

**PROTECTING HISTORIC PARKS AND  
GARDENS  
"THE FULL MONTY"**

Margie Hoffnung, Conservation  
Officer,  
The Gardens Trust

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018  
The Goods Shed, Tetbury, Glos



## **THE GARDENS TRUST OBJECTIVES**

- To promote the study of the history of gardens and gardening, landscape gardening and horticulture in all its aspects
- To promote the protection and conservation of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes and to promote and advise on their conservation
- To promote County Gardens Trusts and through them education, appreciation and involvement of the public in matters connected with the arts and sciences of garden land.
- To encourage the creation of new parks, gardens and designed landscapes



In order to fulfil these objectives the Gardens Trust's Board has various committees which deal with different aspects of our remit. The Conservation Committee, which meets 4 times a year fulfils this role with regard to planning matters. There are 10 members, drawn from many fields, with a wide variety of expertise, some from LPA backgrounds, some academic, some conservation professionals, as well as two GT staff members : The Conservation Officer (MHo) and the Conservation Casework Manager (Alison Allighan). observers ( incl Jenifer White from HE) are also generally present and occasionally members of other GT Committees attend.

## **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

- Fulfilling the requirements of being a statutory consultee on planning applications impacting on RPGs
- Registering planning application consultations and gathering information on the outcomes and decisions
- Maintaining the Casework Log
- Involving and supporting CGTs to respond in appropriate cases
- Commenting on major planning applications



The GT has 2 conservation employees : Alison Allighan, the Conservation Casework Manager (CCM) who puts together our weekly casework log, and Margie Hoffnung, the Conservation Officer (CO) whose job is to make sure that as far as possible, all applications received by the GT are responded to appropriately. We will look at these objectives one by one

## THE CASEWORK LOG REGISTERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Unique database which records all planning consultations received by the GHS/GT since April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2002 and the responses made

Calverley Park and Calverley Grounds	Kent	Tunbridge Wells BC	18/00076/FULL <a href="http://www.tunbridge-wells.gov.uk/apsearch">www.tunbridge-wells.gov.uk/apsearch</a>	E17/1326	16/01/2018	II	PLANNING APPLICATION Full planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to include the demolition of existing buildings (the Great Hall car park, the dental surgery in Calverley Grounds and the toilet block in Calverley Grounds) and provision of new offices (including Council offices, Council Chamber and commercial office space), theatre, underground car parking, and associated landscaping, infrastructure and associated works, including temporary site compound. Civic Development Site, Mount Pleasant Avenue, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. OFFICE/COMMERCIAL Lynda Middlemiss 01892 554055
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**Crucial to get applications onto Casework Log so they are appropriately responded to and included in figures submitted to Historic England**

Excerpt from Casework Log (18.1.18) which is put together and distributed to all CGTs and other appropriate organisations weekly by the CCM. Online documentation rarely gives a complete picture of how an RPG might be affected. The limited hours of GT staff (less than one full week's worth of hours between us) mean that CGT's research and local knowledge is invaluable for giving better picture of the reality and enabling the CO to deliver well considered responses. Developers often have inadequate documentation which glosses over inconvenient facts and may not give true indication of extent of harm. CCM sends this document to all CGTs and other relevant organisations every week. Each application is allocated a category (here Office/Commercial) which is used to monitor trends and statistics. These categories would also include things like AGRICULTURAL, EDUCATION, HOTELS etc. The CCM collates all responses and keeps the Casework Log up to date. To date (Feb 2018) approximately 22,000 cases logged. During 2017 the whole website has been overhauled and is now searchable by property, application type, by specific words etc. We hope this will be a v useful tool for CGTs. The CCM is training selected CGTs to be able to enter their own responses. It is hoped that eventually all CGTs will be able to use the Log in this way.

## THE CASEWORK LOG

### CONSERVATION CASEWORK MANAGER'S DUTIES

- . Follows up any applications with CGTs where degree of harm uncertain
- . CGTs let her know whether OK for a 'no comment' response
- . In many instances, examination of a planning application ends in the conclusion that there is no need to respond with comments. CCM will then send a 'No Comment' response as this will mean that the planning officer is not waiting for a response, and will make it clear that the Gardens Trust and County Gardens Trusts are nevertheless alert to threats.



CCM liaises with individual CGTs and if they are not going to comment on an application the CCM sends the 'No Comment' response on behalf of the GT. The GT has template response letters which CCM sends out regularly (also on GT website) along with a summary monthly *Casework Notes* document which lists in full all responses made to planning applications during the previous month both from individual CGTs and also the GT.

