

Threats to Historic Parks and Gardens

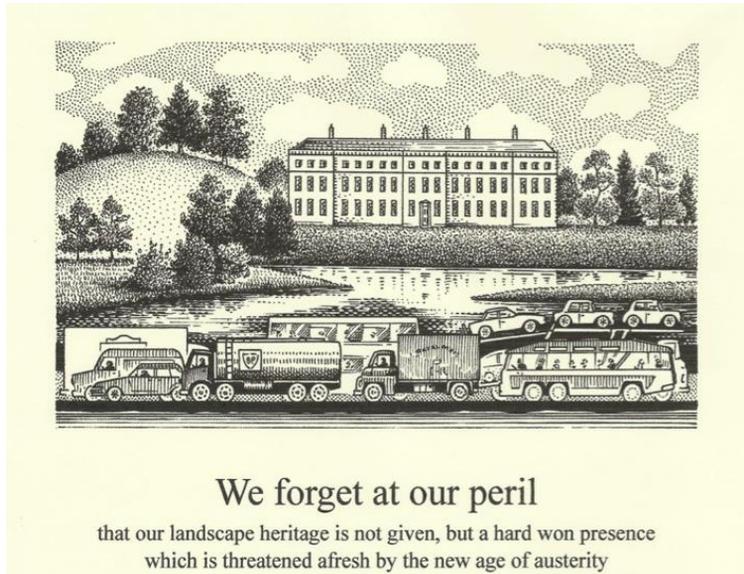


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A training presentation from the Gardens Trust.

This presentation will show a broad variety of threats that these precious landscapes are facing



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This is the frontispiece of the New Arcadian Broadsheet - NAB 67 (2010), by David Lambert, Patrick Eyres and Chris Broughton (drawing).

This image reminds us that the landscapes and houses we cherish are under pressure from development, be it roads and traffic as here, demolition (fortunately pretty rare), neglect (very common), lack of money leading to vistas and landscapes becoming overgrown and partially lost (probably most common of all), vandalism (most prevalent in public parks), change of use - especially common for large houses converted to hotels with extra parking and new spa buildings/additional bedroom accommodation etc required within the designed landscapes, or even misguided interventions.



'It matters not who owns this house or that field, the landscape is ours, it is free to all who care to linger and look at its beauty.'



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Historic parks and gardens are part of our national landscape. As William Morris said of the Cotswolds: 'It matters not who owns this house or that field, the landscape is ours, it is free to all who care to linger and look at its beauty.' Here, fortunately, Stourhead belongs to the NT so this landscape belongs to the nation for all to enjoy. That is sadly not the case everywhere and many historic landscapes are very vulnerable.

We'll now run through some real examples of fairly common threats to historic designed landscapes which the GT's Conservation Team has come across in its work.

COMPLEX HERITAGE ASSETS



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Warwick Castle - Warwick Castle Park is a Grade I Registered landscape, one of only 142 in all of England, created between 1743 and 1803 by two Earls of Warwick, with assistance from Capability Brown. The registered landscape is in divided ownership with Merlin Entertainment Group owning the Castle gardens and a small part of the Park. The rest is privately owned.

Getting owners to agree on suitable management for a landscape, so that it retains all its significances and doesn't start to look disconnected, can be really difficult.

This view is of 18th century Capability Brown parkland with foreground view of 19th century boathouse, (next to which a medieval trebuchet has been erected), from Mount which was medieval motte converted into viewing mound and planted in late 17th century.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING



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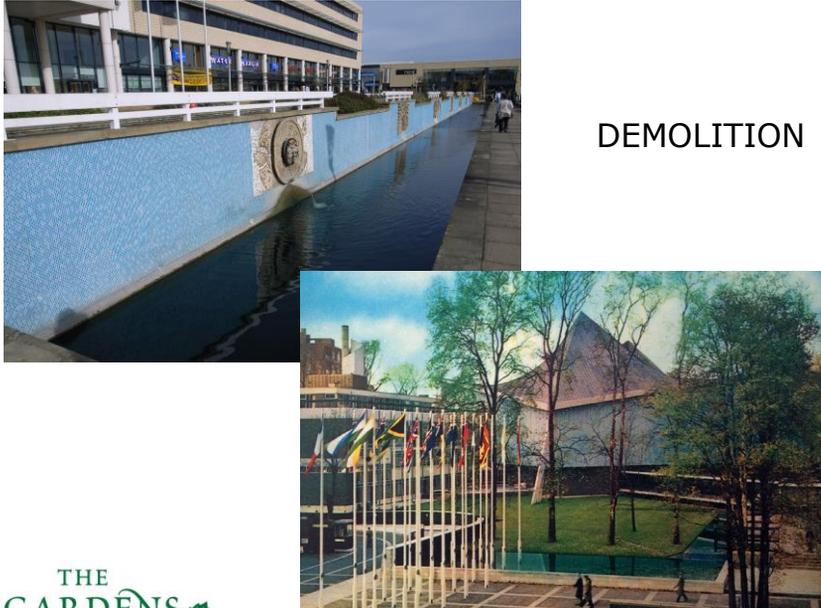
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Burghley, Lincs.

