

Slide – Title Page - Settings

If you have joined us for the last two talks you will have heard Margie Hoffnung describe the many and varied threats to historic gardens, parks and landscapes, followed by Tamsin McMillan's talk last week on the Designations that may afford a park or garden protection from these threats. I am going to talk to you today about the importance of Setting for a designed landscape. I shall be considering the Setting beyond the boundaries of the park or garden, as well as the Setting of individual elements of the site itself.

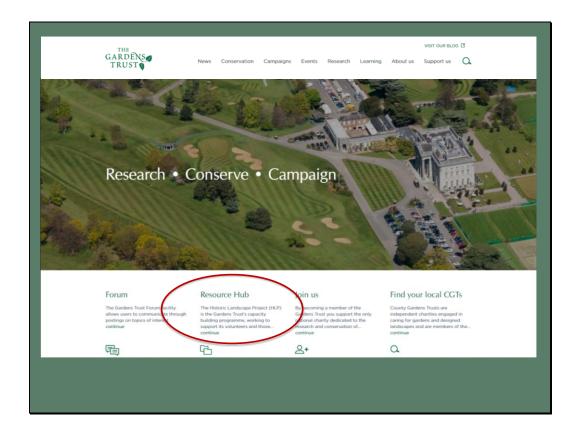
Summary of today's talk on Setting

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Historic England's Guidance Note
- What do we mean by 'Setting'?
- Should we map the boundaries of Setting?
- Planning White Paper August 2020

Slide – Summary of talk

First, we will look at what the National Planning Policy Framework says about Setting and focus on the two most relevant paragraphs, before going on to look at Historic England's excellent Guidance Note on Setting. The latter has informed a lot of this talk and is very helpful.

I'll go through what we mean by the term Setting and what to think about then assessing the impact of development on the setting of a historic park or garden. I'll describe some of the many factors linked to a site's setting before talking about whether we should map the boundaries of a setting or not. I'll end by briefly describing what is mentioned about setting in the recent Government White Paper.



The GT's 8-page handout on Setting can be found on the Resource Hub on the Gardens Trust website.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 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

Paragraph 200

Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably

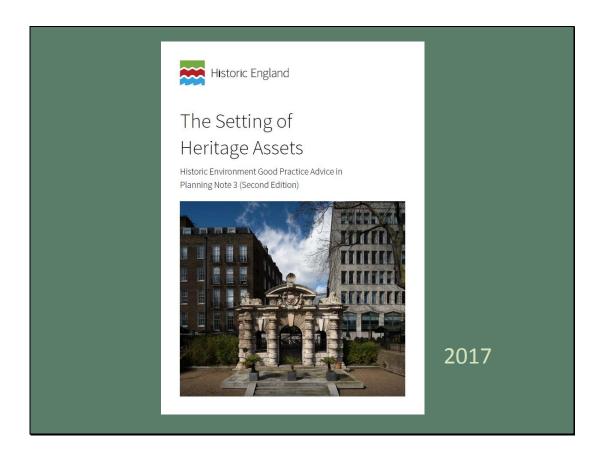
Slide - NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework, or NPPF as it is usually referred to, is a policy from what <u>was</u> the Department of Communities and Local Government and now is known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governments. The NPPF contains 2 paragraphs which refer to the Setting of a heritage asset, namely Paragraphs 189 and 200. A heritage asset includes listed buildings, scheduled monuments, battlefields, shipwrecks and most importantly for us, registered parks and gardens

Para 189 states: 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, <u>including</u> any contribution made by their setting.'

Para 200 goes on to state: 'Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'

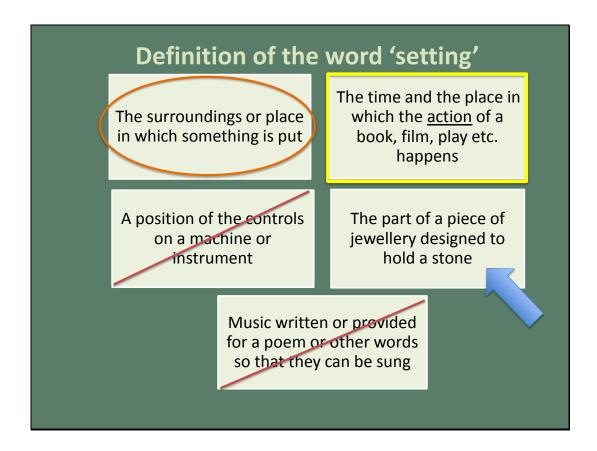
The Significance of a park or garden is a huge subject all of its own and my colleague Linden Groves will be talking about Significance, on November 2nd.



Slide – HE Guidance Note

Historic England produced in 2017 a new edition of its guidance notes The Setting of Heritage Assets — Heritage Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning. We have put a digital version of this document on the Gardens Trust website in the Resource Hub — it's under Conservation Guidance and in the Settings section.

In this publication there is general advice on understanding setting and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views contribute to the setting. There is a staged approach to taking decisions on setting and although it is written for local planning authorities and those proposing changes to heritage assets, it helps us to understand whether a planning application has considered these factors or not.

