

# Welcome

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*Thank you*



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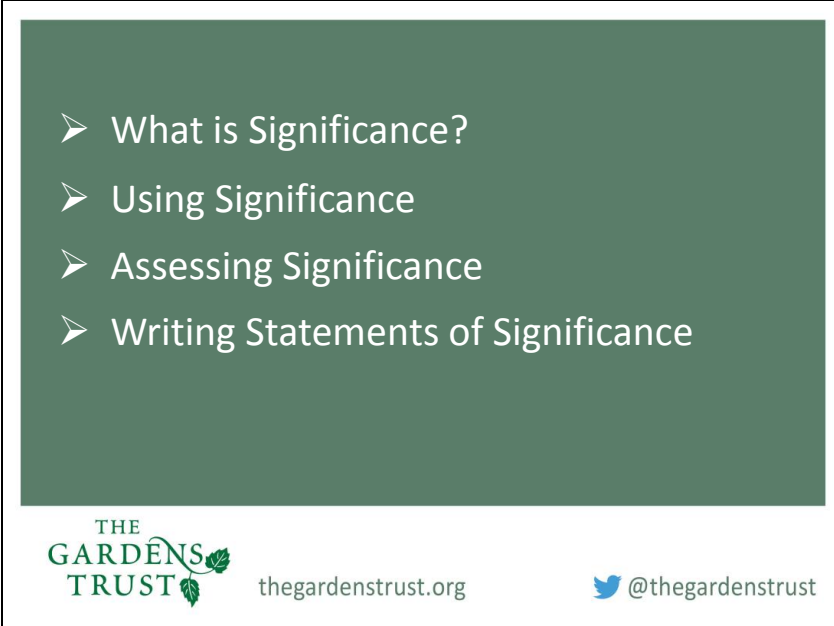
If you have joined us for the last three talks you will have heard our Conservation Officer Margie Hoffnung describe the many and varied threats to historic gardens, parks and landscapes. Then we had our capacity building officers Tamsin McMillan and Sally Bate on the Designations that may afford a park or garden protection from these threats, and the importance of Setting for a designed landscape and how this should be considered when assessing the impact of a development proposal.

Today, I'm going to talk about 'Significance', which in the Conservation world has a more specific meaning than when we use the word in every day parlance, where we might use it to mean something like 'noteworthy'.

In conservation terms, Significance is absolutely key to the protection of historic parks and gardens.

As we are about to see, the concept of Significance, and the pursuit and use of something called '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. You could think of it as an Executive Summary for the site, that describes key facts based on their implications for meaningfulness.





➤ What is Significance?

➤ Using Significance

➤ Assessing Significance

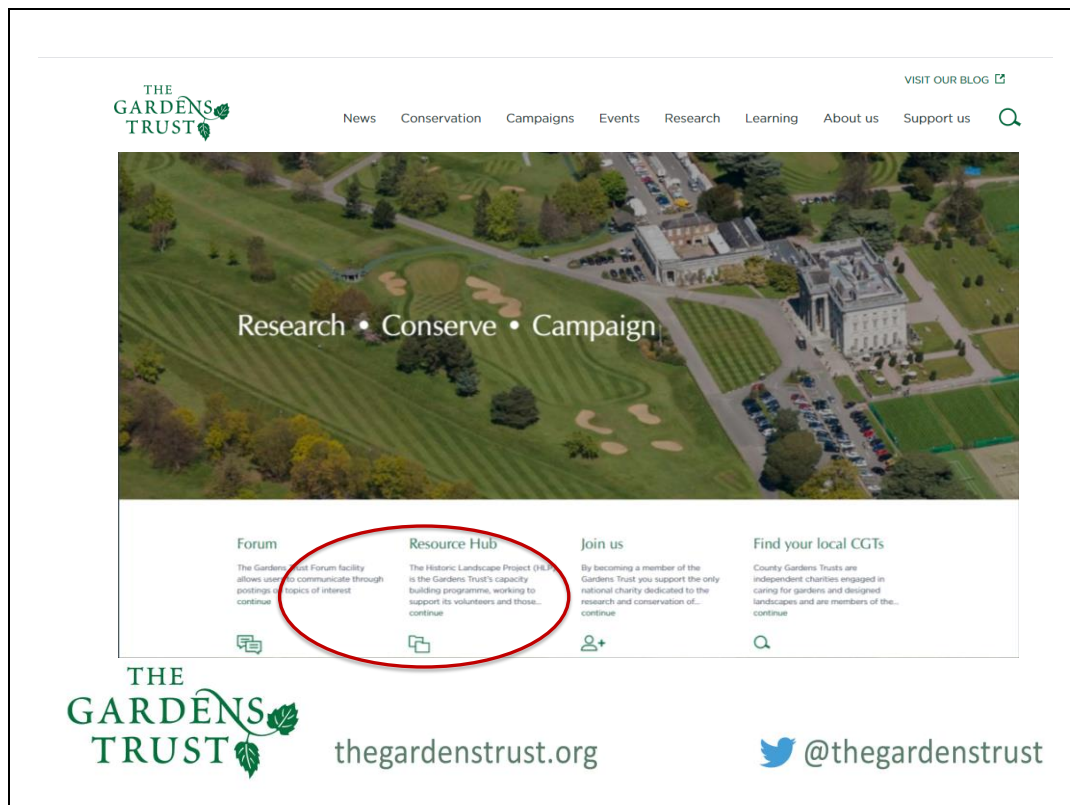
➤ Writing Statements of Significance

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Here's what we'll be covering today.

- I'll start off by giving some headlines on the broad concepts of what Significance is in relation to conservation
- Then I'll talk a little about the kind of situations where Significance or Statements of Significance are used as a tool, and we'll look at where it comes into the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Then we'll look at how to assess Significance.
- And then how to write Statements of Significance, and we'll look at a couple of examples.

