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The Gardens of Rothamsted Manor - Management Plan

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Part B Assessment

Rothamsted Research

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PART B ASSESSMENT

B1 Site Values

The value and significance of the site as a whole is in part derived from the combination and interaction of many particular and specific values. Values may be categorised as, for example: cultural; personal and subjective; 'absolute' or 'objective'; emotional or associative. This section identifies values of the site under different categories, in no particular order of priority. The following section (B2 - Key Values) attempts to synthesise these and to draw out general qualities and values of the site.

This analysis of value derives from discussions with interested parties, careful consideration over a long period, and experience of garden and landscape evaluation. It is nevertheless a personal list, and has not been tested by wider consultation and discussion. This process would be a vital part of the preparation of a formal Management Plan.

Landscape Character and Scenic Value

- The gardens, house and woodland form a strong, simple and integrated composition.
- The gardens, Manor Wood, yard and outbuildings play an essential role as the setting for the house.
- The garden layout has evolved gradually over several centuries, and continues to exhibit many of the historic design intentions.
- The 'Dirce' avenue in the Manor Wood is a unique and impressive piece of garden design, centred on a notable sculpture.
- The statuary, garden ornaments and other features (gates, ha-ha wall, summerhouse, etc) are integrated in the overall design and make a major contribution to the experience of the gardens.
- The formal gardens are well maintained and enhance the setting of the house.
- The Manor Wood and gardens contain a good number of mature and impressive trees.
- The surviving historic landscape features including the tree-lined avenues and field boundaries give some residual structure and variety to the surrounding 'scientific' landscape.
- Inappropriate post-war tree-planting (eg. Lawson's Cypresses) has in places compromised the garden design. This is especially true along the Dirce avenue and where ill-assorted trees form the backdrop to the northern end of the parterre axis.
- The shrubbery, pond, and much of the Manor Wood are only little maintained. The value of these areas as designed landscape or garden is therefore greatly reduced, but could be restored.
- The value of the Manor Wood as an integral part of the gardens is being lost. Its historic character as ornamental woodland is being 'managed out' by an emphasis on management as 'natural' woodland, and as a result of a period of reduced maintenance. The existing path network is minimally maintained, and the Wood has become disconnected from the formal gardens.
- The experimental fields have directly or indirectly had a major influence on the development of British (and international) landscapes. Modern 'conventional' farming owes much to Lawes and Gilbert and their work, and it would be possible to make a case that 'scientific agriculture' in the form that now dominates much of the world began with the Rothamsted classical experiments. Rothamsted should be seen not only as a source of science, but also as a site that has contributed to the history of the landscape in as profound a way as the development of the metal plough, the Acts of Enclosure or the 18th Century Agricultural Revolution. Of all the fields, Broadbalk [Fig.43] embodies this history and significance most powerfully, and has an extraordinary but visually understated character as a scientific landscape.

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Amenity Value

- The Manor Gardens are an attractive and valued resource for visitors, residents and institute staff.
- Their use is limited by their distance from the research campus where most of the staff are located.
- There are occasional openings and events when the gardens can be enjoyed and appreciated in their own right, but these are limited in frequency and scope.
- It is rare for the gardens to be visited without other business at the house.
- There are very few opportunities for public access to enjoy the gardens.

Scientific value

- The surrounding experimental fields have great scientific value. This is not only because experiments are carried out there today, but also because of the continuity of the work, and the detailed records and samples that have been kept over 150 years. The fields must be some of the most carefully analysed land in the world.
- The classical Garden Clover experiment continues on the rose lawn.