Capability Brown's Temple is a key part of a circuit walk so that you approach through dark trees through the back and then out into the front where it is sunny with an amazing view – a deliberate dramatic reveal, as you go from dark to light.

A lack of understanding meant that this intended route was not appreciated, so now you approach the Temple through a sunny walk amongst scattered trees, past the tennis court which was 'hidden' behind the temple.



DEMOLITION

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These two 20th century landscapes have both been demolished. Local Authority budgets and services are cut and Conservation Officers lose their jobs; Historic England specialist staff are disappearing; and development pressure increases.

The registered gardens at Harlow (top left) were bulldozed in 2004 and the Commonwealth Institute garden designed by Sylvia Crowe was obliterated, ironically for a new Design Museum.

NEGLECT



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NEGLECT –this is perhaps the most common problem we encounter. You will know from your own gardens how quickly they can become completely overgrown and lost if left untended. This image shows designed woodland by internationally famous 18th Century designer Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown at Belhus, Essex

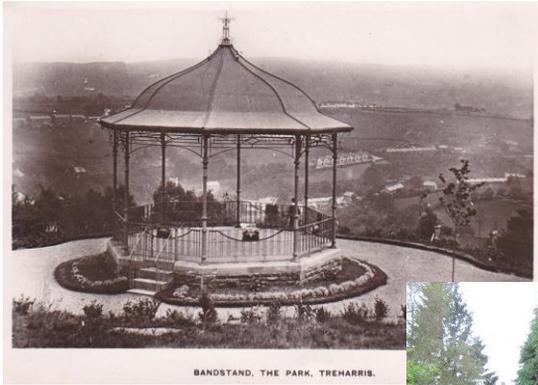


KEY DESIGNED VIEWS LOST

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Overgrown vegetation often closes up designed views and vistas. Fortunately clearance of vegetation is often one of the easier and cheaper things to remedy. Here, lack of management has allowed scrubby tree growth to obscure the original designed view of the Repton landscape at Blaise Castle near Bristol. The illustrations show Repton's Red Book and the same view today.



BANDSTAND, THE PARK, TREHARRIS.

NEGLECT OF STRUCTURES



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Neglect - Bandstands were enormously popular in their heyday and now this one in the public gardens at Treharris, Wales, has almost disappeared.



VANDALISM

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Vandalism – Another problem, especially in towns, is vandalism. When sites are well maintained, this is less likely to be a problem, but once standards slip, it doesn't take long for things to go downhill, as shown in these slides also from Blaise Castle.

Fire damaged this exquisite Grade II* Rustic Cottage which was subsequently restored by an Heritage Lottery grant in the 1990s; unfortunately, shortly after restoration vandals yet again damaged this building severely and it has been boarded up ever since.

PREVENTION OF VANDALISM



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And efforts to prevent vandalism can be pretty damaging too – like this fence around a garden building at Temple Newsam, an 18th century landscape on the urban edge of Leeds.

(photo thanks to Sarah Rutherford)

POOR MANAGEMENT CHOICES



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Poor decisions are often based on a lack of understanding of how the landscape was intended to look.

These arable fields on former parkland at Beechfield, Hertfordshire, a Capability Brown landscape (undesigned), have taken away much of the parkland feel and the agricultural practices (ploughing, fertilising etc) used are also likely to damage the historic planting. (Photo copyright Kate Harwood.)



