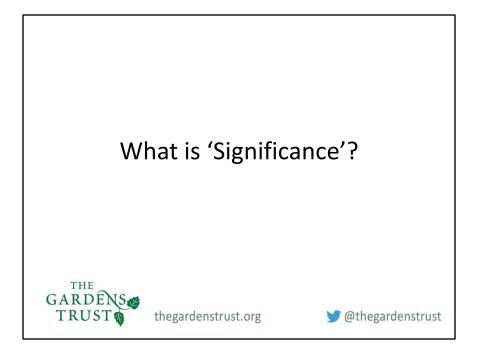
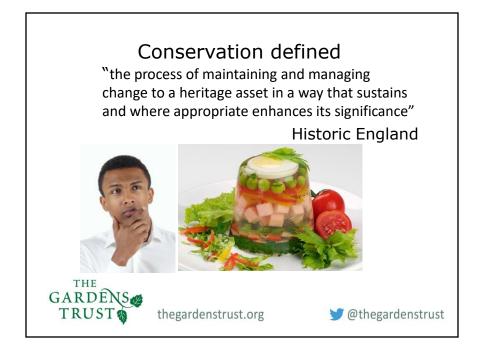


In the conservation world there is something called 'Significance', which has a more specific meaning than when we use the word in every day parlance.

As we are about to see, the concept of Significance, and therefore the pursuit and use of Statements of Significance runs throughout conservation work.

It's one thing spending months or years researching a site so thoroughly that we generate 100s of pages and can say where every plant and path was, and the precise dates of every owner, but in order to make that research relevant and useful for today's conservation scene, we need to be able to condense and edit that information into a pithy description of its significance – and this is what Statements of Significance are.

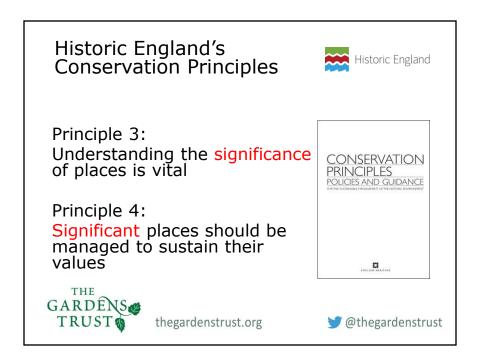




Let's start by getting back to basics . You can see that Significance stars in HE's definition of conservation.

Clearly, significance is key here – not preserving asset's physicality exactly as is, is more sophisticated than that, is about protecting what's special.

It is not about preserving things in aspic! (NB Aspic is a jelly that can be used to preserve food for a very long time.... But does anyone actually want to eat the food in aspic?!)

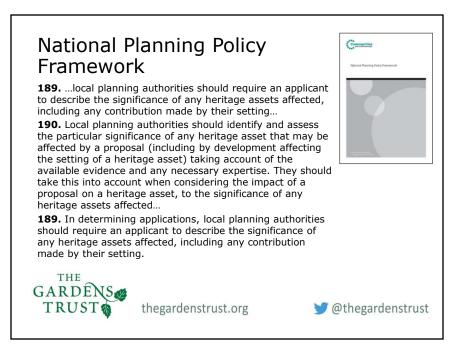


Let's look at significance in the HE Conservation Principles, which are intended to guide HE staff and others in the sector on best practice, so they are the gold standard of conservation work to which we all aspire.

HE is clear that the 'idea of significance lies at the core of these principles' They talk about things like the importance of the historic environment being for all of us, and the need for informed and informing decisions, but Principles 3 and 4 are most relevant to us today:

3 – understanding significance of places is vital In understanding what is important about a place, we can make better judgements and decisions on its future
 4 – significant places managed to sustain their values Once values and then significance of a place are understood, conservation management can contribute to ensuring that change is managed to look after these aspects for future generations

In other words, conservation is not about protecting every detail of how the environment is physically, but rather about really understanding the heritage asset and protecting what is important about it. (You can see how it is similar to the issue of Setting, whereby conservation isn't just about preserving the obvious fabric of a heritage asset but rather is about something more subtle.)



