

## MANOR DRIVE

Manor Drive is probably one of the few roads so named that actually is the driveway to a Manor! The fine, massive stone gateposts and high dressed stone curved walls indicate the once grand entrance to the drive which is located off the Square on Church Street.

The first part of the drive has an inappropriately suburban character, given by the modern kerbed pavements. These are the only sections of modern pavement in the area and in fact are mostly unused as the traffic is light and most people walk in the road.

The dwellings on the left side are modern with fenced boundaries. On the right is the older house called The Barn House. Stone built and sympathetically extended, it has an attractive curved wall leading into Rowlands Close, a small private road of five modern detached houses built on the site of Druce's orchard, once part of Sycamore House land. The drive is named after Rowland George who built the initial pair dwellings in about 1960. The first two houses are similarly built in the Arts and Craft style with rendered elevations and gabled upper storey. Beyond, on slightly higher ground are three differently styled bungalows which enjoy long views to Solsbury Hill. The designs are not typical of the village but the dense mature landscape gives a semi-rural character, reinforced by the planted verge and lack of street lighting. Rowlands Close and No 1 Manor Drive are outside the Conservation Area

Beyond Rowlands Close, Manor Drive becomes a gravelled low-key vehicular access leading only to the dwellings beyond. These are on the left side of the drive with the right opening out to the manor field rising up to meet the Mountain Wood area. The long stone elevation of the dwelling fronting the field is particularly attractive. The drive culminates unceremoniously with the parking area to Bathford Manor.

Built of local stone in the 1770's for the Tyndale family, the manor house was originally only half its present size. After several changes of ownership and its use by Vickers-Armstrong during WW2, the manor estate was purchased by Bathavon Rural District Council. The house was converted into flats and the land developed principally for Dovers Park and Mountain Wood housing estates. The house, although much altered, remains an attractive building and a focal point of this area.

The sloping open grassed area in front is the largest public green space in this part of the village. It is a very pleasant area and is well used by residents. The northern part of the area is used as a playing field by the school. There are several fine mature trees in the area. There are lovely views from the top of the field across to Solsbury Hill and the area would benefit from some bench seating. Dog fouling is a problem although most owners are respectful.

A footpath leads from Manor Drive up to Birdcage Walk above. Due to the incline, the path is partly formed of basic timber steps cut into the grass, which become slippery when wet and very muddy and difficult to use in the winter. Disabled access is practically impossible.

Birdcage Walk is the path which runs along the top of the slope and links Mountain Wood to Dovers Park. It is contained along much of its length by timber and chicken wire fencing which can detract from the attractiveness of the area. The path is open at the south part, at the top of the Manor Field. Beyond the field, near the Pepperpot Pre-school, is an attractive section with mature foliage and wildlife but it suffers from littering. Birdcage Walk is beautiful in summer but lack of lighting makes use after dark difficult.

At the far northern end of the manor area, fronting Dovers Park, is the large two storey modern building formerly known as 'Tyndale' - until recently an elderly person's care home. The building currently has a temporary use and awaits further reuse. Some desire has been expressed by residents that the building or site be used for low cost housing for local people. The building itself is of reconstructed stone and has little architectural merit but a lovely garden with many mature trees.

The area generally is attractive open and low density, despite being in the centre of the village. The slightly suburban character of parts of this area belies the proximity of the historic core but the well established later development and mature landscape have formed a quality of their own.