Historic and Archaeological Value

- The gardens and landscape of Rothamsted are not, according to the current criteria, of sufficient historic or artistic significance to qualify for inclusion on the national English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens. They are however of considerable historic interest and significance at a local level, and this value is considerably enhanced by their association with Sir John Bennet Lawes and the Rothamsted experiments.
- The overall garden layout retains in essence several features from the 17th Century 'Commonwealth' garden and earlier, with significant overlays from each of the following three centuries.
- The existence of the 1623 estate map and particulars, and the details of the gardens and estate recorded in Sir John Wittewronge's unique 'Diary of Weather' add greatly to the historic interest and value of the site.
- The historic value of the site as a whole is bound up with the history of the Grade I listed Manor House, a locally significant and largely intact Jacobean house with Victorian additions, of interest for its design, interiors, contents, and by association with its historic inhabitants. The house and gardens have evolved in parallel throughout their history.
- The association of the gardens with Sir John Bennet Lawes is perhaps of the greatest historic significance. It was in the house and walled gardens that his experiments began and (probably) the world's first artificial fertiliser was developed. The 'Classical' red clover experimental bed is still maintained on the rose lawn today. However, little evidence has come to light that Sir John was particularly interested in the gardens in their own right, and it may well have been Lady Caroline who took the lead in the changes of the 1860's.
- The layout as it exists today is little altered from the Edwardian garden of Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge. This degree of continuity is of historic interest in itself.
- There is a wide variety of surviving historic fabric and features, including garden walls dating in parts from the 17th Century or earlier, the ruined icehouse, the summerhouse, the statuary and other garden stonework, the wrought iron gates, the ornamental ha-ha wall, and the mature trees.
- The 'Soil Archive' held in the barns to the east of the walled garden is of unique scientific and historic significance nationally and internationally.
- The Roman Temple to the north of the Manor site is of considerable historic value in itself, and also reinforces and deepens the historic and cultural significance of the estate as a whole.

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Ecological, Wildlife and Horticultural Value

- The Manor Wood and the pond are of value as wildlife habitats in the context of the surrounding fields. In particular, it is the age and maturity of the wood that gives it wildlife value.
- The formal and walled gardens are of little ecological or wildlife value in themselves, but may contribute in a small way to local biodiversity by offering habitats and resources that would not otherwise exist (eg. lawns, herbaceous border, walls).
- The surrounding experimental fields are generally highly controlled environments, but there are certain plots where specialised ecological communities are established.
- The rhododendron and daffodil populations in the Manor Wood are reputed to include unique varieties bred on site from 1946-1974.

Associative Value

- The gardens offer a sense of stability and continuity for many associated with the institute.
- For many staff of long-service and former residents of the Manor House, the gardens are part of their memories and affections.

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B2 Key Values

The key values of the site that should be recognized, upheld and taken forward into the future:

a) Continuity

- ***Of ownership*** - The Manor House and Gardens stayed in one family from 1623-1934. Since then they have been owned by a Trust set up by a member of the family to run the rest of the estate. There has therefore been considerable continuity of ownership over a long period, and the House remains attached to its historic estate, which has been almost unchanged in extent for 400 years or more.
- ***Of development*** - To arrive at their current form, the Manor Gardens have been changed and developed over centuries. Their basic structure has remained little altered over this time. Although there have been periods when major alterations were carried out, these have fitted into a gradual evolution of existing features (eg walled garden, Manor Wood, forecourt, Dirce Avenue), rather than any dramatic 'overnight' transformations. This sense of continuity and gradual development is of considerable value, and contributes subtly but powerfully to the experience of the place.
- ***Of management*** - There have been few radical changes in the day-to-day management of the gardens. Even when the site passed from private hands into those of the Trust, the care of the gardens seems to have continued under a comparable regime. Having a long-term full-time head gardener on site has helped to keep a sense of continuity in the management. However the site is managed in the future, this experience will be of great value.
- ***Maturity*** - As a result of the above the gardens and woodland exhibit a maturity - of trees, features, design, and atmosphere for example - that is essential to their character. This should be cherished, but renewal (of planting, features etc) will also be needed to ensure this maturity is retained into the future.

