



Our Approach

Wilderness Reserve Suffolk

The Wilderness Reserve is part of a long term landscape scale conservation and restoration project. The origins of which lie in the unique 25 year restoration and extension of the arcadian landscape initially intended as a setting for Heveningham Hall by Capability Brown.

Since then the project has evolved restoring a rich mosaic of habitats creating locally and nationally important breeding and nesting habitats for numerous red list target species.

Alongside this, discrete low impact development have been introduced at Sibton and Heveningham within a wider landscape masterplan, allowing for visitors to stay at the heart of the estate and contribute to its viable long term future while complementing the flowing character of the surrounding countryside, local economy and adjacent settlement.

Achieving Over the Last 5 years:

- 426 acres of arable reversion into permanent pasture
- 85 acres of arable reversion into woodland
- 35 acres of scrubland reversion
- 80 acres of open water and wetland

With over 800,000 trees planted in the last 25 years

Cockfield Hall and the wider landscape - spanning approximately 400 acres - is currently not used to its full potential and has a great opportunity to contribute positively to the East Suffolk economy, as well as the landscape and local biodiversity.

The ambition of Wilderness Reserve Suffolk is to reconnect Cockfield Hall with Yoxford, improving the public access, restoring this important building and giving it a viable future as a country house hotel.

The wider Estate will benefit from an exceptional heritage and landscape led tourist accommodation scheme, with nature and environmental conservation at its heart. Properties offering unique tourist accommodation will nestle within this setting.





Ecological Benefits

Field trees, hedgerows, ponds and meadows have been brought back into traditional management for both wildlife and landscape continuity, leading to immediate and significant nature recovery.

Annual bird counts now show over a 300% increase in species recorded from the starting point of 48 in 2007 to 147 in July 2022.

Over 26 species of mammals have been recorded including 7 types of bat, 5 types of deer, and 3 types of vole. The population includes key indicator species such as Otter, Water Vole and Pipistrelle Bat.

29 species of butterflies have also been recorded, 22 species of dragon fly and 671 species of moths including flagship species.



Sustainable Development



The Existing Site

The Cockfield Hall Estate

Cockfield Hall is a complex and highly romantic building that has evolved and grown following changes in ownership and the fortunes of its owners. Although its origins are those of an earlier Manor much of the house and the current appearance of its yards relates to substantial modifications over the course of the late 18th and early 19th Century as the centre piece of a large sporting and agricultural estate. This involved a complex evolution of the hall and courtyards over a prolonged period culminating in substantial re-modelling in the late 19th and radical rebuilding and subdivision after bomb damage during WWII.

The fluctuating fortunes of Cockfield Hall have affected the surrounding landscape as much as the historic buildings. The earlier Medieval and Tudor landscapes were absorbed into the later park of oaks and grazed wood pasture (that can still be traced in the nineteenth-century Tithe map). During the war the wider parkland was ploughed up and the remaining area to the south east of the hall succumbed to gradual degradation and division into horse paddocks and equestrian facilities.

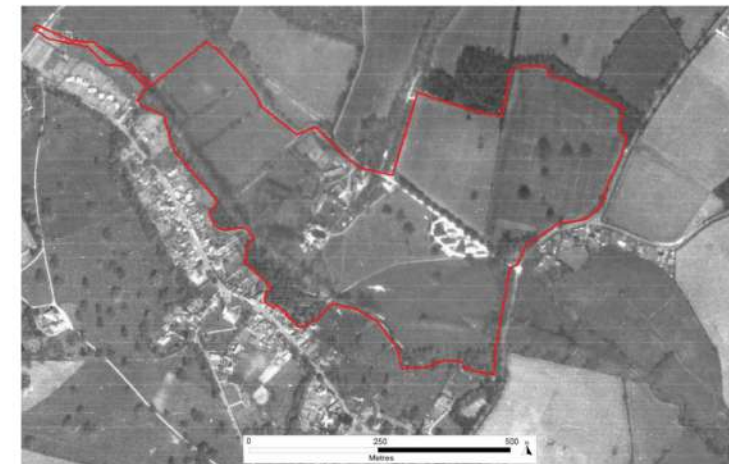
In its current use Cockfield Hall comprises a small amount of residential accommodation, office space, workshops and storage and the wider land use comprises arable and woodland.