CHANGE OF USE



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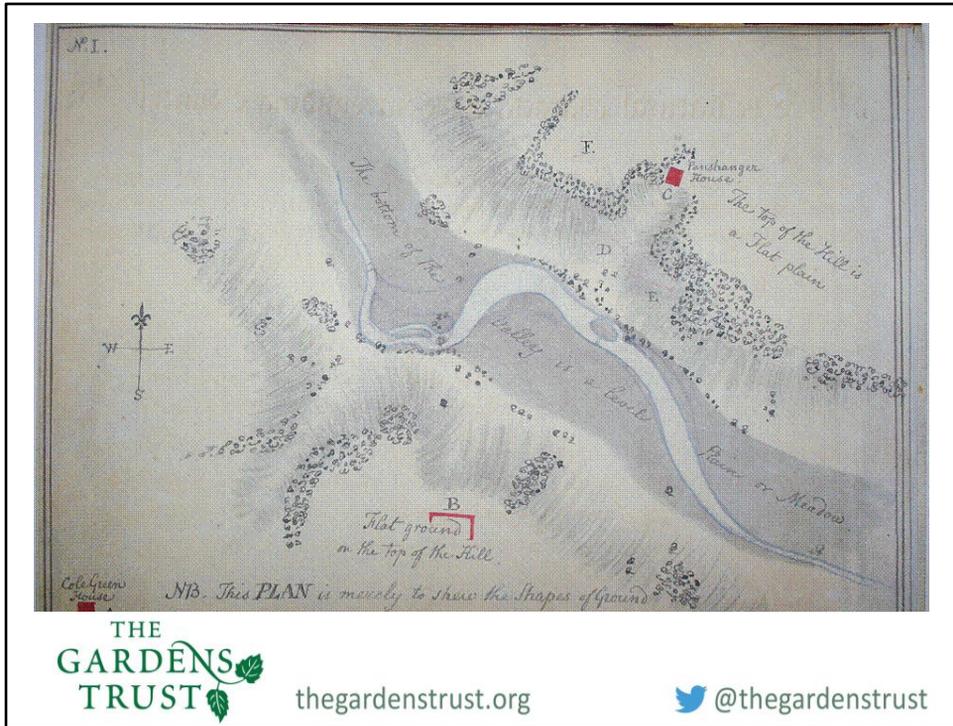
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Change of Use -Our huge national road network requires mineral extraction on an enormous scale.

In Hertfordshire, Tarmac obtained permission in the 1980s to extract gravel at Panshanger, a grade II* landscape on which both Brown and Repton worked. Permission was granted on the condition that the country park was restored with public access. The Brown parkland has been completely destroyed but some restoration work has been carried out on the remaining parkland, though not to the standards expected, and access remains limited.

The good news, if anything good can be said about this slide, is that today it is unlikely that such permission would be granted on a Grade II* landscape.

The photo on the bottom right shows Repton's Broadwater still recognisably intact. The large lagoon to the right of that is made by Tarmac. They wanted to take away the narrow strip of land between both bodies of water to create one large lake. This would have totally destroyed Repton's concept forever. The GT and Hertfordshire Gardens Trust managed to defeat this planning application with help from Historic England.



This shows Repton's drawing of the Broadwater from the Panshanger Red Book. The photo on the previous side is taken looking from right to left along Repton's drawing.

MISGUIDED RESTORATION

Before the fence...



...and after.



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BEFORE & AFTER FENCE In addition, a particularly unattractive fence blocks views across the lake and valley looking west.

The whole scheme has been hugely destructive, in one of the few “outstanding” registered landscapes. Panshanger is now on the Heritage at Risk register administered by HE.

ROAD-WIDENING SCHEMES...



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Road construction – The materials extracted by quarrying are often used for road building. This is the most serious current scheme we are fighting which drastically affects the Grade I landscape at Painshill in Surrey. It is particularly upsetting as, over the past thirty years or so, the landscape and structures within Painshill have been meticulously restored. Approximately £35 million has been spent here over the past 30 years and the result is breathtaking. It has won numerous restoration awards. The map on the left shows where the road would cut off the top right corner of the park, bringing the new road within approx. 15m of the Gothic Tower (shown top right). The aerial photo shows the current position of the road in relation to the Gothic Tower.

... THREATENING AWARD-WINNING RESTORATION



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Painshill restoration – Thought you would appreciate a cheerful slide having seen so many slides of dereliction. The roof of the grotto you can see at the top had fallen in, the Tower was derelict, the lake had silted up and the bridge was gone.

The planning debate is still ongoing and currently the new road is likely to cut off the only maintenance access for the Gothic Tower.