b) Strong Connection with the Manor House

- ***Visual connection*** - The House and Gardens have developed in parallel throughout their history, and each relies on the other to form an integrated visual whole. The role of the gardens as a setting for the House is of fundamental importance.
- ***Practical connection*** - The gardens play an important role in providing for uses and activities that extend and complement the uses of the House.
- ***Historical connection*** - The story of the gardens is inextricably tied up with that of the House, and of the people who occupied it. In particular, the gardens played a key role in the lives of Rothamsted's most significant residents: Sir John Wittewronge, and Sir John Bennet Lawes, whose earliest experiments were carried out in the walled garden.

c) Relationship with the research institute

- ***Historic role*** - Sir John Bennet Lawes' first experiments were carried out on plants grown in pots and in the kitchen garden, although they were soon extended to the Home Farm. Thus the history of the Rothamsted Research Station (and arguably also modern 'conventional' farming and scientific agriculture) began within the precinct of the Manor House and Gardens.
- ***Clover bed*** - This classical experiment continues on the main garden lawn. The Gardens are therefore still tied into the practical work of the Institute, if only in this small and vestigial way.
- ***Soil archive*** - The historic archive of experimental samples remains on the Manor site.
- ***Contemporary role*** - The Manor House and gardens retain an important role within the Institute, for accommodation, conferences and events, and as a general amenity.

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d) Strong and simple design

The gardens' design is simple and comprehensible, with a series of well-defined but connected spaces of differing character. There are few jarring features; generally the design is harmonious. This straightforward but satisfying design is the result of centuries of considered and evolutionary development and is of great value. It is important that the basic design structure is understood and respected, and that ad-hoc or radical alterations are treated with caution.

e) Survival of historic features, fabric and layout

The surviving historic features and fabric have a value in their own right, and contribute to the overall value of the gardens. Their conservation wherever possible should be a priority.

f) The Gardens illustrate the human relationship with plants in complementary ways to those pursued in the Research Institute

Within an estate devoted to the study of particular characteristics and dimensions of plant life the gardens have a unique ability to illustrate and celebrate many other aspects of our relationship with the Plant Kingdom. These include: delight in plants for their beauty, their flowers, scent, form and growth; the changes over history, such as the change from sustenance combined with beauty (eg. 17th Century orchard and kitchen garden) to the modern split between aesthetics (eg bedding) and pragmatics (eg clover bed); plant introductions from around the world; and the experience of gardening itself. In contemporary culture, increasing importance is placed on 'holistic' thinking and approaches as opposed to greater specialisation. In this context, the Manor gardens and designed landscape may provide a key resource for the institute in the future, both in terms of engaging and presenting its work to the public, and possibly even adding a dimension to the scope of the research.

g) A high quality environment and amenity for the site

Within the Rothamsted Estate the Manor gardens are a unique and high quality environment for staff and visitors alike. They are an important resource that provides opportunities and amenity not otherwise available. To have an environment of this quality on a site enhances the value of the whole.

h) Ability to engage wider interest in Rothamsted's history, scientific work and significance

The Manor House and gardens have great potential to spark interest and enthusiasm in Rothamsted as a whole. They could therefore play key roles both in attracting visitors (if considered desirable), and in interpretation of the site. Their appeal was already recognized in the Gardeners Chronicle in 1875:

"*... among a hundred that would appreciate the charm of this fine mansion and its surroundings, there would probably be not more than one who could appreciate at anything like their value the extensive series of experimental researches which have made Rothamsted famous.*"

In addition, they are well placed for access to the most celebrated classical experiment fields, Broadbalk and Park Grass.

i) Ecological importance within the Rothamsted estate

See Section B1 above.

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B3 Threats & Vulnerabilities

