



**Schrödinger's Park:
When is a Park not a Park?
(Victoria Tower Gardens progress report)**

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19th November 2018



London Parks & Gardens Trust



Good afternoon. I am delighted to have been invited by the Gardens Trust to talk about the London Parks and Gardens Trust experience of campaigning on behalf of a small historic public park in central London. It is a story without a clear conclusion – so your hearing of it as it is being written.

The Trust is a CGT. It responds to planning issues across the whole of Greater London – that's 33 London Boroughs. When I joined the Trust in August 2016, the Trust was made up of a variety of different working groups focused on education, research and activities, but very little to do with planning...and these groups acted more or less autonomously. One of the first things I was tasked with doing was reconsidering how the Trust could revive its planning activities which is a core remit of a County Gardens Trust. Little did we know then that we would shortly be embroiled in a very large campaign – at that time the Garden Bridge was still an ongoing prospect and something the Trust was concerned about but had not really got involved with. But before I go on to explain about our campaign a little bit more about the Trust...



London Parks & Gardens Trust

Purpose

Champion

- Responding to planning applications
- Campaigns
- Story telling & narratives
- Publishing knowledge
- Protecting & supporting
- Influencing presence

Celebrate

- Open Garden Squares Weekend
- Walks, tours & talks
- Thanking volunteers
- Engaging and collaborating with others
- Events & sharing

Cultivate

- Learning and training
- Research and interpretation
- Curiosity and discovery
- Academic and community

Over the course of the last year the Trust has been working to consult and develop it's Strategic Direction. It is distilled into 3 areas of overlapping work:

- 1) Championing historic parks
- 2) Cultivating knowledge about parks, gardens and greenspace and contributing to the Historic Environment Record – in London we have the benefit of the Inventory also known as London Gardens Online. A body of research built up since the Trust's inception in 1994 that documents historic parks and gardens across London made available to the public for free.
- 3) And also Celebrating these wonderful green spaces. For this the Trust runs many activities throughout the year Lectures and guided walks but it's biggest event is Open Garden Squares Weekend...



Open Garden Squares Weekend 2019

'Quality rather than quantity'

8th and 9th June

- Opening 100-120 normally closed green spaces of outstanding horticultural merit
- All in central London – across 9 boroughs



- This is the major fundraising event for the Trust – but it is also a huge financial risk. I have given separate talks on this alone but for today, the points to note are that
- In 2017 we opened over 230 hidden, secret and little-known gardens to the public across 27 of our local authorities.
- This year we are focussing on the truly hidden and closed spaces that most people do not have access to – and opening them up for one special weekend. We have about 110 gardens registered to join – all in central London. We are keen to celebrate and give access to spaces which are commercially or communally owned but normally kept private.
- These spaces take a variety of forms, from allotments such as this one – Cable Street
- To..

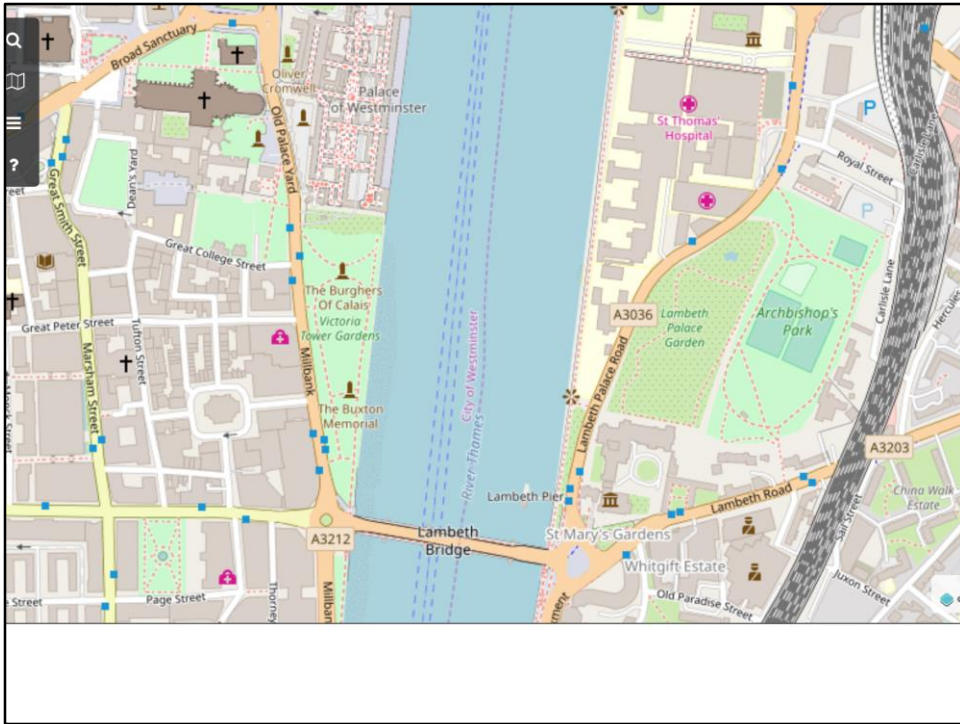


Major roof gardens such as this one in the City of London,
From the historic and traditional to the new and experimental.
Gardens include: private gardens, urban wildlife and ecology centres, as well
as gardens belonging to historic buildings, institutions, restaurants, schools
and shops. We represent them all. So what has this got to do with a small
public park in Westminster?



This map produced by Greenspace Information for the proposed Greater London National Park. It shows only rivers and green space and features no roads, buildings or other structures.

47% of London is greenspace but...of that space only 17-18% is public open space and only 5-6% is classified as a public park





What makes this a public park?

- Green (lawn and trees)
- Designed landscape
- Open air – access to daylight
- People enjoying themselves
- Free
- Perimeter surrounded by features: roads, buildings, river etc









Field and Mawson temporary structure – 5 years planning permission

Gardens are located across 27 London boroughs and range from community allotments to roof gardens

From the historic and traditional to the new and experimental.

Gardens include: private gardens, urban wildlife and ecology centres, as well as gardens belonging to historic buildings, institutions, restaurants, schools and shops.













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