of all the unstable and dead trees, especially in the wider parkland and allowed the gardens to be opened up further to the public without risk.

There is a great variety of trees at Leonardslee and amongst the collection are many large and significant trees. Some of these qualify as Champion Trees, being either the tallest or have the largest girth recorded for that type of tree. Champion Status is awarded by the Tree Register of Britain and Ireland. At Leonardslee there are currently a total of 77 champion trees, 27 of them are British Champions as well as 3 English Champions, the rest are West Sussex County Champions. One of the most significant trees is an Algerian Oak, Quercus canariensis, growing on the west side of the gardens along Green Walk. It is the tallest tree of this species so far recorded in the world.

The 'street signs' were put in by Robin Loder along the main paths at the request of the visitors to make it easier to locate themselves.

It has been 70 years since Leonardslee last entered an RHS flower show and 2023 it entered again at Whisley and Ranster spring shows, where they won silver and golds. There is a Leonardslee bowl which was donated by Giles Loder to the RHS and it is the aim of the current garden team to win this.

The current garden team comprises a head gardener and 11 full time gardeners. Each of the members of the team have their own specialism, and these are supported by a team of volunteers.

The current garden team understand the need for a vision statement to be produced as part of the long term stratergy for managing the gardens. This is something which will be produced following this CMP which will take into acount the significance of the gardens' past as well as all aspects of the gardens' future and their wider context within the High Weald.

2.3 History and Development of the Gardens

The forest within which the estate is set was passed from King Charles II to his physician Sir Edward Greaves between 1660 and 1672. The soil was too acidic for agriculture, and thus remained untended, something later taken advantage of in Leonardslee's development as an extensive and exotic garden. Charles George Beauclerk **[Plate 10]** first began to lay out the gardens, including an 'American' garden with rhododendrons, azaleas, and magnolias. This area is now known as the 'Upper Dell', but within it remain some of the oldest plants in the gardens, including the *Rh. Arboretum* 'Cornish arboreum', dating from before 1810.[1] In this garden is also one of the largest examples of *Magnolia campbellii* in the country.



Plate 10 - *Charles Beauclerk*

1 *A Walk Around the Garden*, R. Loder, 2003.

However, it was under Sir Edmund Loder from 1889 that the gardens flourished. A keen plant breeder, collector, and grower, it was during his time at Leonardslee that Sir Edmund developed a number of hybrid rhododendrons from crosses between *Rh. fortunei* and *Rh. griffithianum*. This group eventually came to be known as the Loderi hybrids in his honour, and three have received the Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. A huge number of rhododendrons, both those bred by Sir Edmund and those not, can be found throughout the gardens at Leonardslee, enjoying the area's acidic soil and humid, mild climate.

Sales particulars show that only the New Pond (a former hammer pond) was in existence in 1852, the other three largest ponds were created under Sir Edmund. The New Pond was formed from two ponds, by raising the dam of the lower until the upper dam became submerged, and two ponds combined.[2] A small brick engine house was built at the lower end of what is known as the Engine Pond, to pump water up to the house before it was added to the mains. The 1896 map shows two buildings here, only one of which survives today. Southwards below its dam is Waterfall Pond, with water entering over a rocky fall in its north-east corner. This lake was created in its present, enlarged form in the twentieth century, and incorporates the former Beaver Pond which was fenced off and housed beavers from 1899 to 1947, when the last breeding pair was given to London Zoo, in the hopes of replenishing their colony after World War II.[3]

South of the Clapperbridge pond are the Top Ponds, which, as seen on the relevant OS maps, were constructed between 1874-5, and 1909 **[Plates 12 and 13]**. Mossy Ghyll Pond was also established in this period, but enlarged in the late twentieth century. Sir Edmund Loder also introduced a number of animal species to the grounds. By 1892 there was mention of 'Indian antelopes, kangaroos, and unusual species of deer were mentioned there, and later also gazelles, ibex, springboks, coypus, capybara, prairie dogs, wallabies, and emu, besides a colony of beavers **[Plate 14]**.[4] Most of these animals were sold after Sir Edmund's death, but wallabies

2 *Leonardslee Gardens Guidebook*, 2003, p.24.

3 *Leonardslee Gardens Guidebook*, 1993

4 'Lower Beeding: Manors and other estates', in A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 6 Part 3, Bramber Rape (North-Eastern Part) Including Crawley New Town, ed. T P Hudson, 1987, pp. 16-21.



Plate 12 - *(NLS) OS Six-Inch, Surveyed 1874-1875, Published 1879.*



Plate 13 - *(NLS) OS 25-Inch, Revised 1909, Published 1911.*

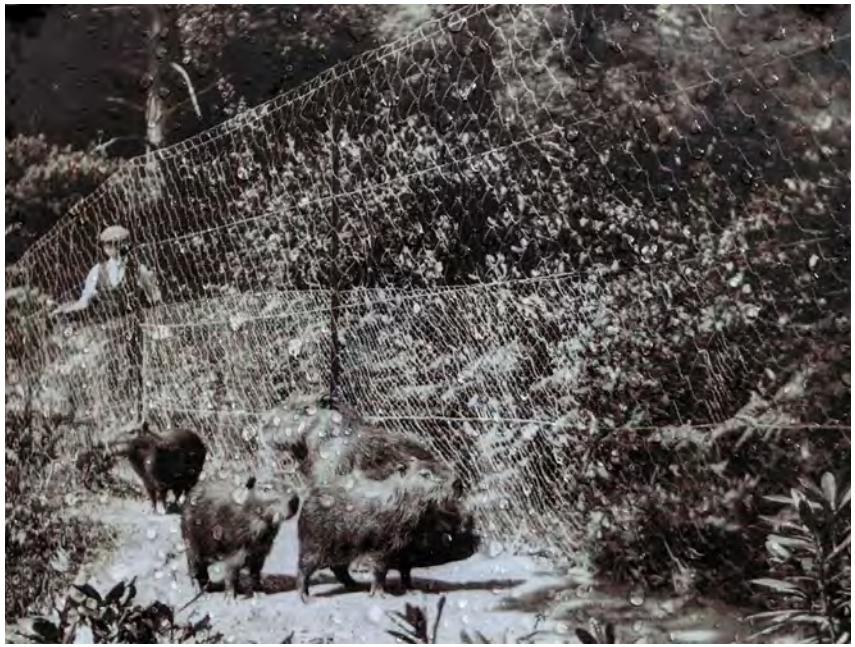


Plate 14- *Capybaras in the Gardens, image sourced from the estate.*

and deer remain in the park today. By the end of the nineteenth century the Rock Garden had been laid out by James Pulham and Son, combining large natural rocks with manmade ones. The latter are formed from a facing material of concrete-like Pulhamite, about 10cm thick, behind which lies a planting pocket **[Plate 15]**. A wide array of azealeas are planted amongst the rocks, as well as a number of *Rh.* 'Ameonum'.

Sir Edmund died in 1920, and after some years of comparative neglect (during which time the park was open to the public) the estate passed to his grandson, Sir Giles Loder, in 1946. Sir Giles was also a keen horticulturalist, serving as Vice-President of The Royal Horticultural Society and receiving the Victoria Medal of Honour for his services to horticulture in 1968. Under him the expansion of Leonardslee gardens continued, with the addition of a great number more plants and garden areas.

The Camellia Grove, added in 1957-1958, is to the far south of the grounds, with planting arranged around zig zag paths. It contains several hundred varieties of camellia, mostly *Camellia japonica*. A large greenhouse was added in 1970 on the site of an old tennis court. This now forms the entrance to the house and gardens, as well as acting as a garden centre **[Plate 16]**.



Plate 16 - *The Greenhouse, c.1989, sourced from WSCC archives.*

The Great Storm of 1987 did some damage to the gardens, felling many elderly trees in the estate **[Plate 17]**. This included the topping of what was once the garden's tallest Fletcher cypress, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Fletcheri'. This now forms a natural arch over the estate's *Falling Walk* path.[5] However, this had the added benefit of opening up new vistas, with reports of improvements to sightlines across the valley, and increased flowering of the shrubs now afforded more sunlight. This also resulted in the wallabies being allowed to roam over a greater area in the park – to combat increased weed growth stemming from removal of trees.



Plate 17 - *The aftermath of the Great Storm of 1987, image sourced from the WSCC Archives.*

The lake surrounds were extensively cleared and remodelled between 1992 and 1993, during which time large areas of rhododendron were cleared, and over one hundred species of oak, and a similar number of maple species were planted.

5 *Leonardslee Gardens Guidebook*, 2003, p.26

The Gardens form an important part of the site's history and development, and areas of them pre-date the house. In the interests of completeness and to provide background information, they are laid out in summary below. The various character areas are taken from those included in the 2003 edition of the guidebook, prepared by Robin Loder, and should be read in conjunction with the Gardens Layout **[Plate 18]**.

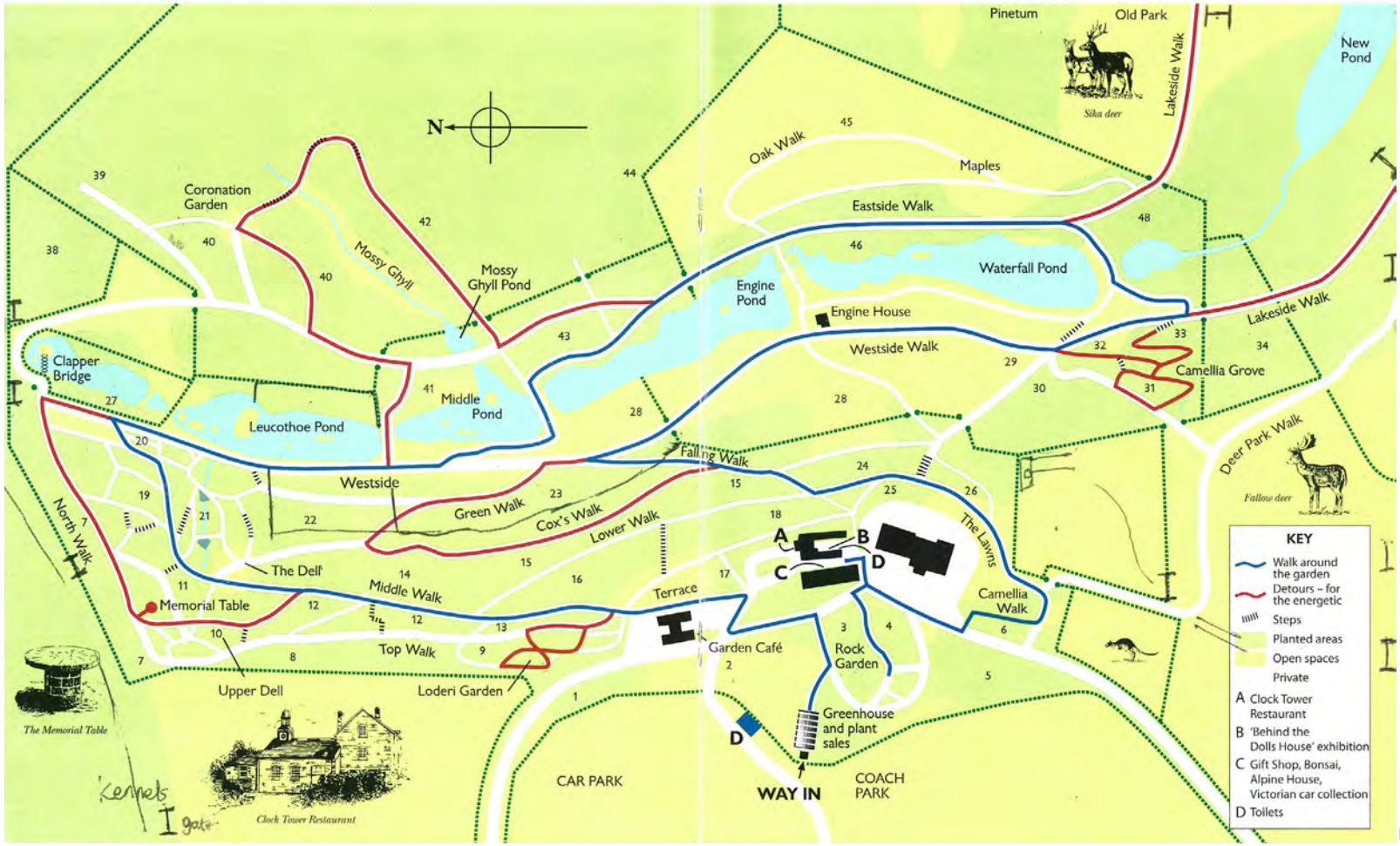


Plate 18 - *The Garden Layout*

A more in-depth look at each character area can be found in the Gazetteer section.

The Loderi Garden

Dominated by hybrid rhododendron Loderi which were first grown by Sir Edmund Loder in 1901; this area has been opened up following the Great Storm of 1987. Varieties include Pink Diamond, White Diamond, Sir Joseph Hooker, Pink Coral and King George. These are of particular significance, as some of the plants are original and all are in the location where they were first raised.

The Middle Walk

An attractive gravelled path runs towards the north.

Further rhododendrons, *Rh yakushimanum, sitchuense, cinnabarinumand* others; some are original plantings from 1901, others were added in 1989.

- *Gingko biloba*
- Chinese tulip trees, *Liriodendron tulipifera* and *L. chinensis*
- Redwood, *Sequioia sempervirens*, dating from 1890, The route from the Greenhouse to the Terrace.
- A gigantic Wellingtonia, over 145 ft tall, *sequoia giganteum*

The Upper Dell

Has narrower paths, recently opened up again, gravelled, and due to the presence of springs nearby, sometimes slippery. There are a number of ancient rhododendrons, many of which are over 160 years old, and the Cornish *Arboreum, Rh, arboreum*, dating from before 1810 and probably the oldest in the garden. This area was once known as the American Garden, and contains the oldest plants. Highly Significant:

- Australian Tree Fern, *dicksonia Antarctica*
- Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, discovered in China in 1947 and brought to Leonardslee in 1948.
- A huge magnolia, *magnolia campbellii.*

The Memorial Table

At the top of the garden and made from an old millstone, this is "In Memory of Edward Loder who made and loved these gardens 1889-1920". There is an excellent view down the valley over the middle lakes. In addition to further rhododendrons, magnolias and azaleas, there is a plantation of *Gunnera manicata*.

The Dell

A protected beauty spot surrounded by rhododendrons and azaleas of all sizes. Columnar oak and beech, planted in 1982 are growing well, with further examples of:

- Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, already over 30m tall
- *Gunnera manicata*.
- Cornish *Arboreum, Rh, arboreum*, over 160 years old.

The Top Ponds, Clapper Bridge and Leucothoe Pond

The walk runs along the west side of the lakes, which are dotted with small islands and offer a refuge from foxes for wildfowl.

- Skunk Cabbages, *Lysichiton camtschatcensis* and *L. americanus*
- Swamp cypress, *taxodium distichum*
- *Leucothoe fontanensia*
- *Enkianthus perulatus*

Coronation Garden and Mossy Ghyll

Reached via a causeway across the water and up the east bank; planted with young Rh Loderi in 1952 to mark the coronation. A small stream flows in winter down the Ghyll.

- Cryptomeria japonica
- Monkey puzzle, araucaria araucana

- Pinus armandii, P pinaster,
- Oriental spruce, picea orientalis
- Purple maple, acer palmatum
- Hungarian oak, quercus frainetto, Macedonian oak, Q. trojana

Middle Pond

Contains large grass carp and rudd. The grass was historically cut but once a year, to allow the wildflowers to prosper. There are fine views from here. A dam divides the middle pond from the Engine House Pond. The habitat is particularly suitable for dragonflies, of which many are to be seen in season.

Engine Pond Walk

Many deciduous azaleas were planted around the lake in 1992, now well grown and cut back; the lake is fringed with Scots pines *pinus sylvestris*, and there are wellingtonia too. A gated enclosure confines the wallabies, introduced in 1889, to this part of the garden, and the present group are descendants of the original and do good work in mowing the grass.

Waterfall Pond

Extensively remodelled and replanted in 1992-93, when large areas of wild Rh. ponticum were removed, and over a hundred different species of oak and a similar number of maples (planted 1999) have been laid out. The path layout was modified at the time of re-planting. Planting in 1950s included 'Strawberry Ice' deciduous azaleas, and there are also wild species here:

- Bog myrtle, *myrica gale*
- Bog pimpernel, *anagallis tenella*
- Ivy leafed bellflower, *wahlenbergia hederacea.*
- Also, a sweet gum tree, *liquidambar styraciflua*

There are also wildfowl and some large carp in this pond.

Lakeside Walk, Old Park and Pinetum

This is a long walk, some ¾ of a mile in length, round the New Pond at the southern end of the gardens. Not fully part of the plantsman's garden which forms the heart of Leonardslee, it still contains species of interest such as hornbeams, Japanese maples, and bamboo, previously much used in the estate. Old iron park gates remain, as well as kissing gates at the entrance to the former nineteenth century deer park, in which Sika and fallow deer as well as wallabies roam at large. On the eastern side is the Old Pinetum, planted 1901-05, and much damaged in the 1987 great storm; new shelterbelts have grown up, and a new Pinetum has been planted during the centenary years of the original planting. This contains examples of most of the conifers that can be grown in Sussex and illustrates well how the devastating storm has been used to advantage in rejuvenating the gardens.

The New Pond is the largest of the Leonardslee lakes and was created around 1750 from two older ponds; the dam of the lower pond was raised until the dam of the upper pond was submerged, and is still visible in the line of waterlilies in the shallow water. The original intention had been to increase the reservoir of water available to power the water wheel of the Furnace Pond beyond.

Camellia Grove

Laid out in 1957-58 by Sir Giles Loder, with zig zag paths, and several hundred varieties of camellia (mostly camellia japonica). There are fine specimens of *camellia williamsii.*

Bluebell Bank

The path leads back up the lake to the Engine House, at the bottom of the bank. Maple and sorbus trees are evident, as well as North American *tupelo nyssa sylvatica* and sorrel *oxydendrum arboretum*. There is a good view to the waterfall.

Green Walk and Cox's Walk

This is the slope west of the middle pond and opposite the Mossy Ghyll. There are good views over the multi-coloured deciduous azaleas to the Mossy Ghyll. As well as further oak trees including an Algerian Oak, redwood, magnolias, maples, and rhododendrons, note:

- Canoe Birch, *betula papyrifera*
- Arolla Pine, *pinus cembra*
- Japanese Cedar, *cryptomeria japonica*,
- Rh. 'Leonardslee Giles' named after Sir Giles Loder who looked after the gardens from 1945 to 1981.
- Fletcher cypress *chamaecyparis lawsonia*

Falling Walk

This is the area round the path rising back up to the House. A large Fletcher cypress blew down in 1987. There has been much recent cutting back following a disease outbreak in the rhododendrons.

- Manna Ash, *fraxinus ornus*,
- *Rh. Auriculatum*
- Foxglove Tree *Paulownia tomentosa*

Lower Walk

On sloping ground between the Terrace and the Falling Walk, characterised by large sessile oak and beech trees, a weeping silver lime, a holm oak and heathers and junipers.

