

5.0

SITE COMPARISON

- 5.1 Site Evolution and Comparison
- 5.2 Precedent Images of Tree Formations
in 18th Century Parks



5.1 SITE EVOLUTION & COMPARISON

5.1.1 Significance and Evolution:

Our heritage is a unique resource, an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of our past. Structures and places can, over time, acquire character and special interest through their intrinsic quality, continued existence and familiarity. This heritage consists not only of great artistic achievements, but also of the everyday works of craftsmen.

Ireland has many examples of this through well-preserved 18th century gardens including; Cabinteely House Co Dublin, Belvedere House Co Westmeath and Russborough House Co Wicklow. The vast majority of these historic parks, including Marlay were built during the Golden Era of prosperity from the early eighteenth century. From the mid-1850s, as the economy recovered from the Great Famine, many landlords indulged in remodeling their existing houses and surrounding grounds.

In its inception, Marlay Park benefited from a new 'naturalistic' approach to garden design. Gone were the structured lines of the 'jardin à la française' style, replaced with rolling hills, lakes, woodlands and pastured land right to the doorstep. Strategic avenues and clusters of 'champion' trees were planted; revealing views and vistas when traveling through the Park.

From the late 1880s the decline of the landlord class coincided with the rise of the Land League and the Home Rule movements. The arrival of the Long Depression and increased land taxes led to a further decline in income for the elite. This increasing debt forced many landlords to begin selling their estates or portions of their estate. It was during this period Marlay Demesne sold its first section of land to the Grange Golf club.

From 1903, the Wyndham Land Act promoted the sale of landed estates through its generous terms, this coincided with the additional acquisition of land by Grange Golf Course to construct their 18-hole golf course.

Today, the Irish government through its participation in the ICOMOS Florence Charter concerning the protection of historic gardens, and the Granada Convention concerning the protection of the architectural heritage of Europe which was ratified by Ireland in 1997 recognises it is the duty of the state to preserve, conserve and transmit this heritage to future generations. Today, Marlay Park is a finite resource in terms of historical importance and recreational green space. Parks such as this form an important part of our cultural heritage.

SITE COMPARISON (continued)

5.1.2 Comparison:

Marlay Park forms an important component of the historic landscape on the fringe of Dublin City. The character of the Park display much evidence of a private garden designed during the height of the landscape garden movement. The arrangement of the site includes a southern facing house towards the distant mountains through carefully choreographed views, woodland walks, open pastures, manipulated water courses, bridges, a regency walled garden and gate lodges. Since opening to the public in 1975 Marlay Park has been a very successful recreational area. Today it accommodates various large and small scale events and public activities.

As part of the site analysis, a wide number of parks similar in terms of layout, era and character were reviewed and compared to Marlay Park. There was also extensive research undertaken on best practice design and development of similar 18th century gardens. This will be further discussed in the conservation section of this report.

Regional Parks are recognized as premier parks that provide a host of attractions and amenities for passive and active recreation. Regional Parks have a unique character which provides attractions for visitors and tourists alike. To achieve the designation of Regional Park it must include a range of high quality attractions and facilities in a unique setting, including play areas, toilets, parking and where feasible they may also include cafés, markets and the ability to host additional functions and leisure activities. Below are a select number of parks which are compared to Marlay Park.

St Anne's Park

As the second largest park in the Dublin municipality, built 40 years after Marlay Park, St. Anne's is a Regional Park that hosts a variety of similar intensive recreational activities including 35 playing pitches; hard-surfaced tennis courts a par-3 golf course and converted outbuildings to host markets and events.

Built in 1835 for the affluent Guinness family, the original house overlooked Dublin Bay on an estate that was in excess of 500ares. It contains many special landscape character features similar to Marlay that were common in 18th century gardens including; bridges, hillocks, aquatic features and a walled garden. Similar to Marlay Park, St. Anne's was purchased by the Dublin City Corporation and opened to the public.



Birkenhead Park, Merseyside, UK



Cabinteely Park, Co Dublin



St Anne's Park, Dublin



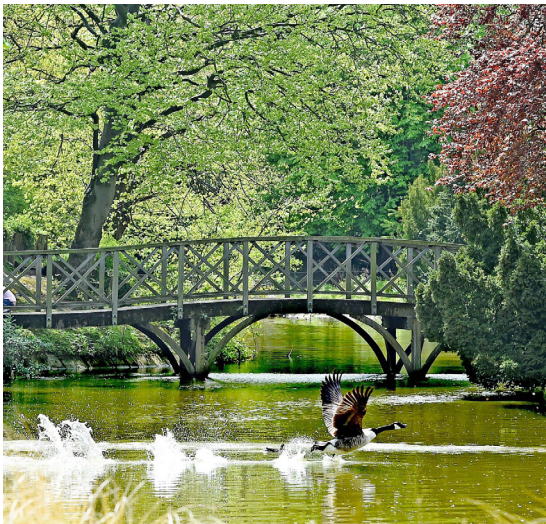
Marlay Park, Co Dublin



Cabinteely Park



St. Anne's Park



Birkenhead Park



Birkenhead Park

SITE COMPARISON *(continued)*

Birkenhead, Merseyside UK.

Birkenhead Park was the first publicly funded park in the world. Located in Liverpool, close to the Mersey River its 226 acres were designed by Joseph Paxton in 1847.

After decades of falling into disrepair Birkenhead Park acquired the appropriate funding to reinstate the park in 2006; restoring original features including ponds, ornate bridges, boathouses and lodges and elevating the status and character of the park as a premier tourist destination. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council share similar aspirations for Marlay Park.

Birkenhead has seen a large surge in footfall since conservation works were completed, a success they also attribute to an increased social media presence for events in the park. However, the park has struggled to accommodate the 30,000+ visitors which have descended on the park for large events, with particular reference made to insufficient facilities, including toilets and parking.

Cabinteely Park

Cabinteely Park comprises an 18th century Park house, just off the N11 dual carriageway, set in parkland of 45 hectares which is a fine example of the less formal 18th Century Landscape style.

The House is available for guided tours and corporate or community events. Within the courtyards, a former grain store has been refurbished and is now used for the promotion and development of Youth Arts in the County, while the stables have been converted tea rooms with an adjoining Japanese-style garden.

Within the expansive grounds, there is a multi-use adventure playground, playing pitches and a trim trail.

5.2 PRECEDENT IMAGES OF TREE FORMATIONS IN 18TH CENTURY PARKS



Russborough House and Gardens, Co Wicklow



Avenue of pines, Cabinteely Park, Co Dublin



Tree clusters in Chatsworth, designed by Capability Brown, Norfolk, UK



Great Cedar of Lebanon, Painshill, UK



MAP 1 - EXISTING SITE FEATURES

Public Realm

The park is permeable to the public within designated hours. Marlay Park is an enclosed garden park with entrances located in the north, south and east of the park.

Distinctiveness

The built heritage and curtilage of Marlay Park lends a strong sense of history and identity to area. It is a premier destination for passive and active recreation and forms part of a transitional gateway to the Dublin Mountains.

Dog Walking

A designated area for dog without a leash area that caters for both large and small breeds.

Landscape and Ecology

Marlay Park is a great example of a late eighteenth century garden. It enjoys expansive views of the distant mountains, man-made ponds, a rich variety of trees and shrubs and a functional walled garden for growing exotic plants, fruits and vegetables.

Marlay Railway

Operating on Tuesdays and Saturdays, the Dublin Society of Model and Experimental Engineers (DSMEE) have enjoyed the use of the model railway lines since 1981.

Art

A sculptural mound created by Agnes Conway is in reference to The Celestial Mountain. The sculpture is at a high elevation adjacent to the all-weather pitches to the south of the park and features winding paths. From this location you can have uninterrupted views of the Dublin Mountains and Dublin Bay.

Access

To accommodate the needs of pedestrians, particularly children, persons with impaired mobility and the elderly, are accorded particular importance, as are measures to facilitate cyclists. The Council aims to review the quality of the access routes as part of the masterplan

Parking Areas

Car parking is provided at the Grange Road and College Road entrances. In response to the demand of increasing visitors to the Park, the Grange Road parking facilities were extended. Additional parking is provided adjacent the playground area accessed via the College Road entrance. The Council recognises the dangers that surround car movement around areas of play and plan to address the availability of more suitable and discreet parking facilities in the masterplan.