Slide 4



A synopsis of this presentation and our handout on Significance can be found on the Resource Hub on the Gardens Trust website (along with lots of other educational goodies); so you don't need to take notes unless you want to.

## What is 'Significance'?



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“Conservation is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance”

National Planning Policy Framework

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Significance starts in the definition of conservation set out by the National Planning Policy Framework - a policy from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to guide local authority planning decisions: *“Conservation is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance”*.

Clearly, significance is key here – conservation is not simply about preserving the asset’s physicality exactly as is, but rather something more sophisticated than that – it’s about protecting specifically what’s special. Of course, that means ‘special’ not just ‘what we like best’. We have to be a bit firm with ourselves in deciding what is special, or significant, so we don’t just choose the bits that appeal to our sense of taste.

I can’t emphasise enough – Significance at the heart of methodology for the protection of historic parks and gardens

## Managing, not preventing, change



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In other words, conservation 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 really want to eat the food in aspic?! )

Significance is a tool that enables us to preserve things only enough to make them still fabulous, rather than preserve them so tightly that they're not actually appealing anymore and even get in the way of us enjoying lovely new things.

## What is Significance?

- What is special about the site
- Difference between what is the history, and what is special
- It requires making a judgment call



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So, what is Significance? I find the easiest way to think of it is as the difference between the HISTORY of a site, and WHAT IS IMPORTANT about a historic site.

Think of it like these two bags. One is huge and can contain everything you own, or everything you know about a site. It is fabulous to have but makes actual ongoing life quite tricky – you can't really move with it. The other is small and manageable – it contains the select favourite or most important things that you choose to carry around with you to make life happen – this represents the selection of what is really important about a site that we need to know in order to manage and conserve it.



## What is Significance?



'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'

National Planning Policy Framework



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The official way of describing Significance for heritage policy, in terms of the planning system, is 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'

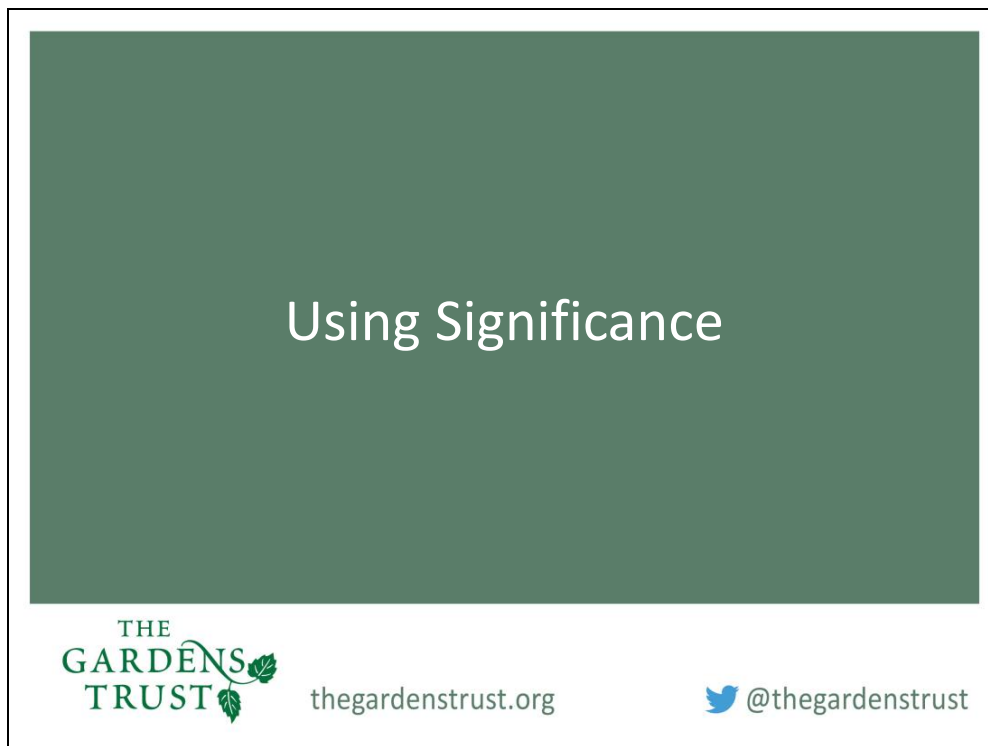
Understanding what is significant about a landscape can help us to assess the impact of development on a landscape. Remember, conservation is about managing change to a site's significance rather than necessarily preserving in aspic.



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 18<sup>th</sup> century house with a Capability Brown landscape 'round the other side' may not be as devastating as we thought. Conversely, we may realise that the litter bin 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 than a much larger development that is convincingly part of the site's 'story'.

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. That's not to say that Significance allows a way to make excuses for development – rather it is a way to make sure we are focussed with our judgments.