Aerial image showing the locations of the three bombs which fell on Cockfield Hall in 1943.



1943 photograph of the north wing and gatehouse with piles of rubble and boarded up windows, indicating repair and rebuilding work following bombing in World War II (photographer T.E. Legg, Historic England Rail Box Collection, Card reference no. S665,079).



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The Historic Environment

The Cockfield Hall Estate

The original manor of Cockfield (GokesFord at Domesday) was possibly named for another ford within the village, and was surrounded by the three larger holdings of Stikeland to the southwest, Yoxford to the north west (the original Yokeford) and Hoppetun or Hopton (Farmstead in the marsh). These manors still relate to the 3 SPG6 Parks within the village that give it so much character -Grove Park, Rookery Park and Cockfield Hall- after its absorption into the Yoxford Manor under the Swillingtons and later Hoptons but it is not until the Blois family took ownership that the house became a principal seat.

Much of the house and the current appearance of its yards in fact relates to substantial modifications over the course of the late 18th and early 19th Century reflecting this changed status as the centre piece of a large sporting and agricultural estate. This involved a complex evolution of the hall and courtyards over a prolonged period culminating in substantial re-modelling in the late 19th and early 20th Century.

As part of these works a new Coach House with an additional gateway to the west was formed enclosing the north Yard and a Dovecote built at the centre, all with this same detail of stepped gables and brick pinnacles. The public face of the Hall was now very much orientated onto this south-east elevation, designed to be viewed from the Turnpike. The new approach was emphasised with a pair of gate lodges at the new entrance within the village, again with this early gothic/mock Tudor detail, with the processional courtyard route relegated to a secondary stables and farmyard entrance. Two additional lodges were built in a Cottage orné style, one at the entrance to the Turnpike and an additional Keeper's cottage to the west, designed to be viewed from a series of walks within a new pleasure ground called The Wilderness to the rear of the Hall.



South East Elevation, Cocktower 1924



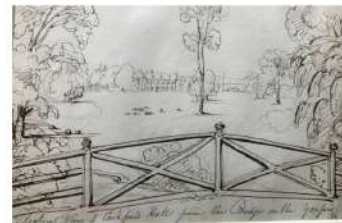
South West Elevation, Cocktower 2022



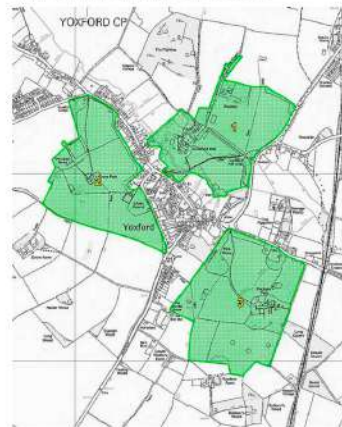
East Elevation, Cockfield Hall 1937



East Elevation, Cockfield Hall 2015



View of Cockfield Hall from the Bridge on Yoxford Road 1872



Historic Parklands: 1 - Cockfield Park 2 - Grove Park 3 - Rookery Park

The south-west elevation as shown in a Carte de Visite was also modified with plain Georgian sash windows inserted into the façade. The parapet on this elevation was castellated but the attic storey was not raised. These works culminated in a substantial rebuilding of the central great hall by the Ipswich architect E.F. Bishop in 1898. Bishop also rebuilt the rear southwest wing, raising it by a storey, tying in with the raised south east elevation and forming a new garden entrance with similar rubbed brick moulding to the door and windows of the Great Hall.

As with many houses of this size the house suffered during the course of the 20th Century with the gradual break up of the wider estate. The Hall itself was requisitioned by the British Army during WWII. In 1943 the house and service courtyard were bombed, with direct hits to the Hall and the old stables resulting in the partial demolition of both buildings and the opening up of the south east side of the service courtyard. The post-war years were a turbulent period for the Country House with many of the larger houses either demolished or where they survived substantially altered.

At Cockfield the surviving house was subdivided into 3 separate dwellings, with two new apartments to the rear in the remodelled southwest wing and a family apartment in the Hopton Wing to the north east, leaving the principle rooms accessed for formal occasions. Both the elevation and plan appear at odds with the existing house, blocking the internal flow and creating an incongruous juxtaposition between the various phases of the building. As part of these works the Stable block was also rebuilt on a reduced footprint to form a double garage block for the family with an estate office above, but retaining the original north most gable and adjacent courtyard entrance.