The need for new house building is one of the most frequent threats to historic designed landscapes. This is the Masterplan for a massive new housing development at Grade I Bramshill in Hampshire, an exceptional, probably unique survival of the early C17 water garden with its associated high status mansion which looks out onto still legible C17/18 open parkland traversed by formal avenues and walks. It was for many years a police training college so there are already unsuitable and unsympathetic buildings on site. This proposal was recently rejected at appeal but we have no doubt it has not gone away.

LEGISLATION



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Sometimes legislation which is put in place to protect us, has unexpected and unfortunate consequences. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 applied the 1975 Reservoirs Act to lakes which had previously been too small to require the full standards of flood protection. Some of our most iconic water features have had to have brutal engineering amendments, like the one at the bottom left, in order to comply with the Act. At Blenheim, Oxfordshire, water levels in the lake have had to be lowered to comply which has starved the great cascade of water, as seen in right hand pictures.

Removal of C18 plane trees at Blenheim has drastically altered the landscape leaving the dam walls exposed – this was not the original design intention.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Lyveden New Bield, Essex



Artist's impression of wind turbine imposed upon landscape of Bolton Abbey, as painted by JMW Turner



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Renewable Energy

Wind and solar farms have featured quite heavily in planning cases over the past few years. Whilst we fully endorse the need for more sustainable energy, we must site these structures carefully in relation to historic designed landscapes in order to avoid detracting from their settings. The images show a wind turbine proposal for Lyveden New Bield, Essex and artist's impression of wind turbine imposed upon painting of Bolton Abbey by JMW Turner. Both applications were turned down.

TOURISM



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Many historic landscapes rely on visitors and tourism to fund maintenance but unsympathetic developments within RPGs can detract from the significance and setting of the landscape.

Case Study

This is Warwick Castle – a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I Listed building surrounded by a Grade I Registered designed landscape (one of only 142 in all of England), created between 1743 and 1803 by two Earls of Warwick, with assistance from Capability Brown. The registered landscape is in divided ownership, with Merlin Entertainment Group owning the Castle gardens and a small part of the Park. The rest is privately owned.

In 2013, Merlin initiated “glamping” in Foxes’ Study, without planning permission. (Foxes’ Study was planted in the Picturesque style in the late eighteenth century. It forms the transition between the gardens and the park and would have been a mixed plantation of trees with an understorey of shrubs, interlaced with winding paths.) In 2014 they obtained a temporary permission for 42 tents.

Then, before any evaluation of the impact of the initial glamping could be made, they put in an application for permanent summer use of 41 tents, together with 20 pairs of semi-detached lodges, and 5 tree houses. This was refused, but was swiftly followed by a new one for 40 standard (round) tents, 3 premium (oval) tents, 9 trailers of loos and three of showers, in addition to four large service tents for reception, dining and cooking and a generator. The application was granted.

Warwickshire Gardens Trust has robustly fought all of these developments.

Then came resubmission of the lodge application, and the Trust fought on but permission was granted in Oct 2016 for 16 semi-detached lodges, i.e. 32 units of accommodation. The approval had been given by a planning committee which had an almost completely different composition, after an election, from the one which had refused an application for mixed lodges and tents the year before.

It is a permanent permission and runs concurrently with the 42 tents which had temporary permission until end of 2018.

Then Warwick Castle was further hit by two big housing development applications in its setting, at Asps and Gallows Hill. The largest application, on “The Asps”, east of Banbury Road, was for 900 houses, a school, local centre and park and ride. The inspector recognised the damage that would be done to the setting of the park and the very substantial harm to the adjacent landscape; and that car use would be encouraged because too many local facilities would not be available on foot. Her recommendation was that the proposed benefits, in the provision of park and ride and much needed houses did not outweigh the harm, and recommended that it be refused. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government agreed with her assessment of the various issues, but then disagreed with her assessment of the balance between harm and benefit and GRANTED the development.

The second application, for 450 houses on Gallows Hill, was allowed by the inspector and the Secretary of State of course supported that.



EVENTS IN PUBLIC PARKS
Winter Wonderland,
Hyde Park, London

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The wide open spaces in urban parks are, of course, ideal for events such as fairs, concerts, Christmas markets, parades etc, and these can bring in much needed revenue. All too often, though, they have long-term effects on the historic landscape.