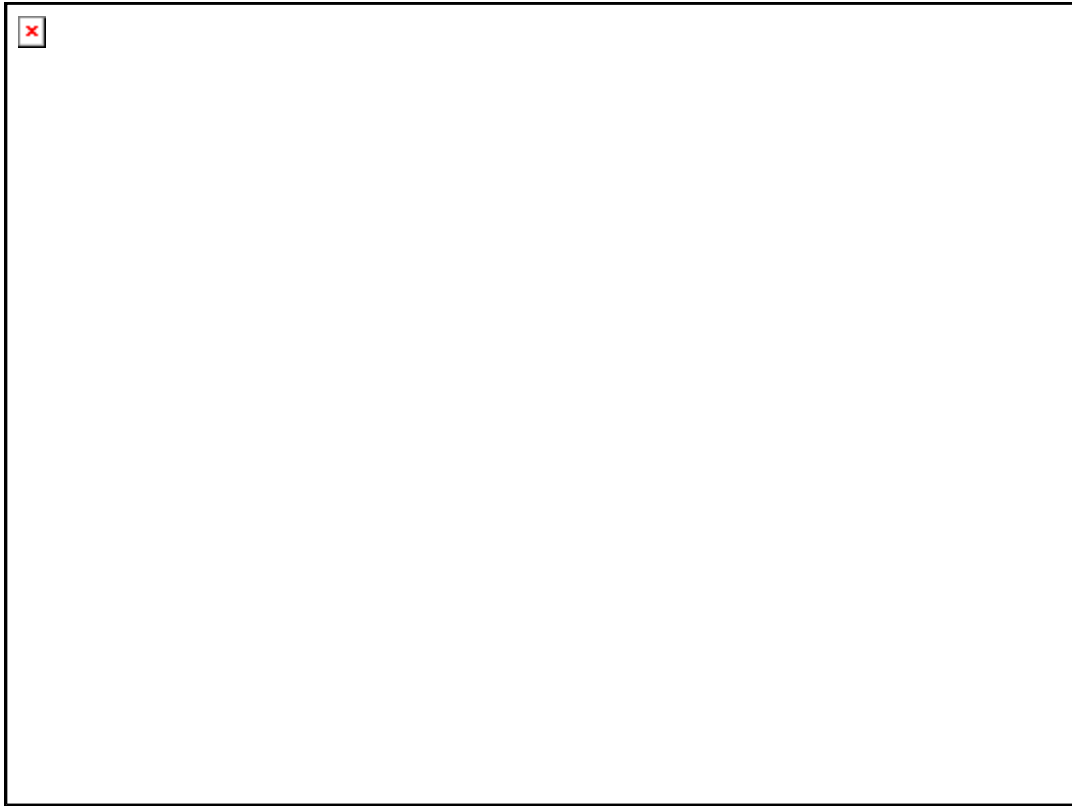
Or, here's an example on the screen. Stourhead – I've mocked up a large but architect-designed art gallery on the left, and a small red dog waste bin on the right. One would make us panic if we got the planning application, the other would just be a quick decision by a site maintenance manager. Which actually causes the most visual damage though? Which is more incongruous when you think that Stourhead's *raison d'être* is as a living work of art?



Here are some slides to show how Statements of Significance, or at least an understanding of significance, can be used, partly in terms of responding to the NPPF, but in other ways also.

Before we leap in, conscious that I'm going to keep referring to Statements of Significance but haven't actually covered them yet, I'll just quickly explain that Statements of Significance are basically just the brief texts in which you write up a site's Significance.

I'll just flag up at this stage that anyone can write a Statement of Significance. There is no global agency to approve or reject your Statement of Significance! (Although, if you want to lodge it somewhere official, you will need to get the agreement of the managers of the repository.)





How would you use the concept of Significance in your everyday work around historic parks and gardens?


Even if you're not interested in planning and conservation, the ability to determine significance will be useful even in activities such as tours, lectures, leaflets.

Essentially, researched information can have a greater impact if the key 'hooks' of a site, what makes it special, are drawn out, rather than simply presenting readers with every word of your lifetime's research. This is user-friendly interpretation!


## National Planning Policy Framework



**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...



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But the Gardens Trust is a statutory consultee in the planning system, so we always have an eye firmly on conservation and the planning system, so let's look at the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - a policy from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to guide their work, that of the Planning Inspectorate, and 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 – it is absolutely at the heart of planning policy for the protection of historic parks and gardens. Here are a few favourite paragraphs from the NPPF. 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 proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.*

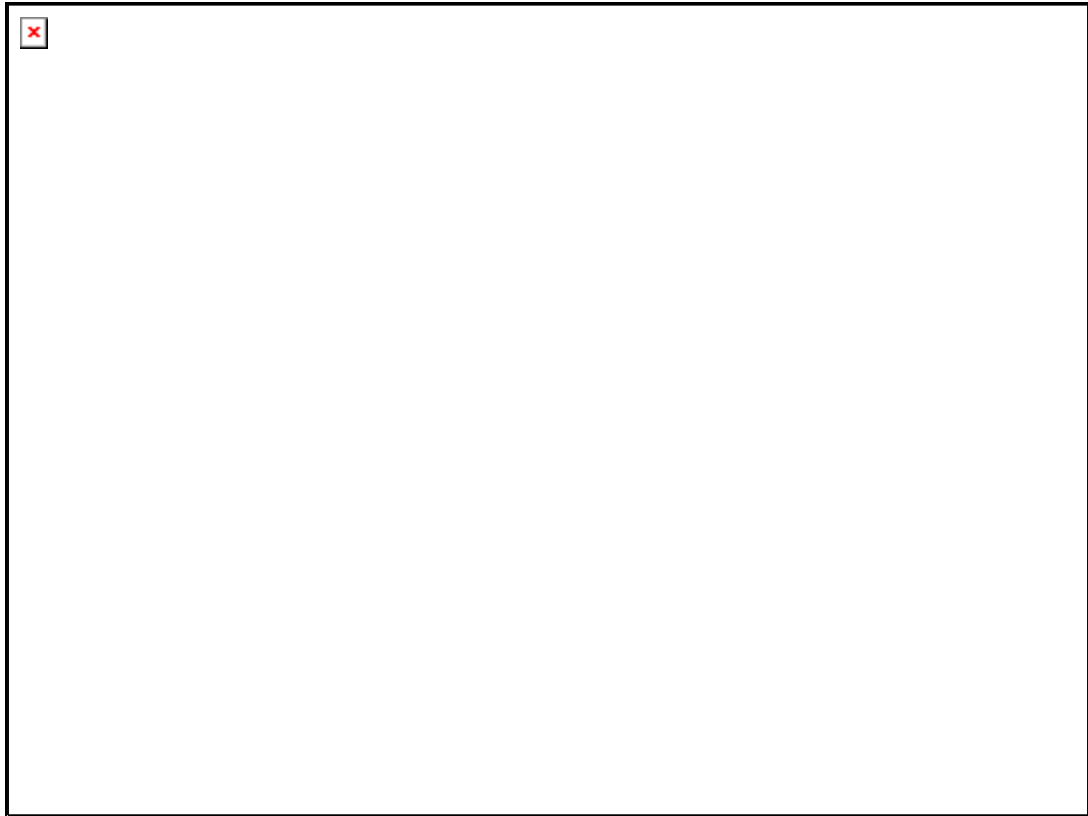
Note the reference to Historic Environment Records – we'll look more at HERs shortly.