South Elevation

Cockfield 1860-19th Century Carte de Visite showing render removed and rebuilt - Century modifications. Facade stucco rendered and colour washed - remnants survive in details on south elevation and Yoxford lodges - part of the same phase



South Elevation

Cockfield 1935 Carte de Visite showing render removed and rebuilt south facade probably to E.F. Bishop detail completing works to the main entrance hall by Bishop



South Elevation

Cockfield 1985 showing partially rebuilt Southern Wing to Curtis and Green design separating the Hall into apartments with family wing to rear

Indicative Design Strategy

Cockfield Hall

Cockfield Hall is a complex building that has evolved and radically changed over the course of its long history. Although the origins of the House are earlier, the two elements of the Bishopp wing are crucial to its evolution and final form. Essentially, the core of the house was formed by Bishopp in his radical 1896 remodelling, connecting the north wing and south west wing via his rebuilt great hall, with the principal rooms and accommodation radiating off it.

The bomb damage and subsequent 1952 rebuild disrupts this relationship, both in what was built and what was not built, by imposing the apartments within the plan and blocking the connections between the various levels and phases of the building. This creates an uncomfortable flow through the current building. Externally the architectural treatment of the rebuilt wing does little to compliment the older elements of the building and jars unsympathetically with the surviving rear entrance detail by Bishopp.



The intention is that the Hall should be returned to the simplicity of its earlier setting with the principal works focused on the rebuilding of this wing to the southwest in order to restore the flow of the building, re-unite the disparate elements and allow the hall to be reinstated as a country house hotel, forming a single building without its secondary apartments and subdivisions. Extensive consultation and design discussions with Historic England and East Suffolk District Council has resulted in a scheme whose design intention is to follow the spirit of the demolished wing rather than being an exact copy and add to the long evolution of the hall.

The two principal elevations of the Hall facing east and north are largely in sound condition with minor works necessary to areas of spalled brickwork where inappropriate repairs have been carried out with cementitious material. Repairs and new work would match existing. Brick samples have been matched using hand-made woodfire bricks by HG Matthews and Son. Similar works would be carried out to the Gate House.



South Elevation Cockfield



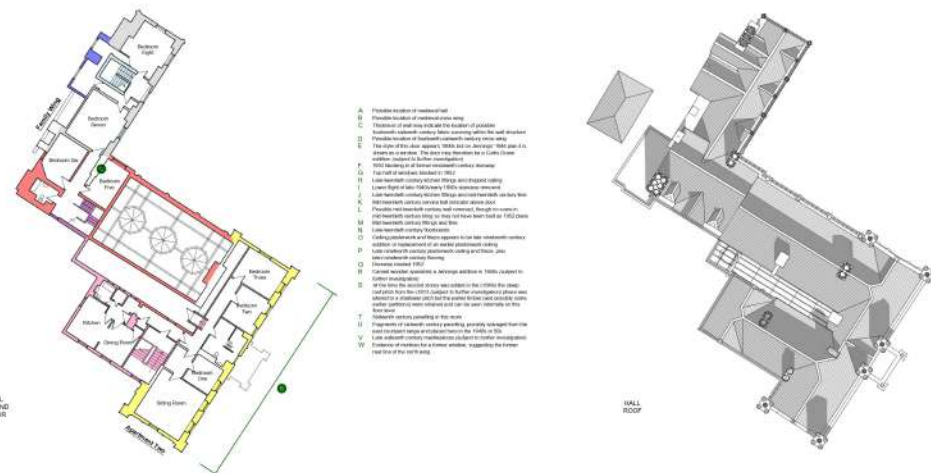
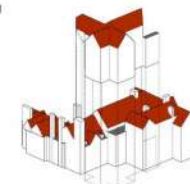
Historic Cellar Entrance Revealed



South Elevation Cockfield - Existing elevation above showing Curtis Green rebuilt wing