## **CONSERVATION OFFICER ROLE**

- . Difficult, major or sensitive applications are considered by the CO
- . Having read all the online documentation CO will summarise thoughts in email to CGT and after consultation with them will draft response
- . If necessary will consult with other Conservation Committee members, liaise with HE, other Amenity Societies or relevant experts
- . CO and CGTs increasingly are involved in Pre-App discussions which is extremely helpful



CCM will forward applications likely to be troublesome to CO immediately upon receipt. CO will then liaise directly with relevant CGT and get a local perspective. CO can v rarely visit sites in person as only has 2 days a week to cover the whole of England, so relies heavily upon CGT's local knowledge. In some instances where additional expertise is required members of the Conservation Committee or other experts living more locally to the site will visit on behalf of the GT, to help the CO compose a suitable response. CO also works 2 days a week for HLP which is invaluable as I get to know them all and much of this work is tied up in strong relationships between the GT/CGTs/other amenity groups etc.

## **PROBLEMS**

- 33% Drop in conservation staff in Local Authorities since 2006
- Remaining staff time poor
- Staff lack in-depth conservation knowledge
- Staff often unaware of GT as statutory consultee & do not always notify us of applications
- Rapid staff change over means that carefully nurtured relationships with LAs often short lived



These invaluable statistics come from a PhD thesis written by Victoria Thompson, now Head of Planning at HE. The research quantified what had been anecdotally felt by CGTs and the GT.

## THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

- Role of statutory consultees poorly understood
- 82% of LAs did not have specific guidance on HP&G set out in their Supplementary Planning Documents
- 25% of LAs have no officer with specific responsibility for HP&G and only 2% have a dedicated officer for this
- 57% of LAs who required Statement of Significance (SOS) did not then check the adequacy of statements before validating the application
- Significance poorly understood
- Parks & Gardens perceived as low profile assets
- 32% of LAs were unable to correctly quantify the number of registered parks & gardens in their area (with the general tendency being to under-estimate)



Won't dwell on all these depressing facts - underlines even more just how difficult a task we all face. What are the positives from the research?



## **POSITIVES**

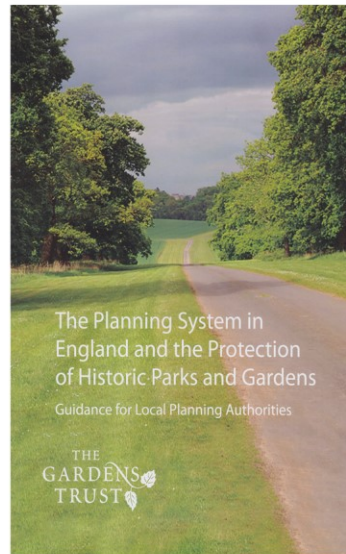
- Increased awareness of existence of HP&Gs & higher profile of CGTs
- Most LAs consult their HERs when responding to applications
- Many LAs would welcome further support in the development of their understanding of HP&Gs and guidance of the assessment of significance
- 70% of responding LAs require submission of SOS before relevant applications can be validated



Many good things are happening, but what has the GT done to help LPAs?

## **PLANNING LEAFLET**

Sent out to all LPAs by the GT and as a 'reminder' if the GT not consulted



This leaflet is available both as a PDF and also in hard copy. Much thought went into how much detail to include : too much would risk it being chucked way; too little would not be useful enough.

## PLANNING LEAFLET FROM THE GARDENS TRUST

### ***"The Planning System and the Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens: What You Need to Know"***

- . The Importance of RP&G/listing explained
- . Statutory Consultation Requirements
- . Dealing with planning applications – clear LPA duties identified
- . Determining Significance – HE conservation principles
- . Checklist of planning stages and actions required at each
- . Other tools : Local Plans/Local lists/CGTs/GT/HE including contact information









These are the basic things covered within the Planning leaflet. Sets out some of the context for the protection of HP&G and advises how LPAs can meet their obligations under the planning system. Explains the duties of LPAs and uses HE Conservation Principles to show how to determine Significance. There is a checklist of various stages in planning application and it documents the actions require at each stage. Rounds it off with a host of useful contact organisations.



THE GT HAS REVAMPED IT'S WEBSITE. AS FAR AS THE PLANNING/CONSERVATION WORK IS CONCERNED ON THE HOME PAGE YOU CAN SEE THE 'RESOURCE HUB'. IF YOU CLICK ON THAT, IT OPENS UP TO A WHOLE MASS OF INFORMATION, FROM MONTHLY CASEWORK LOG SUMMARIES SHOWING APPLICATIONS AND RESPONSES, HANDOUTS ON MANY ASPECTS OF GT WORK, PRESENTATIONS FROM OUR VARIOUS TRAINING DAYS AND MEET-UPS

**PLANNING TRAINING**

Below you can download materials from planning training events that we have run. Simply click the name of the document to download the file.