Applicants need to demonstrate that their proposal comes after an understanding of the site's significance has informed it. But also, local authorities need to understand the site's significance.

***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 the significance of any heritage assets affected...*

Just a note that this all includes Setting – so if there was a proposal for a warehouse in this distant view from Brockhole in Cumbria, applicants and the local authority would need to understand the significance of that development on Brockhole and its setting, just as much as they should do for this zip wire visitor attraction within Brockhole itself.

Pic: Brockhole, Cumbria (Linden Groves)

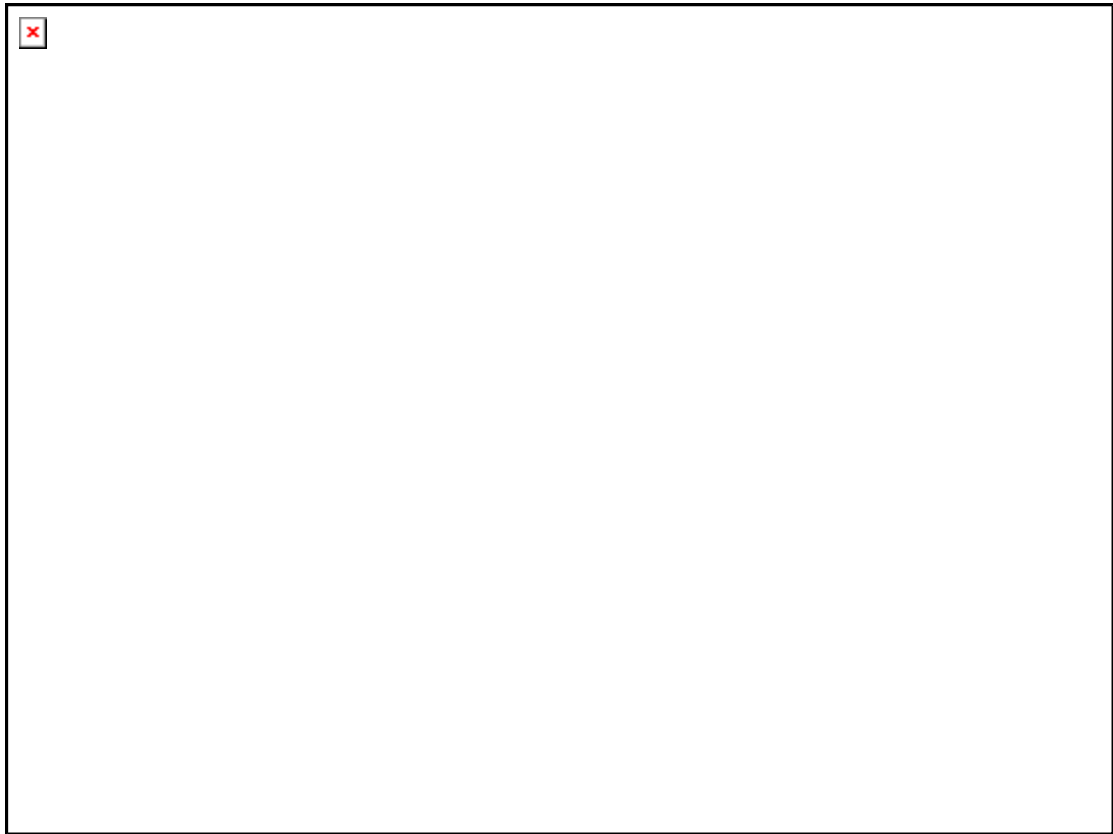


The effect of development proposals on historic parks and gardens' significance is how we now measure impact, and whether the impact is great enough that the proposal should be refused.

**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, ...*

Just to look for a minute at this concept of harm, it's measured as being either substantial or less than substantial. (A proposal could also have no impact on significance or may enhance significance.) You need to be able to clearly articulate what level of harm you believe a proposal has.

This picture is of the infamous glamping at Warwick Castle. 'Medieval glamping' in Foxes Study is at odds with the significance of this area - Foxes' Study was planted in the Picturesque style in the late eighteenth century. It forms the calm 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. This is arguably substantial harm or even total loss of significance, therefore it should have had consent refused.