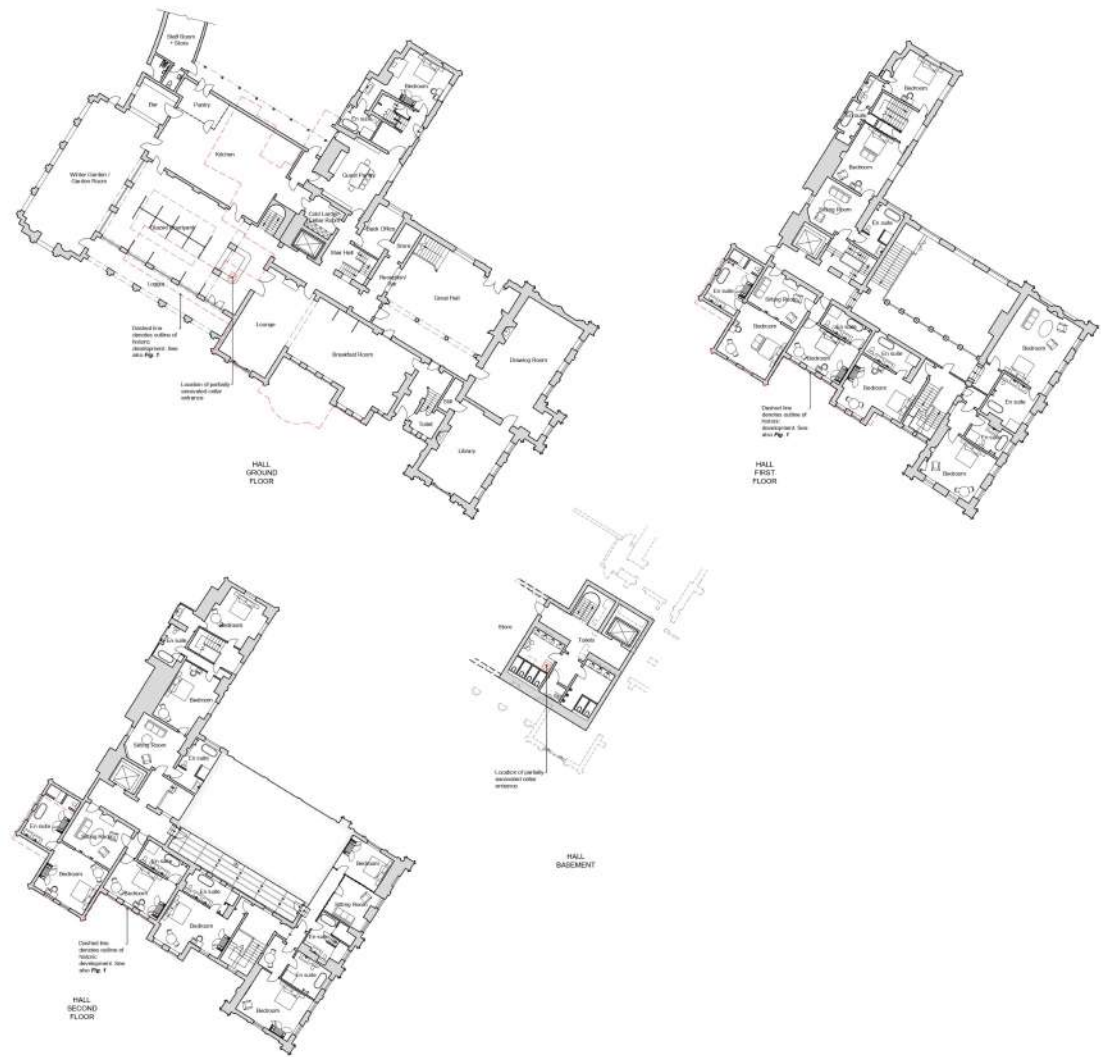


To the left - 1905 Carte de Visite showing render removed and rebuilt south façade probably to E F Bishopp detail complementing works to the main entrance hall by Bishopp



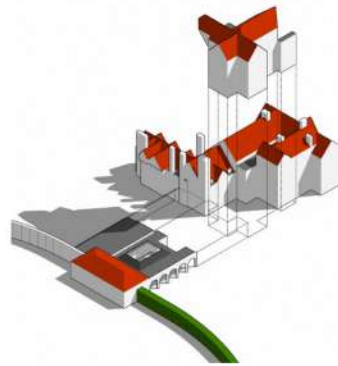


Precedent Imagery



Indicative Design Strategy *Cockfield Hall Garden Room*

On the original Bishopp Wing a single bay and garden room project forward off the main southern elevation. It is proposed to reinstate the projecting bay to first floor level, centered on the raised gable of the Curtis elevation. The garden room appeared as a surprising intervention, disrupting the façade. It is proposed to follow some of the details of this element in a new garden room or orangery building that projects northwest of the rebuilt wing. Earlier site plans show a building in this position and historic images and drawings suggest that this formed a low service building and kitchen block. The new garden room will be linked to the main hall via an open colonnade that hides the rear service wing and a public restaurant area.