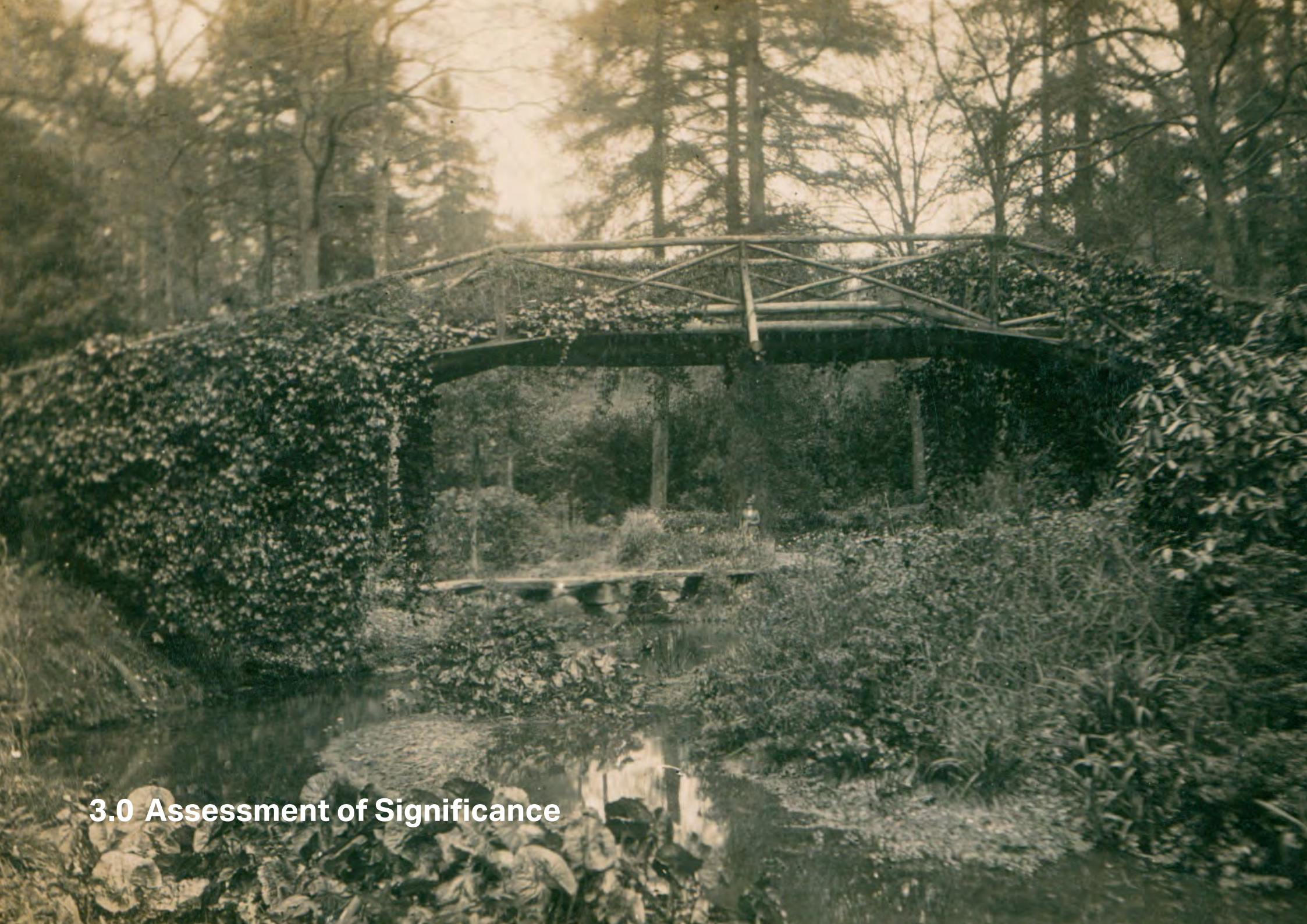
The Lawns

Again on sloping ground, but more open, below and to the east and south of the House. The Falling walk path continues to rise back up to the bottom of the Lawns, where there are steps up to the front of the house. There are clumps of rhododendron and specimen trees, some old. A Rh. Pride of Leonardslee is at the south end of the Lawns. The western edge of the Lawns is bordered by a plantation of Camellias, through which the Camellia walk threads its way.

The Rock Garden

This spectacular creation was laid out at the end of the nineteenth century (as shown by the 1896 OS plan, and by the Country Life article with photograph of 1900) by the firm of James Pulham and Son. They combined large natural rocks with artificial ones in concrete, which contained planting pockets to accommodate the dwarf rhododendrons, evergreen azaleas, palm trees *trachycarpus fortunei* and the Chusan Palm Tr. *F. var surculosa*, and a Chinese lantern tree, *Crinodendron hokkerianum*. There are numerous side paths around the artificial dell which allow the plants to be seen up close.

This completes the tour of the gardens; more information as well as descriptions of the wider woodland and other areas of the Estate are in the Gazetteer.



3.0 Assessment of Significance

3.1 Summary of Significance

The following assessment of Leonardslee Gardens refers to a hierarchy of significance that can be summarised as follows:

Outstanding Significance: elements whose value is recognised in a national and international context – most notably the vistas and contents of the gardens, and that are of higher significance than those elements identified as of:

Highest Significance: which is generally warranted for those elements which contribute to the exceptional interest of the Gardens. Other parts of Leonardslee House and the Grade-I registered Park and Gardens are noted to be of:

High Significance: which applies to elements with values which, on their own, still justify statutory protection through listing.

Moderate Significance: is applied to those elements whose values make a positive contribution to the way the House and Gardens are understood and perceived, primarily in a local context.

Neutral Significance: is assigned to elements which neither add to, nor detract from, the significance of the Mansion and Gardens. Lastly;

Detrimental Significance: is assigned to elements of no historic interest or aesthetic or architectural merit that detract from the appearance of Leonardslee House and Gardens, or mask the understanding of significant elements.

Leonardslee Gardens is a Grade I-listed on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The House is listed Grade II.

The garden surrounds of the house are of the highest significance, being a key part of the history and development of the site. Their fashioning by the resident Loder family, several whom held Royal Horticultural Society positions and awards, partially predate the construction of the house itself, and the development of their associated buildings well illustrate the changing use of the gardens over the centuries.

3.2 The Criteria for Assessment

The illustrated history compiled in Section A2 provides the background information required for understanding the overall significance of Leonardslee Gardens. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the significance of Leonardslee Gardens and associated parkland to inform the proposals for maintenance, restoration or change, which are set out in the Management Polices in Section 4, and so that the effect of the policies on that significance can be evaluated and managed.

The scope of the assessment covers the park and gardens based on a series of character areas (see plate 20 (character area map))

What is 'significance' and why is it important?

Understanding the significance of a place is a fundamental part of conservation, because it is necessary to making decisions about the most appropriate approach in proposing change. In addition, establishing an outline hierarchy of significance can be helpful when major changes are proposed, as more intrusive alterations can be focused on areas of lesser interest and greater care can be taken in areas of high importance. The aim of any project which affects a place of heritage significance, however, should be the preservation of as much fabric as is possible, given that understanding of what is significant is bound to change over time.

Heritage Values

Historic England's *Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* of 2019 sets out current good practice for assessing the significance of historic buildings in England and is derived from the 1979 *Burra Charter.* It states that the following values should be considered in order to fully understand the significance of a place:

- **Architectural and artistic interest** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction and craftsmanship. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture, or gardening.

- **Historic Interest** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- **Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

The synopsis of significance below addresses the categories set out in the 2019 edition of *Analysing Significance,* but as the values identified by Historic England overlap in many areas they are grouped together where this assists in explaining with clarity, and without repetition, the overall significance of Leonardslee House, garden, and the park buildings.

As the gardens are highly significant as a whole, with each character area contributing highly to the overall significance and listing of the Grade 1 Registered Park and Gardens. The plan below has been created to show the horticultural variations in significance of the gardens.

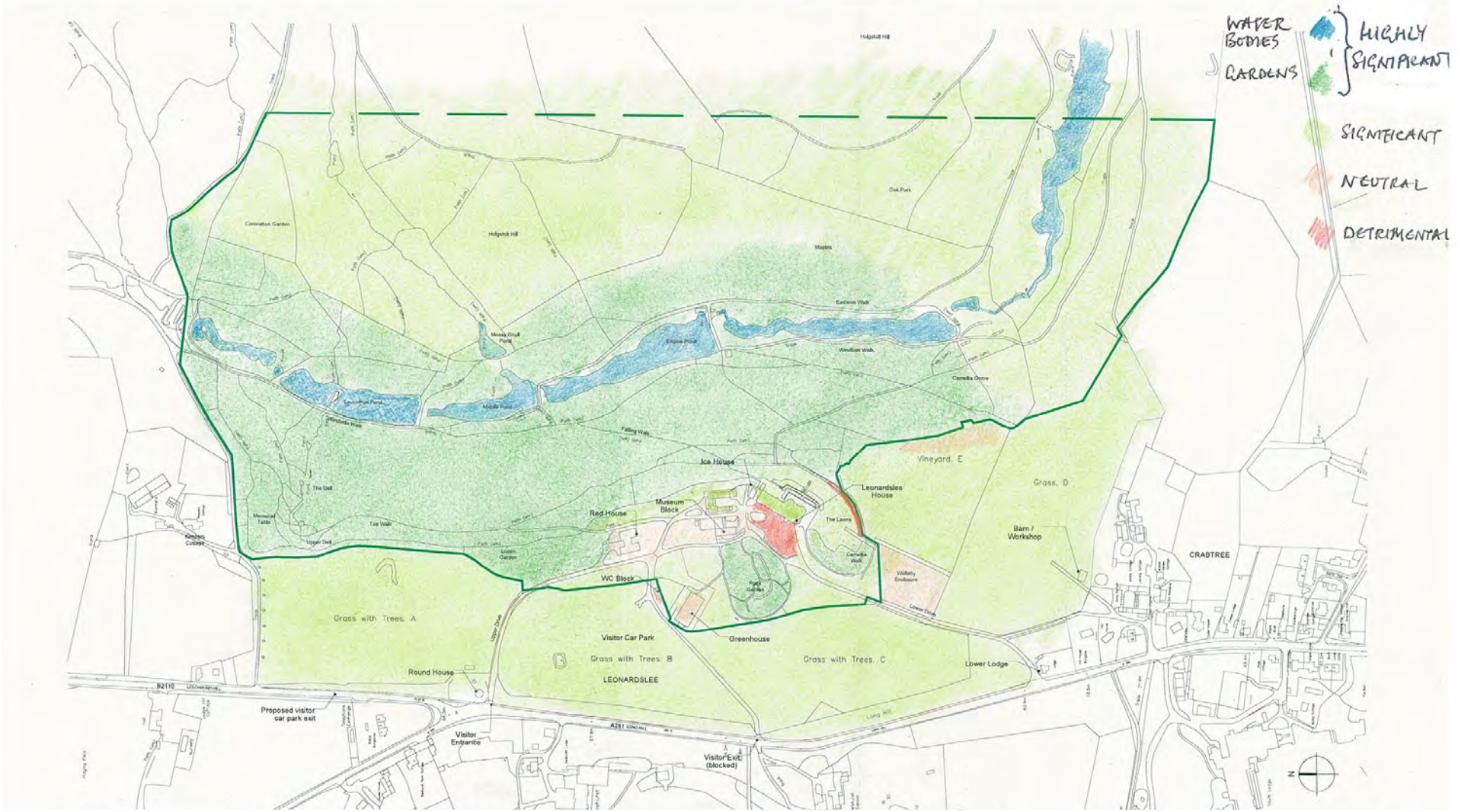


Plate 19 - *The Gardens Plan*

The Gardens Plan - Horticultural Significance

3.3 Significance of Leonardslee Gardens

3.3.1 Historic Interest

The significance and special interest of the Leonardslee site lies primarily in its extensive and historic gardens, and is recognised in their Grade I-listed status. This places them in the top 10% of listed parks, being of international importance. The House is of 'special interest', and was Grade II listed in 1973.

The gardens at Leonardslee are an exceptional example of a type of woodland gardening popularised in the 19th century. The successive ownership of the Loder family, who were keen horticulturalists and involved in the development of other Sussex gardens, aided in the creation of the extensive collection of plants seen at Leonardslee, and creates links to a horticultural dynasty. Their excellent maintenance over many years, including an impressive rejuvenation after a period of neglect, means that a number of historic specimens remain in situ.

The origins of the gardens as they are seen today lie with Charles George Beauclerk, who bought one thousand acres of the forest in the early 1800s, and constructed the rockery in the area now known as the 'Upper Dell'. Here remain some of the oldest plants in the garden, notably one Rhododendron 'Cornish Arboreum' planted before 1810. The ecological rarity of the garden bolsters the site's significance. The steep terrain of the majority of the site has created sheltered growing conditions that allow normally semi-hardy plants to flourish. Additionally the several millenia of leaf mould provided by the historic forest has created relatively acidic soil – providing the perfect conditions for Rhododendrons and other species, and making the garden a rarity in an otherwise alkaline southern England. The incremental development of the Gardens, through the planting of further areas, the intermittent cutting back and re-planting of zones, and the creation of additional lake features over nearly 200 years, is noteworthy.

The survival and quality of the plant specimens themselves hold significant historic value. Of particular note are the Rh. Loderi, hybridised by Sir Edmund, and described below:

> *This splendid hybrid which has no rival amongst modern shrubs to those possessing gardens of cold temperature, was raised in 1901 in three batches; twice Rh. Griffithianum was the male parent, and once Rh. Fortunei. Sixty to seventy per cent were successful when the pollen of the former was used, and about twelve percent when the latter was the father. At least six other hybridisers have made the same cross without obtaining the grand size and quality of the flowers in Sir E. Loder's hybrid. The plant is now so well known, it requires no description'.*[1]

After the acquisition of the garden by the Loder family in 1888, the extents of the current garden were achieved. Sir Edmund Loder had a fascination with plant hybridasation, and developed the acclaimed group of rhododendrons which came to be known as the Loderi hybrids. The three generations of the Loder family who held possession of Leonardslee were closely involved with other successful gardens in Sussex. Sir Robert Loder, Sir Edmund's Father, owned High Beeches, and his brother Gerald owned Wakehurst Place, which is now part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The sheer dedication to the gardens given by the Loders has resulted in it being world renowned for its type, the style of woodland gardening becoming popularised in the early 1900s with an influx of plant species from abroad, including China. So unusual is the garden's type in England that in 1947 it was used to film exterior shots of the film *Black Narcissus*, set in the northern borders of India.

3.3.2 Architectural and Artistic Interest

Of the highest aesthetic significance are the Garden's numerous vistas. These were created by the artistry of careful planting and management of trees and plants in accordance with the site's natural landscape. The co-ordinating feature of the gardens within their landscape is the chain of lakes, all manmade, down the centre of the natural ravine in which the gardens are planted. While in origin a series of ponds to provide a continuous water supply to a forge a little further down the valley, they were progressively developed from the mid nineteenth century (Upper ponds) until the late twentieth century (Mossy Ghyll and Waterfall ponds) to create the vistas and larger bodies of water we see today. The long walks laid out through the Gardens contribute

1 *Rhododendrons,* J G Millais, 1917.

to their aesthetic, guiding the visitor and separating the foliage into thematically interesting areas. The areas of parkland around the house are situated above the valley on the slopes located to the east and west of the site provide an important setting to the more formal gardens, planted by the Loder family. The piecemeal loss of some of this parkland to the west, along the edge of the A281, has resulted in a significant reduction in the historic and aesthetic value, , though this is now being addressed.

Of artistic significance is the temporary exhibition by South African sculptor Anton Smit, providing an additional level of interest for visitors, which could be maintained, though the site would perhaps benefit from a more varied selection of artworks.

3.3.4 Archaeological Interest

The stratigraphy across the site consists primarily of untruncated natural geology overlain by intact subsoil and topsoil. The exception being to the southern side of the event field where the natural geology appears to have been reduced at some point and the area backfilled using modern material. Across the site, the overburden mainly consisted of a simple sequence of natural geology overlain by subsoil, a friable, pale grey brown, silty clay, and a topsoil, mid grey brown silty clay.

The scarcity of archaeological features found on the site to date suggests low impact of any development upon archaeological remains.



4.0 Issues and Policies

4.1 The Context for Assessment

This section provides an assessment of the issues and opportunities which affect the gardens within the scope of this CMP, together with the recommendations as to how they may be addressed. The gardens and wider estate have been divided up into character areas as set out in the Gazatteer section. At the heart of these matters is the retention of significance, the long-term sustainability of the gardens at Leonardslee, and ensuring that the site continues to be an accessible area of beauty, to be enjoyed by the community.

The document as a whole outlines the best conservation approach for the site as it currently exists, and includes advice on how to maintain the gardens in the future. The site is well visited after a period of closure for 9 years between 2010 – 2019 and continues to play a role in the life of the people living nearby, and those who visit from further afield. The need to better connect all visitors to the park and gardens is a key goal.

The process for identifying and addressing issues and opportunities is set out below:



Conservation Principles have been considered throughout the process and will guide the implementation of the agreed Policies.

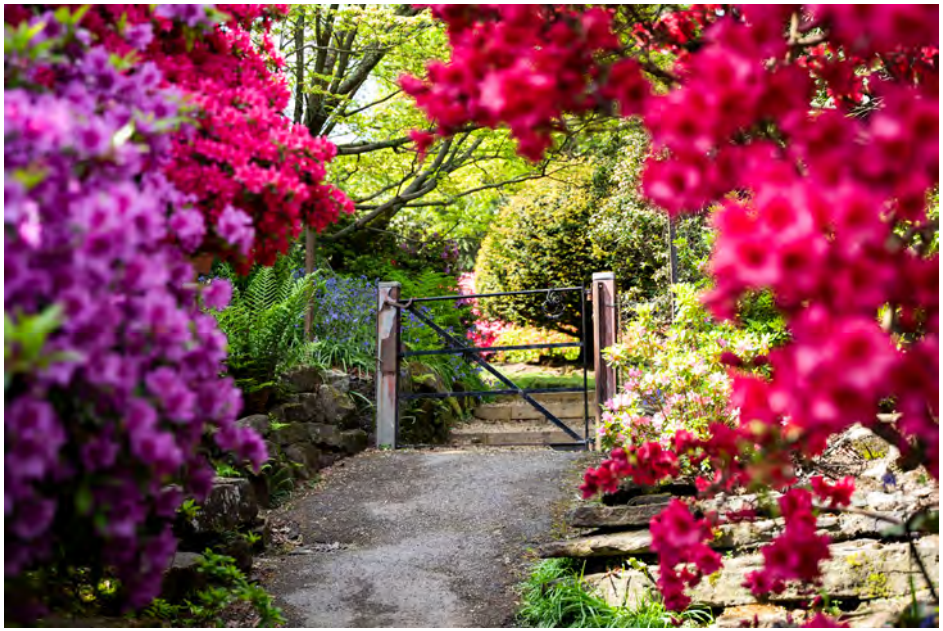


Plate 4.1 - *View from the rock garden looking towards the gate*

4.2 The Use of Leonardslee Gardens

Since reopening in 2019 there has been pressure to improve the income that can be gained from the beneficial use of the gardens at Leonardslee. The current owners have started to look at the master planning of the estate and where the opportunities may lie to further enhance to visitor experience and offering. These need to be reviewed within the context of the estate as a whole to understand the impact these will have.

The gardens are predominantly used as a place for visitors to enjoy and explore the variety of different character areas, landscapes and planting. At certain times of the year the gardens host a variety of visitor experiences of differing scales. These include children's activities and trails alongside the large events such as "Illuminated". It is understood that the Estate wish to look at increasing the number of events held within the gardens to diversify the offering at Leonardslee. There is currently little provision for young children who visit the gardens, and the addition of a children's play area is proposed to fill this gap and appeal to a wider range of visitors.

The gardens are specifically the location for the national collection of Loderi rhododendrons. Whole these are not at present propagated on site, the continuing planting programme seeks to maintain this pre-eminence.

The additional events proposed within the gardens is a potential risk, especially to the parkland areas. This needs to be carefully managed to ensure a large increase in visitor numbers, especially when concentrated at certain times of the year, does not have a detrimental impact on the condition of the gardens and parkland.
New events proposed for the gardens should look to move away from the heavily used areas around the parkland, house and immediate areas around the entrance. New events should look to the wider gardens and bring visitors to the less used parts. This would reduce footfall in the heavily trafficked areas.

The parkland areas of the gardens hold significance in the context of the wider gardens as a whole and should not be viewed as an area which can be over-used for events because they are not formally laid out gardens. The parkland areas are designated UK BAP Wood Pasture Habitat. The number of events currently held at Leonardslee, especially on the parkland, has increased dramatically since it reopened in 2019. Events are generally centered around calender events and school holidays, including Halloween, Christmas and the summer holidays.

The new gardeners area being built in the events field will help to combine everything into one place, rather than being spread throughout the garden. This will also allow for the reuse of some of the buildings at the centre of the estate to expand the visitor offering.

Additional uses within the gardens include the productive Pinotage vineyard, the first so planted in England, and the zoological interest offered by both the introduced species (Wallabies, deer and potentially beavers) and the vibrant inset life near the ponds.

During 2024/25 the pay barrier is being relocated towards the house and stables to allow visitors to visit the catering outlets without paying for garden entry. This will open up some areas of the gardens, including the Rock Garden, to additional visitors. Increased visitor numbers will likely see an increased risk to the collection with visitors seeing the trees and rocks as a place to climb and play. Education into the significance of the garden needs to be allowed for to deter this kind of behaviour.

Policies: Use

UGD1.The special character of the gardens at Leonardslee should be carefully managed to ensure any proposed developments will not detract from the significance of the designated heritage asset.

UGD2. Each individual character area has a horticultural significance in its own right as well as part of the overall gardens and these areas should be looked at as part of the whole estate when identifying new uses for each area.

UGD3. The gardens will maintain the national collection of Loderi rhododendrons.

UGD4. The location of proposed new infrastructure within the gardens needs to be carefully considered. The clustering of new infrastructure within one area of the gardens should be discouraged so as to not permanently change the character of any one area. New infrastructure should be carefully considered as to the most appropriate location based on the appearance and scale. There is potential to encourage visitors to the outer reaches of the parkland with new infrastructure in these locations. This will encourage more of a spread of visitors across the site rather than staying within the paths close to the lake and house, minimising any potential harm caused.

UDG5. All additional events proposed within the gardens, especially to the parkland will need to be carefully considered as to the potential increase in visitor numbers this will attract and the impact this will have on the gardens, their paths, flora and fauna. An increase in visitor numbers will need to be carefully monitored on a weekly basis to ensure that maintenance to the paths and gardens is kept up in line with this to avoid any damage caused as a result. The events calender appears to be nearly full for all seasons and additional events being added need to be very carefully considered in relation to additional visitor numbers and risks to the flora and fauna. It will be necessary to monitor how many new visitors arrive, park and use the facilities within the parkland. The number who then attend garden events needs to be put in place to understand the corrolation between the two.

UDG6. The use of the overflow carpark should be limited per year to minimise the impact of use on the grass and allow time between events for it to recover. This will ensure the parkland views and the condition of the landscape are maintained. It would be beneficial to reassess the road layout within the carparks to rationalise these and restore any back to grass that are not primary routes. This would further assist in returning this area back to parkland.

The parkland area should not be seen as a space which can hold multiple events in succession, due to the risk of grassland erosion. Its significant status as part of the gardens needs to be carefully managed to avoid irreversable harm and long term changes to both in term of the nature conservation and the heritage perspectives.

UDG7. The new gardeners' area in the events field will mean there is now an opportunity for the soon to be empty buildings and areas of garden taken up by sheds and garages, particularly in the North Field and by the Stables to be reused. The area between the stables and house which is currently used for storage sheds could be remodelled to create a new kitchen garden area over which the stables café can look. A succession plan for the vacant buildings needs to be considered. These could further enhance the catering offering for visitors.

UGC8. The wildlife, and conditions for its successful management will continue to be maintained both for native and introduced species.

UGC9. Once the location of the new pay barrier is in place, the potential for additional visitors to the catering outlets and new play area may cause additional pressure to the now freely open areas of the garden, which include some signifcant areas. This needs to be very carefully monitored as some areas including the Rock Garden are often seen as an additional 'play area' by some visitors. Refer to policy PE10 Interpretation.



Plate 4.2 - *View across the ponds*

4.3 The Management of the Gardens

The current management maintains Leonardslee well, keeping it open and accessible for a variety of purposes. The gardens are managed by the Head Gardener who reports to the Estate Manager. The day to day running of the work within the gardens is delegated to the team of gardeners and a group of volunteers who assist in the general upkeep of the gardens. There are only a few volunteer gardeners which make up the team at Leonardslee, and they mostly try and keep on top of the weeding. More recently there has been a loss of gardeners at Leonardslee which has led to a reduction in the amount of maintenance work being done in the gardens. This is combined with the garden team being involved with larger projects around the gardens. It is understood to be difficult to find experienced staff to take up these positions with the relevant experience.

There are several areas of the garden which need specific management to allow them to evolve whilst still retaining their specific character and special interest. These include the lakes, planting, paths and pests as well as the reinstatement of lost historic garden features and vistas, all affected by the gardens being closed for a decade.

Prior to the current owners, the majority of the paths in the garden were grass/ earth, however the gardens were then only open a few months a year during the spring and summer. Now the gardens are open year round something more substantial is needed on the main routes. The gravel which has been laid on these is not suitable for this purpose. The biggest current drain on the garden team's resources is the maintenance of paths and drainage following periods of rain. The current gravel paths are not fit for purpose as the gravel washes down the sloped paths every time it rains, resulting in the garden team spending hours raking and compacting it back into place. This takes the time away from when they should be spending on the gardens. The smaller paths are generally earth/ clay which are fine for the less walked routes.

Whilst the gardens were closed the deer roamed the gardens freely. This has been an ongoing task for the garden team to relocate them back to the Deer Park and repair the fencing. There are now only about 20 deer left in the gardens and the deer management plan is in place to try to move these back to the deer park. New one way deer gates have been installed to assist with this.

There is still considerable activity relating to tree management, following the years when the gardens were not actively maintained. This is to address both the removal of dying trees, their succession, and the re-opening of vistas.
The gardens are zoned into tree safety areas for the management of the large quantity of trees. There are currently 5 members of the team that have level 1 tree safety certificates and 2 junior tree surgeons, this is sufficient to cover the current needs of the gardens and any additional large work is done by a tree surgeon. There is not enough demand for a full time tree surgeon.

The garden team are currently investigating the best way to propagate the Loderi rhododendrons. As Leonardslee doesnt have the staff or facilities to do this in house they are looking elsewhere. Loderi can not be propagated from cuttings, they need air layering which is an 18 month process and has been started for some of the collection. Millais Nursey have recently taken cuttings to their facilities to check if this would be a suitable partnership. This has provided Leonardslee with the availability to buy back-up plants for the collection.

Policies: General Management

MG1. The overall **current management structure** for the management of the gardens should be retained as it appears to be working well. The specialist skills held by members of the garden team should be reviewed regularly to ensure any additional specialists are brought in when needed to fill the skills gaps. New members of the garden team should have the relevant skills and knowledge as well as looking to fill the skills gaps that may occur.

MG2. **Beauty and Impact**: The gardens have been beautifully transformed back to their previous splendour and the management of these should be carefully considered by the Head Gardener and his team. Records of the planting should be kept, especially those relating to the Loder Family.

MG3. The increase in **visitor numbers** shall be carefully managed by the Estates Manager with close coordination with the Garden team. The increase in visitor numbers using the paths and tracks within the gardens will need to be regularly monitored and a plan in place to keep these maintained to a high level to ensure no harm is done.

MG4. The existing **car park area**, including the overflow area needs to be managed to ensure that the trees, both new and existing, planted within it are suitably maintained. There has in the past been unfortunate instances resulting in the loss of trees in this area. The soil around them should be de-compacted to assist in the health of the trees.

MG5. **Priority Areas**: It would be beneficial if the gardens were zoned into priority areas for work. This should be based on special interest, historical importance and visitor routes.

MG6. **Additional volunteers** would assist in undertaking the huge task of keeping the weeds under control and also allow time for other works.

MG7. **Tree Management:** A tree management plan should be updated. This may result in changes to the structure or qualifications of the team responsible for their care.

Policies: Planting

MPL1. **Succession planting** needs to be carefully managed, especially of the Loderi Rhododendrons and national collection plants. The succession plan needs to be considered alongside a programme for pruning of the older rhododendron species where the flowers are now above visitor eye level. The succession planting also needs to be future proofed and take into account the potential future climate with more drought and harsh winter tolerant planting. Some areas of the gardens do not yet have succession planting plans in place, and this should be put in hand. Such character areas include: North Walk, Memorial Table, Upper Dell, Falling Walk and Bluebell Bank.

MPL2. **Plant Labelling:** When the current owners acquired the gardens, nothing was labelled and very overgrown. The garden team previously had a specialist in identification who had spent time working their way around the gardens identifying and labelling the plants and trees. This process should be continued by the gardens team, until a plant specialists can be recruited in the future, to allow the entire gardens to have every specimen identified, labelled and logged.

MPL3. **A database** should be compiled which includes mapping of character areas with all plant names and locations included. This will help in recording the garden as it is and for future reference.

MPL4. **Invasive species** of plant including Bracken, Rh. Ponticum and Japanese Knot Weed can be found within the gardens. There are management plans in place for the burning and treating of these species and these need to be followed to ensure they do not take further hold. The bracken and ponticum are most prevalent on the far side of the lake in areas less visited and of lower priority. The removal of large areas of the Rh. ponticum will provide opportunities and scope for new specimen planting and seasonal interest, especially along the Eastside walk.

MPL5. **Seasonal planting** is needed within the garden to create interest throughout the year and bring visitors during the different seasons. Creating spectacular displays outside of spring without changing the character of the garden will need careful management and planning. There are still many areas of the gardens which have not been fully brought back into good condition following the reopening in 2019. There is a lot of clearing of ponticum and luteum pruning to be done in these areas which may create the opportunity for new seasonal planting including grasses for autumn and winter and summer climbing roses and clematis.

MPL6. **The over maturity** of the rhododendron collection needs to be carefully managed. Many of these are in the Loderi garden, with the flowers now well above eye level. Not all the rhododendrons can be pruned to bring them back to a lower level so the succession of these needs to be incorporated into the plan for each character area.

MPL7. **The car park** is lacking in planting through. The new mature specimen trees are due to be planted where the previous ones did not survive the car park works. However it would be beneficial if there was more low level planting, with a possible opportunity between the rows are car parking, where there is currently post and rope designation. This would assist in making the expanse of car park look more in keeping with the surrounding landscape.

MPL8. **Cultivation and Sale:** A new member of the garden team is being employed to straddle the plant sales side and the gardens team, they will work to cultivate plants to sell as well as for planting within the gardens. This should be added to the succession planting plan.

MPL9. Propagation and succession planting: A propagation programme needs to be set up.
It is understood that the gardens team has recently lost their propagation expert, which is a risk to the collection. A new prorogation expert should be found to assist in the implementation of a programme of succession planting. The success of the link with Millais Nursery should be continued to try and establish a local collection of back up plants.

MPL10. Tree Management: Due to the high number of champion and highly significant trees within the gardens. A document should be drawn up, to address succession planting of significant trees and to understand the risk and plan action to retain significant trees such as removing the target from any fall area an allowing standing deadwood to remain. This will feed into the areas of the garden which still need to be reviewed following the closure period.

Policies: Lost vistas and garden features

MV1. A number of the historic vistas around the garden have been reinstated but there are more in the outer areas of the garden which could be opened. The balance of opening views with the planting needed to be removed to allow for this needs to be carefully managed and balanced to ensure no significant specimen trees are lost in doing so. Other features which have been lost including the Clapper pond bridge could be reinstated to add an additional layer of interest to the gardens.

Policies: Lakes

ML1. **Water Condition:** The lakes need work doing to them generally and would benefit from a hydrologists input to review the water condition of the current system as a whole and assist in the preparation of a management plan for the lakes as a separate area of the gardens.

ML2. **Dredging:** In recent years only clapper pond has been dredged, the remaining 6 lakes would benefit from also being dredged if the lakes are to be managed and enhanced. This has not been done previously due to the large amount of silt removed needing to be pumped and stored somewhere on site. It would be beneficial to have a silt survey undertaken of the lakes prior to any work being done to them and a management strategy will need to be developed if there is going to be a programme of dredging.

ML3. **Fishing:** There is potentially an opportunity to open New Pond, located in the deer park, up for small amounts of fishing. This will need to be reviewed as part of a holistic management plan for the lakes as they form an open system. It is understood there are already some pike and carp in the lake, but if this is to be used for fishing the stocking of the lake will need to be included within the management plan.

ML4. **New planting** is needed in and around the lake to add interest, especially in the summer. Opportunities to add aquatic plants and waterlilies within the ponds could be considered along with other edge planting, these need to looked at as part of the lakes system and the character areas on the banks of the lakes.

ML5. Policies ML1- ML4. should be collated into a single document which would also support the management in the like of climate change, including changing precipitation patterns.

Policies: Paths

MP1. **The gravel paths** need to be replaced with something more suitable, to avoid having continual maintenance on a daily basis. A tar and chip covering could be an option for the main paths around the gardens with the smaller secondary paths retained as grass/ earth. This would free up the garden teams time to be able to undertake tasks within the gardens. Initial calculations suggest that this would pay for itself over 5 years.

MP2. **The drainage** within the gardens is not good, with water pouring down the banks onto the paths when it rains. Some drainage channels have been dug alongside the paths to helps channel the water away, this needs to be carried out across the rest of the gardens to help against the erosion of paths.

4.4 Planning and Legislation

The whole of Leonardslee Park and Gardens is designated at Grade I on the Historic England register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The Park also forms the south-eastern border of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Statutory listing is designed to recognise the importance and significance of gardens and to offer statutory protection against their unsympathetic alteration or demolition. Proposals to develop buildings or land within a conservation area or within a registered park and garden may require planning permission and listed building consent. Listed building consent and planning permission must be acquired from Horsham District Council.

Historic England (HE) must be consulted by Horsham District Council on listed building consent applications relating to the Grade I Park and Gardens, and on applications for planning permission for development which affects the setting and/or the Grade I registered park or garden. HE are also consulted on any proposals for large-scale development in a conservation area (application sites over 1,000 square metres).

All proposals for development on the site must accord with Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment, and with the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

Policies: Planning

PG1. **Statutory Consents**: Before any work is carried out to the landscape at Leonardslee Park and Gardens advice should be sought on the necessary consents required, and these consents should then be properly obtained from Horsham District Council to facilitate the lawful development of the site. Work undertaken should be in accordance with the consents granted.

PG2. **Early, pre-application, consultation** with the Conservation Officer at Horsham District Council and where applicable with the regional Inspector of Historic Buildings at Historic England, regarding proposals that require listed building consent and/or planning permission is strongly recommended.

4.5 Conservation and Maintenance

Appropriate policies and processes for the continuing care and maintenance, as well as conservation are well established in the UK and suitably qualified design professionals are registered with either the Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC) register or the RIBA scheme as SCA registered. There are also qualifications for structural engineers (CARE accredited), Building surveyors (the RICS Conservation Accreditation scheme) and for the builders, gardeners, landscape specialists and conservators who are engaged in the day-to-day care of important historic sites such as Leonardslee.

Leonardslee Gardens forms part of the High Weald National Landscapes along with other significant local gardens including Wakehurst Place, High Beeches, Nymans, Sheffield Park and Borde Hill. A number of these share family connections as well as a shared horticultural significance. There is currently an informal arrangement between the garden teams at these local gardens, where visits to each garden are taking place, seeds are shared as well as knowledge shared on plant collections and risks.

There are a number of garden structures which are in varying conditions, this includes the Pulhamite in the Rock Garden which is in especially poor condition. Interpretation needs to be given to the visitors to make them aware of these structures and their importance as part of the gardens. Since the new play area opened it has been recorded that visitor numbers have changed along with the demographic of visitors. This has in part lead to more climbing on the rocks and trees within the gardens.

Policies: General Maintenance

CMR1. **All works of conservation and maintenance** should be undertaken in accordance with current best practice by suitably qualified gardeners and professionals in line with any management plans in place.

CMR2. **Retained knowledge:** To guard against loss of information or collective loss of memory, as far as possible, gardeners should be retained for long periods of time to keep continuity.

CMR3. **Record of Condition:** For all ongoing works, the existing condition and any specimen plants and their locations are to be recorded prior to commencement.

CMR4. **A maintenance plan** should be regularly reviewed and updated, with prioritised recommendations and its findings should be acted upon.

CMR5. All **poor and self sown seedlings** and plants with no historical significance should be removed to ensure high quality specimens take priority.

CMR6. **Character Areas**: The nature of each individual character area should be maintained and the valuable historical plants protected to retain the overall collective significance of the gardens. This includes the deer park and areas of open grassland alongside the more formal garden areas.

CMR7. **Vistas**: The existing and newly created vistas around the gardens need to be maintained to allow them to continue to be part of the garden attraction. Plants should be pruned accordingly to maintain these key historical views without causing damage or long term harm to the plants. Landscape Architects should be engaged by the gardens team to assist with the planned opening up of new vistas within the gardens. This will need to be carefully planned alongside the experienced garden team.

CMR8. **Water Levels**: Work has been carried out recently to increase the flow of water from the tributaries to maintain the water levels within the lakes, as these were running dry in the height of hot summers. This needs to be maintained and altered accordingly to avoid the lakes flooding or running dry.

CMR9. **Invasive species**: The ponticum, Japanese knot weed and bracken need to be continually maintained and cut back as a result of years of no maintenance. This needs to be an ongoing task to get them under control in the further extents of the gardens.

CMR10. Shared Knowledge: The current informal arrangement between the local gardens could be formalised to ensure ongoing communications and sharing of knowledge and planting are embedded in the management of each, especially when garden teams change. There are schemes which already exist to act as a platform

for this and it would be worth considering Leonardslee joining. This arrangement can then extend beyond the collections to help manage visitor numbers and risks to the garden as well as providing an opportunity for linking events to share peak time visitor pressures on the gardens.

CMR11. There need to be regular inspections of the Pulhamite and other garden structures to ensure they remain in a good condition. Inspections should detail any repairs needed to the various structures which will then inform programmes of repair to each. Inspections should be undertaken by suitably qualified experts to prepare detailed specifications for suitable contractors to undertake the repair works. These inspections should be undertaken every 5 years.

4.6 Sustainability and the Environment

The site needs to be considered holistically to arrive at the best solution to deliver a carbon neutral footprint in future years.

The majority of the services were updated in 2018 when the refurbishment by the new owners was undertaken; however, the service installations are at risk of failure to work effectively and efficiently if there is a lack of maintenance.

The drainage within the garden is currently quite poor. Following heavy rain, large volumes of water wash off the beds and down the steeply sloping gravel paths. In recent months some drainage channels have been dug alongside the paths where this occurs most, to try to stop the paths being eroded and gravel washed away.

The water supply within the gardens is currently limited and as a result makes keeping the gardens and new planting watered during extended periods of warm weather a huge task for the garden team. There was previously a network of water taps, now not functioning, arranged around parts of the gardens which addressed this need. The result of climate change are having an impact on the gardens with hotter dryer summers. The water pressure on the estate is not very high, currently there is a large tank behind the visitor WCs in the car park to provide water to the gardens, however this needs to be improved as is not a sustainable solution long term.

The provision of toilets within the gardens at Leonardslee is limited to the ones located within the stables. With such a large expanse of gardens to discover this means a long walk back up the hill for visitors.

The gardens close at dusk except for specific events, therefore there is no need to permanently light the gardens. The path from the entrance greenhouse to the house is lit with lights fitted to short timber posts to allow a low amount of light for staff working in the gardens out of opening times as well as for visitors to the house. This style of lighting is subtle and in keeping with the garden setting. The carpark has newly installed floodlighting to the main area to accommodate specific events happening after dark.

Woodland gardens can be one of the most bio diverse habitats in the UK, year round flowering and woodland conditions supports a wide range of animals, insects, birds, plants, moss and lichen.

Leonardslee is home to a diverse range of species including, voles, shrews, stoats, hedgehogs, frogs and foxes. Many different butterflies can be seen in the gardens, these include white admirals, silver washed fritillaries, purple hairstreaks, comma, holly blues and speckled woods. Common lizards are also known to have been spotted basking in the sun along with a good population of slow worms and grass snakes.

The increased rainfall, more frequent storms and summer droughts are a serious risk to the gardens. These changes in weather have the potential to lead to issues with plant growth and increased diseases affecting the Loderi rhododendron collection and other important plants within the collection. It is understood that Leonardslee have been working hard to plan for this and have yet to loose any plants. Leonardslee being a mix of mostly exotic planting from the America's, China and the Himalayas is suited to these changes in the weather we are experiencing. The dense planting and wooded areas are greatly suited to the rhododendrons which like dappled shade.

Disease is a huge risk to the collection at Leonardslee. The threat of Phytophthora (sudden oak death) is one which cannot be ignored. It is currently known to be present at present at a local garden and the spores which affect the larch and oak can be easily spread by visitors. It is understood that DEFRA have been regularly visiting to take samples to monitor for the disease. The increased visitor numbers entering the gardens increases the risk of disease and infection being spread to the plants and the resultant clearing needed to large areas of disease is found.

Policies: Services

SES1. **Energy Strategy:** A site wide survey needs to be undertaken across the Estate to inform the development of site wide energy strategy.

SES2. **Maintenance:** Functioning services installations should be regularly inspected and maintained. This should include water, electrical, IT, gas and drainage services, in accordance with the suppliers or installers recommendations.

Policies: Drainage

SED1. There needs to be a whole site review of the garden drainage and a programme of proposed works prepared for the site. It would be beneficial if this was done at the same time as the review of the paths and surface treatments.

Policies: Water Systems and Sanitary installations

SEW1. The Loder family installed taps in certain locations within the garden to assist with the watering, many disguised within box hedges, these are mostly still in place but no longer connected. These could be advantageous to the garden team and their reuse should be considered when reviewing the way the gardens and areas of new planting are watered, especially within the Loderi garden.

SEW2. The supply of water to the garden needs to be reviewed and updated, the current pressure, location and size of the storage tanks is no longer suitable for the maintenance of the garden and the impact climate change is having. They may use stored rainwater from the wider site. This may need pumping from attenuation ponds, as are being built by the new service yard.

SEW3. Weather monitoring is not something that is currently done at Leonardslee and it would be beneficial to potentially start to look at doing this to start to analysis any pattens in the weather and the impacts this is having on certain plants. This may then inform the choice of new planting within the gardens.

SEW4. There is scope for the provision of additional toilet facilities within the garden, as long as their position is carefully considered. There is potential within the vicinity of the Engine House, this would need careful planning and design to ensure it does not have a detrimental effect on the setting of the gardens. It could also have the option of being something more temporary and seasonal. This will be subject to the relevant consents.

Policies: External Lighting

SEL1. **Non-illumination:** The present policy of non illumination in the gardens and minimally to the garden buildings should be maintained. The temporary lighting erected for evening events should be enough to cover any evening use. If a more permanent installation is desirable then a specialist lighting designer should be employed and proposals reviewed to minimise the impact on the landscape.

SEL2. **Any additional lighting** added around the house and stables area should be carefully considered to ensure only the amount needed is added. This should be in the same timber post style as that already in place below the entrance greenhouse. This would be subject to the relevant consents.

SEL3. **The car park floodlights** should only be used when specific after dark events are taking place and once these are finished and the car park is empty they should be turned off. This will ensure there is no unnecessary light pollution to the neighbours and surrounding areas after dark.