-  Westonbirt 201016 Protecting Historic Parks and Gardens: It's a Piece of Cake Programme
-  Westonbirt 201016 Presentation Andy Brown, Historic England 'Vital Ingredients for Conserving Parks and Gardens'
-  Westonbirt 201016 Presentation, Margie Hoffnung, Gardens Trust, 'A Recipe for Success'
-  Westonbirt 201016 Presentation David Lambert 'Who Stole the Cherry off the Cake: Threats to Historic Parks and Gardens'
-  Westonbirt 201016 Presentation, Margie Hoffnung, Gardens Trust 'Introduction to History of Gardens at Westonbirt'
-  Westonbirt 201016 Presentation Kim Auston, Historic England 'Is it a Question of Taste'

**TRAINING**

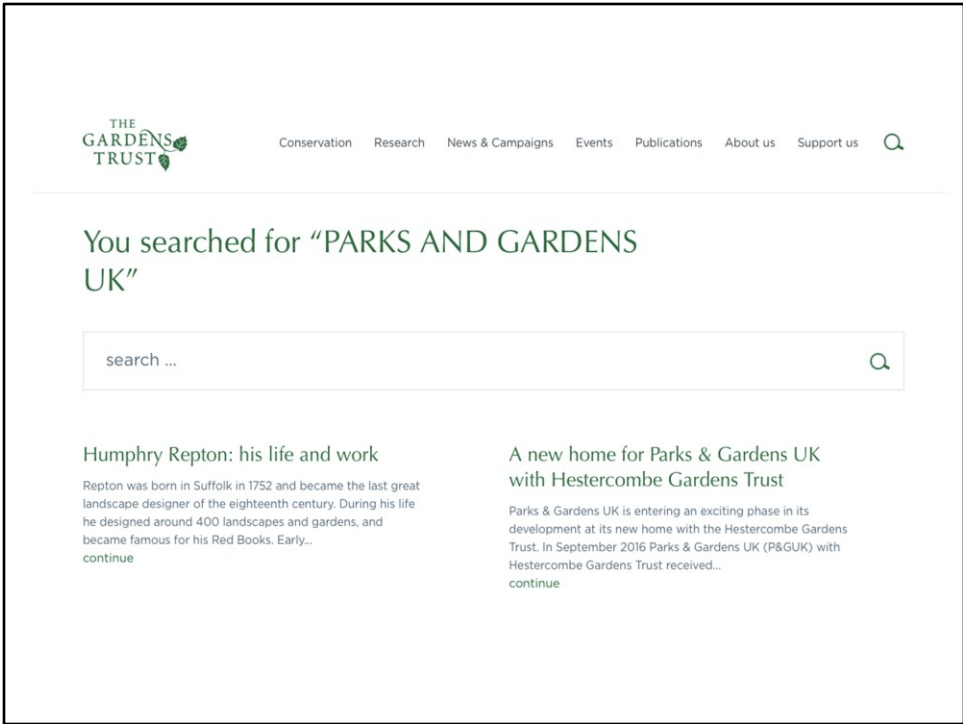
NETWORKING

GUIDANCE

CAMPAIGNS AND CELEBRATIONS

**THE GARDENS TRUST**

IF YOU GO ONTO RESOURCE HUB AND SCROLL DOWN THROUGH THE OPTIONS YOU WILL SEE TRAINING AND HERE IS JUST A SELECTION OF A FEW OF THE ITEMS ON THAT. SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE COME TO OUR INTRODUCTORY PLANNING DAY AT WESTONBIRT, AND HERE ARE THE PRESENTATIONS WHICH YOU ARE FREE TO USE YOURSELVES. YOU CAN SPEND A HAPPY HOUR OR SO LOOKING AT WHAT'S AVAILABLE AND IT'S CONSTANTLY UPDATED. TODAY'S PRESENTATIONS WILL BE PUT ON HERE SHORTLY.



Search facility. If you click on the magnifying glass icon you can type in your search term. Here you can see I have searched for Parks & Gardens UK – and if you click on the link you will see what is happening with the new P&GUK website.

COMMUNICATE

COMMUNICATE

COMMUNICATE



There are so few of us working to protect the historic designed landscapes we all so treasure, that we need to talk to each other. Between us we know an awful lot and it's amazing what we can achieve. Let's be super positive and COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE