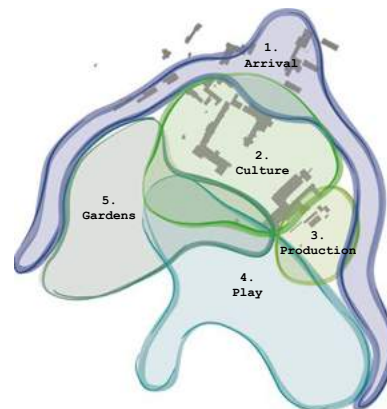




Gardens Master Plan Overview

At the Open House event in March 2018, award-winning garden designer Dan Pearson presented his Dartington Hall Gardens Master Plan. It is a long-term vision that aims to deliver 'root and branch transformation'.

Dan's respect for the history and importance of the gardens is evident, and there are lots of elements that seek to restore and refresh rather than revolutionise. Overall, the scheme is a thoughtful, sensitive response to many of the challenges of reshaping Dartington's important gardens and landscape for the 21st century. Carried out in discrete, manageable phases, 2019 will see the first project, Valley Field, start to take shape.





Dan Pearson MSGD

“Water plays an important role in the Gardens and the Valley Field stream forms an inherent part of the central spine that holds the gardens and connects all areas together.

Focusing on this area initially will help to form better links to the tiltyard and historic gardens above, the walled garden, the future play area and the potential of a new pond below. Its quality as a subtle but grounded feature will be enhanced through repaired cascades, dams, playful bridges and stepping stones providing more interest and engagement with the water as it flows through the valley. Prominent Gunneras and other existing riparian planting that form horticultural and ecological interest will be enhanced by new lush and verdant plantings. These delicate touches build on the rich layers of form and structure providing a great beginning to all rejuvenation works at Dartington Hall Gardens.”

Play Character

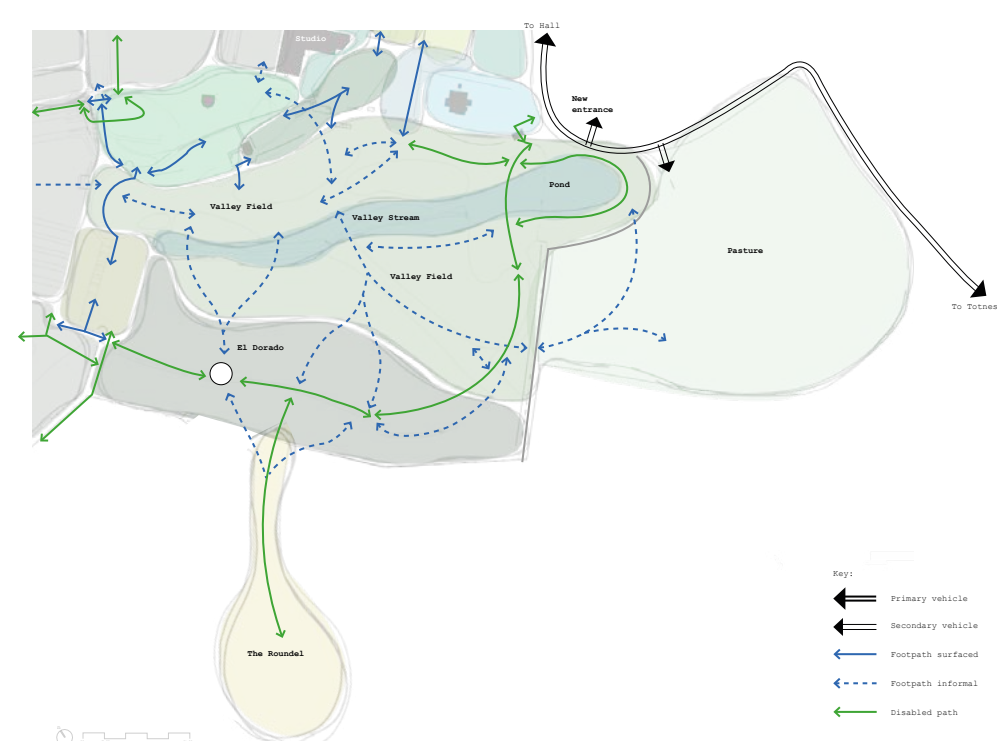
To draw families into the gardens and protect more sensitive areas, Valley Field and Roundel could be redesigned to focus on play and adventure.