Policies: Biodiversity

SEB1. **Dead trees,** where safe to do so could be left to support the biodiversity within the garden, especially within the deer park and pinetum. This could also be considered in areas of the garden where work still need to be done following the period of closure.

SEB2. **Wildflowers:** There have in the past been a wildflower species spotter record what is already at Leonardslee, however this could be something that is done on a semi regular basis to track any new species within the gardens and build up a picture of where these are. There would also be an opportunity to engage for example butterfly or dragonfly specialists to review what species are living in the gardens.

SEB2. **Bats:** There is the opportunity to possibly introduce some bat walks around the gardens at dusk, to allow visitors to see a different aspect of the garden wildlife.

SEB3. **Cleared areas:** Areas which are currently being cleared on ponticum and other overgrown planting would provide an opportunity to encourage some wildflower planting to help increase the diversity of species and plants within the gardens, whilst adding additional interest for the visitors.

Policies: Climate Change

SECC1. A specific climate action plan needs to be put in place and implemented. This will be specifically aimed at understanding the requirements needed to conserve the Loderi rhododendrons. This will include guidance on plant species, locations for new planting and succession planting. The understanding of the collection needs to be documented by the current team to fully understand how they will react to the changes in climate, including the threats and vulnerabilities and what action is needed to mitigate this risk.

SECC2. There needs to be a plan in place as part of the action plan highlighting the most suitable locations for replacement planting. This should cover zoned areas setting out the most suitable locations within the garden where the collection may be moved to, to provide shelter from sun and winds and more suitable growing conditions.

SECC3. New plants planted within the gardens need to be chosen to suit the new emerging climate in the south of the UK. These should not necessarily be British plants but need to be sustainable for wetter, warmer climates. Areas of new planting have yet to be identified as more clearance needs to take place, following the years of overgrowth. Succession planting is at the front of the minds of the garden team.

Policies: Disease

SED1. Management plans and schedules need to be in place to make sure that regular testing of the trees and plants for disease is taking place. Test kits to undertake these by the gardens team should be used alongside regular planned general assessments from Defra.

4.7 Presentation, Education and Interpretation

The history of Leonardslee is intrinsic to the interest of a visit, particularly that relating to the extensive gardens. Information on the site is provided online, and in brochures available at the site's visitor entrance, and an illustrated timeline is affixed to the wall in the courtyard to the Museum Block.

The Gardens, naturally, change from season to season, and there is an ongoing effort to ensure there are areas of interest year-round. The Rhododendrons, Leonardslee's iconic plants, make Spring (from March to June), the most spectacular season. This is common with most woodland gardens in the UK and bolstered by the appearance of daffodils and bluebells amongst the trees at this time of year.

There are ongoing efforts to extent the season of interest at Leonardslee, without changing the overall style of the garden. This has been addressed by the planting of the Maple Walk, by Sir Giles Loder to bring autumn colour to the garden, and there are further plans to incorporate an Autumn fruit or berry garden to further pique visitor interest and attract wildlife.

There are also opportunities to increase the attractiveness of the gardens during the summer, a season in which visitor numbers peak but the garden is mostly green. There are plans to plant summer trees throughout the gardens. Another issue which has been flagged by online reviews of the site is lack of labelling on plants throughout the site. If this were rectified it would help with conveying the site's history to the visitor.

The site's year-round interest has been diversifying through the putting on of events such as 'Leonardslee Illuminated', a festive walk through the gardens accompanied by a light show and various entertainments. This is particularly important to bring visitors to the site during the winter months, when the natural garden is mostly dormant.

The temporary sculpture exhibition by South African artist Anton Smit adds further evergreen interest to the garden, but some visitors in online reviews have suggested a more diverse display of artworks would be preferable. This is now being instigated with temporary sculpture by local artists.

Policies: Presentation, Education, Interpretation and wayfinding

PE1. **Identification and Cataloguing plants**: As many of the visitors come to Leonardslee to enjoy the gardens it could be advantageous as part of the information available to provide plant species information. This is currently being catalogued by the garden team and a way to represent this needs to be considered.

PE2. **Diversification and Seasonal Planting**: It is believed that the diversification of the gardens to make them attractive to visitors all year , and bring back repeat visitors for different seasons is working well. Focusing on the presentation of the gardens with different interpretation during the summer months should be considered as Spring, Autumn and Winter are successfully being explored. New interpretation within the gardens though must not impose too heavily and change the landscape of the gardens.

PE3. **Interpretation Boards**: The scale of some of the newer interpretation boards within the gardens are out of proportion of the locations they are describing. Due to this they have been located in slightly different locations which is affecting the usefulness of the information being presented. The scale of future interpretation boards and the appropriateness for the location needs to be reviewed more carefully to allow the visitor to fully engage with them.

PE4. **Hybridising Rh. Loderi**: The story of the Rh. Loderi could be introduced to the garden with some small areas of explanation in key areas of the garden. This could form part of a self- guided walking tour, taking you on a timeline journey of the garden.

PE5. **The wayfinding signage** with the garden is discrete low wooden signs, which complement the setting. More of these could be distributed to the further reaches of the gardens, especially within the deer park and pinetum to help denote specific areas.

PE6. **The Old Pinetum,** a historically significant part of the gardens is currently not highlighted to visitors. New signage marking the entrance to the pinetum along with the story of this area would assist in engaging visitors who venture over to the far side of the lakes.

PE7. **The Car Park signage** within directing visitors around the car park is of a very large scale and means that drivers do not need to slow down to read it. This may be causing problems with drivers going too fast. Consideration should be given to the possibility of replacing this with significantly smaller signs.

PE8. **Relocation of Pay Barrier**: It is understood consideration is being given to move the pay barrier for the gardens into a more central location to allow visitors to access the café without paying for the garden. This will need careful consideration in how this is achieved without impacting the layout and setting of the gardens.

PE9: **Champion Trees**: there is an opportunity to create an additional visitor trail, focussing on the Champion trees within the gardens.

PE10: Visitor understanding of significance: There is the need for additional signage and interpretation within the more horticulturally significant areas of the gardens, especially the Rock Garden to allow visitors to understand the significance of these areas. It is understood that the Rock Garden can sometimes be seen as an additional 'play area' for visitors. A greater understanding of the significance would hopefully reduce the damage caused to these areas by inappropriate behaviour.

4.8 Accessibility

Intellectual access and interpretation has been addressed in the previous section. Physical access is covered here.

By nature of its setting within rolling hills and valleys, much of the extensive gardens and parkland is hard to access for less able walkers, and impossible for wheelchair users and parents with buggies. This is mitigated by the availability of regular golf buggies to transport visitors to various locations in the grounds, and some signage marking difficult terrain. Seats and benches are provided in some locations but are far apart from one another in some locations.

The lack of WC facilities deeper within the park is of concern, as visitors to the lakes and beyond must navigate a steep upward slope to access those in the Museum and Stable blocks. An obvious solution to this would be to install WCs in the Engine House, which would in turn better promote its use as a summer café.

To the able bodied, there are few difficulties in finding one's way around the site, through a combination of maps, pocket plans and signs. Any more signage risks detracting from the surrounding vistas. The use of signwriting in a script suitable to the setting reinforces the site's cohesive character. However, no provision has been made for relief plans or braille/raised text inscriptions to assist visually impaired visitors.

The limited provision of bins is a deliberate ploy to encourage visitors to take their debris home, and to reduce the tedium of emptying them.

Policies: Accessibility

AP1. **A full accessibility audit** should be drawn up for the estate as a tool to assist with planning of any improvements to the site to allow for more inclusive access. This should include where to look for access to new areas of grants and funding available to help in providing changes. Any changes proposed need to be very carefully considered in the wider context of the gardens and the registered landscape to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on the setting.

AP2. **The paths suitability** for walking on and for buggy and wheelchair access needs to be considered within the path review. This will differ depending on where in the garden they are located. Any proposed changes should take access into account.

AP3 **Seats and Benches**: consideration should be given to adding more seating, following the accessibility audit.

AP4. Any **new or replacement signs** should consider the scale of font and level of text as well as introducing an element of braille text to allow all visitors to enjoy the story of the gardens.

AP5. **The sensory environment** should be considered when introducing new planting, plants which have a greater scent could be used in particular areas or the hights of planting staggered to allow for lower level interest. Some secluded areas of the garden near the lakes, you get the tranquil sound of the running water this could allow for these more sensory areas to be enjoyed.

4.9 Security

The site is bounded by a mix of estate style metal fencing and timber post and rail fencing to the perimeter with large gates at the entrance and exit points of the car park.

To gain access into the gardens you have to pass through a staffed ticket pay barrier within the entrance greenhouse. All the buildings and the entrance gates are locked when the estate is closed, and there are several members of staff who live within the estate in private residences.

Policies: Security

SP1. **A review** should be undertaken of the current security measures for the estate.



5.0 Adoption and Implementation

5.1 Review

The draft Gardens Conservation Management Plan (GCMP) was issued in October 2023 and reviewed by the client team. Feedback was collated by Donald Insall Associates in Spring 2024

The comments received were incorporated where they offered corrections or additional relevant detail into the final document. The process was completed during September 2024.

5.2 Adoption

It was agreed to adopt the Gardens Conservation Management Plan, following the inclusion of the comments noted above. In summary, these cover:

5.2.1 Additions to sections:

2.2 Description of the Gardens

3.2 The Criteria for Assessment

4.2 The Use of Leonardslee Gardens

4.3 The Management of the Gardens

4.5 Conservation and Maintenance

4.6 Sustainability and the Environment

4.7 Presentation, Education and Interpretation

5.3 Implementation

The Estate Manager will be responsible for the overall management of the site. The Head Gardener is responsible for the gardens. Specific tasks will be delegated as these senior office holders see fit. Major decisions of expenditure and policy will, as now, continue to be reviewed by the Estate Manager.

It has been agreed, as set out in the GCMP policies, that works undertaken at Leonardslee should be recorded by the Garden team. These records will be retained at Leonardslee, in files attached to the main GCMP document.

5.4 Cyclical Updating

At intervals of five years, it would be beneficial to update the GCMP document as a whole, collating the records of works undertaken into the main text (Gazetteer), and if relevant to other sections as well.

At the same time, the opportunity would be taken to tour the site as a whole and to update the Gazetteer, to support the continuing maintenance of Leonardslee.



6.0 Gazetteer

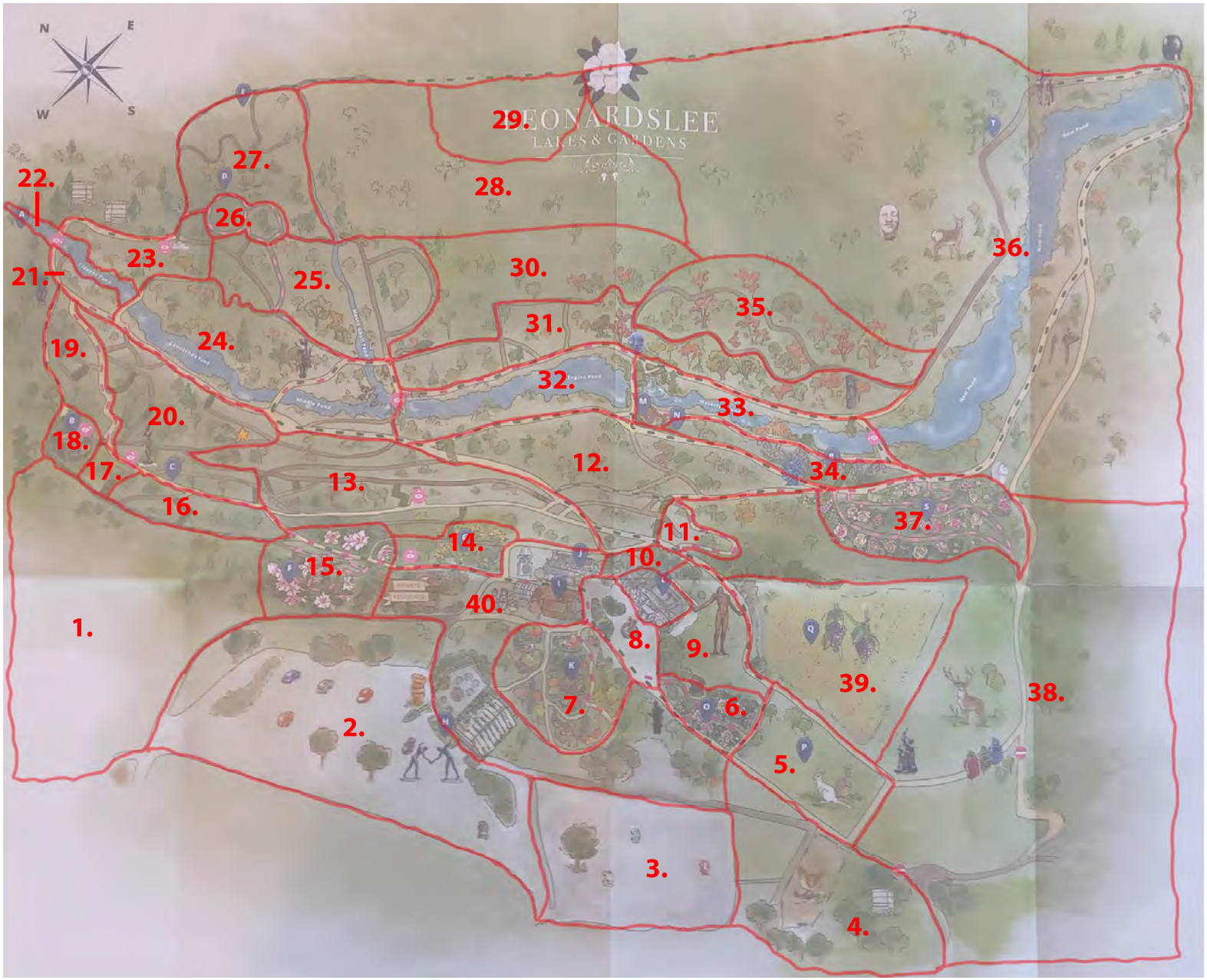


Plate 20: *Character Area Map*



Map of the gardens marked up with arrows to show the key views. These are historic views which have been opened up as part of ongoing management of the gardens or that have been identified to be reinstated. These numbers are referenced in the Gazetteer sections which follow.

Plate 21: *Character Area Map Views*

6.1 Top Field

General Description
The Top Field is located to the north of the main carpark, bordering the B2110 to the west. This is a fallow space where the previous gardeners' welfare accommodation is located along the west side. The field is generally used by the garden team as temporary storage including for compost. All these activities and facilities will move when the new compound is completed in the events field.

Paths
There are no paths within this field. The entrance drive and access to the Red House runs along the south side of the field.

Planting
There are mature specimen trees planted along the edge of the B2110 and north edge. To the east the field borders the planting of top walk.

Proposed new planting
Once the garden facilities are relocated, there is the potential for the field to be planted with wildflowers.

Management
The field is often used for spoil and this washes down into the lakes, during heavy rain. This is causing problems for the lakes, causing additional silting. The relocation of the gardeners' compound should help to address this.

The fencing to the edge of the field is metal estate railings, whereas on the edge of the car park is new rope and post fencing which is not ideal. It would be more cohesive if the type of railing was rationalise to be of one type to match the edge of the top field.

Features
The current gardeners' facilities within the field should be relocated to the new compound once it is complete.

There is a gate in the far corner of the field which gives access to The Dell.



Plate 6.1.1: Character area reference plan



Plate 6.1.2: View of the top field looking North East, from the track leading to the Red House.

Condition
The current estate railings are in a poor condition, broken and rusted and in need of replacing with new estate railings.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.1.3: View of the top field looking North West towards the road.

6.2 Main Carpark

General Description
The main car park is located between the A281 and the entrance greenhouse. The car park surface has been laid with grids to allow the grass to grow through, though this is only successful nearer the perimeter where areas are less trafficked. This was originally a grassed car park area, when the gardens were only open a few months during the summer.

The new play area has been given consent and is to be located between the carpark and the red house in a currently unused and overgrown area of the car park. This will be opening in Jan 2024.

Two new mature specimen trees are due to be planted centrally in the car park where they were previously lost. The edges of the carpark along the A281 are having the hedging reinstated and the car parking spaces retuned to grass.

There is a mix of new post and rope and the existing post and rail fencing to the edges, around the mature trees and between the car park rows.

Paths
The gravel to the entrance driveway is becoming quite potholed and has statutory consent to be replaced in tarmac.

Planting
There are a number of mature specimen trees planted centrally within the car park, with hedging to the edge of the A281 and mature planting to the northern end.

Proposed new planting
New planting is proposed between the rows of car parking spaces were the current post and rope fencing is. These would include Crab apples, rowans, flowering cherries, dogwoods. This would give the carpark a much greener feel. These trees are all pollinators, and have berries and flowers for year round interest. The reclaimed edge bays are showing some signs of grass growth but not as successful as it should be. The rarely used spaces are also starting to green up. This may be as a result of the depth of the gravel which was laid, some of which needed to removed.



Plate 6.2.1: Character area reference plan



Plate 6.2.2: View of the car park looking to the South West towards the road.

Vistas
There is a view from the main car park down to the overflow carpark. This was once a view of open parkland character. In time this view should be reinstated when the grass starts to grow through in the overflow carpark.

Management
The new mature specimen trees which have been planted centrally need to be carefully managed so the soil around them doesn't get too compacted or piled up too high which would impact the health of them.

The new grass put down on the parking to allow for a green covering needs to be managed to ensure it grows properly and is maintained throughout the year.
There are discussions to bring the pay barrier further into the garden to allow visitors to enjoy the café and shop without having to pay to access the gardens. This will need careful management if it is taken forward to ensure any new intervention does not have detrimental impact on the gardens and their setting. The play area will need to be managed to ensure any retained trees are looked after properly during the work.

Signage and interpretation
The entrance sign as you reach the car park giving direction is very large (scaled as though on a motorway), so cars are possibly not slowing down to read it before entering the car park and there is a risk they are going too fast. This could be a lot smaller and more in keeping.

Condition
The car park is in a fair condition although there is a lot of upcoming work proposed to replace previous unconsented works. New grass is being grown to the parking areas, however this is in a poor condition and may need to be reviewed. The post and rail fencing is in a poor condition and in places is falling down, this needs to be replaced to match and create a continuous barrier to the car park.

Significance
Neutral significance as a result of the works recently undertaken.



Plate 6.2.3: View of the car park along the western boundary, looking south.



Plate 6.2.4: View of the car park from the road boundary looking East towards the entrance greenhouse.

6.3 South Carpark

General Description
The south car park is located between the south field and the main car park and is used as a general overflow car park during busy periods and for specific events.

This was originally an extension of the south field and continued the open grassland character to meet the carpark to the north. The grass has recently been removed and new grids laid to allow for all year round parking. The grids have recently been seeded to allow grass to grow through to try and reinstate some of the lost character of the area.

Paths
A path runs along the east edge of the car park leading to the event field and what was the original main drive for Leonardslee House.

Planting
There is new hedging planted alongside the A281 to provide a screen to the road which had previously been lost. A mature specimen sits to the north of the car park and along the east perimeter edge.

Proposed new planting
It would be beneficial to consider providing more specimen trees with the main body of the car park.

Management
There needs to be careful management of the newly grassed area to ensure it is properly established, before it gets heavy traffic use. Following large events, particularly those during the winter months, including the Illuminated event, mechanisms need to be in place to return it to grass.

It is believed that the current hardcore previously laid on this area has been laid quite deep, therefore it will have to be dug down deep enough and enough aggregate removed to allow the grass to grow properly.
The specimen trees in the area need to be properly protected to ensure any works in the area do not have an adverse effect on them.



Plate 6.3.1: Character area reference plan



Plate 6.3.2: View of the south car park from the main car park looking south east.

Signage and interpretation
There is no signage in this area and this should stay as it is.

Condition
This area is currently in a transition from a gravel surface back to grass. The grass growth needs to be carefully reviewed at intervals to ensure it is taking properly and the condition of it is good going forward.

Significance
Detrimental as a result of the works recently carried out.



Plate 6.3.3: View showing the grass starting to grow through in the south carpark.

6.4 South Field

General Description
Located to the south of the car park this field is kept as open grassland. It is to the west side of what was the original drive to Leonardslee House. Currently the chicken coop which is on the southern side is being removed to reinstate the open characteristic of the original drive up to the house. A new orchard is being planted alongside the edge of the south field and the A281.

The northern portion of this character area has been separated off for an overflow car park and is described under a separate section.

Paths
There is an earth track that runs along the east side of the area from the garden store to the main drive. There is also a track along the north edge of the chicken coops which, once removed, should be returned to grass.

Planting
There are mature trees which border the A281 and along the south edge of the field.
Proposed new planting

A new orchard is to be planted along the edge of the A281.

Management
This area is important for its open grassland character bordering the west side of the drive to Leonardslee House. This special character should be maintained as a backdrop to the more formal gardens beyond.

Condition
This area is in a fair condition but is currently a little muddled with the chicken coop once this is removed and the path re-grassed this will help enhance the character area.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.4.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.4.2: View of the south field looking towards the events field to the East.