Cockfield Hall 2023 – North West of the Rebuilt Wing

Indicative Design Strategy

Coach House

The Coach House range was built in the early 19th century but taking stylistic references from earlier buildings on site and using many reused historic timbers, indicated by unused mortice holes and moulded beams. These can be seen in the dividing walls and ceiling joists throughout the building. Proposed works seek to create additional accommodation and reception space within this building while keeping these features exposed as much as possible with the main vaulted barn area kept open to the rafters.



Clocktower Extension

The original Hospitium or guest house formed the eastern wing of the courtyard, part of the processional entrance passing through the ornate gateways to the Gatehouse and Hall. The building also received a direct bomb strike and, like the hall, was only partially rebuilt as a pair of garages with a first floor office above. Again, after extensive consultation a simplified scheme has been drawn up. Initially proposed as a separate dwelling it is now proposed that the building will be part of the hotel offering without the need for any separate domestic curtilage. It is proposed to leave the existing Tudor north gable and clock tower in its current position but carefully dismantle the recent south gable and rebuild to the original footprint, enclosing the courtyard and recreating the sense of ceremonial progression through to the hall.



South East Elevation, Clocktower 1924



South West Elevation, Clocktower 2022



Sibton Park Walled Garden

Walled Garden



A Walled Garden lies to the north west of the Hall. Typical to many estates where the garden was the productive heart of the estate, providing fruit and vegetables throughout the year as well as private pleasure gardens, the walled garden has largely returned to grass. The walls are in poor repair and require extensive refurbishment.

Proposals would follow the principles set out at Sibton Park, where the fabric of the walled garden has been restored, retaining the open structure of the internal garden and orchard planting while creating additional accommodation along the rear walls. As at Sibton these would be in the former of a low Bothy type structure pitched against the rear wall and include the rebuilding of a small corner tower.

Dairy Range

It is proposed to follow the same principles on the Dairy Range which has an existing consent for its restoration, partially completed. The proposed scheme has evolved during the course of consultation and simplified from the existing approval in order to retain the original floorplan and fabric of the building as much as possible.



(Precedent leaded light casement windows)

(Reinstated joinery)



Landscape Strategy

Cockfield Hall Estate

The historic parkland has been impacted overtime by the fluctuating fortunes of Cockfield Hall. As part of the restoration and rebuilding of the historic built form, work has begun on reviving the wider landscape setting. The horse paddock fences and choking planting have been removed to reveal the house from the highway. English oaks are being planted to replace random exotic trees and bring back the park and wood pasture.

Alongside this, as part of Kim Willkie's landscape masterplan, it is proposed to connect and expand the existing blocks of semi mature woodlands and woodlands of relatively recent planting through a network of wood pasture, woodland belts and plantations. The majority of the new plantation comprise hornbeam and oak with alder and hornbeam in the wetter areas and scrubrier planting including hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose.

The woods will be managed as part of the Estate's wider woodland plan to encourage coppice growth and woodland flora and fauna. The existing network of woodland rides will be restored, and a northern access drive created through the new woodland belts following contours, existing tracks and hedgerow networks.

The Estate's silvicultural system has to a degree been dictated by the need to harvest the dying ash trees with selective felling preferred to clear-fell where possible. Once re-established the woodland is to be sustainably managed as coppice and thinnings for biomass to feed the estate's proposed district heating systems and long term high quality timber production.



