

Heritage Design & Access Statement

Nursery Cottage, Knowsley Estate, L34 4AG



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1.0 Introduction

1.1. Brief

This Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Listed Building Consent application, submitted by Savills (UK) Ltd. on behalf of the Knowsley Estate, for the erection of a new agricultural unit on land at Nursery Cottage, Knowsley Estate, L34 4AG, a property that is located in a registered park and garden.

1.2. Property Address

Nursery
Cottage
Knowsley
Estate. L34
4AG



Figure 1. (Google Maps, 2025)

1.3. Location

The proposal is situated in the Knowsley Grade II Listed Park and Garden a Registered Park and Garden (List Entry 1000997) located within the metropolitan borough of Knowsley.

1.4. Background

The proposal considers animal welfare improvements on this working farm.

1.5. Design and Access Proposal

The proposed development comprises the erection of a detached agricultural unit designed to cover and enhance the existing sheep pen facility.

2.0 Heritage Statement

2.1. Design Proposal

The new structure will provide improved shelter and space for livestock, particularly during adverse weather conditions and lambing periods. The building will be constructed using materials appropriate to the rural setting and agricultural function (similar to existing structure on the site), ensuring minimal visual impact in the context of the immediate farm building provision and the wider setting.



Fig. 2 – general view (approach).

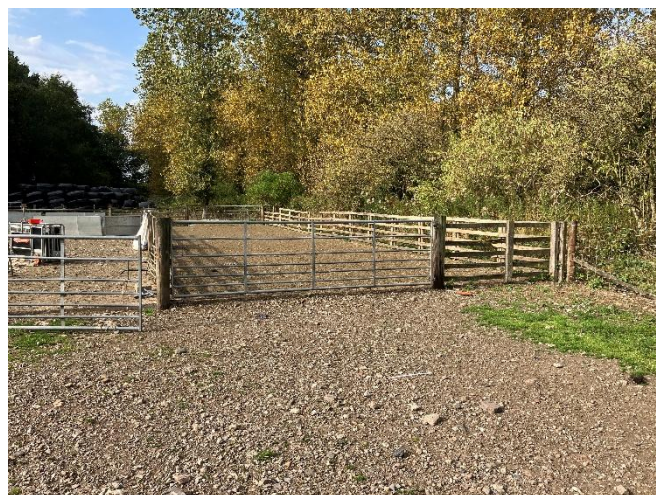


Fig. 3 – further general view (existing sheep pen).

Figure 2, 3. General views. (Savills, 2025)

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2.2. Building Description & Heritage Significance

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000997
Date First Listed: 1st Feb 1986

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:

Knowsley (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish:

Knowsley

District:

St. Helens (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish:

Eccleston

National Grid Reference:

SJ 45296 94884

Details:

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

A park which originated in the C13 and was landscaped during the late C18 incorporating elements of a late C17 and early C18 landscape. Lancelot Brown drew up proposals for the park and kitchen garden in 1775 and 1776 and it is possible that parts of the park were altered to his designs. During the 1830s William Sawrey Gilpin advised the thirteenth Earl of Derby on various matters relating to the park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The earliest reference to a park at Knowsley is in 1292 when it was owned by Robert de Lathom. The estate passed to the Stanleys by marriage in 1385. Sir Thomas Stanley was created Earl of Derby in 1485 by Henry VII as a reward for his support in the battle of Bosworth and the estate has remained in the hands of the family since that time.

LISTING DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Knowsley Park is situated immediately to the south and east of the village of Knowsley within the area enclosed by the A580 to the north, the B5203 to the east, the A57 and M57 to the south and the B5202 to the west. The c 950ha park is on undulating land which rises to the south-east. The boundary is formed by a stone wall which was built by during the 1830s and 1840s by the thirteenth Earl of Derby. It runs around the whole of the perimeter and is screened by belts of trees apart from an area in the south-east corner of the site; here the boundary was altered in 1921 and is now marked by a fence. The northern part of the west boundary, where the wall runs parallel to Ormskirk Road between Dumbrees Lodge and Ormskirk Lodge, appears to follow the line of an avenue shown on an early C18 estate map. The southern boundary was altered and the wall rebuilt in places in connection with the construction of the M57 motorway. The boundary of the park was altered on several occasions before it was walled. The drive connecting Ormskirk Lodge and Huyton Lodge was formerly a public highway. It was stopped up and the land to the west of it taken into the park in 1777. At some point during the C18 the southern boundary was extended south from a line shown on an early C18 estate map, enclosing an area now occupied by paddocks south of Riding Hill. The setting is urban and suburban on the south and west sides and agricultural elsewhere.

