

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY & MAINTENANCE PLAN

Bower Farm, Havering-atte-Bower, Essex

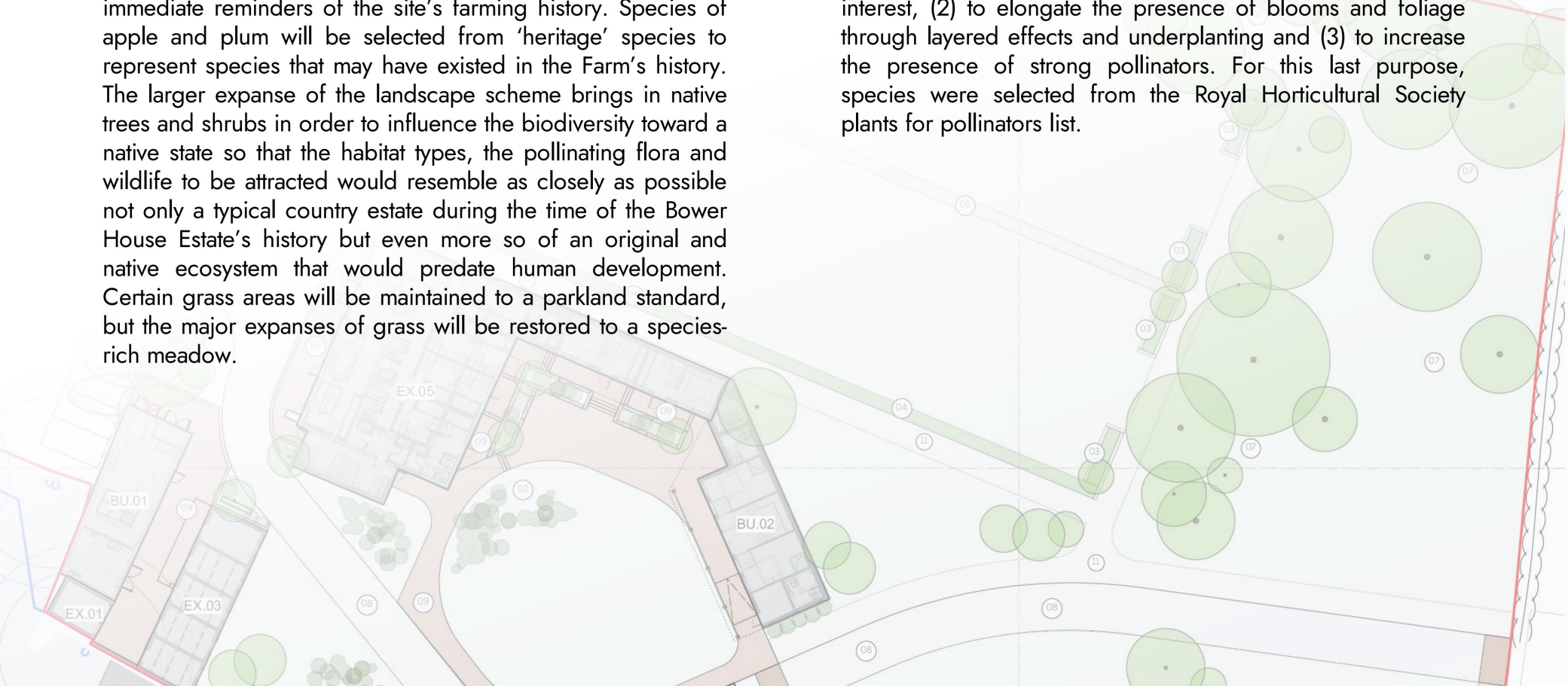
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The planting scheme for Bower Farm incorporates two major strategies: (1) to honour the site's agricultural and historical heritage and (2) to promote biodiversity by enhancing the existing habitat and restoring habitat and laying the foundation for a balanced and mature woodland.