OS Information may not be topographically accurate/ site boundary is indicative

- - - Historic Hedgerows
- Existing Woodland
- Tree Plantation 2023/2024
- Semi-mature, Scrub & Orchard Planting
- New Waterbodies, Rills and Wetlands
- Public Right of Way



Waterbody Creation

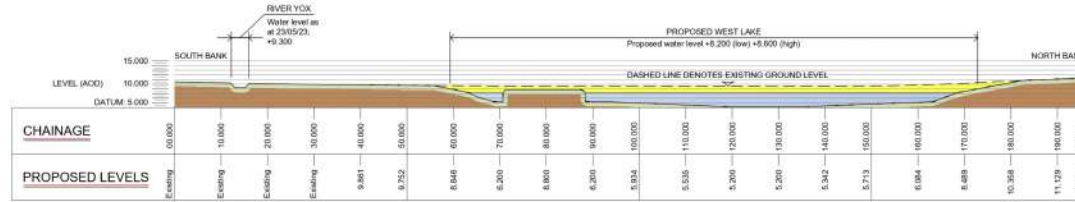
The Cockfield Hall Estate

A revived water landscape will focus on small interventions within the river course to increase the diversity of habitats and oxygen within this stretch of the river, along with the sluices and drainage channels bordering the River Yox.

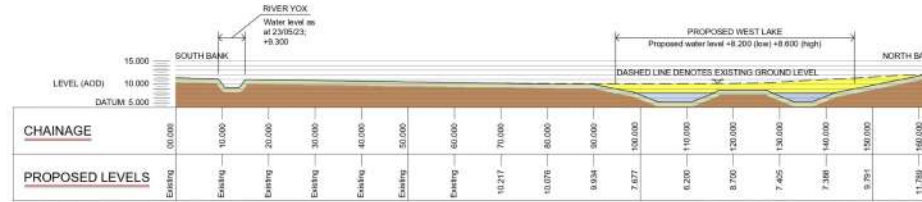
More ambitiously, the wet fields along the valley bottom will be reprofiled to create a lake and marshland. This will help to control any storm water run-off, creating an additional freeboard depth of over a metre across the proposed lake.

As per previous works at Heveningham and Huntingfield lakes, the existing drainage channels will then feed into the extensive new wetland areas, creating a lag between storm events and through flow entering the river via a weir.

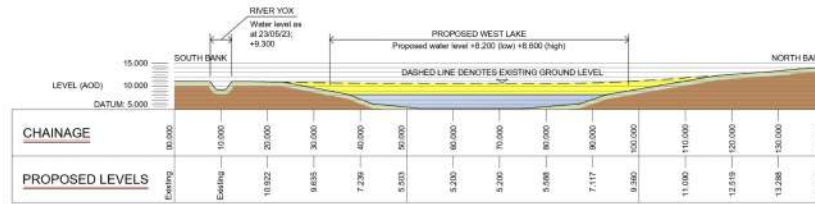
Overall, this will result in a significant increase in the landscapes water holding capacity (by approximately 50 - 60 million litres) during flood events, which will reduce the risk of flooding in the village, whilst creating an increasingly rare wet woodland habitat with a network of channels and alder carr islands.



SECTION C-C



SECTION E-E



SECTION F-F

KEY:
 Additional flood storage



Extent of Surface Water Flood Risk – published by the Environment Agency (shown above)

- High risk means that this area has a chance of flooding of greater than 3.3% each year.
- Medium risk means that this area has a chance of flooding of between 1% and 3.3% each year.
- Low risk means that this area has a chance of flooding of between 0.1% and 1% each year.



Precedent Imagery (shown above)



Cockfield Flood Plains 2018 (shown in the row above)

Design Strategy










Cockfield Hall Estate

As part of this landscape masterplan, low impact development would be provided in the form of holiday cottages, which allow visitors to stay at the heart of the estate and experience the beauty of the restored landscape. As a result, the designs will celebrate the remote nature of their locations with minimal lighting and covered outside dining areas.

The position of the cottages has been designed to complement the evolution of the parkland and the proposed landscape works. Longer views into and from the site, as well as contours and screening (existing and proposed) have been taken into consideration, with cottages largely hidden from view.

These cottages would each be of an individual appearance with details taken from Suffolk vernacular design. The property types would range from simple timber and corrugated tin buildings, to eyecatchers on the woodland edge and woodland cottages primarily focused within areas of wood pasture reversion and tree plantations. Two small farmstead style settlements are also proposed on the northern edge of the upper site reflecting a settlement pattern that relates to the dispersed farmsteads on the upper claylands along the greens.