- The County Plan contains an intention to construct a Harpenden Bypass. If this were acted on, it would be likely to cross the Rothamsted estate. It is unlikely that it would cross the Manor gardens, but it would certainly damage the surrounding landscape and could even jeopardise the future of the field experiments.
- The majority of Rothamsted Research's funding comes from Government sources. The institute must compete with other sites and other priorities. There is no absolute guarantee that support will be maintained at current levels or at all. Without government support, the Lawes Agricultural Trust would struggle to ensure continuity of ownership and land management. The significance of the threat to the Manor gardens in these circumstances would be minor, however, compared with the threat to the 'Classical' field experiments. If continuity of management was lost there, a uniquely valuable scientific, historical and cultural resource of international importance could very quickly become an unremarkable set of fields.
- There are considerable commercial pressures for development land in the Harpenden area, especially for housing.
- The high cost of staffing and accommodation in this part of Hertfordshire makes Rothamsted a comparatively expensive place to carry out research, most of which could be done elsewhere in the country. Given the pressures on Government funding, this may lead to reductions in investment and commitment to the site.
- GMO trials at Rothamsted have resulted in some anti-GM protests. If these were to intensify, it could seriously damage both the fabric and the reputation of the site. This might make increased public access to the Manor House, gardens and experimental fields more difficult to justify.
- It is possible that further items may be stolen from the gardens.
- The current level of funding and its continued downward trend will gradually erode the value of the site and its features.
- The current status of the Manor gardens without specifically devoted resources, management, staff or policies will tend to militate against a clear sense of purpose in their management. The gardens have no specific individual or body in place to champion them, or to develop a strategy for their future. The gardens' particular needs will therefore not easily be recognised within an institution whose core interests lie elsewhere.

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B4 Opportunities

The following are opportunities for the site associated with changes to the management of the gardens. It is assumed that these opportunities should reflect a commitment to the potential of the gardens *as gardens* rather than, for example, the opportunity to save money by reducing the gardens' maintenance budget, or turning the walled garden into a car park. It is also assumed that it is intended to keep the Manor House as an integral part of the institute rather than, for example, leasing it as a luxury hotel.

- To enhance and 'add value' to the Manor House in terms of its setting, its potential to generate income, and its potential future uses.
- The gardens, in combination with the Manor House, add greatly to Rothamsted's potential to engage public interest and to encourage public access.
- To create a unique and valuable educational resource.
- To present the history of the site and the institute with immediacy and interest. This could be done through a combination of adjacent locations including the house, the walled garden, the soil store, and the classical fields.
- Within an estate devoted to the specialised scientific study of particular characteristics of plants, the Manor Gardens present a special opportunity to illustrate and celebrate wider aspects of our relationship with the Plant Kingdom.
- To restore an important piece of local history and landscape.
- To improve local biodiversity and increase wildlife value.
- To enhance an environment and create a high quality place, of value to the institute, its visitors, and the wider public.
- This is a time when considerable funds are being made available for capital projects associated with the 'heritage' through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Funding associated with conservation and restoration of a 'heritage asset' is particularly directed to projects which offer enhanced public access and educational opportunities. In this context the classical experimental fields and farm would be as eligible for consideration as 'heritage' as the Manor House and Gardens. If the HLF's agenda is accepted by the Trust and institute, Rothamsted should be very well placed to make a successful bid for funding.
- This is a time when there is great public interest in gardens and in environmental matters generally. There could therefore be considerable support for a garden project at Rothamsted.
- To tap the abilities, enthusiasm and efforts of staff and local people through a volunteer programme and 'Friends' group.

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B5 'No-change' scenario

These are likely results of continuing with current management.