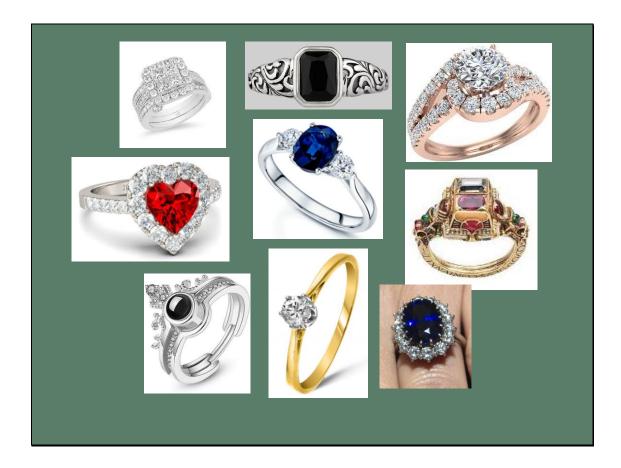


Slide – What do we mean by 'Setting'

Here are some dictionary definitions of the word setting which I'll give you a few seconds to read.

I have ringed the definition we are dealing with today. The two struck out are not relevant but for the one edged in yellow . . . There is an argument that the word 'visit' could replace action and the words 'park or garden' could replace book, film, play etc in this definition.

However, I am going to use the definition indicated by the blue arrow to illustrate how we can consider the settings of parks and gardens.



Slide – Each park is different and so is its setting

Like rings every park or garden or designed landscape is unique and so is its setting. As you can see here, we have the main gemstone representing the park or garden and its mount and minor gems representing the surrounding land and its features.

Every ring is different, some have more features, some are larger, and the mounts vary — all having different settings. Some sites have complicated settings, the park or garden is linked to other heritage assets (here, the smaller gems), others are simple and let the site speak for itself. At least one gem here has great royal significance, as well as a beautiful setting!



<u>Slide – Multi-stone ring on black</u>

Let's now focus on this particular ring. A fine sapphire and diamond ring in a linear mount on a smart black background which really shows off the design. If the sapphire in the middle represents an historic garden or 'asset' then the other gems, the gold mount, and even the dark background and reflection, form the surroundings which complement and help to show off the main gem, but they do not overshadow or distract from it. Without the setting, the main sapphire in the middle would still be intact and beautiful, but somewhat lacking.



Slide – replace the stone

What happens when changes are made to the setting? How do the dynamics alter? Here is the same ring with one of the diamonds changed to a ruby. You can see that the design has immediately lost its symmetry and your eye is drawn to the ruby, so the focus has gone from the main sapphire. In the same way a new building or structure can easily grab the eye if it is not in accordance with the setting of a garden.



<u>Slide – remove background</u>

In this picture, the ring's design and composition are the same as the original picture but the black background and sparkling reflection have gone. The ring is still beautiful, but it has lost its drama and appears to be floating — it is not grounded in its setting — imagine a beautiful garden surrounded by industrial activities, quarrying or a busy road network.



Slide – different background

This last picture shows the original ring again but on a different coloured background. The ring is still a beautiful design, but it appears dull and less appealing. In the same way a once-pretty landscape park on the edge of town, becomes completely encircled by modern housing and shopping malls.

Assessing impact of development on a heritage asset

- Start with the asset itself its significance
- Then consider:

The asset's physical surroundings (including other heritage assets)

The way people can (or may be able to) experience the asset

The asset's associations

Slide - Assessing the impact of development on a heritage asset

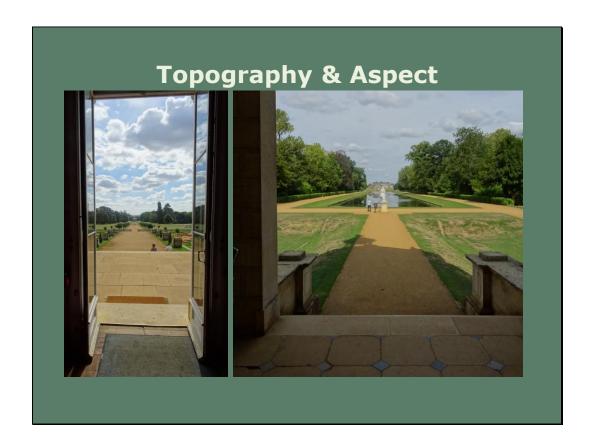
To assess the impact of any proposed development on a park or garden you need to start with what makes it a heritage asset or in other words its significance. Once the significance of a site is fully understood you can establish the contribution made by its setting — which is so much more than just the views. You can consider its physical surroundings — natural and man-made - including other heritage assets. Also, how do people experience the site and what associations does it have? The sites I am referring to, will be mostly Registered Parks and Gardens on HE's National Heritage List for England.



Slide – Asset's physical surroundings

First, I'm going to talk about the physical surroundings and attributes that might be included in the setting. Historic England has put a list of physical surroundings in its Guidance Note and from the list I have pulled out the following questions that we might ask ourselves.