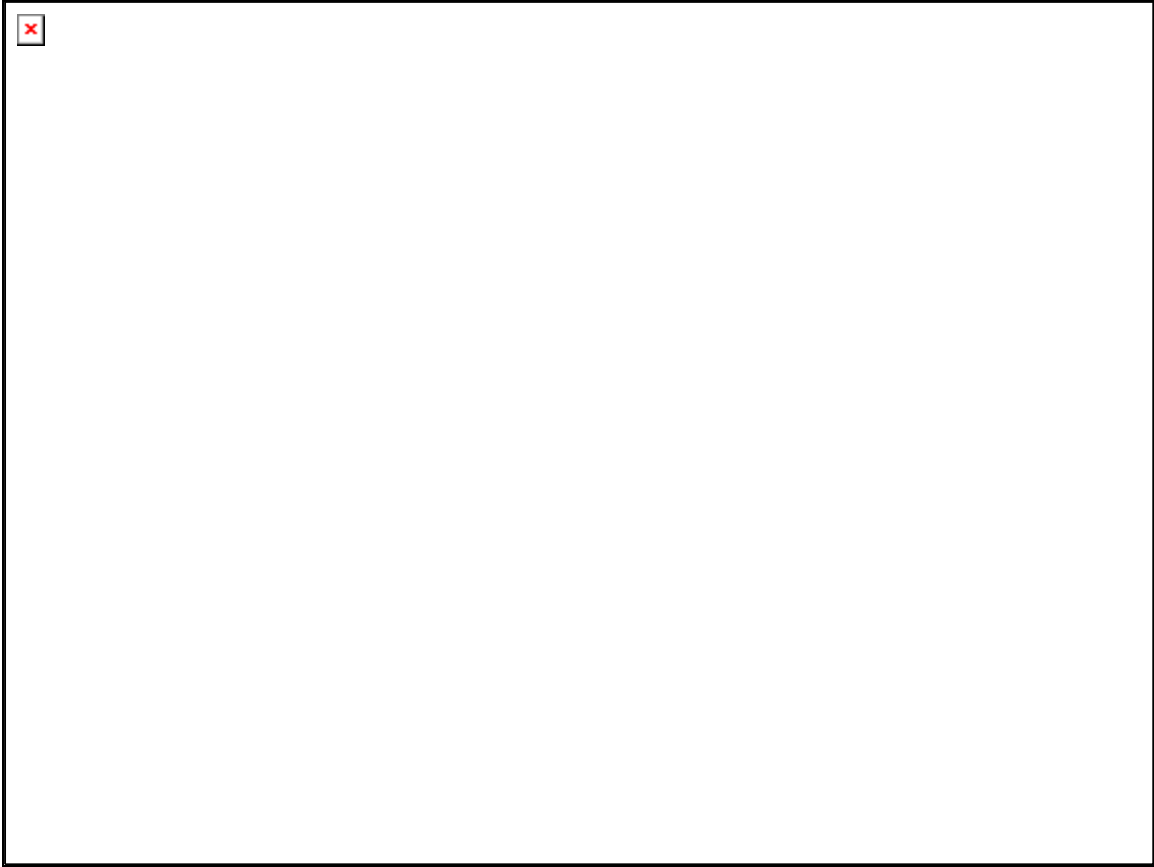


And this all applies even if the site is undesignated, although there is more leniency. (I'm not going to do a huge recap on Tamsin's Designation webinar, but a reminder that a reference to a site being designated would mean it was on the National Heritage List (the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest). Non-designated sites are ones that are still of some importance, locally rather than nationally for example, but are not designated at the national level.

***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.*

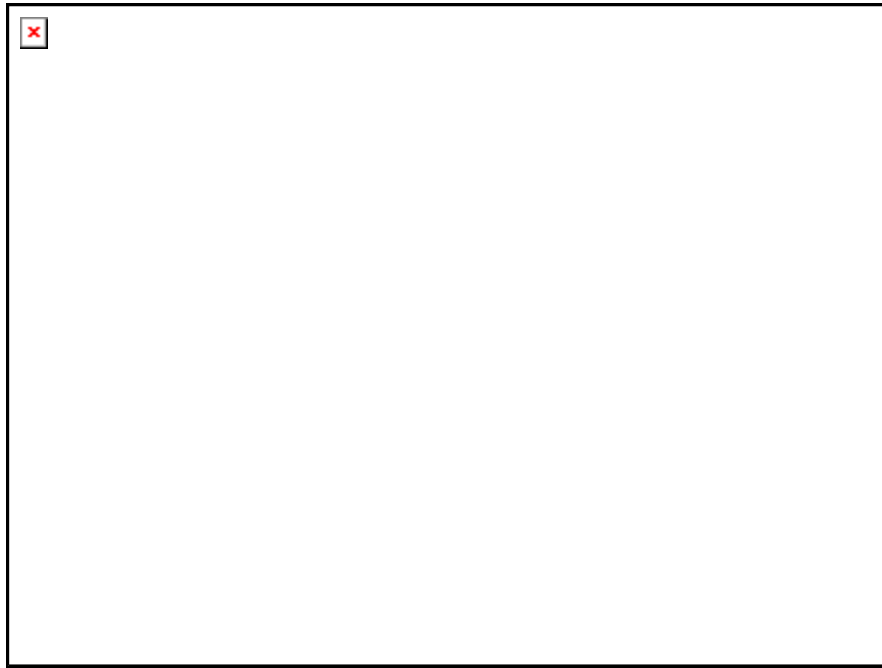
So, this need to measure an application against the impact on significance applies even to sites that aren't on the Register of Parks and Gardens, so long as they have been in some way identified the local planning authority.

Pic is Barn Hill, Wembley, London – unregistered park that includes a remnant of Humphry Repton landscape. If there was a proposal to put a car park or leisure centre in it, the local planning authority would have to assess that against the site's significance.



Just flagging up for you, Historic England has a great advice note on Significance, and it particularly covers Significance in relation to the NPPF.





Let's remind ourselves of the NPPF's reference to Historic Environment Records (HERs) and find out a bit more about them.

These 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 Statement of Significance, 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 research doesn't only get put on your website, or even into a beautiful coffee table book, but also gets put onto the HER.

Fundamentally:

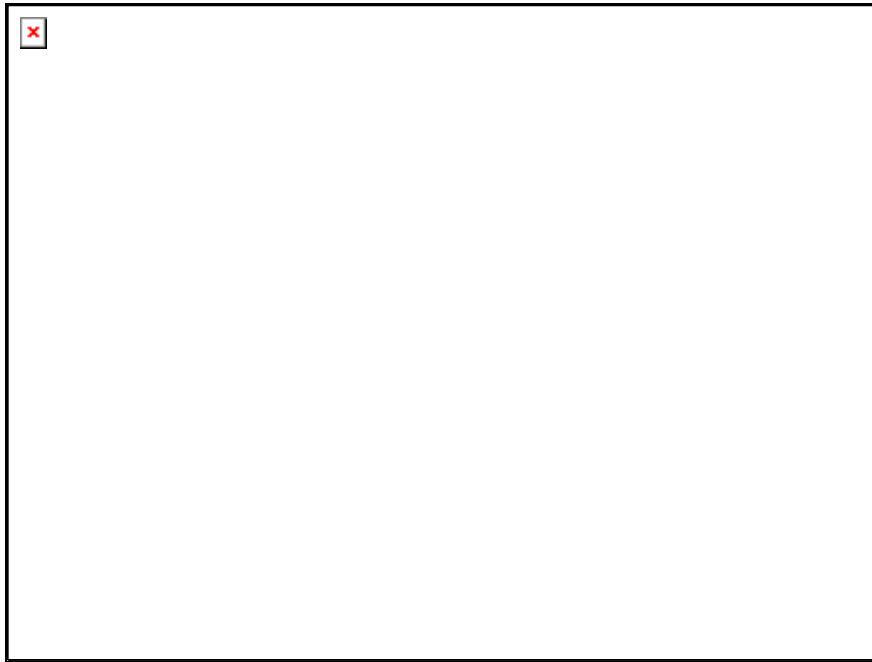
Planners are busy, stretched, under-resourced and usually historic designed landscapes aren't their specialist subject

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 up 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.