- 'No change' will by definition not arrest the slow but continual decline of the gardens and landscape.
- It is in the nature of gardens and landscapes to change and develop. Active management and intervention is therefore required to achieve the stated objective to 'maintain the status quo'. In the short term this may be grass-cutting or weeding, but longer term programmes of (for example) planting renewal, tree replacement, and fabric repair are equally important. Existing funds and priorities allow insufficient scope for this long term maintenance and renewal, and this contributes to a gradual decline.
- Erosion of fabric - if adequate funds are not secured for the capital and repair budgets, many of the key features of the gardens will continue to decay and may be lost. Examples include kitchen garden walls (leaning dangerously at north-western corner), the ornamental terracotta ha-ha walls (one section has already been lost), the summerhouse, the entrance gates and screen, and some of the garden ornaments. The cost of replacement is usually higher than regular maintenance. If items are lost it is therefore tempting not to replace them, and the general decline continues.
- Any attempts at renewal (eg. of trees/shrubs) require an understanding of the wider context and of overall objectives for the landscape if they are not to be disconnected and ad-hoc. A certain amount of time and funding is required to allow those responsible to develop and maintain this understanding. At present levels of funding there is little scope to pursue this kind of strategic thinking, and it is therefore hard for decisions to fit into an overall coherent pattern.
- Without a concerted effort to develop and implement a coherent and well-considered strategy (and high-level support for this process), it is inevitable that general management understanding of the needs of the gardens will decline.
- There is a danger that the gardens will increasingly be considered as a 'white elephant' by the institute. The case needs to be more powerfully made for their intrinsic value, its importance to the site and the institute, and its considerable unlocked potential.
- The Manor House is increasingly being required to pay its way and compete for business. The gardens play a key role in the strength of the 'product' and are a real asset in this respect. However, this value will tend to decline if current trends continue, at a time when the 'product' will need to be improved.
- There is a general cultural tendency towards increasing public access to heritage and to institutions like Rothamsted. The gardens would be eminently suitable for increased access but will not be able to meet the challenge without changes in management.
- Current woodland management policies are intended to return much of the previously semi-ornamental Manor Wood to 'native' woodland habitat. This, in addition to a long-term lack of funds to look after paths and woodland planting, has changed the character of the wood to the point where it hardly feels like part of the garden. This process will continue if active steps are not taken.
- A lack of active tree-care (eg. formative pruning and thinning) will continue to reduce the overall quality of tree stock on the site. Many of the trees planted in the last 20 years are now twisted, forked, overcrowded, etiolated and drawn, leaning, smothered by undergrowth, or stunted - in ways that would not have been considered acceptable in the past. In the precinct of a fine garden and house this will not produce tree-stock of a standard to be enjoyed in the future as today's mature trees may be now.
- Over many years, in the interest of the field experiments, hedgerow and parkland trees have generally not been replaced when lost. This policy, while scientifically understandable, has greatly reduced the landscape character (and bio-diversity) of the estate. A continuation of the policy will denude the landscape further.

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B6 Key Issues

It is a central part of the management planning process to identify the key issues and questions faced by the site, and to identify ways to address them. Ideally this requires the involvement of all 'stakeholders' and a period of discussion and review. For the purposes of the present exercise an extended process involving Rothamsted staff time was not feasible. Instead, a series of visits and one-to-one discussions were undertaken over a period, and it is hoped that this was sufficient to bring out most of the major issues.

a) Strategic policies

- Should the management objective remain to retain the status quo? What does this mean in an ever-changing environment?
- If some form of change is inevitable, what would be desirable changes?
- How should change be managed?
- Is there any benefit to be gained from an increased commitment to the gardens?
- Should the aim be to restore and enhance the gardens?
- Should the aim be to reduce maintenance and expenditure?
- Are there particular features, areas or functions of the garden that should receive more attention than others?

b) Future of the Manor House

- The future of the gardens is inextricably linked to the future of the Manor House. The gardens have a vital role as the setting for the House, and provide a valuable resource and amenity. However, the potential that the House and Gardens have to complement and mutually benefit each other has not yet been realised. Key questions about the future of the Manor House include:
- Will its function change?
- Will it be required to generate more revenue?
- What role can the gardens play in the future of the House?
- Will increased public access be required?

c) Value to the Institute

- Neither the Lawes Agricultural Trust nor Rothamsted Research were set up to run a historic site. Their core interest is agricultural research. The Manor House plays an important role in the life of the Institute, but when this is set against the cost of its upkeep its value is difficult to justify in purely financial terms. Even if it can pay its day-to-day expenses from its own revenue generation, its long-term maintenance seems set to remain a drain on the Institute's resources. Seen from this perspective, the gardens seem even more of an extravagance than the House. Despite this, it is clear that the gardens have a value to the Institute beyond financial and practical considerations (see B2 - Key Values above). They also have a value that extends beyond the Institute, and a value in themselves, simply for what they are.
- Is the full value of the gardens being realised?
- How should the value be maintained?
- Could it be enhanced?