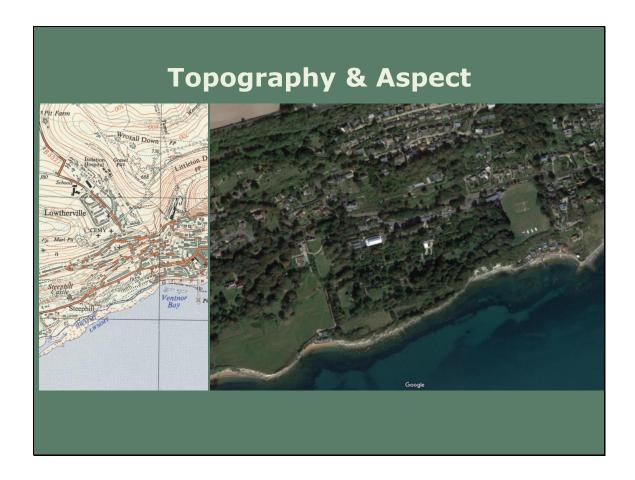
Topographical attributes will probably feature quite highly – how does the park or garden fit into the contours of the land or relate to watercourses or coastal stretches. Linked to this, is the site's aspect. Does it take advantage of a sunny south-facing slope or is it tucked away from the prevailing winds.



Here we have flat topography at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire, which allows for a grand formal setting with extensive garden features such as this long canal, seen in the distance from the house in the photo on the left and then on the right, back towards the house from the Pavilion.

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At Wentworth Castle near Barnsley, the garden's setting takes advantage of a large hill, looking across the valleys that surround it — the perfect setting for Lord Strafford's Folly, designed to be seen from all around - and to see from.



A garden which takes full advantage of its aspect is Ventnor Botanic Garden on the Isle of Wight – the SSE-facing site, backed by the steep slopes to the north and with the warming effect of the sea, this setting allows for the nurturing of tender specimens.

Other Heritage Assets

Associated Main House or Building

Neighbouring Listed Buildings

Historic Gardens Buildings and Structures

Evidence of Historical Garden Style or Styles

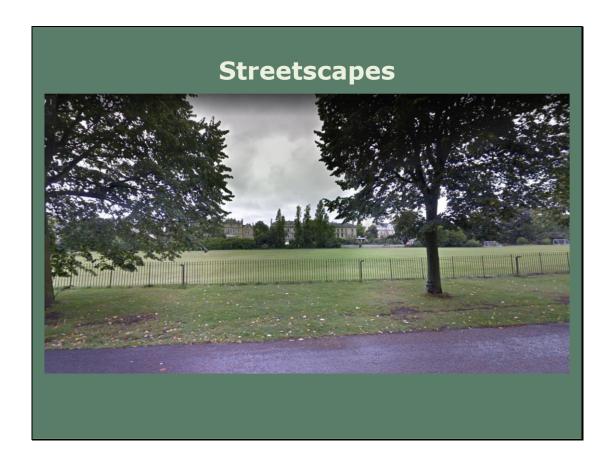
Archaeological Remains

<u>Slide – Other Heritage Assets</u>

For our park or garden, what other heritage assets exist as part of its setting, does the main house or building remain or are there other listed major buildings close by?

Are there garden buildings or structures extant and if so, are they in a single historical style or is there a mix of styles? Are any of the buildings or structures listed in their own right?

Is the garden style of one period or is a palimpsest of many? Some landscapes may have archaeological remains — visible or buried below the surface.



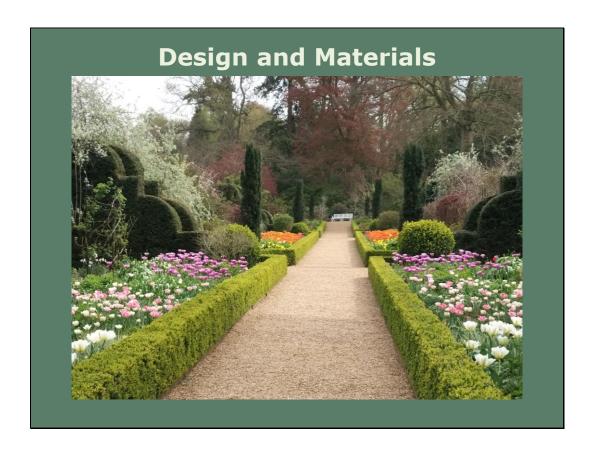
<u>Slide – Streetscape examples</u>

How would you describe any surrounding streetscapes? What is their scale, for example are they grand villas with large gardens, as here at Kensington Gardens, or . . .



... more modest houses or cottages?

Are buildings tightly packed or is there generous green space around them? This is the large-scale 1930s housing developments around Eaton Park in Norwich



<u>Slide – Design and materials</u>

Does the garden or park display a formal design? Like this one at Blickling Hall NT, Norfolk or \dots



... has it been designed to look 'natural' and informal, such as Brown's beautiful landscape at Croome Park in Worcestershire? How is the park or garden orientated, in relation to the buildings and settlement pattern around it?