In selecting plant species and cultivars, buildings are surrounded with planters and beds with typical British fruiting trees and shrubs sculpting the primary landscape, bringing in immediate reminders of the site's farming history. Species of apple and plum will be selected from 'heritage' species to represent species that may have existed in the Farm's history. The larger expanse of the landscape scheme brings in native trees and shrubs in order to influence the biodiversity toward a native state so that the habitat types, the pollinating flora and wildlife to be attracted would resemble as closely as possible not only a typical country estate during the time of the Bower House Estate's history but even more so of an original and native ecosystem that would predate human development. Certain grass areas will be maintained to a parkland standard, but the major expanses of grass will be restored to a species-rich meadow.

As this site is adjacent to the Bower House property and historically was a contiguous estate, plant selections were also made to bring in a sense of harmony and continuity between the two properties, whilst retaining the agricultural feel of Bower Farm, by planting flowering plants and shrubs that can be found on the Bower House property.

In addition to primary planting schemes with trees and shrubs, species have been considered (1) to provide year-round interest, (2) to elongate the presence of blooms and foliage through layered effects and underplanting and (3) to increase the presence of strong pollinators. For this last purpose, species were selected from the Royal Horticultural Society plants for pollinators list.



MAINTENANCE STRATEGY



In order to ensure that the vision of the landscape plan is not only executed initially but also develops according to that vision, a maintenance strategy is essential. The landscape can be divided into three areas, each with its own maintenance plan:

1. **Cultivated beds and planters** surround buildings and contain higher densities of smaller plants in the forms of herbaceous perennials and smaller shrubs, which require biannual pruning to maintain shape and size. Weed control is essential to developing these beds. The primary visual is in the form of fruiting trees and shrubs and these will also requiring annual pruning and maintenance to promote their health and aesthetic contribution for these areas. A careful selection of 'heritage' fruiting trees would be selected for best pollination and fruiting potential.
2. **New woodlands** are primarily located on the north and eastern border of the site. These areas incorporate native trees both in the form of slow-growth hardwoods and fast-growing trees that will fill in the landscape more immediately. Underplantings of native perennials and bulbs will enhance the biodiversity. After initial planting, this area will require less maintenance in the long term in order to promote a native and self-guiding ecosystem, but initial maintenance will include protection of planted trees from existing browsers (deer and muntjac) and prevention of bramble and stinging nettle from overtaking the site before the tree canopy can be established by the planted trees. The spacing of the trees will be in accordance with the best spacing for the ultimate spreads of the individual trees with a view of a mature woodland.
3. **Grasslands** are found as two habitat types. One is amenity grasslands, which surround buildings and which is to be maintained as parkland grass and mown frequently in the growing season. The other grassland type will be developed into species-diverse meadowlands and will be maintained less frequently. Flowering species will be sown into these grasses to encourage pollinators and native grassland ecosystem development. A major maintenance need for this landscape is to control the growth of stronger, invasive species that proliferate at the beginning of new landscape sites and to prevent the fields from becoming monotypic patches.

PLANT SELECTIONS

Cultivated beds and planters

Malus spp. (apple)

Malus sylvestris (crab apple)

Prunus spp. (cherry, plum)

Rubus spp. (raspberry 'autumn bliss'; blackberry 'Oregon thornless')

Ribes spp. (gooseberry 'invicta', red currant)

Cornus sanguinea (common dogwood)

Sambucus nigra (elder)

Cornus kousa (Chinese dogwood)

Cornus sibirica (Siberian dogwood)

Lavendula angustifolia (lavendar)

Stachys byzantina (lamb's ear)

Hydrangea spp. (hydrangea)

New woodlands

Quercus robur (English oak)

Fraxinus excelsior (ash)

Fagus sylvatica (beech)

Populus spp. (aspen)

Betula spp. (birch)

Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn)

Hyacinthoides non-scripta (English bluebells) and other woodland perennials and bulbs

Grasslands

Annuals such as cornflowers, field poppies, corn marigolds and corncockles, as well as domesticated strains of barley and wheat to add to the food availability to encourage native fauna to inhabit the area

Perennial flowers such as ox-eye daisies, red campion, knapweed and field scabious.