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d) Funding / Revenue

- The gardens must compete for priority within a site-wide budget that covers all grounds maintenance and horticultural work. This budget is itself in competition with funding for the core activities of the Institute, in a period when research funding is not available in abundance. There has been a long period of gradually dwindling resources for the gardens, and there is still downward pressure. There is no 'ring-fenced' budget, and there is therefore always an increased risk of resources being nibbled away, however sympathetic the budget-holders may be. Despite this, a good standard of horticulture is still maintained in the areas of the gardens around the House, but cutbacks cannot continue indefinitely without posing major threats. As with the House, long-term maintenance will require extra resources if the value of the gardens is to be maintained or enhanced.
- What is the appropriate level of funding and priority for the Institute to devote to the gardens?
- If the level of funding is appropriate at present, will it remain so for the next 20 years?
- Can funding be sought from elsewhere?
- What is the potential of the gardens to raise revenue in their own right, or combined with the House?
- What is the potential to 'add value' to the other activities on the estate?

e) Management Structure

- The management of the gardens is principally the responsibility of Horticultural and Controlled Environment Services (HCES). Their work is overseen by the Trust and Research Institute, and is carried out in liaison with other interested parties, such as the Manor House management and the Woodland Advisory Group. The Head Gardener and the Head of HCES take an active interest in the gardens and, within their remit, have maintained them well. They are not in a position however to do the work that would be required to develop a new long-term strategy for the gardens. This is partly due to restrictions on time and resources, but it is also because the process would require the active commitment of all parties at all levels at Rothamsted. It is not something that can be done in isolation; it requires an integrated approach, with all facets considered, all possibilities aired and all voices heard.
- Are existing management arrangements meeting current needs?
- How able is the structure to draw on all interests and views, and to tap into the wider energies and enthusiasms of the Rothamsted staff?
- Is the existing structure able to develop and sustain a plan and a strategic overview for the gardens, and is it able to take a long view (eg 20 years)?
- Might there be benefit in a more widely-based group, temporary or permanent, devoting attention specifically to the gardens (and/or the whole Manor site) and their future?

f) Public Access

- This has already become an issue for the House, due to the requirements for access attached to public grants for repair and restoration. The House is likely to need more grants, and the access requirements are likely to be extended. If a decision was taken to seek grant funding for work to the gardens, similar rules would apply.
- Is more public access desirable? Would it hinder the work of the institute? Would it cost money?
- Would it be desirable to adopt a policy of increased openness and to present the history, work and significance of Rothamsted to the wider public? Would they be interested? Is the educational emphasis currently favoured within government and funding bodies compatible with the remit of the Trust?
- The extension of public access to the Manor site or elsewhere on the estate could involve substantial expenditure. This would include capital expenditure on new facilities and car-parking, and revenue costs such as additional staff. If this were to be pursued, what would be the return?
- What would be an appropriate level of access to aim for?

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g) Connection to the Institute

- The Manor House and gardens are physically distant from the main research campus. They are accessible, but it would not be easy to regularly stroll across in a lunch break. In addition to this physical separation, there are few reasons for non-resident staff to visit. There are occasional functions and conferences, but many staff may never have visited, or may feel that the Manor is 'not for them'. For most purposes, the House and gardens are peripheral and cut off from the life of the institute.
- Would there be benefits in encouraging greater connections between the Manor and the rest of the institute?
- How might this be achieved?