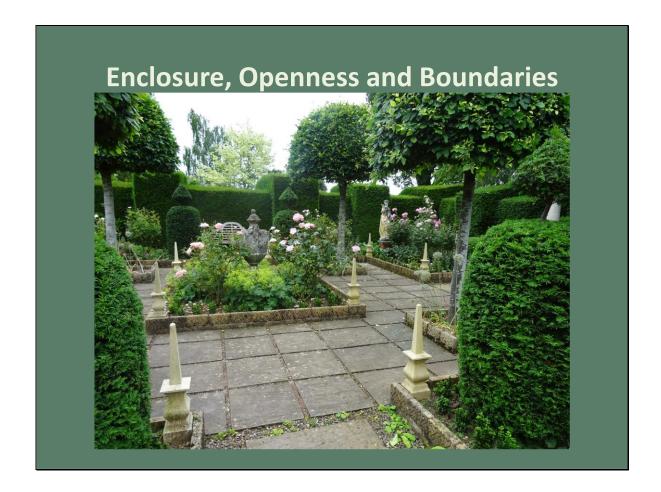


Has the local geology determined the materials that have been used to make the buildings, walls and horizontal surfaces?

This is Sizergh in the Lake District where the house and garden's hard landscaping have been created from the local stone.

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Or historically, has material been brought in from elsewhere? This 1930s cement is definitely not indigenous to Norwich and the intention was to create Italianate gardens at Waterloo Park.



<u>Slide – Enclosure, Openness and Boundaries</u>

Does the park or garden maintain its areas of openness or enclosure and how are the boundaries marked – should they be planted thickly, or should there be elements of seeing the landscape beyond?

Here, at The Laskett in Herefordshire, the Setting is very intimate, the site is divided into with small outdoor rooms.

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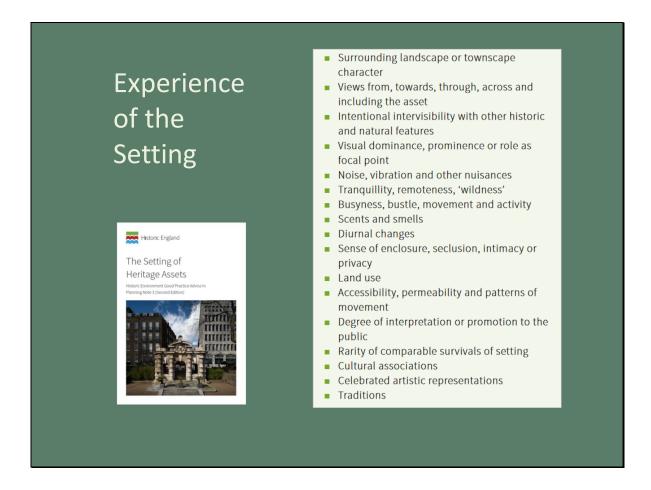
While Repton's park at Sheringham on the North Norfolk coast is a much more open setting, bounded by wooded belts.



And here, at Temple Newsum in Yorkshire, the setting is very open with farreaching views to the horizon.

Do different parts of the site still link up with each other both visually and physically or has the site become divided or under multiple ownership? What is the history of the site and to what degree of change has there been, over time, to affect its setting?

By asking all these questions we can get a good understanding of the factual information about the setting of a park or garden.



Slide - Experience of the Setting

However, there is more to the Setting than straightforward facts. The Setting of a park or garden also includes the experiences you get when you are in it, travelling around it or looking in from outside it.

Here is the list of experiences of the Setting from Historic England's Guidance Note and which I shall elaborate on next.

'The contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset'.

Slide – Views

When we visit a historic park or garden, the experiences we think of first are the views we are going to see. This is what English Heritage says on the topic of Views and Setting: 'The contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset'.



Slide – Views from the house

If a park or garden has, or had, a main residence or structure, it is likely that there will be key views from its location. These views may be to another building or eye catcher or they may extend through the park via an avenue or gap in a perimeter belt of trees to the landscape beyond. This is the key view from the mansion at Castle Howard in Yorkshire



Sometimes this view is deliberately endless, as at Kelmarsh in Northamptonshire, to imply the vastness of the estate. Or it could be to is to another heritage asset such as a church tower or a clump of trees on the horizon . . .



 \dots such as here, at Wimpole Hall near Cambridge – the eye is taken through the urns and trees to the ruined castle folly in the distance.