This Character Zone includes designs for the following Garden Areas:
Valley Field / Pasture / El Dorado / Roundel

Existing Character Plan



Proposed Character Plan



- Key:
- Primary vehicle
 - Secondary vehicle
 - Footpath surfaced
 - Footpath informal
 - Disabled path

Valley Field

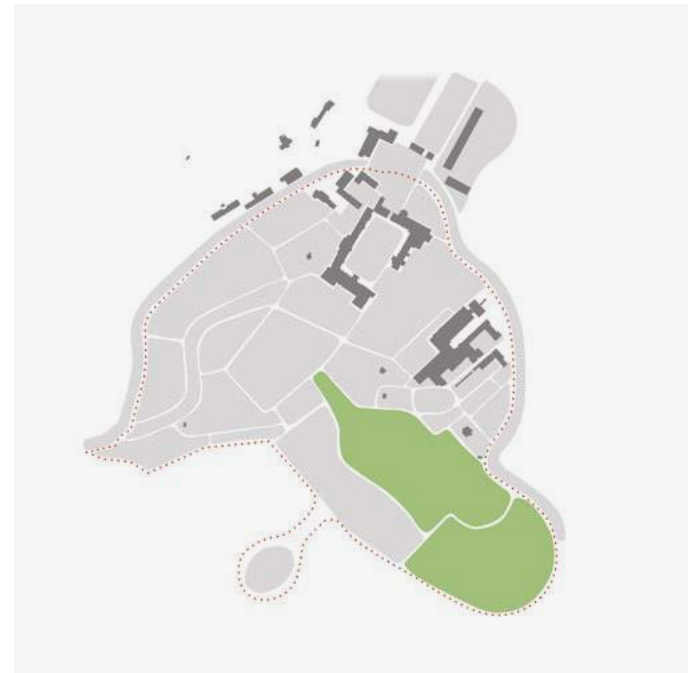
Once part of a great orchard that ran up from the River Dart to the Hall, Valley Field was cleared by 1839 and grazed as parkland until Percy Cane incorporated the area into the garden by forming a ha-ha at its lowest point. This opened up the landscape, merging it seamlessly with the slopes of the parkland pasture beyond.

Today Valley Field is maintained as a wildflower meadow with parkland trees (including *Castanea sativa*, *Liquidambar styraciflua* and *Quercus robur*) and a ribbon of riparian vegetation (including *Alnus glutinosa*, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* and *Gunnera manicata*) associated with the riverlet that carries the garden's surface water down to a limestone pothole beyond the ha-ha.