Now for the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - a policy from the Department of Communities and Local Government to guide local authority planning decisions.

NPPF 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Significance crops up the whole way through the heritage section of the NPPF, and here are a few favourite paragraphs. These ones talk about the importance of understanding the significance of a site.

189 In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proportion their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assets and uses where necessary....

190. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

189. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.



Effect of development proposals on historic parks and gardens' significance is how we now measure impact.

195. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a **designated** heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, ...

197. The effect of an application on the significance of a **non-designated** heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.



Here are some slides to show how CGTs could use Statements of Significance, or at least an understanding of significance



Help assess the impact of development on a landscape. Conservation is now about managing change to a site's significance rather than necessarily preserving in aspic. A planning application may not be to our taste but by recognising a site's true significance we may be able to establish that actually a large new extension in the pretty 1970s rose garden of an 18th century house with a Brown landscape 'round the other side' may not be as devastating as we thought,

By understanding significance and using this as a way of assessing impact, we can prompt ourselves to be pragmatic rather than dogmatic in our conservation work. Conversely, we may realise that the litterbin that has just been put in the middle of the Capability Brown view may actually have far more of a detrimental impact on the site's real value and significance.

Being able to assess a development against a site's significance, rather than just whether it is new, or big, will allow us to help manage rather than prevent change, prompting ourselves to be pragmatic rather than dogmatic in our conservation work.



Argue our case when commenting on planning applications.

- Remember the NPPF and how much weight you're allowed to give impact on significance in commenting on an application.
- In NPPF the developer is required to lay out the impact of the proposals on the significance of the site.
- If they cannot identify what is significant about the site this leaves it vulnerable to erosion and loss.
- And if we can tap into Significance, our letters will press all the right buttons.
- The GT's template letters for you to comment on planning applications include a
 place to relate the proposal to significance, and this is standard best practice

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Local list planning application template response

You may wish to use this template letter when commenting on a planning application that affects a historic park or garden that is not nationally designated on the Register of Parks and Gardens, but which is of local interest, ideally but not necessarily included on a recognised Local List or in the Historic Environment Record.

Items requiring amendment by the writer are presented in italics, with notes for your guidance in [], which will need deleting before completion. We have highlighted key words as a reminder that the ideal structure for a letter is SSIPP (Summary, Significance, Impact, Policy, Position).

Date Head of Development Management Address [mark for the attention of the case officer if you have the name]

Dear Sir,

14/xxx (application details)

We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on this application, which has a material impact on the significance of [name the site], which is identified by us as of local importance, and contained within the Trust's Local List of important parks and gardens. [Amend this as appropriate depending on how you describe your county's UnRegistered sites of interest. Say if your List of Parks and Gardens has been accepted or adopted by the planning authority, or if the site has been incorporated into the County HER]

We write to object/support/other stance this application, which will [summarise impact in one sentence].

[Add a short paragraph on your County Gardens Trust, and how it sees its role. Mention that it is a member of the national Gardens Trust.] For further information, we refer you to the Gardens Trust publication The Planning System in England and the Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens (2016), which is available online at www.thegardenstrust.org

We have made a site visit [if you have] and undertaken further research [say what, if relevant]. The **significance** of [site name] is [include a brief description of the site's significance. Your CGT's researchers may already have this, or it may be on the HER entry. If not, you should try to write one, using the HLP guidance on Significance on the Resource Hub at www.thegardenstrust.org. You can also include the relevant entry

from your Local List or gazetteer if it helps.]

[Use the following paragraphs to state the proposal's **impact** on the site's significance – this will form the bulk of your letter. If you are struggling to determine this, it might be because the applicant has inadequately addressed the requirement to provide an analysis of the site's significance and the impact of the proposal on this significance, eg in an environmental, heritage, or design and access statement? If this is the case, you can say so and request that the applicant provides this information before the application is considered.]