EVENTS IN PUBLIC PARKS

Aftermath of an event
access barred to non-paying
public during events, often for
many weeks



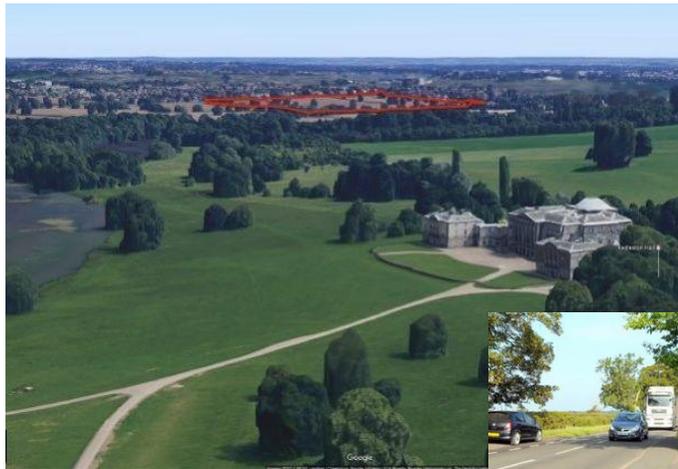
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Events in Public Parks – the image on the right shows barriers in Brockwell Park in South London, to prevent public access to one of 18 events held there during the year, mostly in the summer.

The muddy grass in Finsbury Park shows what damage even a small event can do. Even when the area is returned, the public still cannot walk on it for at least a month afterwards to allow the grass to recover, effectively making that part of the park inaccessible to the general public.

DEVELOPMENT IN SETTING



400 new houses outside
park at Kedleston



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This planning battle, at Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, has been going on for some years. Originally the developer put in a plan for 400 houses outside the park (circled red in top photo) which were visible from within the designed view from the circuit walk. The original application was rejected by the LA; the applicant appealed and won; this appeal was in turn overturned by a High Court Judicial Review.

Unfortunately, the story did not end there. The developer appealed to the Supreme Court, which overturned the judicial review decision, and the development is now going ahead.

DEVELOPMENT IN SETTING



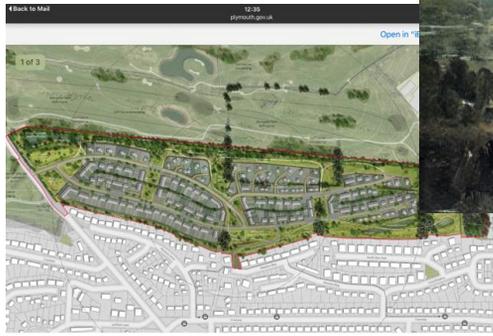
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Many British Cemeteries are Registered landscapes, and one of the most magnificent in London is Brompton Cemetery. Unfortunately for Brompton Cemetery, Chelsea Football Ground lies directly across the road. Recently planning has been sought and granted for a new football stadium which now looms over the Grade I listed cemetery which contains 28 listed structures within it as well as a listed K2 red phone box outside. A disappointing yet not really unexpected outcome.

DEVELOPMENT IN SETTING



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Boringdon Park (unregistered)

The Boringdon Arch was built for Lord Boringdon in 1783 to a design by Robert Adam and served not only as an “eye catcher” from Saltram House (Registered II*) but also provided a sudden and dramatic view of Saltram when approached from the north, via a former drive from Boringdon House. This painting is of the view out from Boringdon, painted by Turner in the early 19th century.

Boringdon Park is now used by a golf club, who put in a planning application for a Wind Turbine (estimated output of 500kw) with a 50m hub height, 77m tip height, and with associated infrastructure and formation of access track. It is within a local landscape, but the proposal would be in the setting of Grade II* Saltram, slightly below the ridge and a little to the east of the Boringdon Arch so therefore would be a visual competitor in the views of the Arch from Saltram, and vice versa.

Devon Gardens Trust objected, along with HE and the NT (who run Saltram). Permission was refused, due partly to harm to historic interests and unacceptable landscape and visual impacts, with DGT’s comments being quoted in the report. In this case, the significant harm to historic interests and landscape character, visual impacts and harm to neighbours are considered to outweigh the benefits of the production of renewable energy.

Then followed another application, for 280 houses south of Boringdon (only 290m

away), so in its setting. Devon Gardens Trust and The Gardens Trust both objected and the application was refused.