6.5 Wallabies Enclosure

General Description
Leonardslee is famous for its wallabies. Sir Edmund Loder was fascinated by animals, particularly exotic animals which he loved to introduce into the garden. The Bennet wallabies in the breeding enclosure are direct descendants of the original collection introduced by Sir Edmund in 1889.

The Pulhamite rock structure in the middle of the enclosure was originally meant to mimic the mountain side for the mountain goats, which were also originally in this enclosure. This was installed by Pulham and Sons at the end of the 19th century at the same time as the rock garden.

There are currently 20 Bennet wallabies in the enclosure with more up in the deer park. There are new males introduced regularly into the breeding enclosure to widen the breeding pool, with the existing males relocated to the deer park. All the wallabies at Leonardslee are treated as wild animals.

Paths
There are paths to all sides of the wallaby enclosure.

Planting
Generally open meadow with some specimen trees to allow sunshine and open space.

Proposed new planting
None proposed.

Vistas
None.

Management
The enclosure is constructed of chicken wire with timber posts and an electric fence on top. The whole fence is about 8ft tall to ensure the wallabies cannot jump out. As a result of decades of fallen fences prior to the Streeter family ownership the Wallabies were left to roam the gardens. They have now all be contained with some females still in the deer park from this time.



Plate 6.5.1: Character area reference map

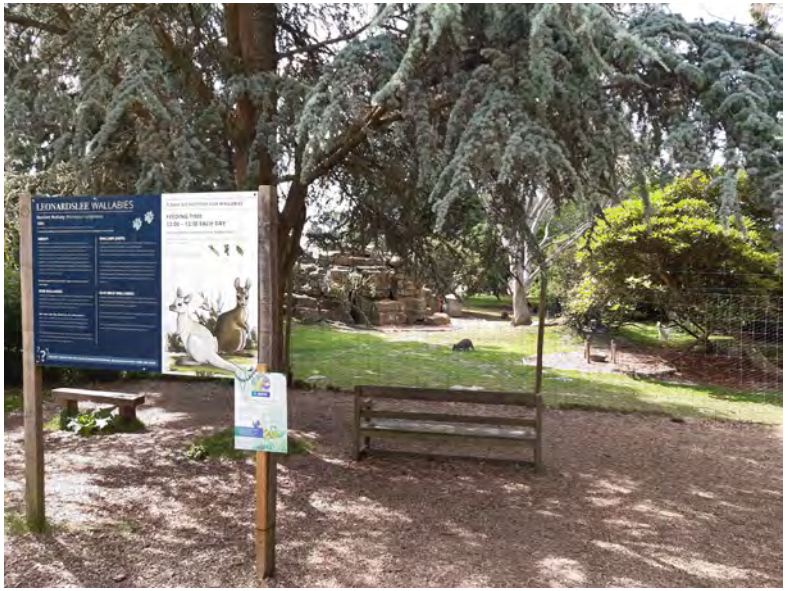


Plate 6.5.2: View of the wallaby enclosure from the edge of Camellia Walk.

The Pulhamite structure needs to be managed to ensure that any repairs are undertaken in a timely manner.

Signage and interpretation
There is a large interpretation panel outside the enclosure giving information on the wallabies.

Features
There is a Pulhamite structure within the enclosure for the wallabies. The best time to see the young wallabies is in the late winter and early spring. There are opportunities each day for visitors to watch the feeding time.

Condition
The Pulhamite of the central structure is not in a good condition, this needs to be monitored.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.5.3: Wallaby enclosure with Pulhamite Rock feature.

6.6 Camellia walk

General Description
This area was originally planted by Sir Edmund Loder and these are the oldest Camellias in the garden.

Paths
The paths that run through his area have a bark chipping covering with log rolls to the edges of the paths and beds to stop visitors walking onto the beds.

Planting
Alongside the Camellia's are a number of Palm's, Cherry trees and old Magnolia's creating incredible colour in the garden. This area also includes an interesting group of Pieris including Japonica variegate and Pieris Wakehurst.

A number of trees in this area of the garden collapsed in last year's heavy snow, these have been propped to support them and they are sprouting again.

Vistas
None.

Management
The plants in this area are very delicate due to their age and the garden team are trying to dissuade visitors from walking on the beds by using log rolls to designate the edge of the beds. This needs to be carefully managed to ensure the wellbeing of the plants.

Signage and interpretation
Limited, within a small area.

Features
There is a newly built brick structure around the original well and a new timber framed roof structure over it. Currently this is quite stark having been built in modern brickwork done but should weather in time to better blend into the surrounding gardens.



Plate 6.6.1: Character area reference plan



Plate 6.6.2: view within the Camellia Walk

Condition
Improving following recent cutting back.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.6.3: Entrance to the Camellia Walk from the rear of the Rock Garden.



Plate 6.6.4: The new structure built above the original well.

6.7 Rock Garden

General Description
The Rock garden is one of the most important historical and horticultural features of the garden. To the west of the mansion it was designed and constructed around 1890 by James Pulham and Sons. It was one of the first projects Sir Edmund Loder undertook after he bought Leonardslee. As part of the design were a grotto and a fernery which have now sadly become overgrown and lost.

This was originally the alpine garden, but is now quite different from the original conception due to iterative change.

The restoration of the rock garden was one of the first priorities of the garden team when the Streeter family bought Leonardslee. They removed the overgrown conifers, resurfaced the paths, restored the water feature, and planted new bulbs and perennials.

Paths
The cleverly designed paths and levels encourage exploration and views across the whole area. There is a main gravel path running through the middle and smaller paths lead from this, with low metal gates and either end. These have recently been resurfaced.

Planting
Initially it was more of an alpine garden, filled with scree bed and low growing specimens, but over time this has evolved to what we have today.

At its best in the spring the Rock Garden is awash with colour and form. Plants here include azaleas, rhododendrons, dwarf conifers and acers. Specimen trees include , Exochorda x macranthaChinese Lntern Tree and Azalia Microphylla 'Variegata' which leaves smell of chocolate. Sitting beneath the canopy are alpine bulbs and perennials including Narcissus cyclamineus, Armeria maritima, Primula and Hostas. Evergreen azaleas, palm trees *trachycarpus fortunei* and the Chusan Palm Tr. *F. var surculose.*

The rhododendrons here had been cloud pruned to help give them a pleasing structure and form.



Plate 6.7.1: Character area reference plan


Plate 6.7.2: View within the Rock Garden

There are a number of Champion trees here which include Acer palmatum 'Seiryu' a fine maple characterised by its delicate leaves which produce great autumn colour. The Olearia Lineata is an unusual straggly shrub native to New Zealand, it is known as the Daisy Bush and is related to herbaceous daisies and Asters. The Chamaecyparis obtuse 'Comacta' this Hinoki Cypress is at the entrance to the Rock Garden and was planted as a dwarf shrub but has now grown into a champion. Cryptomeria japonica 'Aurescens' grows next to the drive and is a form of Japanese Cedar and the Eucryphia cordifolia is an evergreen tree native to Chilie and produces masses of white scented rose like flowers in late summer.

Proposed new planting
This area is still being restored and improved with the hope to add a collection of South American shrubs around the perimeter.

Vistas
The views within the rock garden are highlighted by the twisting nature of the path.

Management
There can sometimes be problems with children climbing on the rocks in this area and using it as a playground. This should hopefully stop when the children's playground has been built but in the meantime the garden team keep someone working in the rock garden at all times to deter this behaviour.

Fences have been introduced to protect the new plants from rabbits eating them.

Signage and interpretation
There is a large wooden interpretation board giving the history of the rock garden and showing its highlights through the season.

Features
There used to be a fernery and a grotto within the garden but these have now become overgrown and lost. The garden team have identified these two areas as possible areas to be restored to reinstate the historic features and add interest to the gardens. The garden is a quiet place of contemplation for many of the visitors to Leonardslee.



Plate 6.7.3: View of the Pulhamite rocks within the Rock Garden.

Condition
The rock garden is generally in a good condition, it has undergone a lot of work since reopening in 2018 and continues to be a priority for the garden team due to its significance. There are currently no issues with the Pulhamite rocks.

Significance
Highly Significant

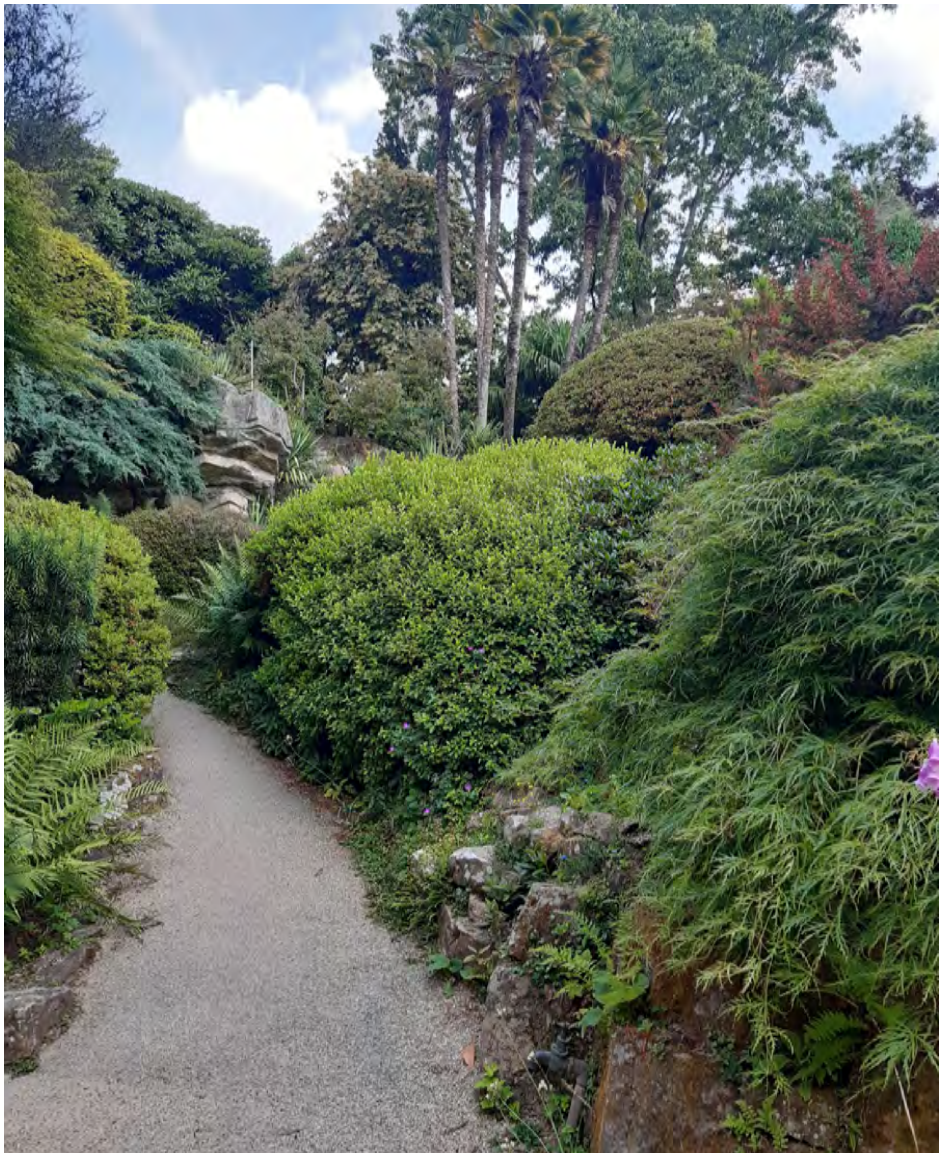


Plate 6.7.4: View looking into the Rock Garden from the exit towards Camellia Walk.

6.8 Leonardslee House frontage

General Description
This area is now a car park used for hotel guests and visitors to the Interlude Restaurant, but it was originally a small area of hardstanding with lawn and herbaceous beds and climbers over the front of the house. Centrally in front of the house on this hardstanding is an imposing metal water feature.

Paths
The parking area has a tarmac covering as do the various paths leading from this area out into the gardens.

Planting
The climbers on the house elevation have recently been replanted to recreate the historic planting layout. A large hedge separates the carpark from the house lawn to the East acting as a screen.

Proposed new planting
The planting has been completed in this area following review.

Vistas
The views onto this area are from the hotel rooms on the first floor of Leonardslee House, these could possibly be improved with some additional planting to soften the large expanse of tarmac.

Management
As you come round the corner of the house towards the lawns to the east, you get quite a smell coming up from the reed bed when it needs maintenance.

The maintenance of the reed bed needs to be managed so this does not continue to happen.

There is a large amount of car parking spaces here, which it is believed were put in when the house was converted into office use, there are now more spaces than the number of hotel rooms. It would be useful to know if this area is ever full or if some of the space can be given back to soft landscaping.



Plate 6.8.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.8.2: View of the house frontage looking along the edge of the boundary with the lawns.

Signage and interpretation
There are a number of signposts in this area directing visitors to the various areas of the gardens. This is also the area where information boards showing upcoming events are displayed.

Features
The buggy drop off point is located here on the carpark, which collects visitors from the bottom of the lake and brings them back up the steep paths.

The central water feature has a prominent location in front of the house. A number of timber picnic tables are located at the edge of the car park and act as an overflow of seating for the Stables tea room.

Condition
This area is in a good condition generally. Unfortunately the expanse of tarmac is not in keeping with the other surfaces in the Gardens, nor with the character of the House, and a revised hard landscaping plan is desirable.

Significance
Detrimental due to the expanse of hard surface.



Plate 6.8.3: View of the house frontage from the entrance to the Camellia Walk.



Plate 6.8.4: View of the frontage of the house from the Stables

6.9 Lawns

General Description
The lawns are located to the south and west of Leonardslee House and here there is a view across the valley towards mossy Ghyll. This was historically a lovely pristine grass croquet lawn onto which the house opened out.

The Lower walk path continues to rise back up to the bottom of the Lawns, where there are steps up to the front of the house.

It is now predominantly used for the many events which are put on at Leonardslee, including open air cinema, concerts and the Illumination event. All these events require a range of various staging and matting layouts to 'protect' the grass but result in it getting ruined damaged regularly.

The huge Faith statue now sits centrally on the lawn and is a permanent feature. The foundations for its plinth are thought it be very deep.

Paths
There is a stone flag terrace to the front and side of the house.

Planting
The old ha-ha which runs along the perimeter of the area adjacent to the vineyard is now more of a shallow ditch with a white picket fence separating it from the area beyond. There are clumps of rhododendron and specimen trees, some old. A Rh. Pride of Leonardslee is at the south end of the Lawns. The western edge of the Lawns is bordered by a plantation of Camellias, through which the Camellia walk threads its way.

There is a small herb garden adjacent to the house.

The rest of the area is laid to lawn.

Proposals and new planting
There are plans for a bandstand adjacent to the house for potential wedding use.



Plate 6.9.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.9.2: View of the lawns looking from the edge of the vineyard. Showing the Peace statue centrally.

Vistas
There is a lovely view from the terrace across the valley towards Mossy Ghyll.

Management
Due to the numerous events which take place here throughout the year the grass to lawn doesn't really grow well. Even with the matting and bark laid for the illumination event the grass still gets destroyed and needs replanting.

Signage and interpretation
None.

Features
The semi permanent marquee has now been removed. But at the far end of the lawn there is a marquee constructed every year which required still requires the grass to be re-seeded when it has been removed.

Condition
This area is in a fair condition but due to the stress put on the grass it could be greatly improved.

Significance
Significant.



Plate 6.9.5: View looking from the path leading towards the Wallaby enclosure.



Plate 6.9.4: View of the bottom of the lawns on the edge of the Eucalyptus Lawn.

6.10 The Stables Area

General Description
This area is located to the south east of the stables, in the area between the house and the stables. From the stables, paths and steps leads down to the gardens. This is also the area where the gardeners' garages are located. A large stone wall along the side of the stables forms a place for climbing plants and ivy.

Paths
There is a path leading down some steps to the gardens, this is predominantly an earth path with stone steps. This path leads down to the main garden path which is Breedon gravel covered.

Planting
The planting in this area includes rhododendrons, ferns and some seasonal planting on the area of sloped grass.

Champion trees include: Pinus strobus 'Pendula' this weeping form of Weymouth Pine native to United States; Phyllocladus trichomanoides var. alpinus, known as Mountain Celery Pine, this conifer is endemic to New Zealand and is very slow growing. Chamaecyparis obtuse 'Lycopodioides' another variety of Hinoki Cypress and Pseudolarix amabilis known as the golden larch. It isn't actually a larch but its leaves turn a striking gold before dropping in the autumn.

Proposals and new planting
The construction of a new storage area for the garden team elsewhere in the gardens is allowing this area to be given more of an identity of its own.
New timber structure was installed at the top of the existing steps 4- 5 years ago but not completed.

Vistas
New view created from the east stables wing onto the new garden area. Shown as view 12. on Plate 21.



Plate 6.10.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.10.2: View from the stable courtyard looking east towards the gardens, showing the existing gardeners garages.

Management
The existing large stone wall to the east of the stables is in need of review, some of the stone buttresses have loose stones and there may be other areas where repairs are needed.

Signage and interpretation
New signage will be installed, in keeping with the rest of the signs used in the gardens, to give visitors information..

Condition
This area is currently in a fair condition, with the existing garages and sheds soon to be removed.

Significance
Neutral Significance



Plate 6.10.3: Stone steps leading from the stables area down into the garden.



Plate 6.10.4: The stone retaining wall running between the east side of the stables and the gardens.

6.11 Eucalyptus Lawn

General Description
This is a small area located to the east of the lawns. Giles Loder's conifer walk starts from here which leads up to the Red House.

Paths
The paths here are made of plastic gravel grids with gravel set into them. They have the same problem as elsewhere with gravel run off in heavy rain.

Planting
Eucalyptus grow in this area.

Proposed new planting
This area is planned to have some winter interest plants added.
A winter walk is being created here along with one by the lake to enhance the visitor enjoyment during the winter months.

Vistas
A more or less level walk with views towards the North.

Management
The paths in this area are causing management problems with the constant run off of gravel when it rains. The preference from the garden team would be to replace all the paths that are not earth/ grass with a Tar and Chip covering to remove the constant maintenance needed. There is a time consuming job for the garden team to move large areas of gravel after the rain and re-roller it all.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber location indicators only in this area.



Plate 6.11.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.11.2: View of the Eucalyptus Lawn looking towards the south east, just below the house lawn

Condition
This area is in a good condition generally, new planting will help add variety to the area throughout the year. The paths need to be reviewed as are causing maintenance issues as elsewhere in the garden.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.11.3: View within the Eucalyptus Lawn



Plate 6.11.4: View looking north west back towards Falling Walk

6.12 Falling walk

General Description
Falling walk leads from the house down towards Middle pond.

Paths
A new concrete gully has been put in alongside the main path which stops the water running off the bank and onto the paths when it rains, this has been working effectively in stopping all the gravel running off the paths down the slopes too. The main path has a Breedon gravel covering with smaller grassy paths off this.

Planting
The area has a number Rhododendrons and Azaleas as well as an impressive arched pine. This pine fell during the snow and has started to regrow over the path forming an arch. A number of Champion trees are located here including Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea tricolor' which is an unusual European Beech tree cultivar from a distance the leaves appear to be all purple, but on closer inspection some have white edges tinged variably with pink. Specimen plants include Manna Ash, *fraxinus ornus, Rh. Auriculatum* and Foxglove Tree *Paulownia tomentosa.*

Proposed new planting
Under review.

Vistas
There is a view here from low down towards Middle pond and Engine pond. This is shown as 11. and 13. on Plate 21.

Management
The Champion tree ash is needing to be felled as it has cracks, bracket fungus, lots of dead wood and weeping wounds. This is especially important as it is close to the path and has been highlighted as a potential visitor risk.

Work is ongoing with the drainage issues and path surface finishes need to be addressed estate wide.

Signage and interpretation
Small wooden signs show the area name and also directions to the Engine house.



Plate 6.12.1: Character area reference plan



Plate 6.12.2: View within Falling Walk.

Features
There are new low stone walls at the top of the area adjacent to the terrace, this will soon lead up to the new garden area proposed where the existing gardeners garages currently are.

Condition
This area appears to be in a fair condition, work is ongoing with the drainage to the main paths.

Significance
Highly Significant

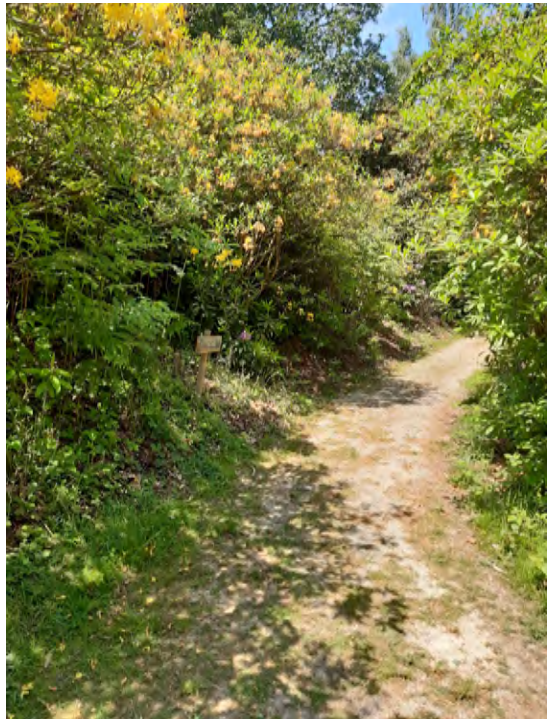


Plate 6.12.3: View along one of the smaller grass paths.