There is national and local **policy** of relevance to this application. At a national level, we refer you to National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph *[insert paragraph number here, choosing one from Section 12. Relevant extracts from the NPPF are given in a handout on the Resource Hub at www.thegardenstrust.org] [Explain how the proposal does or does not comply with the NPPF paragraph.] Locally, Local Plan policy/ies [say what the policy is, and from which version of which document it comes] is relevant to this proposal. [Explain how the proposal does or does or does not comply with the Local Plan policy.]*

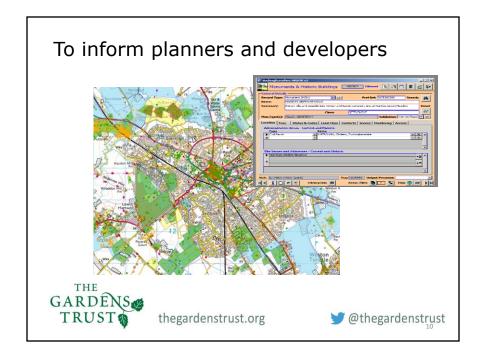
[Having previously stated the impact of the proposal, you now need to state your **position**. Clearly state whether you are objecting or supporting, or taking another stance, and summarise why, without repeating the impact paragraphs.]

We would be grateful to be advised of your decision, or if further information is submitted. Please note that we would like to speak at planning committee [delete if you would not be willing].

Yours faithfully

[Avoid signing the letter in a personal capacity. If at all possible, try to get it nominally signed by your CGT's Secretary or Chair to emphasise that it is an official response that has been through a sign-off process]

originally issued 2013, revised November 2014, revised March 2017]



Contribute appropriately to Historic Environment Records.

They are used by local planning authority officers to help inform their decisions and function best when sites have a Statement of Significance to represent them. If we can put our research into the HER with a SoS, then we are giving it wings as a conservation tool.

What are HERs?: A county-based collection of information, textual and mapped, covering thousands of archaeological sites, fieldwork and other elements of the historic environment of the county.

This picture is a screen grab of part of an entry.

They will attempt to gather all the different designations and features of the heritage asset.

Get material from lots of different sources, including specialist academic groups such as CGTs.

2 main uses – as material for academics, researchers etc, but also to inform planners and planning decisions.

When a planner receives a planning application, you will remember that NPPF requires them to assess it against the heritage asset's Significance – NPPF 187. Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record.

This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to ... assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment...

NPPF 188. Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.

They will need to know more about the heritage asset, in a hurry, and will go to the HER as their main port of call.

If we have ensured that the very best information is in the HER, then we will have armed our planners with the tools they need to assess and perhaps reject that application.

Good argument for making sure that your CGT's research doesn't only get put into a neat list on your website, or even beautiful coffee table book, but also gets put onto the HER.

Fundamentally:

Planners are busy, stretched, under-resourced and usually historic designed landscapes aren't their specialist subject

They will not have the time to read a dissertation and make their own judgment on a site's Significance, so you have only given them a (rather unwieldy) half of the tool.

But if you can head your research with a brief Statement of Significance (we're talking about sentences rather than pages) – the harassed planner can whizz in, understand it immediately, and use it exactly where it is needed in assessing the planning application.

So, clearly if we can assess and summarise Significance as part of our research, and make that available through the HERs, our research can have a direct application in the conservation of historic designed landscapes.



Explain the value of a site concisely for Local Plans . Looked at how local plans can give local sites a degree of protection, and yet again, these function best if the site entries come with a SoS.

And a quick word about Local Listing.

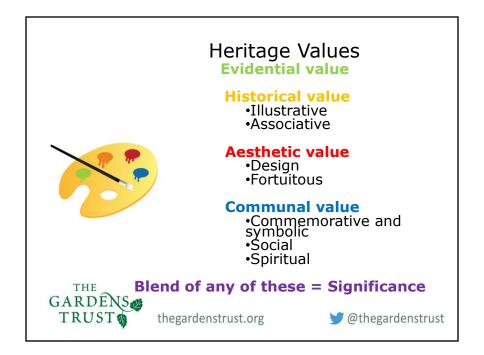
This is a really valuable way to offer some protection for sites that aren't on the National Register, so not nationally designated, but perhaps of real local value. By working with local planning authorities, CGTs can help to create lists of local sites of importance, and this list can even be attached to a Local Plan, offering some degree of protection in the planning system. But no local planning authority officer is going to have time to listen if you go and dump 100,000 words of research on their desk and ask for it all to be locally listed ... what they are going to listen to is if that research is carefully compiled and each entry includes a Statement of Significance so that they can see quickly exactly why each site has value.



