Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol
National Trust

Green Infrastructure Statement

Chirk Castle Drying Ground Access Path

Completed by:	Gemma Baron, Asst. Nature Conservation Advisor
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Date:	12/02/2026
Address of site:	Chirk Castle
Grid reference:	SJ 26899 38057

Description of Proposal: A 2m ramp with a gradient 1:12, constructed of layers of consolidated hardcore with gravel, to connect the Drying Ground to the path below in the gardens at Chirk Castle.

1. Policy Context

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its protection and provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources. In particular to protecting, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in terms of the diversity within and connections between ecosystems and the extent and condition of these ecosystems, so that they are better able to resist, recover from and adapt to pressures. This means that the development of green infrastructure is an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty.

Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels. At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands. At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.

All planning applications should include a green infrastructure statement which is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and describes how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.

Green infrastructure assessments and locally based planning guidance should guide development proposals, and the GIS will demonstrate multi-functional outcomes which are

appropriate to the site and local area. The GIS will demonstrate how the project design has incorporated the step-wise approach.

2. **Description of proposed development, site and details of all existing green infrastructure**

A new path is proposed at Chirk Castle, connecting the Drying Ground, to the gravel path below (Figure 1). This accessible ramp, will allow better access into this area of the garden, as was the case historically (Photograph 1). The site currently is surrounded by a Yew hedge, with a herbaceous border. The path will involve the removal of 2m of hedge and border, and construction of a 2m wide ramp of gradient 1:12 which will be excavated to a maximum depth of 4 inches below cultivated ground. The path will consist of consolidated layers of hardcore with gravel in keeping with other paths at Chirk.

3. **Rationale for selecting this location over alternative locations**

The proposed location is on the site of historical access to the Drying Ground (Image 1), and reinstating this will improve access to this area of the garden.

4. **What green infrastructure features (trees, hedges, hedgebanks) have already been removed from site and/or require removal to facilitate the development?**

The creation of this path will involve the removal of a section of Yew hedge and some herbaceous borders containing typical perennial garden plants such as Penstemon and Echinops. The ground will be excavated to a maximum depth of 4 inches.

5. **How are the retained features being protected during development?**

This is a small development, and surrounding shrubs and borders will not be impacted by the excavation work.

6. **What is being planned as mitigation for losses?**

Tree planting is planned across the wider Chirk Estate, including Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Sycamore, Horse Chestnut, Beech and Hornbeam. These will be planted sensitively within the parkland landscape as future replacements for veteran trees. A minimum of 10 native Oak trees will be planted at the locations shown in Map 1. A total of 84 trees will be planted across the Estate by end of December 2026.

7. **Details of management or maintenance**

The young trees will be sourced from a small tree nursery on-site, or from Denbighshire County Council tree nursery, and where possible will be grown from seeds of local provenance. They will be placed in plastic tree guards (many of which are pre-used and have been collected in from previous planting). The trees will be further protected from livestock by wooden tree guards built on site. They will be checked annually, with any pruning and weeding required completed during the checks.

8. **Conclusion**

The proposed development at Chirk Castle will have a small impact on some of the existing Green Infrastructure within the garden, and this will be offset with tree planting within the wider Estate. There will be a net biodiversity benefit as a result of this project.