If you're looking for examples of CGTs that have done great jobs of putting their research into HERs with Statements of Significance, I recommend the websites of Yorkshire Gardens Trust and Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust, who've both done a great job here.



Statements of Significance can also help us to explain the value of a site concisely for Local Plans, both to help persuade the local authority officer putting together the local list of sites of importance of the value of each site, but also within each site entry.

Our designation workshop looked at Local Plans with 'local lists' of sites of local importance. This is a 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. (Although, to be clear, sites don't have to be on a local list to have some protection if they can be recognised by the local planning authority as non-designated heritage assets in some other way.

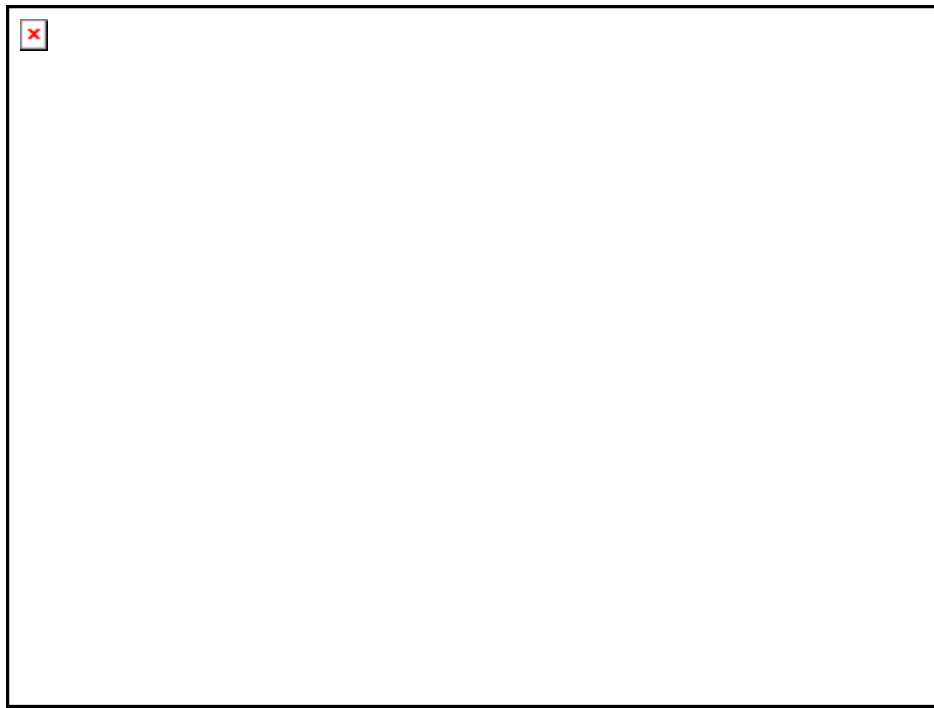
(For more info on local listing, try the Historic England advice note 7

<https://bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/research-and-recording/locally-important-sites-3/>)

By working with local planning authorities, CGTs can help to create these lists of local sites of importance, and this list can 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.

Incidentally, local lists don't have to be in local plans – they are useful documents even if they just stand alone.

- Yorkshire Gardens Trust, Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust and Kent Gardens Trust have done some excellent work on this, and you can see examples on their websites –  
<https://www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk/research-projects/>
- <https://bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/research-and-recording/locally-important-sites-3/>
- <https://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/research/selby-district-research-recording-project>



We looked at how Significance can help you assess a development proposal – think back to the dog waste bin at Stourhead. This understanding of Significance also needs to be carried into our comment letter on planning applications.

Remember the NPPF and how much weight you're allowed to give impact on significance in commenting on an application.

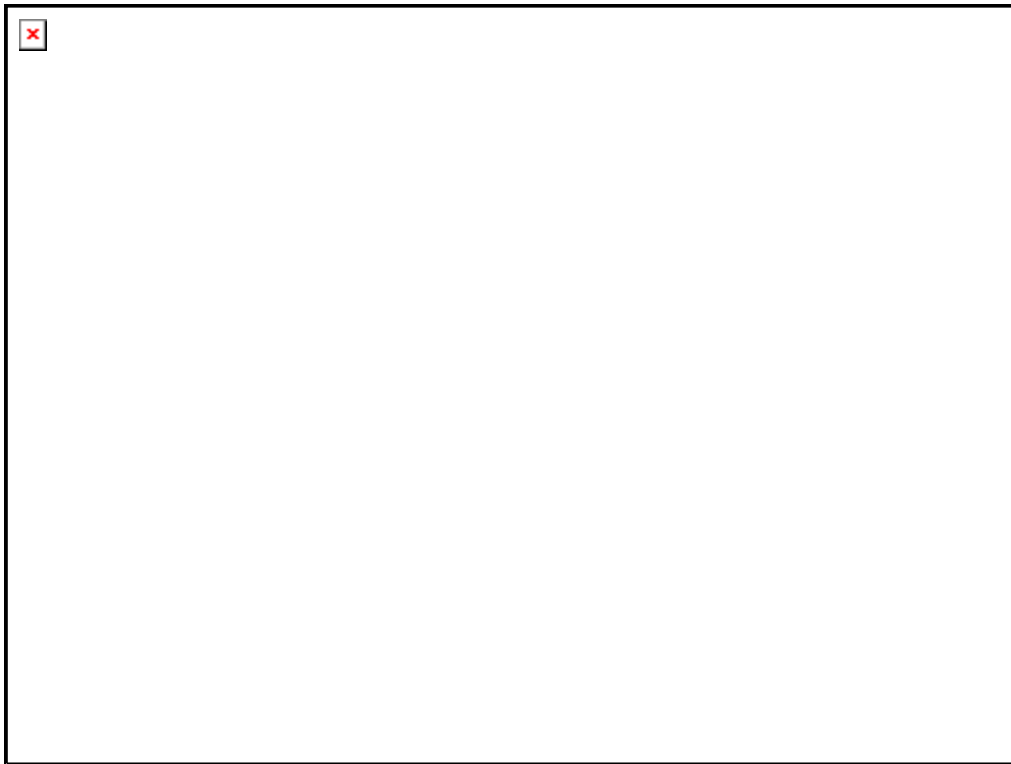
In the NPPF the local planning authority is required to assess the impact of the proposals on the significance of the site. If they cannot identify what is significant about the site and show that the impact is not serious, permission should be refused.