**MISGUIDED
INTERVENTIONS**

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The proposed United Kingdom Holocaust memorial, next door to the Houses of Parliament within the Grade II Victoria Tower Gardens, is a very sensitive case. The Gardens Trust wholeheartedly endorses the principles behind this monument but feels this is not the right place for it. Numerous listed memorials already exist in this garden, including the Grade II* Buxton Memorial to commemorate the 1807 Abolition of Slavery Act, which is positioned on an axis down towards Church of St John, Smith Square, strongly reinforcing the religious message of humanity.

All sense of an uncluttered, calm expanse of public open space in the centre of the city, with long views in several directions, would be totally lost amongst the mass of different textures and activity imposed by the monument: visually dominant tall fins, hedges, pathways, pedestrians, trees etc competing with the solid dignity of the Houses of Parliament and the Victoria Tower in the background.

Westminster Council rejected the planning application and London PGT are representing the GT at the forthcoming public inquiry. The date has had to be put on hold due to Covid, but The GT wholeheartedly supports LPGT volunteers (including their Patron Hal Moggridge) and Helen Monger, the Director of the LPGT, who have been working tirelessly to put together the documentation required at all stages of the process. The Trust has benefitted from working in collaboration with other objectors to secure legal support and underwrite a potential fine should the case be lost, however it needs your support to contribute to the legal costs to fight the case further. If you feel like pledging a sum, you can donate via this link : <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/save-victoria-tower-gardens/>

CLUTTER



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Ad hoc developments, without proper planning or consideration, can really distract from the intended design: just imagine felt tip scribbles on the Mona Lisa! Here, the exit from Cannizaro Park (II*) (remodelled because main entrance is in re-use as a hotel), is cluttered with a bin, bike rack and sign, to say nothing of grit box outside.

NON-CONSULTATION



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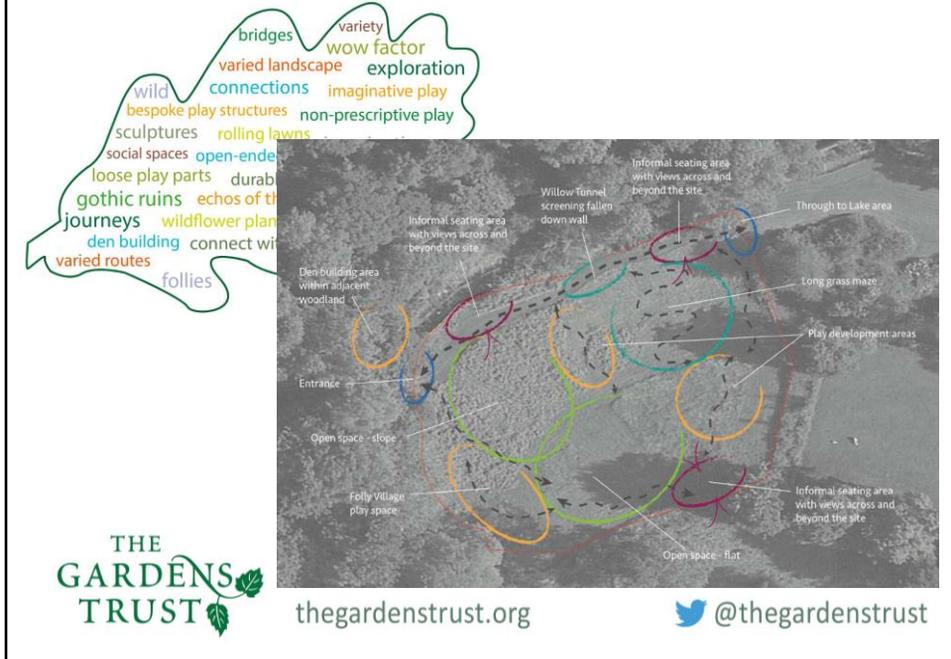
Case Study

Newark Park, Gloucestershire, is a Grade I house in a Grade II landscape, remodelled in the 1790s in Gothick style by James Wyatt.

The map shows the position of the house on an escarpment above a lake. There is the Monkey House, a Gothick summer house, and a crinkle crackle wall, both Grade II. The photo of the open doorway shows the view from the Monkey House. The owners wanted to install a playground in the woodland you can see in the view out of the Summer House door.

In this case, understanding the setting is crucial. It's hard to get a feel from the pictures just how secluded and secret the whole valley feels, with its deep combs and long views out into the countryside.

Introduction of an unsympathetic dominant feature in the landscape



Rather than being a well-concealed feature, the playground is actually designed to draw visitors' attention to it. The designer stated: "We suggest focusing on creating a 'wow' factor play element to draw interest to the development".