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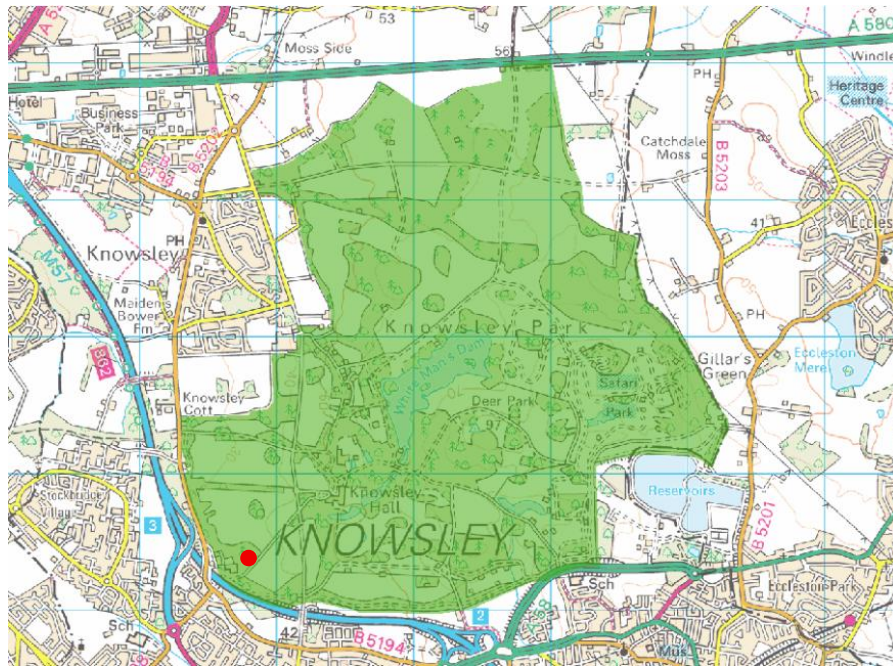


Figure 4. Historic England List Entry Location Plan (Historic England, 2024), the red dot illustrates the proposed development area.

2.3. Statement of Significance

Knowsley Park is a Grade II registered historic park and garden of national importance, recognised for its special historic and landscape interest. The estate originated in the 13th century and was substantially remodelled during the late 18th century, incorporating earlier design elements. It is closely associated with prominent figures in English landscape design, notably Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, who prepared proposals for the park and kitchen garden in 1775–1776, and William Sawrey Gilpin, who advised the 13th Earl of Derby in the 1830s. These interventions reflect key phases in the evolution of English landscape design, including the transition from formal layouts to the naturalistic style championed by Brown.

The park retains significant historic features, including serpentine lakes, tree belts, and clumps characteristic of Brown's approach, alongside later 19th-century enhancements. Its historic association with the Stanley family, Earls of Derby, adds considerable commemorative and associative value, linking the site to political and cultural history. The estate's scale (c.950 hectares) and survival of designed elements contribute to its aesthetic and evidential value, offering insight into elite landscape design and estate management practices over several centuries.

As a designated heritage asset, Knowsley Park's significance lies in:

- Historic interest: Continuous development since the medieval period, with major phases in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- Associative value: Links to Capability Brown and Gilpin, key figures in English landscape history.
- Aesthetic value: Cohesive designed landscape incorporating water features, woodland belts, and pleasure grounds.
- Group value: Relationship with Knowsley Hall and associated structures, forming an integrated historic estate.

The existing sheep pens occupy a minor, utilitarian area within the wider park and do not contribute positively to its historic character. Any new agricultural development must therefore be sympathetically designed, ensuring minimal impact on the park's historic layout, views, and setting, and preserving its landscape character and evidential value.

2.4. Impact assessment

The proposed development involves 'over roofing' existing sheep pens with a new agricultural unit within the boundary of Knowsley Park, a Grade II registered historic park and garden. While the sheep pens are utilitarian and make no positive contribution to the historic landscape, the introduction of a new structure has the potential to affect the park's historic character, setting, and views.

Potential Impacts:

- Visual Impact: The new agricultural unit may introduce a modern built form into an area historically designed for open pastoral use, potentially disrupting the park's naturalistic character and long views.
- Historic Landscape Integrity: The development could alter the spatial relationship between designed elements, particularly if located near tree belts or water features associated with Capability Brown's design principles.
- Cumulative Change: Incremental modern interventions risk eroding the legibility of the historic design over time.

Mitigation Measures:

- Location and Orientation: the unit has been positioned on the footprint of the existing pens to avoid encroachment into historically significant areas.
- Design Approach: materials, colours, and roof profiles have been selected to blend with the rural character and minimise visual intrusion, with similar appearance to existing adjacent agricultural structures.
- Screening: existing native planting will soften views and maintain the park's naturalistic aesthetic in this working farm setting.
- Reversibility: the structure is designed so it can be removed without permanent harm to the historic landscape.

2.5. Conclusion

The proposed work at Nursery Cottage, Knowsley Estate, L34 4AG, comprises the erection of a detached agricultural unit over the existing sheep pen provision. With careful design and mitigation, the proposal is considered to have a low level of harm to the significance of Knowsley Park, in line with NPPF paragraph 202, which requires that less than substantial harm be weighed against public benefits. The agricultural unit supports the ongoing viability of estate farming, which is historically associated with the park's function and character.

Appendix A

Site Plans, Floor Layout Plans, Elevations (submitted as separate document)