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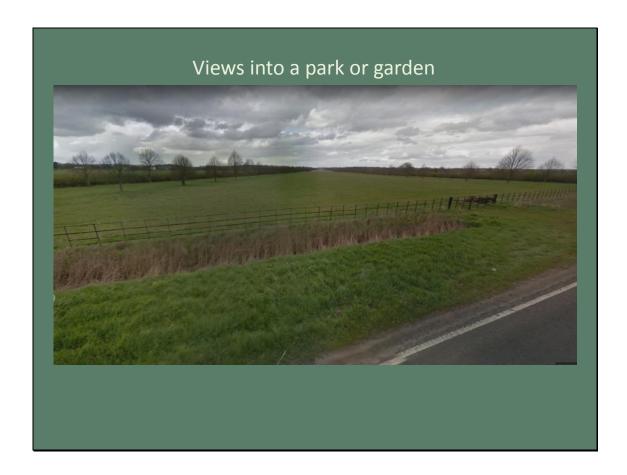
<u>Slide – Internal views across the asset</u>

Being able to see all your park or garden from the house would not be an interesting design or inspire you to explore the grounds. Therefore, many have a route that leads you around the site, opening up more views as you traverse. These may be views back to the main house as here, at Lyme Park, Cheshire or views across the site to other points of interest.



Slide – Views to the exterior

It may be that views out of the park are important to experience too. These could be designated look-out spots, maybe with a seat to rest on, to admire a wooded valley, distant hills, glimpses of the sea, historical buildings or someone else's beautiful garden. This is the view from the Mausoleum at Pentillie in Cornwall, the tight meander in the River Tamar forms part of the park's setting.



Slide – views looking into a park or garden

It maybe that a town or settlement benefits from views into a park or garden. Also, some designs have deliberatively encouraged views from passing roads to give travellers an understanding of the status of the owner and the amount of land they owned. This is the view from the A603 looking up the extensive avenue towards Wimpole Hall, which you probably can't make out, but it is where the two hedges meet on the horizon.

Public Parks and Garden Squares would also come into this category allowing neighbouring houses to borrow the landscapes as their front gardens.

All these categories of views need to be considered if a proposed development threatens the experience of a Setting.

Here is a short exercise to get us thinking about the placement of a new structure and how it affects the view into a site.



<u>Slide – Corfe Castle today</u>

This is Corfe Castle in Dorset — a view I'm sure many of you are familiar with. Apologies, that it is not a park or garden, but it is a heritage asset and let's imagine that it is beautiful Baroque temple similar to the Temple of the Four Winds at Castle Howard.

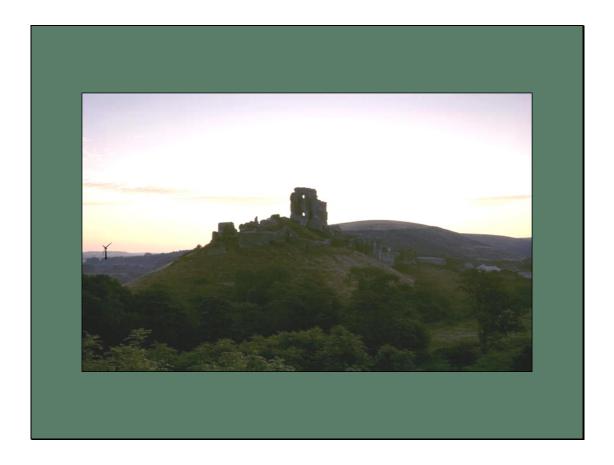
There's a great hill just behind it – the perfect spot for a . . .



<u>Slide – C Castle with turbine close by</u>

... wind turbine.

A bit like the ruby in the sapphire and diamond ring earlier, the whole setting has been altered and no longer are the Castle ruins the focal point of the view. Your eye bounces backwards and forwards between the two competing structures. I hope you would agree that this is not an acceptable development. So, would you find this proposal be more acceptable . . .?



<u>Slide – C Castle with turbine in far distance</u>

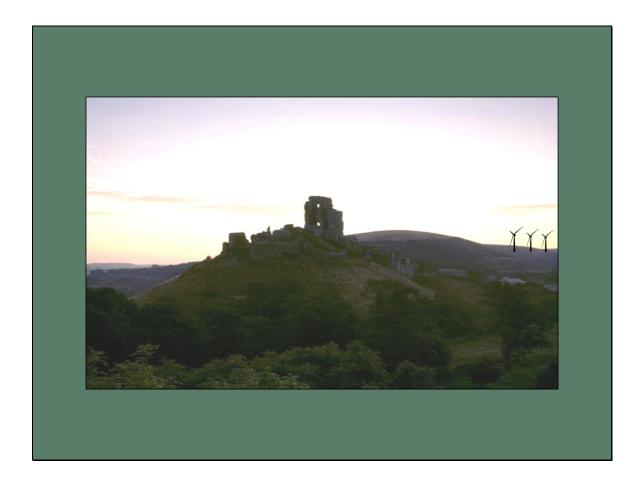
Most of us would think it is less harmful to this historic asset, but how about this proposal . . .



Slide - C Castle with turbine next to it

I would say no, as I have climbed that steep path up to the ruins. A turbine overhead would be totally unacceptable so close to the historic market town of Corfe, as well as the castle ruins. But as far as the view is concerned it is better than the first suggestion on the hill but not as good as the second on the distant horizon.

Of course, views can be very subjective – how would you feel about this proposal . . .?



<u>Slide – C Castle with 3 turbines far right</u>

Although, I feel I would still say no, isn't it interesting how despite increasing the number of turbines to 3, the Castle ruins are still very much the focal point. In order to know how a proposal may affect the setting, you have to really know the site, on the ground and understand each element of its setting.