Note that the captions actually mention in three places the views across and beyond the site. These views out did, unfortunately, allow a direct sight line from the Monkey House to the play area.

The GT was not consulted directly but did hear of the proposal and, after visiting Newark Park, the GT's Conservation Officer objected to the proposed site:
"The area by the summerhouse, lake, folly and pergola is a particularly sensitive part of the designed landscape within the estate, with an atmosphere of tranquillity, secrecy and views out into the combs and woods beyond... A playground sited exactly where the view is concentrated would be very detrimental to the setting of these features and spirit of place. It would also negatively affect the significance of the designed landscape."

Unfortunately, construction of the play area went ahead.

UNDESIGNATED LANDSCAPES



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Many designed landscapes are undesignated, i.e. not considered significant enough, or not yet assessed, for Registration or other national or local designation, or even placed on the Historic Environment Record – so are not offered any kind of protection in the planning system.

This is Finedon, Northamptonshire. It has been known for many years that Repton was engaged to undertake work at Finedon though quite what he proposed and what, if anything, was executed is less clear. Repton did write a short note about Finedon in his book 'Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening', published in 1795.

Part of the former designed landscape lies to the south of the Hall, in an area which is currently separately owned from the former mansion house. Detailed planning permission was granted here for "a cutting edge, contemporary property with accommodation over two floors amounting to some 5,000 sq ft. This beautiful plot comprises 3.5 acres of parkland with many established trees together with an ancient yew tree circle, two grottos and a large pond."

The features described are a water feature and associated stone grotto or rockery and a circular raised area planted with a circuit of yew tree,s known as the yew circle. None are statutorily Listed.

Northamptonshire GT was dismayed to see this advertised as a property to be built and then sold. Sadly, there was not much they could do, because there was so little designation protection for the site. Fighting this application was like working with one hand tied behind your back, and of course now NGT are wishing they had managed to

research Finedon in time to, ideally, get it Registered, or more likely at least locally listed and on the HER.

UNDESIGNATED –
BEING CONSIDERED FOR REGISTRATION

Preben Jakobsen's own photos of the garden at 5 Pipers Green Lane



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Fortunately, new sites can be added to the Register, and even those that are not Registered can gain some protection by being on a Local List of significant sites.

A winning bet on the 1979 Greyhound Derby brought Michael Morris's London garden, by award-winning modernist designer Preben Jakobsen, into being: effectively, it was built by a fast greyhound called Sarah's Bunny!

Current photos showing the garden relatively intact and original design intent clear

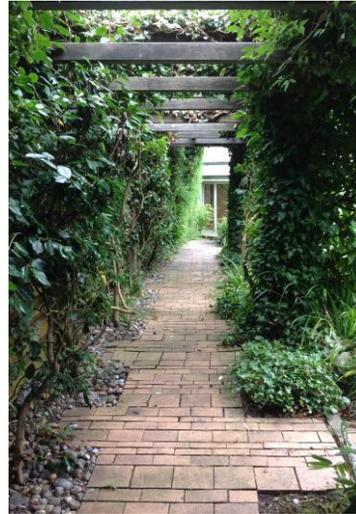


<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/11439821/A-private-garden-worth-searching-for.html>



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The garden has featured in many journal articles and books for being of outstanding quality and as a ground-breaking marker for British domestic landscape architecture and garden design ; an important and rare example of late twentieth century domestic suburban modernism on a compact site and using materials of the period; it inspired Jakobsen's 1982 Chelsea Flower Show 'Sculpture Garden' and is considered as the pioneering garden that led to later 'modern gardens' that are so common place today in both public and private designed landscapes.

Andrew Wilson, Christopher Bradley-Hole, Dominic Cole and Tom Stuart Smith have all expressed the importance of the show garden to them; The garden is rare – Jakobsen completed in the region of 170 designs of which only in the region of 7 were domestic gardens and of which this is one of the only known surviving examples.

It is mentioned in: Tom Turner's 1986 book: 'English Garden Design History and Styles since 1650); Jane Brown's 1999 book 'The English Garden Through the 20th Century', and Andrew Wilson's 2002 book 'Influential Gardeners – the designers who shaped the 20th-century garden style.'

The garden is now being considered for Registration, along with several other 20th Century designed landscapes.



In 2002 the RHS published a report looking at the impact of climate change on gardening, 'Gardening in a Global Greenhouse'. Since then the global climate has undergone dramatic change, with 2019 proving to be the warmest year on record.