Plate 6.12.3: View from Falling Walk looking down towards Waterfall and Engine Pond, View 11. on Plate 21

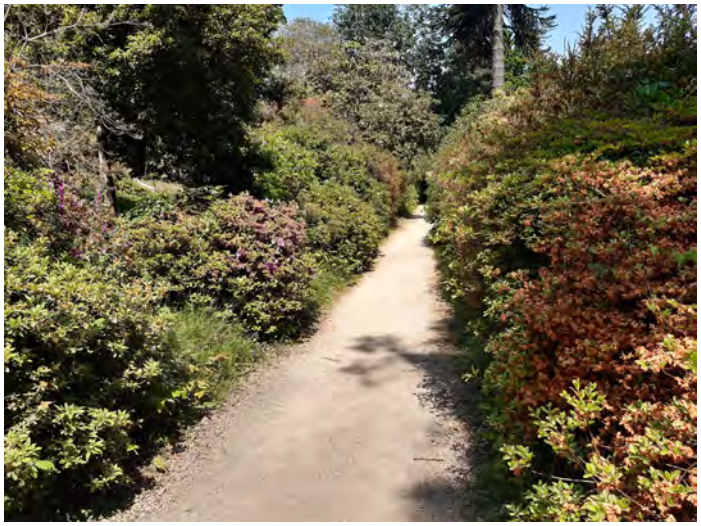


Plate 6.12.4: View along one of the main paths

6.13 Middle Walk

General Description
This areas runs from the Loderi garden to the Dell on the west side of the lakes. Some of the trees in this area of the garden date back before the Loder family, this includes the Giant Redwoods planted by Charles Beauclerk.

Paths
The paths in this area are predominantly covered with Breedon gravel, which was put down when the Streeter family bought the gardens and opened them up to the public year round. Prior to this when the gardens were open seasonally these paths were mainly grass. The Breedon gravel is causing problems as the gravel slides down the hill every time it rains, washing into the lake.

Planting
This area of the gardens is a mix of planting giving interest at different times of the year. Magnolia, Rhododendrons and Camelias in spring. Acers bring autumn colour and Flowering dogwood and Hydrangea in summer. Further rhododendrons, *Rh yakushimanum, sitchuense, cinnabarinumand* others; some are original plantings from 1901, others were added in 1989.

The Redwoods, Sequioia sempervirens which were planted in the 1850s by the Beauclerk family and originally came from Kew.

Other specimens include Gingko biloba, Chinese tulip trees, Liriodendron tulipifera and L. chinensis as well as a gigantic Wellingtonia, over 145 ft tall, sequoia giganteum.

Proposed new planting
There are areas of new planting going in, most noticeably where a limb recently fell off one of the beech trees and has given an opportunity for new planting where the area below was naturally cleared. This will be planted with new Magnolias.

Vistas
Historically there were views down to the lake from here and one has been identified to be opened up towards Mossy Ghyll Pond. This will require some pruning and removal of trees. This is shown as view 2. on Plate 21.



Plate 6.13.1: Character area reference plan



Plate 6.13.2: View within Middle Walk

Management
This area has become overgrown but these Rhododendrons can't be pruned down to bring the flowering lower. Some Rhododendrons will be pruned however to bring more light in and create/ reinstate historic views out. The gardens team are looking to recreate the views as part of the long-term management of the garden.

The gardens have not been too affected by the increased temperatures of recent summers, but there are limited watering points to water the new plants within the gardens.

Tree safety is something the garden team are aware of, and felling trees clears areas that will then require new planning schemes. This does however give opportunities to create views.

There are no propagating facilities currently at Leonardslee. It is all outsourced to the Duchy Estate in Cornwall do the micro propagation for Leonardslee. There has created a back up collection for the Estate.

Signage and interpretation
The National Collection Rhododendrons, located here, includes signs by one each of the species to identify them to visitors. A spreadsheet also exists, managed by the garden team, with GPS locations of each of these to the nearest meter.

Additional Features
This area doesn't have any stand out features.

Condition
The paths are becoming an issue that will need to be addressed soon and how these are managed and a plan for replacing the surface treatment throughout the gardens.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.13.3: View along the top path of middle walk



Plate 6.13.4 The giant redwood within Middle Walk

6.14 Daffodil Lawn

General Description
This small area of grass bank slopes down towards the lakes and is covered in a carpet of daffodils from early March. A path runs along the top edge to the east of the Red House. This year (2023) the grass has been left long to see if wild flowers grow for the summer to add another layer of interest to the area.

Paths
The path running along the top edge of the lawn is currently finished with Breedon gravel.

Planting
This character area is formed predominantly of a grass sloped bank covered in Daffodils in spring. There are a number of specimen trees giving interest these include, some of the large hybrid Rhododendrons raised at Leonardslee, Acers, Davidia and Cornus Trees alongside the spring bulbs.

As you walk towards the Loderi garden there is a Pieris. This tree was where the original cutting was taken from for the one which is at Wakehurst.

There are two County Champion's within the Daffodil Lawn, (Prunus serrulate 'Albi-plena') Japanese Cherry which is over 100 years old and is covered in pure white double flowers in early Spring, and last for just one week.

Further down the bank is another County Champion (Acer pseudoplatanus 'Prinz Handjery'); this unusual cultivar of Sycamore originated in Germany, it is slow growing and looks best in spring when the new leaves emerge shrimp pink before turning pale yellow.

To the upper side of the path is planted with the dwarf conifer collection which was put in by Giles Loder in 1965.



Plate 6.14.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.14.2: View along the top path with Daffodil Lawn sloping away below.

Proposed new planting
There have been discussions with Wakehurst for providing wildflower seeds to go in this location to add some summer colour and interest to the gardens. The grass has been left long to see if wildflowers grow naturally.
The gardeners will be adding more daffodils to the lawn this Autumn (2023) to add to those already there for spring next year.

Vistas
The view here is key, looking down to the rotunda by Mossy Ghyll. Having been overgrown for decades it has been restored by cutting back the Azaleas and the self-seeded Birches trees. This is identified as view 1. on Plate 21.

The views from this area are the most spectacular in May and October, showing the red and yellow Azaleas looking down towards the waterfall.
This vista is now highlighted on the visitor map.

Management
The retaining wall which holds the Conifers along the back of the path is cracking as a result of the conifer roots. This is being monitored as part of the maintenance of this area.

Signage and interpretation
A low level sign with information about the area is located at the top of the bank.

Condition
The area is generally in a good condition. The low wall needs monitoring as discussed above. The paths are in a good condition in this area they are generally flat so the issues seen elsewhere do not affect them. The grass appears in a good condition generally.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.14.3: View looking north east down towards Engine Pond in the distance. Shown as view 1. on Plate 21.

6.15 Loderi Garden

General Description
This is the oldest part and most important part of the garden. In 1901 Sir Edward Loder started planting his rhododendrons here, with the White Diamond hybrid. The Loderi garden contains the most important collection of rhododendron hybrids ever created. Located to the north side of the Red House, it contains large old rhododendrons, giant conifers and hidden palm trees. This areas character is defined by the woodland theme with naturalist planting. There are 35 Loderi hybrids in total and all can be seen here together. Some of these like the Spearmint hybrid only appear at Leonardslee.

Paths
Breedon gravel paths run through this area with some smaller earth and grass paths.

Planting
This area has the national collection for Leonardslee and Loderi rhododendrons with 17 unique to leonardslee, the whole collection was bred here by the Loders. The collection includes Pink Diamond, White Diamond, Sir Joseph Hooker, Pink Coral and King George, these are of particular significance, as some of the plants are original and all are in the location where they were first raised. The majority of those within the Loderi garden are Glamour Rhododendrons, which are trees rather than shrubs.

The area also contains a number of other specimen trees including, two large oak trees, a giant redwood, camelias, acers and magnolias.

The Champion Trees include a hybrid rhododendron (Rhododentdron arboretum x thompsonii) which has blood red flowers in spring and a variety of rhododendron which has been planted since the 19th century (Rhododendron 'Ivery's Scarlet'), which is probably one of the original plants first put on the estate when the gardens were created. It produces plentiful red flowers in early spring.

Proposed new planting
None proposed in this character area.



Plate 6.15.1: Character area reference plan


Plate 6.15.2: Loderi rhododendron within the Loderi Garden.

Vistas
There are no views out from the Loderi garden, as the character of the area is with large the hybrid rhododendrons.

Management
There are lots of unnamed hybrids within the garden which the garden team, alongside the RHS, are in the process of naming. The current garden team includes an identification expert who is going round the garden identifying and labelling them.

Smooth barked rhododendrons of which there are many within the Loderi gardens cannot be pruned. This has resulted in high flowering trees and shrubs. The large rhododendrons leave no light below and suck up all the moisture creating an area below where nothing grows. The garden team are looking to cut specific plants back but keeping the height of those which creates the character.

As elsewhere in the gardens, the current gravel path surface, when used on a slope, creates a maintenance headache for the garden team. After a prolonged or heavy period of rainfall the gravel is washed down the sloped paths resulting in piles at the bottom and bare earth at the top. This requires hours of the teams time to rectify on a regular basis.

Signage and interpretation
There is a low wooden sign showing the name of the area as well as information boards detailing the varieties of rhododendron within the Loderi garden.

Champion plaques are attached to on champion trees, 80 of these across the gardens as a whole. There is a plan to create a champion tree trail in the garden for visitors.

Additional Features
A number of now redundant taps are hidden around the garden, within box hedges, including in the Loderi gardens. These were used by the gardeners during the Loder era to water the gardens during the hot summers.

The garden is at its best from March through to late May.

Condition
The garden contains spectacular rhododendrons, not all of which are easy to see due to the size to which they have grown and work continues to open up parts of the foliage canopy to permit them to be better seen. The ground cover is largely missing, due to lack of light.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.14.3: View down one of the paths in the Loderi Garden

6.16 Top Walk

General Description
This an extension and the top edge of the Loderi Garden, with Middle walk to the east.

Paths
The path leading through this area is bare earth from the Loder era of the garden.

Planting
The rhododendrons continue along with Cornus trees (flowering dogwood).

An Ancient climbing Kiwi vine has wound itself up an English oak tree. Formerly the arboricultural team used to climb up to harvest the fruit to be used in the restaurant, however the team no longer have this capability, so the fruit is unused.

There are a couple of Champion trees, including Rhodendron arboretum subsp. Cinnamomeum which is an impressively large rhododendron, native to the Himalayas.

Proposed new planting
Presently this area still needs opening up to regain views (see below), after which new planting can be considered.

Vistas
The team are trying to keep the view across to the lake over the dell open by management of the planting. This view is shown as number 3. on Plate 21.

Management
The planting is being managed to allow for the views to the lake to be kept and enhanced.

The paths, like elsewhere need to be addressed across the whole estate.

The redundant watering taps in the area could be reviewed, alongside the strategy for watering the garden during period of little rainfall.



Plate 6.16.1: Character area reference map

Signage and interpretation
Timber signs are placed throughout the area to highlight interesting and champion species.

Features
The watering taps from the Loder era are still located in this area, these are now redundant but used to assist in the watering of this area.

Condition
The area is in a fair condition. The views need some maintenance generally as do the paths.

Significance
Highly Significant

6.17 Upper Dell

General Description
The Upper Dell is the western extension of the Dell below, located adjacent to the Memorial Table. This area was once known as the American Garden, and contains the oldest plants

Paths
The paths in this part of the garden are generally narrow grass/ earth from the Loder era, which have been recently opened up again. Due to the presence of springs nearby these are sometimes slippery.

Planting
There are a number of County Champion trees in this area of the gardens including Larix decidua which is the huge European larch standing right next to the path from the woodland plantation that was established on the estate before the gardens were created.

There are a number of ancient rhododendrons, many of which are over 160 years old, and the Cornish Arboreum, *Rh, arboreum,* dating from before 1810 and probably the oldest in the garden. Rhododendron 'Smithii Group' has an impressive curving trunks of the veteran red flowered tree rhododendron. The Cedrus deodara at the top of the Dell is a species of cedar native to the Himalayas and is one of the oldest trees in the garden. A Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, discovered in China in 1947 and brought to Leonardslee in 1948 is located within the Upper Dell.

Primula also like this area of the garden growing alongside magnificent Wisteria, Magnolia and Rhododendrons.

Proposed new planting
Under development

Vistas
There are limited views across the valley from up here.



Plate 6.17.1: Character area reference map


Plate 6.17.2: Wisteria growing within the Upper Dell

Management
There is a dead end to this route and the plan is to create a connecting path upwards to the memorial table so visitors are not stuck at a dead end and have to turn back. Gullies have been created alongside the paths to allow rain to run off as this area can become quite boggy when it rains.

Signage and interpretation
There are a number of timber information signs within his area of the garden, providing information about interesting specimen including the champion trees and kiwi. As in other parts of the garden a small timber sign shows the start of this new area.

Features
The key features in this area are the champion trees with wisteria adding seasonal interest.

Condition
The condition of this area is generally fair. Some work is required on the drainage and opening up routes in and out to better guide visitors.

Significance
Highly Significant

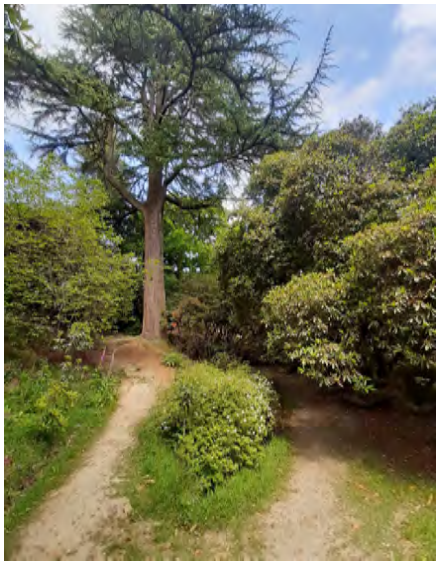


Plate 6.17.3: Series of grass paths runs through the small area.

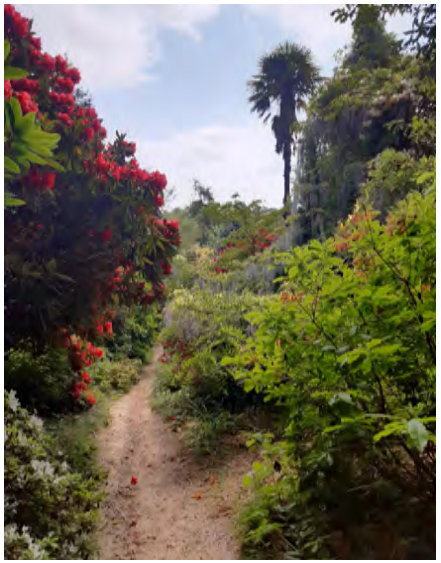


Plate 6.17.4: View along the grass path

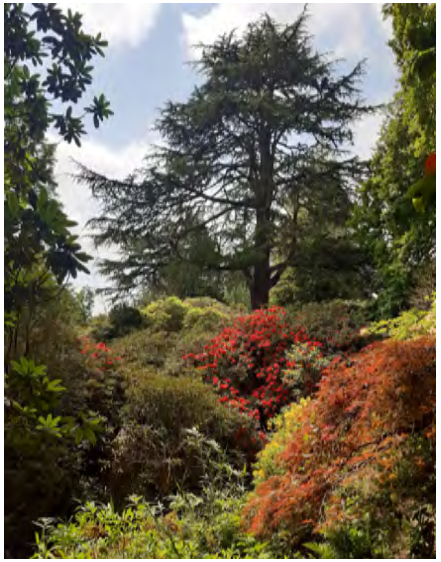


Plate 6.17.5: Limited view across the valley

6.18 Memorial Table

General Description
Located just above the Dell, at the top of the garden, it is home to an old Sussex mill stone inscribed with 'In memory of Sir Edmund Loder who made and loved these gardens 1889 – 1920' . Great vantage spot to look down access the lakes and gardens.

Paths
Mostly grass paths in this area of the garden.

Planting
The rhododendrons here are smaller/ lower and newer with Miss Satomi (Japanese dogwood), part of the new national collection in the garden.

The Champion trees in this area include the Magnolia Campbellii, a huge tree over 100 years old which was one of the first ever trees of this species to flower in England. A very tall Fraser Magnolia with smooth knobbles on its trunk can also be found here: this is a summer flowering tree. A number of Metasequoia glyptostroboides known as the Dawn Redwood, a Chinese endemic tree, were planted in the gardens in 1950. In addition to further rhododendrons, magnolias and azaleas, there is a plantation of *Gunnera manicata*.

Proposed new planting
Still in development.

Vistas
From this point you get one of the most spectacular views across the gardens and down to the lake. This is shown as view 4. on Plate 21.

Management
The view down to the lake need to be maintained by the garden team, ensuring the plants do not become too large.



Plate 6.18.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.18.2: Mill Stone inscribed in memory of Sir Edmund Loder.

Signage and interpretation
A small timber sign indicates the area. Some signage could be introduced by the mill stone to give a bit of information about the significance of it. The inscription is hard to read, maybe this could be presented alongside it.

Features
The Sussex millstone in the memory of Sir Edmund Loder and the view are the key features of this area of the garden.

Condition
Generally good.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.18.3: View from the memorial mill stone looking east. As shown on Plate 21 as view 4.



Plate 6.18.4: Rhododendron in bloom at the entrance.

6.19 North Walk

General Description
Leads from the memorial table to clapper pond along the north west edge of the estate.

Paths
The paths here have been replaced with a plastic interlocking grid filled with gravel. However the gravel is too small for the size of the grid and as a result runs downhill. Larger gravel is needed to stop this happening. This type of path is something that needs review as currently there is a huge amount of maintenance needed every time it rains.

Planting
The north walk has a number of Cornus trees which are June-flowering and add summer interest to this area of the gardens. At the bottom of north walk Pinus radiata 'Aurea'. This rare cultivar of the Monterey Pine has golden yellow foliage to the ends of the branches that appear to glow on even a dull day. This is one of the Champion trees.

Proposed new planting
Still under development

Management
The paths need a lot of management and consideration should be given to a new cohesive scheme of path coverings across the estate.

Signage and interpretation
Timber sign denoting the area.

Condition
Generally in a fair condition.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.19.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.19.2: Pathway along North Walk with interlocking grids filled with gravel.



Plate 6.19.3: Small timber sign locating the character area.

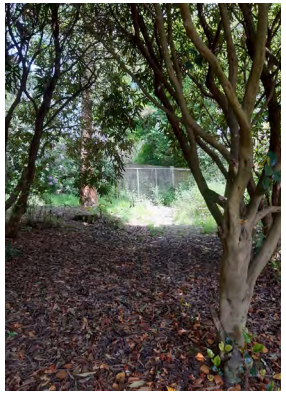


Plate 6.19.4: One of the smaller earth paths within the North Walk.

6.20 The Dell

General Description
The Dell is located to the north west corner of the garden and one of the oldest areas. It was originally called the American Garden in 19th century when they were fashionable. Charles Beauclerk was the owner at that time and he planted the area with newly imported trees like exotic redwoods, ferns and palms.
The Dell is one of the few parts of the garden that Sir Edmund Loder had an active hand in, adding plenty of rhododendrons, magnolias and other specimens.

Paths
The paths are mostly Breedon gravel, however in most cases the gravel has substantially washed away leaving the sandstone rockbed to come through the path.

Planting
To the lower edge of the Dell is a large area of Gunnera which dies back in the winter.

This area is home to two of the oldest rhododendrons. One of these being the 35ft Cornish Red Rhododendron which was planted in the 1800s and is the oldest rhododendron in the garden. These are both very big and slightly obscure the view from the Memorial Table.

Some of the other plants here include, the Metasequoia glyptostrobodies which was discovered in China in 1947, and still remains in the garden at over 30m tall. Giant Magnolia Campbellii, one of the oldest in the country. There are also some interesting Oak trees including a Cork Oak.

Champion trees include the Deodar cedar, Dawn Redwood Metasequoia Rhododendron arboretum sutchuense cross.

Adding summer colour is a large area of Foxgloves to the southern end of the area.

Proposed new planting
There is a plan to create a path from the upper dell down to the Dell through where the Gunnera currently is at the bottom. This will involve opening up areas of the dell with the removal of some selective planting.



Plate 6.20.1: Character area reference plan



Plate 6.20.2: View within the Dell.

Vistas
The recently restored views looking down to the lakes across the valley are outstanding. These have been restored by hard pruning the Azaleas.