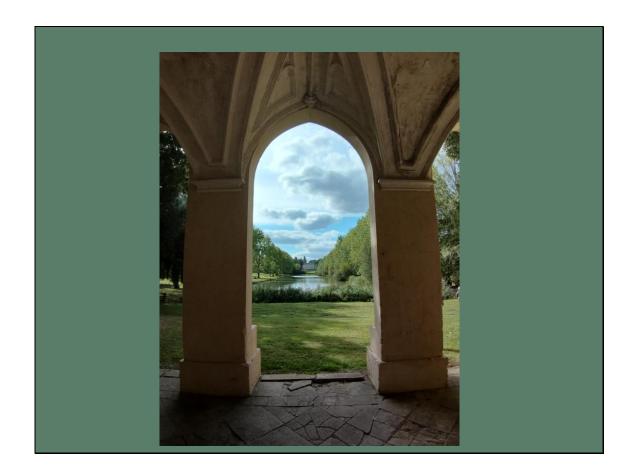
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<u>Slide – Other factors that may affect the experience of the setting</u>

The views you experience in a park or garden are a key part of its Setting but there are other ways your experience may be affected.

Noise and Vibration is one. Maybe you can think of an example where you have been enjoying a visit to a designed landscape only to discover that to your surprise a busy road runs along one side and spoils your enjoyment of a beautiful place to spend time and think or the noise masks the woodland birdsong in the established belt of trees.

This was my experience when I visited Shotover House in Oxfordshire last year. From the house I admired the well-known view of the gothic summerhouse and I couldn't wait to walk alongside the canal to see it close up.



<u>Slide – Shotover from the summerh</u>ouse

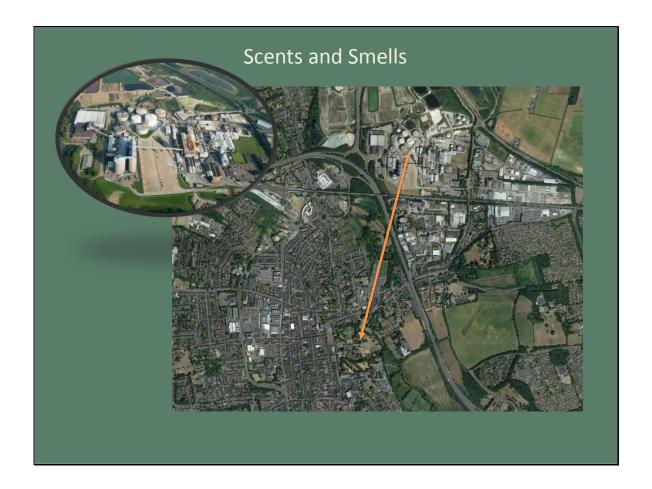
There was a lovely view back up to the house, but the experience was totally ruined for me by the heavy traffic noise only metres behind the building on the dual carriageways of the A40 – and it wasn't even a wet day when it would have been even louder. The Oxford to London Road was a much quieter routeway when this garden was laid out!

Similarly, in winter, if you could see through the thin belt of trees behind the summerhouse you would have seen the movement and reflections of busy traffic, which would have adversely affected the peaceful idyllic feel of the setting.



Slide – Chiswick House

Similarly, Chiswick House looks like an arcadian idyll, but it experiences considerable traffic noise from the M4 dual carriageway passing close by and with three London airports not that far away, disturbance from plane noise is frequent, as well as the associated visual movement which is out of keeping with its Setting. This gull is helpfully representing a low overhead plane! Tranquillity or remoteness maybe an important part of a Setting and therefore any concentration of new development could easily threaten this.



<u>Slide – Smells and Scents</u>

There could be a change in industrial practice nearby, which may not be visible or audible but there could be unpleasant smells intermittently or continually. An example of this could be a sugar beet factory such as this one on the edge of Bury St Edmunds, the fairly unpleasant smell often drifts across the town and Abbey Gardens, if the wind is from the north.

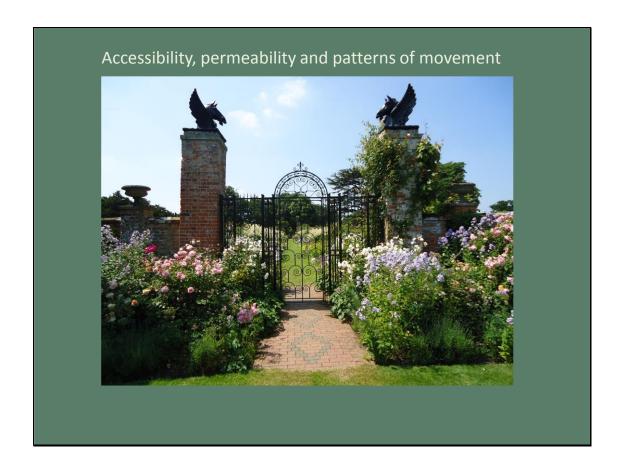
A more common source of unpleasant smells would be the opening up of a new landfill site near a historic park or garden.