-  Historic Hedgerows
-  Existing Woodland
-  Tree Plantation 2023/2024
-  Approved Forestry Track
-  Semi-mature, Scrub & Orchard Planting
-  New Waterbodies, Rills and Wetlands
-  Public Right of Way
-  Screened Woodland Cottages
-  Farmsteads & Woodland Edge Lodges



OS Information may not be topographically accurate/
site boundary is indicative





Masterplan Update

The Cockfield Hall Estate

In recent months, extensive consultation has been undertaken with officers at East Suffolk Council, SCC Highways, SCC Archaeology, Historic England, the Environment Agency and other statutory bodies. Pre-application meetings have focused on Cockfield Hall, the Tudor Courtyard, the Griffin, access and car parking, informing the design team's proposals for the wider site.

Additional site investigations have also been completed, including archaeological trial trenching, a radar survey of the bomb-damaged areas at Cockfield Hall, a suite of ecological surveys, as well as noise and traffic surveys for the surrounding area.

A comprehensive Forestry Plan is being drawn up with advice from the Forestry Commission and Natural England, with the intention to begin planting next season. An access track will also be provided, following this year's harvest season, connecting existing woodland rides, and facilitating the expanding forestry operation. Routes follow existing tracks, contours, historic field edges and hedgerows.

During the community consultation events last year there was much discussion over existing footpaths. Having taken those views into consideration we re-engaged with SCC Highways and have altered our proposals to retain existing footpath routes. In addition, we are proposing to grant a permissive footpath connecting to the A12 at the main Cockfield Hall entrance.

We will continue engagement over the coming months with a particular focus on the Griffin. In addition, we will be submitting an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion to East Suffolk Council ahead of proposed planning applications at the end of Summer.



Early 19th Century – Great Street



1891 photograph of the Griffin from Parr, Yoxford Yesterday, Vol. 7



1910 photograph of the Griffin



Early 1940's – Yoxford High Street



Circus Elephant outside the Griffin in the late 1940's



1939 photograph of the Griffin, showing rebuilt south gable and straightened roof pitch of the range on the front of the building. (England's Places)

Historic Evolution

The Griffin Inn

A building has stood on the Griffin site since 1358. The Griffin name is said to have derived from Sir Arthur Hopton (1488-1555) of Cockfield Hall whose family crest depicted a Griffin. Whilst the Griffin began its life as a dwelling house it has been a Public house in some form since at least the 17th Century and has played a key role in village life.

Like many East Anglian timber frame houses it is a much altered palimpsest of multiple phases. It started life as a dwelling before conversion to a Licensed House and eventually one of two Coaching Inns in Yoxford on the Ipswich to Yarmouth route. This saw a change in the Griffin's fortunes and its expansion, including the creation of a row of shops, stable yard and additional bedrooms.

Despite the loss of this trade with the arrival of the railway the building was further modified in the 1880s with a lowered roof over the projecting gable and false timberwork, and rough-cast cement applied to the entire High Street Elevation.



Original house built, potentially four bays long. Re-used roof structure from an earlier fifteenth century barn. 1585 –name changed from Baxsters to Gryffun. Probable open 'Hall' house

Bake House or Back House built to rear, again with fabric reused from other buildings.

New roof infilling area between back house and new chimney stack. Licensed to sell wine. Wing built to south (now demolished) housing two shops and additional rooms. Raised floor inserted southern end.

New Gable adjacent to backhouse projecting onto High Street. Stables built to the rear. Advertised in 1747 as "The Griffin,...with 5 rooms a floor, Stables, Brewing Office and Cellars. and two shops"

Secondary coaching Inn to 3 Tuns "Old Blue to Ipswich 10mg. & to Yarmouth ½ past 3 aftn". Griffin described as having garden, yard, stables, lofts, granary, chaise house, cart shed and piggery. Inside there were two parlours, a bar, keeping room, liquor bar, store- room, cellars, wash-house and nine bedrooms. There were two shops on the premises, let to a butcher and basket maker

Shops and rear wing demolished in 1930 and rear Gable and Chimney stack rebuilt in brick. Kitchen wing, toilet block and stores built within catslide extension.



View looking through the rused aisle framing with late 17th /18th century rebuilt purlin roof at the far end



Much altered bar area in the central part of the ground floor



Southern room on the ground floor with early 16th Century timber frame and later alterations



Rear elevation with 20th Century extensions



The Griffin Proposals

Yoxford Village

The Estate intends to revitalise the existing Pub, seeking to extend and alter the current layout to ensure the long-term viability of the Pub as a key community asset. Works are largely confined to the west of the site within the old stable yard - creating a new kitchen and service area.