Plus, even if you're not interested in the crucial role of significance in research, planning and conservation, the ability to determine significance will be useful even in your more traditional work of organising garden visits, education, writing up for publication etc.

Essentially, researched information can have a greater impact if the key 'hooks' of a site, what makes it special, are drawn out – ie why should people care about this landscape, rather than 'simply' cataloguing everything you know about it.





So how do we know what the 'Significance' of a site is? If you're lucky, someone will have written a Statement of Significance already. If not, then you need to do one!

Historic England offers a set of values that can be applied to cultural heritage to tease out its significance and get us thinking about sites in a specific way. You look at a site and pick out which of these heritage values it holds, and the blend of them together is its Significance. NB, NPPF has different way of saying this (results in the same) – their headings are Archaeological, Architectural, Artistic and Historic.

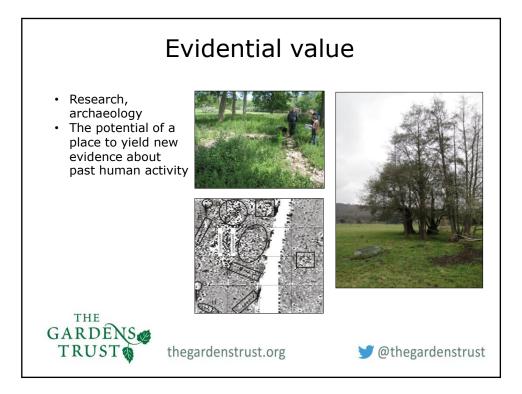
The values are: Evidential Value Historical value – illustrative and associative Aesthetic value – design, artistic, fortuitous Communal value – commemorative and symbolic, social, spiritual

The significance is a blend of all the values which the site fulfils.

These values can be applied to the landscape as a whole, and to its constituent parts.

The sum of these values applied to a place indicates its significance. NB Site does not have to fulfil each of these values, but they do form a useful checklist for you to go through when you are considering where the site's significance and value lies.

Now we'll consider each of these briefly in turn, with examples.



Evidential value relates to the potential of a place to reveal new information – what archaeological potential does a place have, for example?

This example shows Titsey Place in Surrey – exploration of a known scheduled monument has begun to reveal a potentially extensive villa complex, as yet only partially explored. This is an example of how many heritage assets still hold hitherto unrealised evidence – they have evidential value

So we could say that one of the ways that the site of the Roman Villa at Titsey Place is significant is its evidential value: its potential to reveal more information about Roman religious and social activity in the North Downs and the construction and layout of a villa complex.



Historical value lies in the potential to tell stories about the past, or evoke a sense of what it might have been like to live in the past – using the site as a key to unlock a narrative.

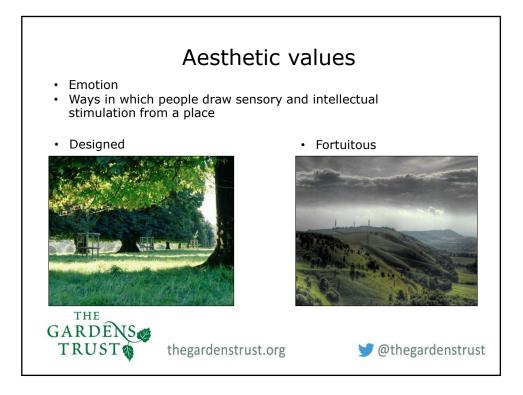
Historical value tends to be illustrative or associative.

Associative value arises from association with a notable person, event, or movement because being at the place where something momentous happened can increase understanding of it. Many buildings and landscapes are associated with people, literature, art, music or film, for example.