A glimpse into Rowlands Close

## SIGNIFICANT FEATURES for the Manor Drive area

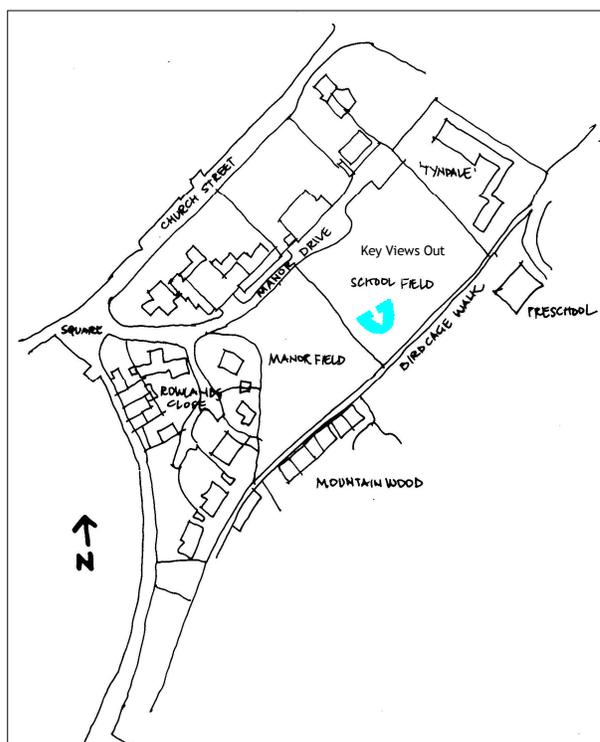
- Topography:** Level along Manor Drive, then sloping up towards Mountain Wood to the southeast. Manor Drive has a gentle curve at beginning. Rowlands Close on slight rise towards south.
- Access:** No through vehicular route, generally private. Drive is historic access to Manor. Rowlands Close modern cul-de-sac. Rural character compromised by short section of modern raised pavement at junction with Church Street but enhanced by shared gravel surface and absence of street lighting and road markings. Well used footpath links to Dovers Park and Mountain Wood.
- Settlement:** Bathford Manor is historic core of area. Most other development late 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly detached single and two storeys. No particular settlement pattern, modern buildings located to take advantage of topography and views.
- Morphology:** Bathford Manor diminished in stature and original building has changed but remains important landmark. Modern development in previously open adjacent areas. Most new buildings discreetly sited.
- Activities:** Quiet, mixed size, residential. Public open space adjacent.
- Space:** Generally open character with low density development, despite central village location. Panoramic views towards Solsbury Hill and Bannerdown from Manor Field. Contained views along Birdcage Walk. Apart from fine walls at entrance to Manor Drive, and some other walls on the approach to Manor, area lacking in stone walls. Mature foliage in gardens very important to character of area.
- Buildings:** Partly within the Conservation Area. Mostly modern detached one and two storey dwellings with no particular architectural character. No particular development pattern; location of buildings takes advantage of topography and views. Landmark historic buildings at culmination of Manor Drive.
- Material/Detail:** Older buildings of local stone with traditional detailing. Modern buildings in real or reconstructed stone and render, mostly lacking in traditional details.

### GUIDANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure retention of remaining rural character of Manor Drive; resist introduction of pavements, road markings and street lighting.
- No development on open green areas.
- Protect and maintain stone boundary walls.
- Resist additional large scale development.
- Encourage extensions to be designed respecting village character using natural materials where appropriate and high quality design.
- Encourage retention and management of existing mature trees, particularly those outside of the Conservation Area.
- Encourage upkeep of fencing to Birdcage Walk and Manor Field.
- Ensure setting of existing landmark building is retained.

### POTENTIAL ACTIONS & ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES

- Site benches and possibly litter bins in appropriate locations.
- Improve footpath and steps for safer use. Potential for improved disabled access.
- Improve Birdcage Walk by clearing encroaching vegetation regularly and adding appropriate lighting.
- Lobby for Local Authority grant aid for repairs to stone walls.



Sketch map of the Manor Drive area.

Manor Drive area pictures



Mature trees on the Manor Field.



The Manor and adjacent cottages.



Birdcage Walk looking towards Mountain Wood bungalows.



School playing field and Manor Field steps.



Newer properties on Manor Drive with suburban pavement.



Overgrown natural area at top of school field.



Birdcage Walk from Dovers Park.



The former Tynedale building.



Manor Field with views towards Bathampton Down.



Manor Drive entrance pillars and the stone wall.