

Landscape Narrative Statement – Wykehurst Place

Wykehurst Place, constructed between 1872 and 1874, sits within a landscape characteristic of a substantial historic country residence. The proposals support the return of the property to use as a family home by creating a coherent and usable garden that responds sensitively to the historic character and setting of the house.

The design is informed by the open lawns, gravel paths, and informal garden spaces surrounding the house. A lawned garden is proposed between the main house and the pool area, with a larger play lawn beyond. This retains the open character of the grounds while providing structure for day-to-day family use and carefully maintaining visual continuity to views across the wider landscape.

The pool has been centrally aligned to create a clear axis with the house. Rather than resisting this relationship, the design embraces it, forming a strong organising element that sits comfortably with the architecture and reinforces the overall composition of the setting. For practical reasons, the pool is located away from the house to accommodate some plant and services within the pool building. The west garden provides the most appropriate location, preserving principal views and historic outlooks to the south.

Materials are chosen to complement the existing character. Natural stone paving is used in key areas, while gravel paths continue the established circulation. In several locations, these routes pick up alignments suggested by pathways shown on historic mapping of the site, helping to reinforce a sense of continuity within the landscape. Gates and fencing are introduced only where necessary to create safe, enclosed family spaces, preventing unmonitored access to the wider grounds. These are positioned discreetly, largely out of principal sightlines, and softened or concealed within planting and hedging. Their design is intentionally minimal and understated so that they sit subtly within the landscape.

Planting provides layering, seasonal interest, and enclosure, helping to nestle the pool and pool house. Formal hedging is used selectively for structure, while softer planting assists with screening. The proposals work with the existing ground levels, thereby minimising landscape intervention, with a single new set of steps linking two existing levels and reflecting existing style and materiality.

Overall, the proposals respect and reinforce the historic character of Wykehurst Place while reimagining the landscape to support modern family living. By working with the existing structure, materials, and topography, new elements are introduced in a restrained and considered manner, ensuring the gardens function effectively for contemporary family life without compromising the historic setting.