Management
Bracken in this part of the garden is a management issue and needs to be addressed. It is being sprayed in the deer park to try and reduce it and a similar planned approach needs to be implemented here.

There are areas of Japanese knot weed in a few places but this is not spreading or growing and is currently under control with a management plan in place. The large patch of foxgloves currently mask this.

The oldest rhododendrons in the garden pose a management issue of whether the plants or the views take priority. These need to be taken on a case by case basis.

Signage and interpretation
Minimal signage in this area.

Features
The oldest Rhododendrons in the garden are a key feature of this area along with the restored views.

Condition
Generally good, though some over-large trees are impeding clear sightlines to historic vistas.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate: 6.20.3: View looking east down the valley towards Leucothoe pond.



Plate 6.20.4: View from the edge of Leucothoe Pond looking west up the valley. Showing the location of a possible new path linking back to the North Walk.

6.21 Clapper (west side)

General Description
To the west side of Clapper pond the area sits between the pond and The Dell and North Walk.

At the northern end of the gardens on the western banks of Clapper Pond there are views looking across clapper pond as well as long views down towards Leucothoe pond and on to engine Pond on the distance. From this side of the pond there was historically a bridge which spanned the narrow end of the pond over to the east side walk.

Paths
The path down from the dell has plastic gravel grids, exposed where the gravel has run off in the rain. These become slippery when the weather is icy or wet, causing a hazard to visitors.

Planting
Within the area the camelias, azaleas and luteums have been hard pruned to give views back and get flowers back down to a low level. This is a result of the gardens being unmanaged for a decade prior to the Streeter ownership.

There a are number of Champion trees here including Acer palmatum 'Kagiri Nishiki' a variety of Japanese maple an old cultivar with pink flushed white edges to its tiny leaves. The Acre palmatum 'Albomarginatum' this cultivar of acer palmatum has variegated leaves with white edges and the Acer oliverianum is native the Taiwan and has very small leaves.

Other planting along the west side walk includes Skunk Cabbages, Lysichiton camtschatcensis and L. americanus, Swamp cypress, taxodium distichum, Leucothoe fontanensia and Enkianthus perulatus.

Proposed new planting
The current camelias, azaleas and luteums are currently being pruned. The scope for new planting will be reviewed once this work is complete.



Plate 6.21.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.21.2: View from the edge of Clapper Pond looking towards the Dell.

Vistas
The luteums have been pruned down to restore the views of the ponds. These are long views from the end of clapper pond looking south down the lakes.

Management
Work will continue to regain lost or impaired vistas. Path surfaces to be considered with other similar locations throughout the gardens.

Condition
Fair to Good.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.21.3: Path leading down towards Clapper Pond.



Plate 6.21.4: View from the west side path looking over Clapper Pond.

6.22 Clapper pond

General Description
Clapper pond is the northern most lake in the gardens and is fed by the land above. The first ponds were excavated for iron ore industry in 16th century, extended and added to over the years. Clapper pond to the north, constructed in late 19th century to become part of the American garden. There is a small island on this pond which is accessible by a set of stepping stones but in Charles Beauclerks time in the 1800s there was an ornate wooden bridge which straddled clapper pond.

Paths
A Breedon gravel path takes you round the pond at the north end giving access from one side to the other.

Planting
Gunnera are growing to the east bank of the pond.

Proposals and new planting
There was once a wooden bridge that went over the pond (see photo) the ends are still in place and it is hoped that this will be reinstated.

Vistas
There is a view from the path crossing the lake down the length of the lakes to the south. This is shown as view 5. on Plate 21.

Management
This is the only pond that was dredged when the Streeter's took over the running of Leonardslee. They would like to dredge all the ponds but there is currently nowhere for all the silt and gravel to be pumped.

A gulley has been installed as the area is prone to flooding and the bank to the north of the path has previously washed away. The grass bank is there to stop the flooding.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber signs located on the banks show the name of the pond.



Plate 6.22.1: Character area reference plan.



Plate 6.22.2: View from the northern end of Clapper Pond looking south. As shown as view 5. on Plate 21.

Features
There are understood to be carp are in the pond as well as a variety of water fowl , geese, herons, ducks and coots. In the centre of the pond is an island accessed by stone stepping stones.

Condition
Fair to good; the new landscaping needs time to settle.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.22.3: 1940s view from the north end of Clapper pond, looking south, showing the 'Rustic Bridge'.

6.23 Clapper (East side)

General Description
To the east side of Clapper pond the area sits between the pond and the Coronation Garden.

At the northern end of the gardens up the hill from clapper pond on the east side. View looking back westwards across Leucothoe pond and across you experience the newly improved views to the banks of the tree lined Rhododendrons beyond. In spring this is one if the best views in the garden.

Paths
The paths are Type 1 MOT aggregate with no Breedon gravel over the top. A new gulley has been created alongside the path to try and reduce the flooding when it rains.

Planting
Monoliths or standing deadwood have been left with the intention to plant climbing hydrangea / roses and honeysuckle which will climb these features.

Proposed new planting
The bank is currently being cleared bit by bit and planted with heathers and hydrangeas for summer interest and in keeping with the woodland character of the area.

New climbing plants are being added to the standing monolith tree trunks.

Vistas
The garden team are busy recreating the views down to the ponds but there is some still to clear where it has become very overgrown. The westwards view across the Leucothoe pond is one of the most important in the gardens. This is shown as number 6. on Plate 21.



Plate 6.23.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.23.2: Gravel path leading down towards Clapper Pond.

Management
The areas of bracken and open space are being managed. They are starting to clear the areas and finding seating below the overgrown planting. There is still lots of clearance to be done in this area to the rhododendron ponticum, it is being dug out/ burnt and the stumps painted.

Signage and interpretation
Limited in this area to small timber location indicators only.

Features
The bee hives located in this part of the gardens are managed by the chefs, not the garden team.

Condition
The area is still very overgrown from the decade when the gardens were shut. The garden team have a management plan in place for this area and are starting to implement it.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.23.3: Upper clay path leading down towards Clapper Pond.



Plate 6.23.4: View looking down from the top of the east side path towards Clapper Pond. As shown on Plate 21. as number 6.

6.24 Leucothoe Pond inc. Middle Pond

General Description
To the south of Clapper pond is Leucothoe Pond and Middle Pond, these were constructed between 1874 and 1909 and are often referred to as the top ponds. The ponds contain large grass carp and rudd. The grass was historically cut but once a year, to allow the wildflowers to prosper. A dam divides the Middle Pond from the Engine House Pond. The habitat is particularly suitable for dragonflies, of which many are to be seen in season.

Paths
The paths around the lake are generally grass with some Breedon gravel sections. The west side of these ponds are more regularly walked and managed.

Planting
To the east side of Leucothoe pond there is dense Ponticum and deadwood trees as a result of the decade the gardens were closed. The previous owner did more management on the west side and left the east. At low level around the edges of the ponds lots of spring bulbs have been planted and wood anemones. Lots of champion species can be found on the west side walk of these ponds.

Around the edges of the lakes are planted Ponticum hedges to create a barrier: these are from when the Loder family owned the gardens. They are kept cut back and not allowed to flower to manage the risk of infection.

On the corner of the Leuconthoe pond is the swamp cypress tree (Taxodium distichum) is a must see for its unusual cypress knees which grow around its base.

Proposals and new planting
The east side of the lakes is where a lot of attention is being focused to bring it under control. This will include opening up the areas and planting new small specimens in the new gaps created. A plan for this area has been created.

The lakes generally need a lot more planting around them and the garden team are trying to get autumn colour to either side of the lake as well as planting hydrangea to bring summer interest. This will include trees for big impact and colour and to try to fill gaps where things have been removed.



Plate 6.24.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.24.2: View from the east bank of Leucothoe Pond looking north.

The introduction of marginals and aquatic planting is needed within the lakes.

Vistas
There are fine views along and across the pond to the slopes above; better to the west where more recent cutting back has taken place. This can be seen on Plate 21. as view 7.

Management
The heavily overgrown areas on the east side is currently gated off to visitors to allow the garden team to work at restoring it. Tree surgeons will be needed to be brought in assist in this huge task.

The Ponticum hedge to the edge of the lakes needs to be managed to ensure it does not flower and is kept to a sensible size.

The build up of silt in the lakes needs to be reviewed, these ponds have not been dredged since the Streeter family took ownership.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber location indicators only.

Additional Features
The hedge is one of the few within the gardens.

Condition
This area is generally in a fair condition, however a lot needs to be done to the lakes and the east side.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.24.3: View of Middle Pond from the east bank.



Plate 6.24.4: View from the west side looking towards the bridge separating Leucothoe and Middle Ponds.

6.25 Mossy Ghyll pond

General Description
The smallest body of water in the garden is Mossy Ghyll, and one of the best views is as you stand on the mossy ghyll causeway and look across to the lakes to the western valley banks beyond. This is a feeder pond and is fed by a tributary from the top garden and then this feeds the middle pond.

Paths
The paths that run around the east and west banks of the lake are a mix of Breedon gravel and earth paths. The paths to the east banks are less visited by the public than those to the west.

Planting
There are Luteum growing in this area, which during the decade of closure became overgrown. Orchids are growing by the pond and white daffodils have recently been planted on the bank above the middle pond. Champion trees in the area include Pinus armandii which stands off the Mossy ghyll in a thicket of Rhododendrons but is still easily viewable from the path.

Proposed new planting
The peninsular between mossy ghyll pond and middle pond has been cleared and new beech trees have been planted. There is still more to clear in this area and new planting.

Works are continuing to bring autumn colour to either side of the lake – trees for big impact and colour and to fill gaps where things have been removed.

Vistas
There are good views across this part of the gardens from the path below the Mossy Ghyll pond, and from the causeway on top of the dam between the Middle and Leucothoe ponds.



Plate 6.25.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.25.2: Mossy Ghyll Pond looking from the bridge.

Management
A basic gully has been put in along the edge of the path to stop flooding during heavy rain. In previous summers this pond tended to run dry but changes to water management have meant this no longer happens.

Pruning of the luteum plants is ongoing to reveal the pond.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber location indicators only.

Features
Wooden benches are located around the area.

Condition
Good, as a result of recent and continuing works.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.25.3: Mossy Ghyll Pond looking north east.

6.26 Coronation Garden

General Description
Next to the top garden, the Coronation Garden was planted in 1952 by Giles Loder to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It is a full collection of smaller younger Loderi hybrids rhododendrons that Sir Giles' grandfather bred back in the early 1900s.

Paths
The paths are mainly earth and a number have tree roots crossing them. This is highlighted to visitors on signs at reception regarding trip hazards.

Planting
The Luteums had been left to become overgrown during the decade before the Streeter family took ownership, these have been hard pruned and new specimens added last summer, 2022, including new Magnolias in the Magnolia glade.

The hard pruning of the Luteums has exposed the 250 year old Monkey puzzle, eucalyptus trees and a Hungarian oak, *quercus frainetto*, *Macedonian oak, Q. trojana*, that was one of Robin Loder's favourites. There are also a number of Acers alongside the collection of Loderi hybrids, Cryptomeria japonica, *Pinus armandii*, P pinaster, Oriental spruce, *picea orientalis* and Purple maple, *acer palmatum*.

New style deer protection cages have been installed to protect the new plants.

Proposed new planting
The ground cover in this area needs to rejuvenate itself now the larger trees have been pruned and more light is penetrating to the ground.

The plan moving forward is to cut back the azaleas hard to clear the views down towards the Leucothoe Pond.

Vistas
There is a management plan in place to start to cut back the overgrown planting to recreate the views out towards the ponds. This can be seen as view number 8. on Plate 21.



Plate 6.26.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.25.2: Magnolia within the magnoila glade

Management
The chippings which have been laid on the beds are from the felled trees.
There is a bin in this area, one of only a few around the gardens, these fall on the gardens team to empty.

Signage and interpretation
There is a timber sign giving information about the history of the Coronation Garden and a few key hybrids.

Features
There are a number of low benches around the garden for visitors to sit and enjoy the tranquility.

Condition
The garden generally in a good condition, a lot of work has been carried out here recently to prune the overgrown planting and to reintroduce new planting and views.

The paths on this side of the lake are generally less visited and so are suited to being grass/ earth.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.25.3: Area of pruned luteum and newly planted specimen trees.



Plate 6.25.4: View within the Coronation Garden.

6.27 Top Garden

General Description
The Top Garden has a native woodland feel to it and is one of the most important areas of the garden accessed through the double gates which is the most recently open part of the garden at Leonardslee to be re-opened following the new ownership of the Streeter Family. Following much clearance work and making safe of old falling trees, a lovely hidden valley garden was revealed in 2021, with a stream running through it that eventually leads to Mossy Ghyll to the south. In spring a carpet of naturalised bluebells can be enjoyed in this peaceful, wildlife filled part of the garden that rewards exploration. Continue to the top up the far slope leads to the new Hillside Garden which will open in 2023 and to the gate to the deer park and pinetum. The original pinetum, is located within the Top Garden.

Paths
The paths are predominantly grass and clay running through the top garden. Some of the clay paths that run up the hill have been eroded.

Some new gravel paths have been laid that lead back down the hill into the more formal gardens.

Planting
The planting in this part of the garden reflects the native woodland character with lots of bracken, heather, foxgloves and some hybrid rhododendrons. There are also blankets of bluebells in the spring.

Proposed new planting
New specimen planting will go into the top garden once the ponticum has been removed.

Vistas
There is a view of the Red House from the top of the Top Garden. This can still be seen but needs some management to make it clearer. This is shown as view number 9. on Plate 21.



Plate 6.27.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.27.2: View within the Top Garden

Management
There are still some deer in the Top Garden. New one way gates have been installed at the boundary with the Deer Park to try and move them out of the garden.

The plan is to get on top of the ponticum and then do some specimen planting, where the gaps have been opened up.

Less than 5% of visitors come over to this side of the estate, and with the opening of new areas of the garden on this side, there is an opportunity to direct visitors to these.

Signage and interpretation
More interpretation signs would be beneficial on this side of the lake giving information on these gardens and incentives for visitors to venture further into the park.

A sign at entrance to the Top Garden would assist in making visitors aware of where they are and a bit of information on its history.

Features
There are a series of streams which lead back down into the more formal gardens. The small pond feeds down to Mossy Ghyll.

Condition
This garden is in a good condition, but there is still more to do to manage the ponticum and introduce more specimen trees for added interest.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.27.3: Gravel path leading though the Top Garden looking down towards the ponds.



Plate 6.27.4: Character of the Top Garden.

6.28 New Pinetum

General Description
A new pinetum was planted in its current location by Robin Loder in early 2000's exactly 100 years after his grandfather planted the original pinetum. This is a collection of rare and unusual specimen conifers and cultivars from around the world. The new pinetum is located within the Deer Park and contains most of the conifers in this part of the gardens.

Paths
The paths in the pinetum are grass tracks.

Planting
The pinetum has lots of interesting conifers, some rare from around the world. Towards the south is an amazing collection of interesting conifers such as Pinus Montezuma, Pinus pseudostrobus and Abies nebrodensis.

Around the base of these is lots of bracken, a bracken clearing programme of work is in place to remove it. The younger trees are protected from the deer by tree protection fencing made of split chestnut.

Proposed new planting
There is a possibility here to create a new trail through the new pinetum. There are other opportunities to introduce new specimen trees when the bracken has been cleared.

This area up in a remote part of the deer park would have great opportunities for use for star gazing evenings or wild camping events.

Management
The garden team are currently in the process of going through the new pinetum, naming, labelling and categorising the trees.
The garden team have also recently started to create paths through the ponticum and opening up the space.



Plate 6.28.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.28.2: View across the New Pinetum.

Signage and interpretation
This area is not marked on the existing visitor map and not well signposted within the deer park. Those visitors who venture into the deer park come across it almost by accident. Better information on the significance of this and the old pinetum should be available to visitors.

Features
The nuttery which was previously located at the top of this area has now been removed. The plan is to relocate this to the new orchard area along the western edge of the garden. but

Condition
This area is in a fair condition, more work needs to be done on bracken and ponticum removal.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.28.3: View across the New Pinetum within the Deer Park.



Plate 6.28.4: General character of the New Pinetum.

6.29 Old Pinetum

General Description
The Old Pinetum, planted 1901-05, can be found just inside the Top Garden main gate to the left. This was the original spot for a Pinetum at Leonardslee planted by Sir Edmund Loder, but sadly lost in the great storm, of 1987.

The Old Pinetum is in the process of being uncovered and restored during which time there have been discoveries of some small conifer trees that perhaps missed the storm or are self seeded plants from the originals, there is also thinking that this might be a nursery area for the actual pinetum that Sir Robin Loder toyed with.

The garden team are also finding some interesting Rhododendrons, not many of which are labelled, and these are being identify as they grow and flower. The opportunity is there to keep developing this area and eventually create a series of entrance and exit paths that will provide extra areas of exploration for visitors.

Paths
There was originally a path from here down to clapper pond and this is to be opened up again.

Planting
This area is mostly conifers with some interesting newly discovered rhododendrons, which need formal identification. There is a large amount of bracken which needs to be managed.

Proposed new planting
Some more conifers will be introduced into this area, as the restoration work continues.

Management
The bracken is starting to take hold here and needs to be managed as part of the restoration works.



Plate 6.29.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.29.2: The area around the Old Pinetum. New signage is being installed here.

Signage and interpretation
Currently the old pinetum is not marked on any visitor maps or have any information available about its history. The entrance to the old pinetum is not signposted so visitors who do venture to this area have no way of telling what it is. This signage is currently in the process of being produced but more information should be available to visitors.

Condition
The old pinetum is in the process of being restored.

Significance
Highly significant

6.30 Hillside Garden

General Description
This new garden is located on the hill to the east side of Engine Pond connecting back into oak and maple walk and top garden. This is the last bit of the garden which isn't currently open to the public and is being worked on by volunteers to open soon. The character of this area is mainly woodland with some rhododendrons and more open areas including a glade and tree lined avenue.

Paths
New pathways are being created and existing overgrown grass paths are being cleared.

Planting
As the garden is being uncovered and restored there are specimen trees being exposed, these include sorbus, Loderi rhododendrons and maple as well as 4 champion trees.

There is a lot of ponticum, bracken and luteum which needs to be managed and cleared to allow the garden to open.

Proposed new planting
New specimen trees will be planted to further enhance the ones already here.

Vistas
A tree lined avenue is being restored to give visitors a view up the hill.

Management
The team need to expose and label the champion trees and Loderi rhododendrons. The ponticum, luteum and bracken need to be cleared to allow for the garden features and plants to be exposed. This is currently underway with clearing and stump removal and hard pruning the ponticum.

All the redundant fencing, which once separated this area from visitors, will be removed so it becomes part of the gardens.



Plate 6.30.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.30.2: View looking up the tree lined avenue, currently under restoration.

Signage and interpretation
The area is called the hillside garden, however it is less formal than others in the garden, this should be reflected in the information to visitors. This will mean visitors expectations are managed before they venture to the other side of the lake.

Features
There is a very atmospheric open woodland glade in the centre of the garden which joins up with the top garden.

A tree lined avenue with Loderi rhododendrons leading up the hill has been discovered and will be restored to give visitors a new vista.

Condition
This garden is a work in progress, with volunteers currently clearing the area to make way for new planting.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.30.3: View of the Hillside Garden during restoration works.

6.31 Eastside Walk

General Description
This area is located along the eastern side of the ponds between the banks of Engine and Waterfall ponds and the Oak and Maple walk.

Paths
The paths around this area are generally loose gravel and have the same issue with maintenance as elsewhere in the gardens.

Planting
There are a number of Champion trees along this side of the ponds which include Oxydendrum arboretum with deep craggy bark and eye catching sprays of white bell shaped flowers in late summer and its excellent autumn colour. Also here is the Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Compacta' , a large round conifer which was once a small compact shrub but has gained great proportions with age.

There is also an abundance of luteum and rhododendrons, ponticum and Scots pine. To the edge of the ponds are Typha latifolia.

Proposed new planting
Along the western edge of the walk is proposed to be some new marginals to add interest. Some new small specimen trees could be added within the walk once areas of ponticum have been thinned and the area opened up slightly.

Vistas
There are views from this side of the lake across the engine and waterfall pond to the west side. This is shown as view 15. on Plate 21.

Management
The edge sandstone of the engine pond has been undercut by the water and will need to be reviewed and consolidated as part of a larger plan for the lakes generally.
There is currently quite a bit of Duckweed in the pond which is mainly being removed.
The main eastside walk would benefit from the thinning and removal of the ponticum and the pruning of the luteum which has begun. This would allow for it to be opened up for replanting of small specimen trees.



Plate 6.31.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.31.2: View along the path leading to the deer park

Signage and interpretation
There is minimal signage here, and any new signage should be kept to a minimum, however here may be an opportunity to engage visitors on this side with the lakes and their significance as part of the landscape and history of Leonardslee.