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<u>Slide – Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy</u>

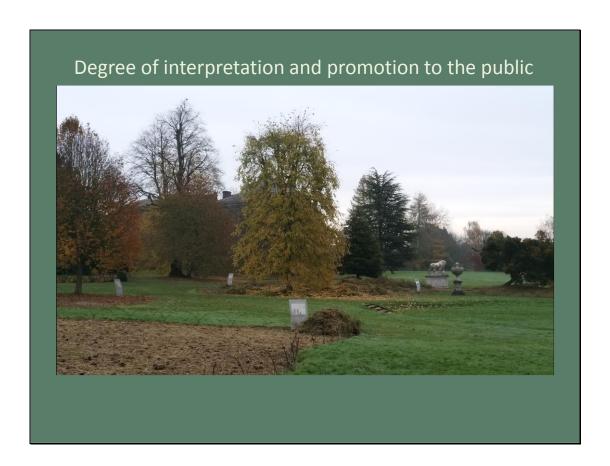
Another aspect of Setting that gardens may demonstrate is the sense of enclosure or seclusion. We have just seen these qualities as physical attributes of a setting but as a Setting experience they may offer intimate spaces where people can think their own thoughts or read a book or just sit in the sun - or shelter out of it.

This is Heigham Park in Norwich where separate areas are marked out by beautiful high yew hedges and although the park was opened in 1924 it has an Arts and Crafts feel about it. The intimate setting of this small public park is now threatened. The City Council have declared that they are going to drastically reduce the yew hedges in height — on safety grounds. If this happens, the whole intimate setting of this park will be lost.



Slide – Accessibility, Permeability and Patterns of movement around the site How people move around the park or garden, as well as how they access it from outside, is also part of its setting. This gateway at Helmingham Hall, Suffolk is obviously allowing you to enter the garden at the point that has always been an access. If this entrance was bricked up the path behind would lead nowhere, the setting has been altered and your experience compromised. Paths may be formal and made of hard durable materials or they may be informal grass tracks.

Paths may be deliberately planned to take you on a 'best route' journey around the site — others have developed following desire lines and human feet. This last group of pathways may have evolved historically over many decades or centuries, but some can be very new and appear almost over-night, therefore it is important to really know and understand the history of site.



Slide – Degree of Interpretation and promotion to the public

If it is a garden which allows public access how is the site presented? Does the setting enable you to traverse and understand the park or garden? If there are no signs or visual clues, visitors may not be able to find their way and potentially stray into areas which are susceptible to damage or off bounds. The degree of signage can have an effect on the Setting of a garden. Too many signs or unsympathetic signage, and then the eye is distracted from the design, the planned views and maybe the relaxed feel of the park or garden. This photo shows the pleasure gardens in a landscape park, visited last November on a rather grey day - obviously not the best time of year to visit any garden. Although you can see four interpretation panels in this picture, there were many more and they were visible from some distance away. The intention, to interpret how a pleasure garden was used in the past, has changed the experience of the setting in the present. They demand attention away from the garden itself and encourage a dot-to-dot, zig-zag method of traversing rather than the natural flow around the area.



Slide – Connection – St George's Bloomsbury

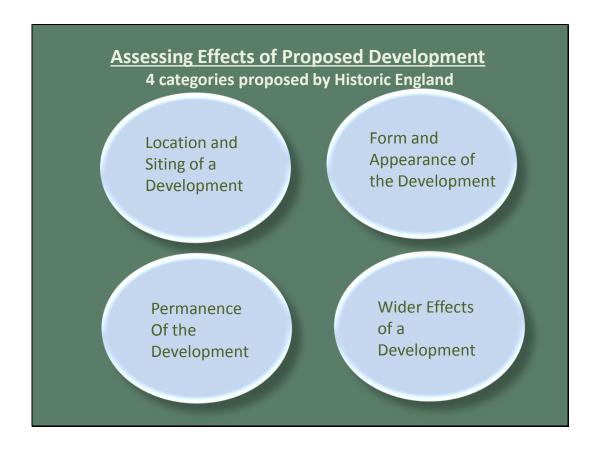
The experience of Setting is also affected by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the park or garden.

This image shows St George's Gardens, Bloomsbury in London. The site gardens have always been surrounded by development of the Coram Family Charity, who have historically operated facilities for needy children, and still do today. A few years ago, there was an application for a large new building adjacent to St George's Gardens by the Coram organisation - a new Children's facility. Theoretically, it was damaging to the Setting of the gardens, in that the proposed modern building would change the feel and views from the gardens and the surrounding streetscape. However, in this case the garden's setting is defined by the Coram organisation, not just visually but in terms of its emotional and historical context. Perhaps in this case it was appropriate to allow the new building?

- Rarity of Comparable Survivals of Setting
- Cultural Associations
- > Celebrated Artistic Representations
- > Traditions

Slide – Last four Experience categories

The last four items on HE's check list of potential key attributes of a setting, that should be considered when assessing its contribution to the garden's significance, are these. However, I'm not going to dwell on them today as they are so closely linked to Significance that I'm in danger of gate-crashing next time's talk.