And if we can tap into Significance, our letters will press all the right buttons. If we can set out in our comments on planning applications how the proposal will impact significance, we are making it much easier for the planners to successfully protect historic parks and gardens.

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.

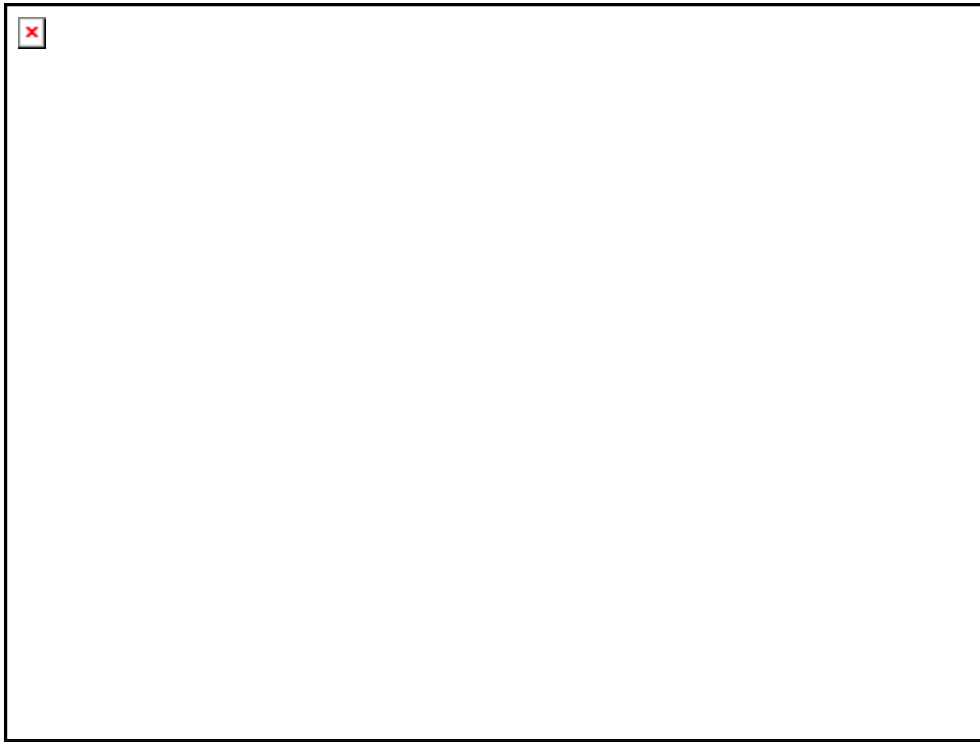
Reminder, you can get these template letters from our online Resource Hub. They follow a model where you explain the Significance, and then you explain the impact of the proposal on Significance.

If you have a Statement of Significance to hand, that either your County Gardens Trust researchers have written, or is in the HER, then you can just drop it into the letter, having gone through the process of questioning the proposal against it. If you don't have a Statement of Significance, you will need to hastily write one from your knowledge of the site, even if that knowledge is not as extensive as you would like.



So, how do you assess Significance?

A reminder here that anyone can come to a conclusion about a site's Significance and write a Statement of Significance. Like anything in life, some will be better than others, but that's ok. A mediocre Statement of Significance can always be improved upon, down the line! There is no mechanism for approving a Statement of Significance, so you could quietly write one for your own use for a particular site without having to send it to some kind of 'Agency for Rubber Stamping Statements of Significance'. But if you want it to be used somewhere like a Historic Environment Record or Local Plan then at that stage you will obviously need to be liaising with the person who looks after that resource.



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!

I'll just flag up here for those of you who have done Significance training with us before that we're shifting this now from using the Historic England Heritage Values, to the Heritage Interest terms used by NPPF. Don't panic, it's essentially the same thing!

The National Planning Policy Framework offers a set of interests 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 interests it holds, and the blend of them together is its Significance.

The heritage interests that the NPPF uses are: **Archaeological, Architectural, Artistic** and **Historic**. I'll read to you now, how it describes each of them, and then we'll go through each one separately and talk it through in more everyday language.