Condition
This area is in a fair condition generally. This area is still being managed from the reopening of the garden with work needed to the ponticum. The lakes to the west edge also need review as part of a wider lakes management policy.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.31.3: Path adjacent to waterfall pond



Plate 6.31.4: Area of hard pruned Lutium on the east bank



Plate 6.31.5: View towards the engine house from the east bank. Shown as view 15. on Plate 21.

6.32 Engine Pond

General Description
Moving to the south is Engine Pond, constructed between 1852 when William Hubbard was the new owner and 1874 it was originally used to pump water to the mansion and upper gardens via the pump in the engine house. The engine house is now a seasonal garden café.

Planting
The banks around the lakes are fantastic in late winter and spring to enjoy a huge range of stunning bulb displays. As well as bluebells there are carpets of snowdrops early in the season on snowdrop rise as well as daffodils both classic wild yellow types and new plantings of white 'Thalia' collections. Recently planted are 5000 blue Camassia bulbs near the Engine House at the end of this spring 2023.

Later in Autumn this area enjoys pockets of colour such as maples on Acer Walk on the east side of the lakes or the pure white stems of the trees in Birch Grove at the bottom of waterfall pond.

Many deciduous azaleas were planted around the lake in 1992, now well grown and cut back; the lake is fringed with Scots pines pinus sylvestris, and there are wellingtonia too.

Wildflowers on the grassy banks include common cow-wheat, common and lesser skullcaps, bog pimpernel, ivy-leaved bellflower, violet helleborine and wood horsetail. There are also a lot of more familiar wildflowers, from the many purple flowered Common Spotted Orchids and bluebells in the spring to many hundreds of purple Devils- bit Scabiuos in late summer alongside Betony and yellow spikes of Goldenrod.

Proposed new planting
New planting is proposed along the banks of the lakes to provide summer and winter seasonal interest. New aquatic planting is being considered but this should be tied into the review of the health of the lakes.



Plate 6.32.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.32.2: View from the bridge to the northwest end looking down Engine Pond towards Waterfall Pond. As shown as view 10. on Plate 21.

Vistas
There are views in both directions along the string of lakes. Looking north towards Leucothoe and Clapper Ponds and south towards waterfall pond. The view looking northwest is shown as view 10. on Plate 21.

Management
Engine Pond has a similar management plan as waterfall lake with only the character of the area differing.

The lakes have sluices which can be altered to make sure they don't burst their banks and to keep them filled in hot summers where they tend to run dry.

Features
The lakes themselves are very important as habitiat for dragonflies and damselflies, species include the endangered Brilliant Emerald, the tiny Willlow Emerld Damselfly, and Scarce Chasers, can be seen flying low over the water.

On the lakes you may also see electric blue Kingfishers flying past as well as coots, moorhens and several pairs of Canada geese that nest on the islands and both grey herons and cormorants can sometimes be seen hunting for fish.

Condition
The condition is fair but in need of an overall management plan for the lakes.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.32.3: View from the east bank looking across the bridge dividing Engine Pond from Middle Pond.



Plate 6.32.4: View looking from the bridge between Waterfall and Engine Pond down Engine Pond to the northwest.



Plate 6.32.5: View from the west side looking across Engine Pond from the bridge by the Engine House.

6.33 Westside Walk and Waterfall Pond

General Description
This is the southern most pond before it heads up to the deep park and New Pond. Named for the cascading waterfall to the corner of this pond, it was enlarged to its current size in late 20th century to encompass Beaver pond which housed beavers between 1899 and 1947.

It was extensively remodelled and replanted in 1992-93, when large areas of wild Rh. ponticum were removed, and over a hundred different species of oak and a similar number of maples (planted 1999) have been laid out. The path layout was modified at the time of re-planting. Planting in 1950s included 'Strawberry Ice' *deciduous azaleas*, and there are also wild species here: Bog myrtle, *myrica gale*, Bog pimpernel, *anagallis tenella*, Ivy leafed bellflower, *wahlenbergia hederacea*. Also, a sweet gum tree, *liquidambar styraciflua*.

Paths
The path which runs between the waterfall and new pond floods in heavy rain and the lakes burst their banks.

Planting
There is currently limited planting of interest around the lake. Some summer wildflowers are growing on the banks alongside the bracken and ponticum hedge. Mature trees sit on the bank to the south east end of the lake. There is no planting in the lake and this is something which could be encouraged to provide some interest.

Proposed new planting
New planting is proposed along the banks of the lakes to provide summer and winter seasonal interest. New aquatic planting is being considered but this should be tied into the review of the health of the lakes.

Vistas
The view from the crossing between waterfall pond and new pond looks north west back across the lakes. This is shown as number 14. on Plate 21.



Plate 6.33.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.33.2: Pathway running along the edge of Waterfall Pond

Management
The Sussex Wildlife Trust has approached Leonardslee to find out if they want to reintroduce beavers again. This is a management decision as left free in the gardens, beavers would destroy a huge amount of the trees and plants.

The flooding to the path between waterfall and new pond is being managed. Dredging the ponds is something that would be beneficial to the ponds and desired by the garden team but this will need logistical input to be able to happen with space needed for the silt pumped out.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber location indicators only can be found around the edge of the lakes.

Features
There is a pleasant sound of water from the sluice gate taking water from the bottom of Waterfall Pond into the start of New Pond making it the perfect spot to sit and enjoy the sights on one of the many garden benches.

Condition
The pond would benefit from dredging and more planting is needed both within the pond and to the banks. The condition generally is good.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.33.5: Gravel path along the edge of Waterfall Pond



Plate 6.33.3: View form the bridge to the south east looking back along Waterfall Pond towards Engine Pond.



Plate 6.33.4: View from the Engine House looking south.

6.34 Bluebell Bank

General Description
This area on the west side of Waterfall pond has an enchanting carpet of blue and purple which stretches across the glades grassy slopes during early spring. This is a sign of a healthy woodland environment and this display is a highlight of the season at Leonardslee.

Paths
The gravel path through this area has a metal edging strip, however, due to the grass on one side and the gravel of the path on the other both being worn away the metal edging is now sticking up from the surface. Visitors in this area have created a secondary/ widening of the existing path by wearing away the grass to the side and this has caused the trip hazard.

Planting
This area generally consists of large mature trees with grass bank below and bluebells in spring.

Alongside the bluebells there are a number of Champion trees include Piunus patula known as Mexican weeping pine native to highlands of Mexico. Pinus pseudostrobus, known as a smooth barked pine, grows right next to the engine house and has long needles and slender shoots with blue blooms. Maple and sorbus trees are evident, as well as North American *tupelo nyssa sylvatica* and sorrel *oxydendrum arboretum*.

To add height and interest there is a standing deadwood/ monolith which has climbing plants growing up it.

Proposed new planting
None currently proposed.

Vistas
The grassland combined with more widely spaced trees allows views over the pond, with a good view down to the waterfall.



Plate 6.34.1: Character area reference map



Plate 6.34.2 Upper path through Bluebell Bank.

Management
The issue with the path in this area having been widened by visitors eroding the grass next to it, the garden team would like to relay this path and lay a more substantial edging to keep visitors from eroding the grass.

To the upper bank there are foxgloves which currently hide some Japanese knotweed. The Japanese knotweed is being treated and managed by the garden team and the foxgloves currently allow cover for this.

The deer fences which were previously installed around the garden are in the process of being removed, now that the deer are securely enclosed in the deer park.

There is an area of Rhododendron ponticum to the back which is being managed by the garden team.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber location indicators only in this area.

Condition
The path running through this area need some maintenance to bring it back up to a good condition. The rest of the area is in a good condition generally with good management in place.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.34.3: Standing monolith for climbing plants to grown up.



Plate 6.34.4: Eastern corner of Bluebell Bank sloping down towards Waterfall pond. Camellia Grove to the south.

6.35 Oak and Maple walk

General Description
Maple Walk is at the east side of the garden with the Oak Walk further up the slope and Waterfall pond below. The large collection of Acer trees on this slope were planted by Robin Loder in 1999 and include many different species of unusual acers from around the world as well as a selection of interesting cultivars. This area is best in the autumn with the leaves a kaleidoscope of reds, oranges, yellows and pinks. But just as interesting in spring when the new foliage emerges. A small clump of Liquidambar trees and Cornice bushes close to the path here add an eye popping burst of vibrant colours in autumn and complement the acers.

Oak Walk runs parallel to Maple Walk, higher up the slope and is planted with different oak species, hybrids and cultivars, many of which are rarely seen in cultivation in the UK and some barely resemble oak we are used to in Britain. Edmund Loder called it Quercus ' walk for all the very different species of oak.

These were planted at the turn of the century at the same time as the acers. There are also flowering Cornus trees laden with large white and pink flowers in June and impressive mature English Oaks alongside tall specimens of Monkey Puzzle trees.

To the rear of this area behind the fence line is the deer park.

Paths
There are some informal paths in the area and the plan is to create more of these coming up from Aspen pond. The paths are mostly the original scrub with log lined edges, improvements are needed here and an overhaul of the existing paths.

Planting
The lower banks are planted with acers of various colours and a huge variety of oaks are up on the higher banks, including some evergreen. Alongside these are a number of rhododendrons, cornus trees and bamboo.

The area of bamboo planted here currently acts as a screen for the scrub bank below and this will eventually be planted with a better species of bamboo.



Plate 6.35.1: Character area reference map.


Plate 6.35.2: View through the Maple Walk.

The ponticum on the lower banks will be removed to give views down to the ponds and new cornus trees have been put in where pockets have been created. There are lots of small luteum which have been recently been pruned below the oaks on the lower areas. At ground level there are bluebells in the spring.

Proposed new planting
Going forward the goal is to be a high performance garden, and any tree that is not at its best will be reviewed for removal.

New cornus trees will be planted in new pockets created from the removal of the ponticum.

Vistas
There is still the view from oak walk straight across to the back of Leonardslee house, this is now somewhat obscured but could be reinstated as a key view. As shown on Plate 21. as number 16.

The luteum will be pruned back to knee height to reinstate the views back to the lakes.

Management
There is the remains of a concrete plinth which once held one of the large artist's statues. The artist is due to remove this collection over the next year and what happens to the remaining large concrete plinths needs to be managed.

The garden team are currently carrying out a schedule of hard pruning the luteums in this area with a lot more still to be undertaken. The height they will be pruned to is dependent on the character of the area they are in.

The ponticum and bracken are in the process of being removed from this area.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber location indicators are set on the edge of the pathway.



Plate 6.35.3: Earth path leading up to Oak Walk.



Plate 6.35.4: Selection of Maples.



Plate 6.35.5: Area to the east side of Waterfall Pond where ponticum have been removed and luteum hard pruned.

Features
There is a large fallen tree to the upper part of the area which will be made into a bespoke bench and a new path up to it. This is an opportunity to create interest in the garden and places to stop from the trees which need to be felled.

Condition
This area is in a fair condition, a lot of work needs to take place to bring it back to where it was historically.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.35.6: View through the Oaks back towards Leonardslee House. Shown as view 16. on Plate 21.

6.36 Deer Park

General Description
This part of the estate is directly to the south of the mansion house and covers 70 acres including the oldest and largest pond. Running through the valley is New Pond which was created from two smaller ponds to reach its current 4 acres size, making it the largest pond here.

Having been a deer park since the 19th century, it has been planted up with many specimen trees including a large collection of conifers. The park is home to both fallow and sika deer as well as some of the free roaming wallabies. A main path circles the lake but there are smaller paths which run up the hill on the east side and which lead through to the top garden. Most of the conifers are part of the pinetum a collection of different conifer species and cultivars from around the world some which are rare and unusual.

The deer park is a quiet place where there is a range of wildlife, including birds such as Yellowhammers, Siskins, Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Marsh Tits, Nutcatchers, Spotted Flycatchers, birds of prey such as buzzards, Red Kites and Ravens.

This area was closed by the Loder family towards the end of their ownership and it was neglected.

Paths
Most of the paths through the deer park are either gravel or grass/clay. The smaller secondary paths are all grass. As elsewhere in the gardens there are similar problems with gravel from the oaths being washed down when it rains.

On the south side of the park the paths have been re-laid leading back to the house in clay/mud with new drainage channels along the edge to channel the water. The paths leading up to top garden are predominantly grass.

Planting
The character of the area is native woodland, with predominantly ponticum and bracken, and a number of champion trees.



Plate 6.36.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.36.2: Earth path running through the Deer park .

The garden team are currently carrying out in-house rolling of the bracken and a phased programme of ponticum removal.

Sussex wildlife have recently undertaken wild flower surveys in the deer park and found lots of wild flowers, which add to the biodiversity of the area.

Vistas

There is a view down to the lake from the bird hide. There should also be a key view to the house from up in the deer park, this should be reopened. There should be removal of the ponticum and some of the birch trees to create view pockets down towards the lakes. Shown as view 17. on Plate 21.

Management

There have been issues reported with dogs being let off the lead in the deer park and over the past few years a few of the wallabies in the Deer Park have been killed.

There are still a lot of fallen and dead trees in the Deer Park which the garden team are in the process of clearing or where suitable leaving to increase biodiversity.

There is currently a volunteer assessing the lake, New Pond, for fishing capabilities in a view to look at the option of opening this up.

A new deer fence and gate has been installed to the west boundary into the garden to allow one way entry for the few remaining deer left in the garden back into the deer park. There is a new solar powered deer feeder on the park side.

Perimeter checks of the Deer Park are carried out regularly to ensure fences and gates are secured. Some areas of the park have additional fencing where areas were previously fenced off from the public, these will be removed.



Plate 6.36.3: Path from the gate in the Event Field looking down towards New Pond.



Plate 6.36.4: The eastern estate boundary at the far end of New Pond.



Plate 6.36.5: View down New Pond looking west.



Plate 6.36.6: Open area of the Deer Park.



Plate 6.36.7: Path leading through the top of the Deer Park.



Plate 6.36.8: Gate from the Deer Park at the northern edge leading into the Top Garden.

Signage and interpretation
Some of the signs around the edge of New Pond are very large and their locations do not correspond with the information on the boards. It is understood that this is because they were too large to be placed in the correct locations so have been moved to a more appropriate setting for their size. This is unfortunate and is something that needs to be addressed.

There are a number of small wooden signs within the deer park denoting the different character areas.

Features
A bird hide has been built overlooking new pond, which attracts visitors to this side of the gardens.

New pond is home to numerous Mallards, Cormorants, Herons and Mandarin ducks. There is an empty small flat open area in the SW corner of the deer park next to new pond and the boundary fence. This is sometimes used for children's events/ trials or small catering outlets, but could provide an opportunity for something more long term here to bring visitors over to this area.

Small wooden benches are located around the Deer Park.

Condition
The deer park is generally in a good condition, however no substantial works have been undertaken here since the park reopened. There has been some clearing of dead trees, ponticum and bracken but as this area is not a highly visited area it is a low priority.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.36.9: View from the path over New Pond on the east side.

6.37 Camellia Grove

General Description
This was planted by Sir Giles Loder between 1957 and 1958. Sir Giles had a true passion for camellias and he planted several hundred varieties, mostly Japonica. He won multiple awards at RHS shows for his exhibits from Leonardslee. He also had 3 camellia houses at Leonardslee during his time, one of which once occupied the site of the current entrance building.

Paths
This area is a myriad of steps and zig zag paths twisting through the shrubs as you discover the collection.

The low path in the grove is soil and stone and this is what the paths originally were in the garden. Although the garden only used to open for a few months in the spring/ summer so didn't get as much wear as they do now. The gardeners would prefer the sloped and main paths to be Tar and Chip with all the other secondary paths earth.

The steps within the area are timber sleepers and require some maintenance but these have not had to be replaced yet.

The top path through the grove has a gravel covering and is the route for the visitor buggy, as with the other sloped gravel paths around the gardens during the heavy rain the gravel and soil washes down the bank.

Planting
There are several hundred varieties of camellias in the grove, most of these are japonica types and come in a full range of colours including fine specimen of Camellia williamsii which is dark pink with yellow centres, Haku-rakuten which is soft pink and Nina Avery which is white with subtle pink highlights and Prima Vera which is pure white. There are a number of young oaks which give some shade to the camellias.

The Champion trees here include Cupressus macrocarpa 'Donard Gold' standing at the gate to the deer park, at the foot of the Camellia Grove is the yellow foliaged cultivar of Monterey Cypress. There is also Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Spek' known as Lawsons cypress which has bold blue grey foliage.



Plate 6.37.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.37.2: Entrance to the Camellia Grove. Signage showing ongoing restoration works to the area.

Proposed new planting
There is currently no new planting proposed in this area.

Vistas
There are no long views within this area. The views are within the grove itself.

Management
The ponticum is currently being removed here and a phased process of restoration pruning of the camellias has begun. Following the pruning the camellias tend to flower again in the next year or two. This has lowered the level of the flowers back down from where they had grown to after years of no maintenance.

Like in other parts of the garden some plants were not pruned for over 10 years during the time the garden was closed. Work will continue on this over the years.

The unlabelled camellias, like other plants in the gardens are slowly being labelled as they are identified, the garden team have an identification expert within it and are working towards the identification of all the plants in the garden.

Signage and interpretation
Small timber location indicators are set on the edge of the pathway. At the beginning of this character area is an information board with information about the current management of the Camellia Grove and the pruning taking place.

Features
The camellias are the main attraction in this area and the restoration pruning is bringing them back to how they used to be.

Condition
This area is in a fair condition, however a lot of work needs to be done on getting the planting back to its best and the paths will also need attention in the future.

Significance
Highly Significant



Plate 6.37.3: Lower earth path through the grove.



Plate 6.37.4: Entrance to Camellia Grove looking back towards Bluebell Bank and Waterfall pond beyond.

6.38 Event Field

General Description
Located to the south of the vineyard and wallaby enclosure, it forms the southern part of the Deer Park and borders onto the land still owned by the Loder family. The original Estate kitchen garden wall borders the south side. The character of this area is open parkland with the woodland of the Deer Park to the north east boundary.

A new garden compound is being built along the southern edge which will bring together all the garden team and their facilities under one enclosure. This will include poly tunnels, storage, nursery beds and welfare accommodation.

Paths
There is a main vehicle path from the main drive through the event field down into the main gardens, this is steep with a gravel surface. Like elsewhere in the gardens there are problems here with the gravel being washed down the slope. These need to be reviewed as part of the overall path management strategy.

Planting
The field is dotted with mature trees.

Management
The field is used for events and careful management needs to be planned following these to ensure the parkland maintains this character.

The new gardeners' compound is located to the south side. This and the paths leading to it need to be managed to ensure no new paths are created to cross the parkland.

The mature trees within the landscape need to be carefully managed to ensure they remain healthy.

Features
A new attenuation pond has been put in next to the new compound. This has pipes running below the ground down towards the garden as mitigation in case the pond overflows.



Plate 6.38.1: Character Area reference map.



Plate 6.38.2: View from the western edge looking towards Camellia Grove and the Deer Park. The boundary of the Vineyard is to the left.

Condition
This area is in a good condition but currently undergoing works to build the new gardeners' compound, following the work the parkland should be reinstated as it was.

Significance
Significant



Plate 6.38.3: View from the corner of the Wallaby enclosure looking towards the new gardeners compound.



Plate 6.38.4: View looking west across the field.



Plate 6.38.5: View from the southern boundary looking north towards Leonardslee House.

6.39 Vineyard

General Description
The vineyard was planted in 2018 as the UK's first Pinotage vineyard. The vines were chosen as a link to the Streeter family in South Africa. The first bottles will be produced in 2024.

The vines are enclosed by a chicken wire and timber post fence, with grass between the lines of vines and a large grassed area beyond.

Paths
There is a path that runs along the top edge of the vineyard, dividing it off from the lawn.

Planting
The vines have been planted on the east facing slope and are doing well, there was a bumper yield last year (2022) due to the hot weather over the summer.

Proposed new planting
None

Vistas
Open views across the vineyard to the South Downs, as well as towards Hogstolt Hill and the trees in the deer park.

Management
The cutting of the grass between the rows of vines is managed by the gardens team but the rest of the vineyards is managed separately by the team who run Mannings Heath.

The reed beds to the north of this area need to be regularly maintained to ensure they work correctly and don't smell.

Signage and interpretation
There is currently no information boards offering information about the vineyard. This could be considered especially once the first bottles are produced.



Plate 6.39.1: Character area reference map.



Plate 6.39.2: View from the House lawns over the Vinyard looking down hill towards Camellia Grove in the distance.

Features
There is extensive fencing around the perimeter of the vineyard as well as a double gate in from the deer park.

Condition
The condition of the area is good, this is largely the responsibility of the Manning Heath team.

Significance
Neutral



Plate 6.39.3: View of the vines from the path between the wallaby enclosure



Plate 6.39.4: The historic Ha-Ha separating the vineyard and the house lawns.

6.40 Visitor Facilities

This area comprises Leonardslee House, the Entrance Greenhouse, Stables , Museum Block and Stables Residences. These and the immediate surrounding landscape are covered under the Main Conservation Management Plan Document.



Plate 6.40.1: Visitor facilities looking towards the stables



7.0 Bibliography

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Appendix

Appendix 1 - Leonardslee House Conservation Management Plan