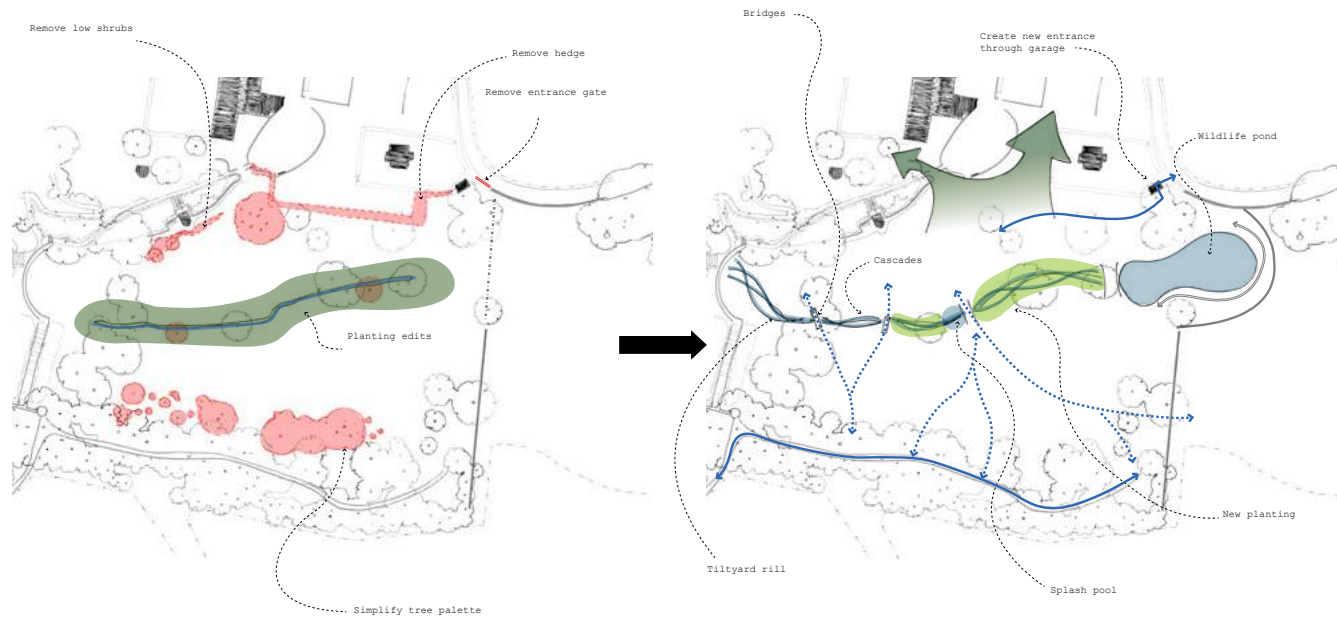
The design aims to maintain the informal meadow character and manage the existing trees to strengthen the qualities of the vista from the Tiltyard and open views across the valley. Physical connectivity between the adjoining garden areas and the pasture to the east is to be considered, along with the improvement of the water course for both biodiversity and informal play opportunity.

The concept is defined via the following key moves:

1. Remove Gardener's cottage hedge to increase woodland edge habitat to Valley Field and connections to productive areas.
2. Undertake planting edits to remove low shrubs and simplify tree palette to form new cohesive riparian character.
3. Redesign of water course through formation of new play spine including rill, cascades, bridges, stepping stones and splash pools.
4. Create new wildlife pond to lower reaches of garden and visually bring field beyond into the garden.
5. Define lower entrance gateway and disabled path through repurposed garage at Gardens Cottage.



Key Moves



Section



Valley Field Plan



1. Tiltyard rill drops either side of steps and becomes a sinuous line before entering cascades.
2. New deck bridges pick up desire lines across Valley Field.
3. Planting edits to stream including increase in Gunnera as play feature.
4. Hedge and scrub removed to allow lawn to wrap up and connect into Productive Nuttery.
5. Existing entrance removed and Cottage Garage converted into lych-style gateway to garden.
6. Farmer's gate moved to allow access into pasture field.
7. Existing drops repaired to form a series of cascades with acoustic qualities.
8. Visual connection across to new tree house at entrance to formal play.
9. Stone placement to create ravine-like informal play and hold back water in areas.
10. Existing weir point dammed and opened up to form children's splash pool with stepping stones.
11. Hard edge to form bridging point and weir which feeds pond.
12. Marginal planted edge to back of pond when viewing from garden.
13. Garden boundary adjustment with new ha-ha wall formed to hold back levels for pond.
14. Pasture relaxed and informal. Mown paths to allow walking into landscape beyond garden.

How Are We Funding The Project And What's Next?

Funding Our Plans For The Garden

We have a small amount of legacy money to kick-start the Valley Field project, but as a charity Dartington will rely on support from donations, legacies and grants to help deliver these exciting plans for the gardens. Donations not only help us to care for the gardens and protect this wonderful estate but also enable us to invest in new features and improvements like those in Valley Field. If you would like to find out more about how you can support this work, visit the 'Get Involved' section of our website or speak to a member of our team today.

So, What Next?

Once the Valley Field project has been funded and completed, we are planning to turn our attention to the next exciting project in Dan's plan - the Production Area. This phase will see a revamp of the walled garden which supplies organic produce to the various food outlets on the estate moving Dartington towards becoming more self-sufficient, and sustainable. This phase will be entirely reliant on funding from donations and grants.

Valley Field Pond



Valley Field Rills



Valley Field Splash Pond



Valley Field Mood Board