The stable building to the rear boundary is proposed to be extended to provide additional storage, W/C's and private dining rooms. The building will return with a back of house area to the north via a single-storey flat roof element that houses a new kitchen area. The existing 20th C Lean-to would be demolished and replaced with a new two storey projecting gable.

Externally, it is proposed to remove the more recent applied false timber framing and cement render and put back a pargetted lime render; the remodelling of the roof profile of the principal front projecting gable will form a more sympathetic elevation; a change in roof material to thatch and plain tile; and the replacement of the uPVC windows with a traditional Suffolk timber casement window based on surviving examples.



Private Dining Room



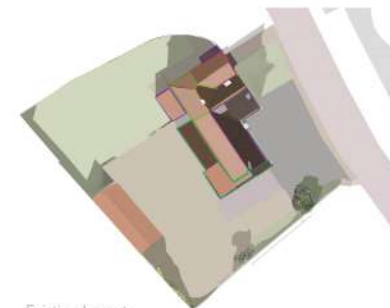
Entrance Bar



Proposed West Elevation



Existing West Elevation



Existing Layout



Layout Highlighting Kitchen Wing and Rear Gable Extension



Proposed Layout

Internally it is proposed to open up the existing public bar, removing the recent floor and creating a vaulted entrance hall. A new bar and tap room would then be formed to the rear.

The proposed reconfiguration of the bar, kitchen and seating area will make a significant difference to visitor experience and efficiency, resulting in a layout that is intended to improve the character and atmosphere of the public area, by opening up the existing bar area and revealing the main chimney stack and fireplace (shown above).



Precedent Imagery



Landscaping proposals look to create a 'Green heart' to Yoxford, less dominated by cars. The current tarmac parking area to the southeast of the Griffin would be removed immediately adjacent to the road with vehicle access restricted to disabled, drop-off and deliveries.

A new parking area to the rear of the village store would provide additional parking for the pub and village store and seek to enhance off-street parking opportunities for the long-term traffic management of the village. The current parking area at the Pub would become an open green, that visually interacts with the churchyard and Mulberry Park adding the open green space within the village centre and accentuating the character of the village as the Garden of Suffolk.

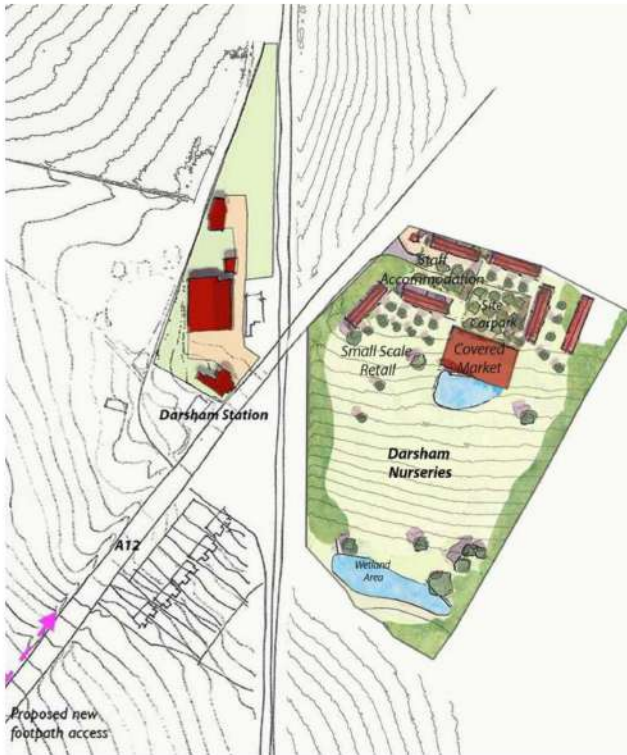
Darsham Nurseries

Staff Accommodation

The Estate has recently acquired the former Darsham Nurseries site, which is in close proximity to the vehicular entrance to the Cockfield Estate.

The operations at the nursery ceased during the pandemic and it is therefore a vacant brownfield site.

Encompassed as part of the overall strategy for the Estate, the intention is to explore using this site to provide residential accommodation for staff employed at the hotel and the wider estate, along with supporting retail / employment floorspace.



Key Deliverables . . .



Delivery Timelines