So Petworth has Associative Value in its connection with Turner. JMW Turner benefited from the patronage of the 3rd Earl of Egremont who gave him a studio at Petworth House. The artist visited Petworth regularly until the Earl's death in 1837 and produced 1,000 drawings to record the beauty of the place. Therefore, Petworth is a really useful key in unlocking the story of Turner. We can probably all think of landscapes that we can connect to a historically important figure, including designers, so Associative Historical Value is a biggy for historic landscapes. **Illustrative value** has the power to demonstrate some historical point, to narrate an historical story or to evoke the past.

This is a William Kent gateway on the edge of a cricket pitch at a school in Surrey, the site of the ferme ornee of Philip Southcote, Woburn Farm. It illustrates the former use and design of the estate, being a relatively rare survivor of this passing but influential trend, and so more broadly illustrates the use of ornamentation in the farm landscape of the 18th century, as well as being an authentic example of the work of Kent.

Question – where can you think of with historical associative value? Illustrative value? Buckingham Palace? Versailles?



A more familiar concept this one...Aesthetic values will come up all the time for historic designed landscapes.

Aesthetic value arises from the sensory and intellectual interest of a place.

They can be the result of the conscious *design*, primarily the qualities generated by the design of a building, park or garden.

Perhaps you might describe the aesthetic value of this parkland landscape as the arrangement of large mature trees planted to reveal and frame views under their broad canopies.

Aesthetic value can also be the apparently *fortuitous* outcome of the way in which a place has evolved and been used over time, ie without design. For example, the seemingly organic form of an urban landscape - dramatic quality in the juxtaposition of buildings and spaces.

And particularly in landscapes, the designed and fortuitous can be used to work together – design being used to emphasise the fortuitous nature of surrounding landscape (in other words, a designed park or garden can be planned to work beautifully within its fortuitous wider setting).



Communal value derives from all the other meanings that people assign to a place. It is not the same as Community! Often expressed in a sense of belonging and can have a profound effect on local identity, and it is here that we touch on intangible and living heritage. HE sub-divides this into the commemorative, social and spiritual which can be helpful.

COMMEMORATIVE and symbolic values reflect the meanings that people draw from the place. These might be overt or they might need interpretation.

Perhaps an obvious use in the landscape is that of the creation of memorial gardens or shrines, symbolising a significant event. Here is North Stoneham war memorial shrine in Hampshire, magnificently restored in 2010 set in 18th century Capability Brown parkland. The Shrine was built in 1917 by landowner John Willis Fleming as a war memorial to his son Richard and the other thirty-six men of North Stoneham parish who died in the Great War. – so you can see how the communal values could be drawn out, but also the historical values the landscape and shrine itself hold. [Image courtesy of Hampshire Gardens Trust]

SOCIAL value,

Historic public parks obviously carry huge social communal value as they were built as statements of civic pride originally and continue to provide a sense of place, fostering community spirit and enabling social interaction. Flexible and highly adaptable, accessible to all. Used by millions on a regular basis. This example shows Red Cross Garden in Bankside – recreated Octavia Hill garden reopened in 2006. Careful re-introduction of a May Day festival with maypole dancing, as was known to have taken place in Octavia' day, has fully established a much-loved annual local community event. You would be able to describe the social value of this place as a focal point for celebrations of the history of the garden, marking the arrival of spring and the annual introduction of the area's children into the joys of maypole dancing and Victorian games.

[photo courtesy of Bankside Open Spaces Trust]

SPIRITUAL value - Whilst churches and buildings of worship may seem the obvious example, spirituality in the designed landscape can also derive from symbolism and use of the landscape. Here, at the bottom, the remains of Quarr Abbey, Isle of Wight, 12th century Cistercian Abbey, largest religious community on the island – the ruins are incorporated into part of a wider historic parkland estate. The aesthetic values can be clearly seen too.

And of course cemeteries hold spiritual and commemorative values for many, and are an important category of designed landscape.



		Evidential	Historical	Aesthetic	Communal
	Feature	Lindential		Acounctio	comunat
	Fieldtree Park				
	Northern Park				
	Lake				
	Temple				
	Kitchen Garden				
	View to tower				
THE					

We probably need a mechanism or process to order our thoughts about what values apply. I offer this table as a perhaps manageable way to think about assessing significance.