h) Management Policies

- Good garden management depends to a great extent on having the necessary skills and resources in place, but it also depends on developing clear policies and principles. Some of these will be arrived at fairly straightforwardly by developing a thorough understanding of concrete issues such as the demands of the site, design intentions, and horticultural good practice. Others will prove more elusive and complex to resolve and may reveal apparently deep philosophical differences of opinion. In such cases there may seem to be several equally valid approaches to a problem It may sometimes be possible to successfully steer a middle course or to find a compromise, but at other times a 'fudge' will not suffice, and it is important to take a clear line. This may satisfy all points of view, or it may please only some. Sometimes no-one will be entirely happy. Even if it proves impossible to reconcile all interests, experience shows that the attempt brings benefits.
- When management policies have been set, they must still be subject to change and review. Garden management is a dynamic process, often referred to as 'managing change'. Thus, if an ideal and universally accepted set of policies could be adopted today, they would still need to be monitored and adapted for tomorrow.
- During the preparation of this document certain issues emerged that appeared to demand attention at a policy level. This is inevitable for any large garden. Some of these issues emerged simply through observation of the site, while others became apparent through observation of differing views between interested parties. The following are examples that will need to be considered when developing new management policies:
- Manor Wood - Should it be part of the gardens or not? What is the appropriate level of management? Should the priority be to manage it as 'natural' woodland or as part of a garden, or can these objectives be balanced to their mutual benefit?
- Bedding - Are labour-intensive bedding displays a waste of time and money? Or is their appearance and appreciation justification enough? Are they essential to the character of the gardens? If so, where are they best to be deployed?
- Grass cutting - What is the appropriate frequency of cuts for different areas? Is time and money being needlessly expended in certain areas?
- Ecology and wildlife - Is gardening incompatible with a respect for nature? Do human interventions always have negative effects on ecology, or can they help to enhance and maintain habitats and diversity?

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i) Landscape Policies

- It is understandable that, for over a century, land management policies on the site have primarily served the needs of the experiments. This has served the interests of the experiments well, but it has had major deleterious effects on the designed landscape surrounding the Manor.
- The most obvious example is that the parkland to the south and east has been completely lost to agricultural/experimental use. Apart from the limes lining the roads to the east of the Manor, virtually all the parkland trees have disappeared, either purposely removed or not replaced when lost. Losses include the 18th Century elm avenue and the 19th Century 'clumps', both designed to enhance the view to the south of the House. This prospect, from the entrance and principal front of the House, was arguably as critical to its setting as the gardens, shrubbery and woodlands on the other sides. The garden design still sets the stage for appreciation of the view, with the ha-ha, the broad southern lawn as foreground, and the framing shrubbery and trees. The current prospect is a great disappointment. It lacks any sense of design or conscious intention, and might be any undistinguished bit of farmland [Fig.10]. There are signs that this problem is being recognised; grazing sheep have been reintroduced, and a replacement avenue has been proposed.
- There are other cases where management decisions have affected landscape value, such as the policy of not replacing hedgerow trees.
- It would clearly be inappropriate to alter the priority given to the experiments in favour of landscape aesthetics, but is there any reason why a new balance might not be achieved in certain areas?
- Through the Countryside Stewardship scheme, certain policies have begun to change. For example, grass headlands are being left in fields. Are there further opportunities for developing policies that may enhance biodiversity and landscape value?
- If national and international farming policy develops towards greater emphasis on diversity and environmental improvements, will this affect Rothamsted's landscape policies in the future?

j) Hidden Assets

There are a number of underused 'assets' in and around the gardens and Manor site. Some have been largely abandoned as their original purpose was lost or resources were reduced. Others are 'off the beaten track' or inaccessible to most people, and there is little information or encouragement to support a visit. Is it realistic or desirable to try to realise more of their potential and significance? Does it matter if they remain largely 'hidden'? Would their value be compromised if they received more attention?

The following are the principal examples:

- Walled Garden - A fundamental part of the Manor's life for centuries, and great potential for the future.
- Pond - Largely obscured, with no path to explore it.
- Soil Store - Hidden away, rarely visited, and apparently dull and 'dusty' to the uninitiated. With imagination, it could hold the seed for an important and fascinating educational centre.
- Manor Wood - Rarely visited by visitors to the House, and apparently disconnected from the formal gardens. Full of hidden features, interest and potential.
- Park Grass & Broadbalk - Highly significant and historic fields, that would be fascinating to anyone with an interest in plants, farming, ecology and the soil - if well presented and explained.
- Roman Temple - Off the beaten track, especially for the public.