Today, confidence in global climate models has increased and we now know that extreme weather events are the most likely conditions to be experienced by the UK. The impact of these events, such as flash flooding and periods of drought, is likely to be compounded by increased housing pressure, meaning that gardens will become more critical in providing services formerly delivered by the natural environment – services such as flood alleviation, carbon sequestration and the provision of habitats for wildlife – that will be lost to development.

Fifteen years after 'Gardening in the Global Greenhouse', the RHS launched 'Gardening in a Changing Climate' – an update of the original document – on 26 April 2017. The new report has been written in collaboration with researchers from the University of Sheffield and University of Reading. The report presents the results of an extensive survey of amateur gardeners and interviews with industry professionals. It highlights the importance of gardens in terms of their interaction with the natural environment and provides recommendations on how gardeners can adapt to climate change through plant choice and garden design. The report also outlines ways in which gardeners can manage their garden to enhance carbon sequestration and flood alleviation.

EXTREME WEATHER



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Westbury Court Garden, near Westbury-on-Severn, Gloucestershire (Image copyright National Trust/Jenny Green)

Grade II Registered Westbury Court is the last surviving example of a 17th Century 'Dutch' garden in the UK. Is the only Dutch water garden in Britain. Created in the late 1600s, the garden is designed around a series of canals and water features bordered by formal hedging.

It suffers from flood damage: "The floods have washed away paths, bridges in the garden have had to be lashed down and the water has also damaged plants and formal hedges," and the National Trust is looking at a range of options to try and divert water away from the property. It has also bought adjoining farmland and is working with a team of experts to create a mini flood plain.

DISEASE



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We are seeing more and more serious plant diseases in the UK, posing a serious threat to the continuation of some of our common garden plants and tree species. This increase is largely attributed to the rise in volume of imported plants, along with climate changes which increase the risk of pests and diseases becoming established. Oak, ash, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, olive, box and many other plants and trees are increasingly at risk from fungal or bacterial disease or insect parasites.

The loss of entire species from a designed landscape can wipe out important designed elements such as avenues and clumps of trees, topiary and hedging.

The photograph (copyright RHS) shows box blight, a fungal disease.

NATURE CONSERVATION



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Obviously historic designed landscapes can be brilliant for biodiversity – there is sometimes something of a myth that nature needs to be untouched in order to thrive but actually historic parkland, for example, can be very biodiverse. Do go to capabilitybrown.org to see Natural England leaflets on the biodiversity of 18th century parkland.

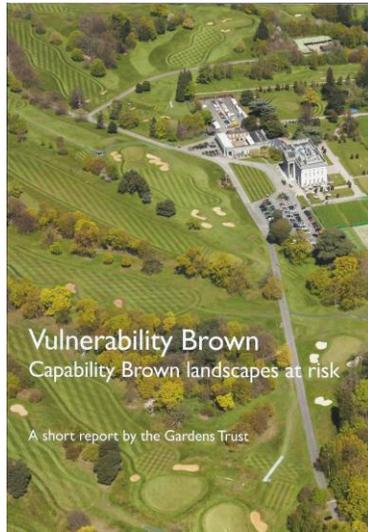
We all want to do well to conserve nature, but sometimes this can result in a blinkered approach that puts it before all else in all places.

For example, Tree Preservation Orders relate specifically to safeguarding trees, and are useful in certain circumstances. However, where they are mis-applied or unimaginatively enforced, they can be a bar to the proper conservation management of a designed landscape.

TPOs can be applied to either specimen trees, or to a wider group of trees (a 'blanket' TPO). A tree or group of trees covered by an Order cannot be felled or have work carried out on them without the prior consent of the local authority. Where work is carried out without permission, fines may be levied and new trees may be required to be planted.

[Photo: Durlston Castle, Swanage, Dorset - key circulation route within Grade II RPG overgrown and key designed views obscured due to inhibition on appropriate tree management due to blanket TPO]

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You might think one open space is much the same as another, but look at the changes made to this Capability Brown landscape in order to use it as a golf course. NB Do read Vulnerability Brown, www.thegardenstrust.org

'Every man who has a cause
at heart must act as if it
depended on him'

William Morris



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The battle to save our historic landscapes goes on and is never over. It requires eternal vigilance, and an army of volunteers.

We would like to leave you with this quote from William Morris 'Every man who has a cause at heart must act as if it depended on him'



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