This is a rather mechanistic process - you divide a site into different areas, then fill in each value box (leaving those blank where the site doesn't fulfil a certain heritage value) for each area. When complete, you could turn it into prose text. A reminder about when we turn this into prose – we're not looking for lengthy tomes and there are no prizes for high word counts. That kind of detailed writing has its place but when dealing with significance what we're looking for is a short pithy summary of the most important points – a couple of paragraphs is ideal.

What this also shows is that you could start with a whole estate, Then break it down into areas Then even into features

A different tool to help							
	Evidential The lies	significance of chiefly in	Historical				
	Aesthetic		Communal				
THE GARDENS TRUST thegardenstrust.org							

You might prefer this form instead, either using one for each feature, or looking at the site as a whole.

Temple Newsam Registered Park and Garden Draft Statement of Significance For CGT planning response letter or similar:							
The significance of the landscape of Temple Newsam lies chiefly in the way it sheds light on the design approach of the foremost landscape designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, in spite of his design not having been fully implemented. His rides, planting and management of views show him working with, and adjusting, the natural topography to aesthetic and dramatic effect.							
Whilst no longer intact, the landscape design incorporates featur with sweeping lawns, varied woodland, scenic drives, and class adapting Etty's earlier work.							
The integrity of the Brownian landscape is particularly compromised by the loss of a large area to the west which was given over to open cast mining from the C19 up to the 1960s and subsequently poorly restored. However, that open-cast mining of a Brownian landscape was conceivable demonstrates the comparatively low value then attached to association with Brown, who is today recognised to be amongst the great names of landscape architecture world-wide. Even in this area, pockets of evidence of Brown's planting scheme might still be found.							
GARDENS TRUST thegardenstrust.o	rg						

On the basis that there is no right or wrong way, there is resistance from many to giving examples because templates aren't appropriate here, but I do think it will give us the push we need to look at a couple. You can find other examples on the internet.

This one is quite short, such as you might use in a planning application letter.



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You might want an A4 page (variable!) version to go with your research and in the HER. This is a longer version of the previous.

Key phrases:

- The significance of the landscape of Temple Newsam lies chiefly in the way it sheds light on the design approach of the foremost landscape designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. [Associative and illustrative historical value]
- His rides, planting and management of views show him working with, and adjusting, the natural topography to aesthetic
 and dramatic effect. Sweeping lawns accentuate the main house in the former views towards the house. From the house, a
 temple provides an eye-catcher within a small clearing in a varied wooded area, characteristic of Brown's placing of such
 classical buildings within the landscape to provide interest and scale. The woodland planting, although now too dense in
 places, reveals traces of Brown's use of varied and harmonious texture and colour in the views. [Aesthetic value]
- Etty's treatment of the bridge and Avenue Ponds bears witness to the contemporary engineering limitations to hydrological works and bridge design. [Illustrative historical value]
- Archives indicate that Brown's designs for the Menagerie Lakes were probably never implemented. These relatively small
 water bodies attest to the common practice of commissioning plans for elaborate schemes that were then only partially
 implemented, or not at all, for whatever reason. [Illustrative historical value even if something not implemented!]
- The floriferous walled kitchen garden with extensive glasshouses continues to illustrate the long history of horticultural
 practice. National plant collections conserving the genetic diversity of the particular species have been maintained here
 since xxxx. [Illustrative historical value, getting in plants!]
- Within the parkland lie the earthworks of a shrunken mediaeval village, [Evidential value]
- Small-scale memorial planting in this area has created places of some significance for the relatives of those commemorated. [Communal value, with caveat that is limited]
- The integrity of the Brownian landscape is compromised by the loss of a large area to the west which was given over to
 open cast mining from the C19 up to the 1960s and subsequently poorly restored. However, that open-cast mining of a
 Brownian landscape was conceivable demonstrates the comparatively low value then attached to association with Brown,
 who is today recognised to be amongst the great names of landscape architecture world-wide. [Illustrative value, even
 damage to the heritage asset can be part of its heritage significance!]

Seems to us that you might want to do 2 Statements for each site - 1 longer and 1 shorter.