9. Plans and Maps:

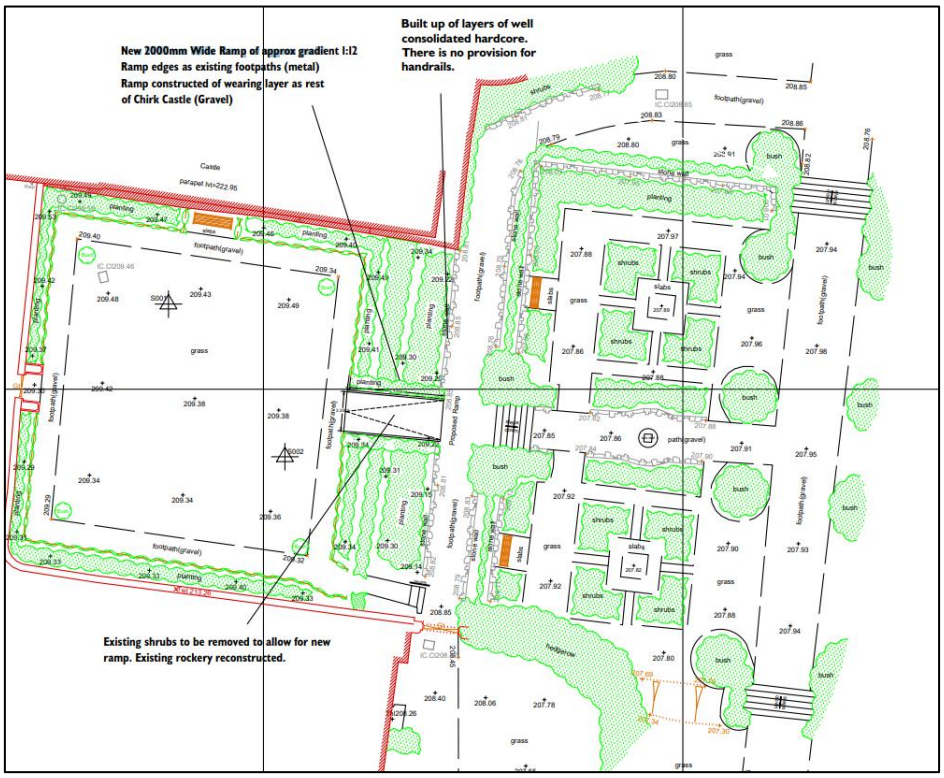
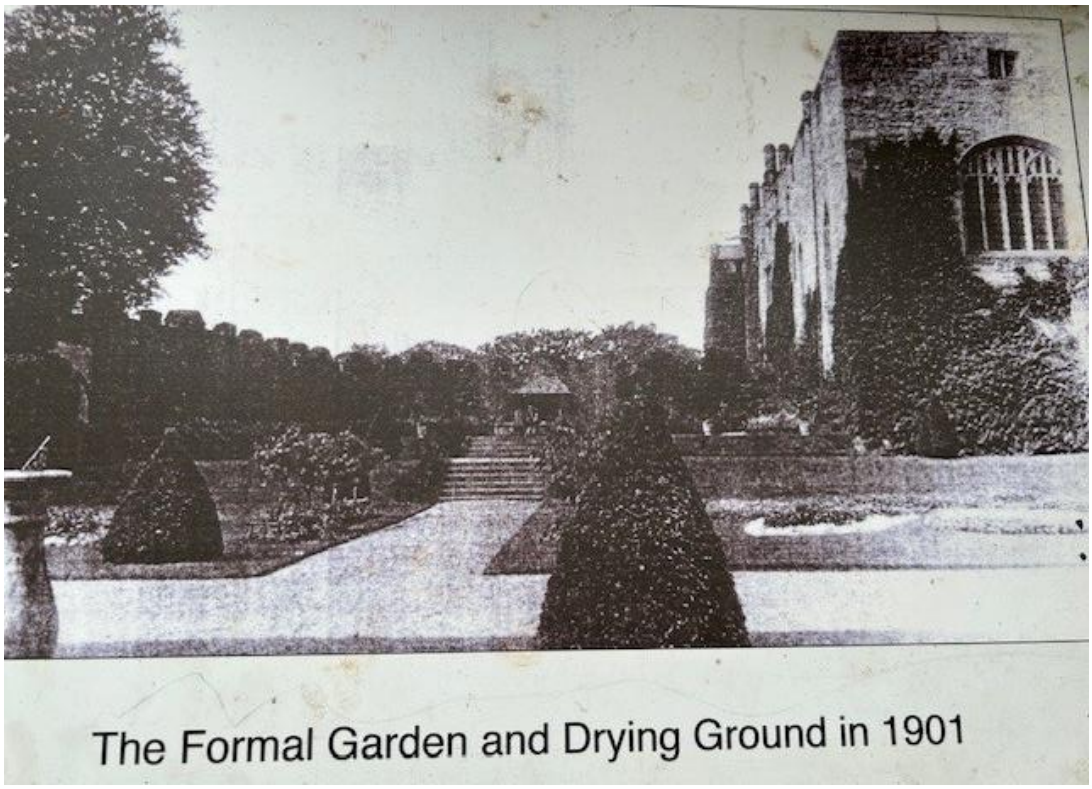


Figure 1: Proposed location of new path

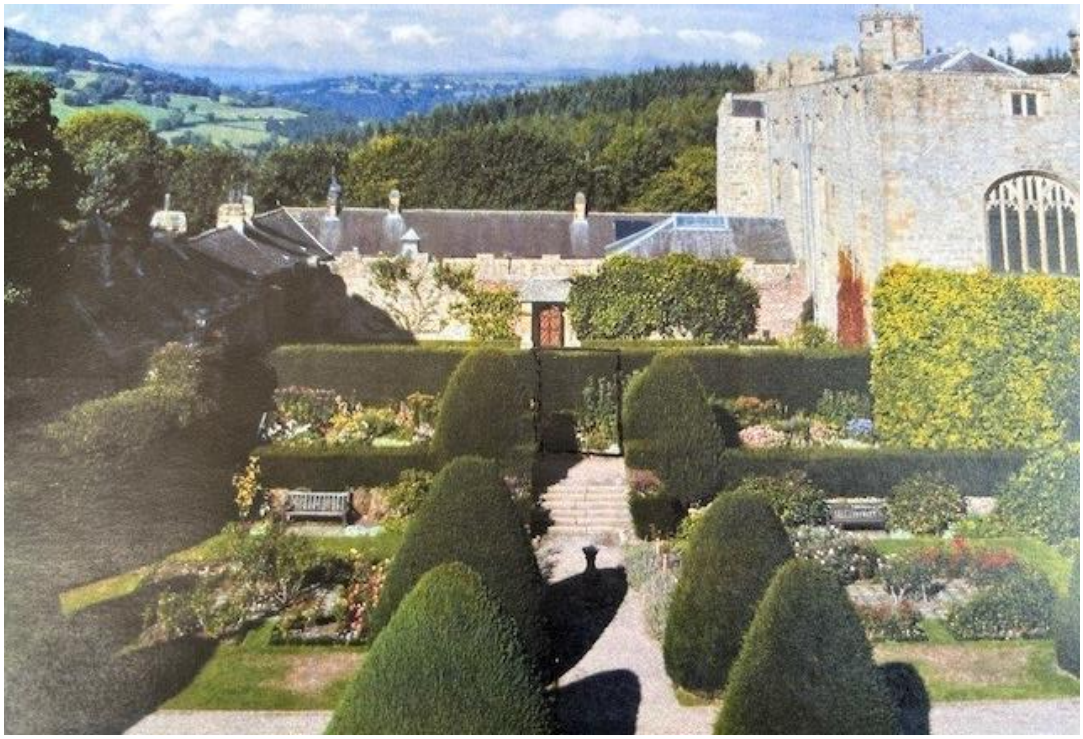


Map 1: Chirk Castle Estate (green boundary), showing the location of the proposed new path (red boundary), and the planting locations for 10 native Oak trees (blue circles).

10. Photographs



Photograph 1: a historic view of the Drying Ground, with step access shown.



Photograph 2: a more recent view of the Drying ground showing the existing Yew hedge and herbaceous border at the top of the steps