Slide – Assessing effects of proposed development

When a site's setting is understood and a development is put forward, we need to assess the effects of the proposal on that setting, whether beneficial or harmful.

The factors we should consider come under these four categories suggested by Historic England and there is more detail about them in the HE Guidance Note.

Should We Map the Setting of a Park or Garden?

Curtilage v Setting

Curtilage – Legal term

Defined by consideration of ownership, both past and present, functional association and layout

Slide – Should we map the setting?

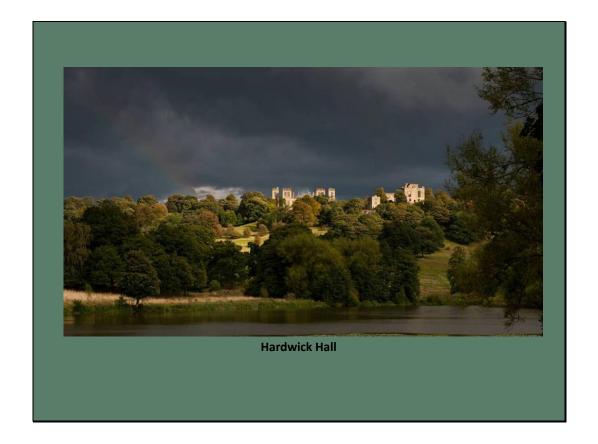
So, should we attempt to map the extent of the Setting for a historic park or garden? The curtilage, particularly of a listed building, is more of a defined area. The setting, as we have seen, can be much larger and more complicated, often including things that cannot be easily quantified.

It is tempting to think that by delineating the Setting, including all the important aspects and features of a garden's surroundings we will ensure development cannot take place without consultation.

Setting – the setting of a heritage asset will include the curtilage (if it has one) but generally be more extensive

The NPPF makes it clear that it does not have a fixed boundary and cannot be definitively and permanently described for all time as a spatially bounded area or as lying within a set distance of a heritage asset because what comprises a heritage asset's setting may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve or as the asset becomes better understood

Historic England's advice note warns against this. It makes it clear that while the Setting can be mapped out in the context of an individual application or proposal, it does not have a fixed boundary and cannot be definitely and permanently described for all time. This is because a heritage asset's setting may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve or as the asset becomes better understood.



An example where mapping was attempted and then suffered drawbacks, happened at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire. Key views and zones of visual influence were drawn up, subsequently a proposal for a wind farm was submitted just outside the Setting boundaries but it was still considered to have a negative impact of the hall's Setting.

The National Trust at Hardwick now refers to the mapped area as its 'core setting' which allows more flexibility in defining its broader setting.



Slide – White Paper

Setting, as a concept, in all the ways I have talked about this afternoon has been a major consideration for planners, developers and respondents to planning applications. Setting is highlighted and championed, and rightly so, in the National Planning Policy Framework and by Historic England, but what is the situation in the government's recent White Paper: Planning for the Future?

<u>Planning for the Future</u> Pillar Two

Proposal 16: We intend to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England

Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century

It is Proposals 16 and 17 which are of most interest to the Gardens Trust and although 16 seems to be more about protecting habitats and species, the Gardens Trust feels that this proposal has links with number 17:

<u>Proposal 16</u>: We intend to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England

<u>Proposal 17</u>: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century)

Reading through these two sections in the White Paper, the term Setting is not specifically mentioned in either of them. Proposal 17 talks about how the planning system has played a critical role ensuring the historic buildings and areas are conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced by development.

Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century

We envisage that Local Plans will clearly identify the location of internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets, such as World Heritage Sites and conservation areas, as well as locally important features such as protected views.

It says that the NPPF already sets out strong protection for heritage 'We envisage that Local Plans will identify the location of internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets, such as World Heritage Sites and conservation areas, as well locally important features such as protected views.' This does not appear to be ditching a consideration of setting, but rather suggesting that it could be distilled into the terms 'protected views'. As we have seen, this is far from the current situation where guidance and case law makes it clear that setting is about more than just views; also that issues of setting (of which views are important) are not static. So, the omission of Setting is likely to attract a very large degree of backlash from consultees. The Gardens Trust is recommending a review of Settings in terms of Historic England's advice, and if it can be part of the framework proposed in the White Paper that would be a welcome step. The Gardens Trust's detailed response to White Paper should be available soon.

The deadline for comments on the White Paper is October 29th, 2020.

Statutory Consultees

The Gardens Trust: Grade 1, II* and II

Historic England: Grade 1 and II*

Slide – Statutory Consultees

Lastly, a reminder that The Gardens Trust is a statutory consultee on planning proposals which affect Registered Parks and Gardens <u>or their settings</u> – that's for Grades I, II* and II sites.

Historic England are statutory consultees on the Grade I and Grade II* sites only.

The key to protecting these settings, as well as the heritage asset is, therefore, to establish relationships between the asset and its surroundings — if there is an important relationship, we can use the planning system to protect it.