*•archaeological interest: if the heritage asset holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

*•architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the*

*design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*

*•historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

*In legislation and designation criteria, the terms 'special architectural or historic interest' of a listed building and the 'national importance' of a scheduled monument are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance.*

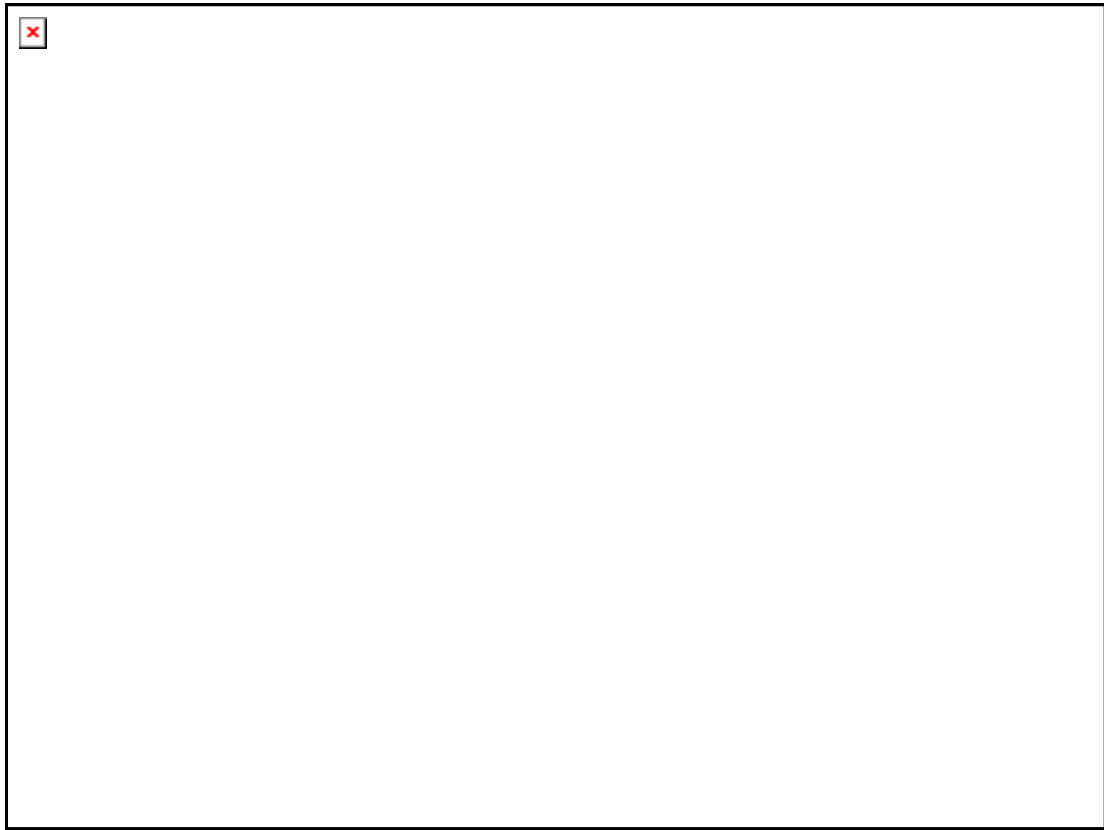
In other words, in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, the 'special historic interest' means of 'special significance'.

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

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

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

So, Significance = the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.



Historic England has different way of saying this, referring not to Heritage Interest, but rather to Heritage Values, which are terms from their Conservation Principles. In the past, we have tended to deliver Significance training using the HE Heritage values rather than the NPPF terms, but these are being phased out and so now we are moving to the NPPF terms.

It doesn't really matter either way, as the concepts are broadly the same, and you should end up with a similar piece of work in a Statement of Significance.

Here I've put the two sets of terms next to each other and tried to indicate with the colours how they correlate.

The HE Heritage Values are:

Evidential value, which correlates with Archaeological Interest

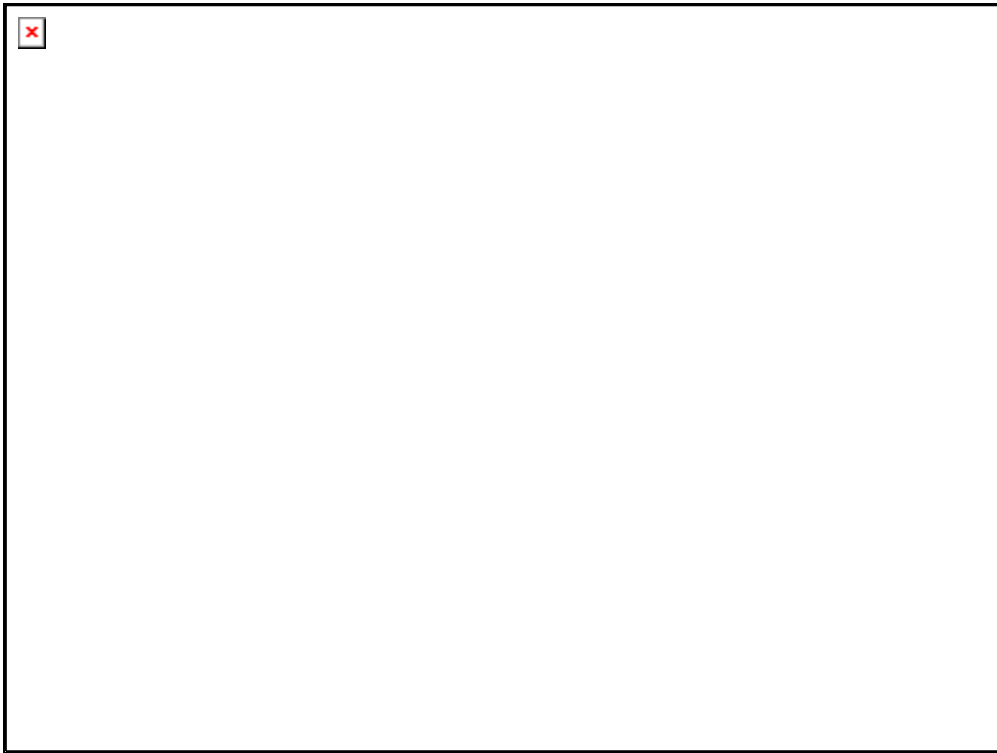
Aesthetic value, which correlates with Architectural and artistic Interest

Historical value, which correlates with Historic Interest

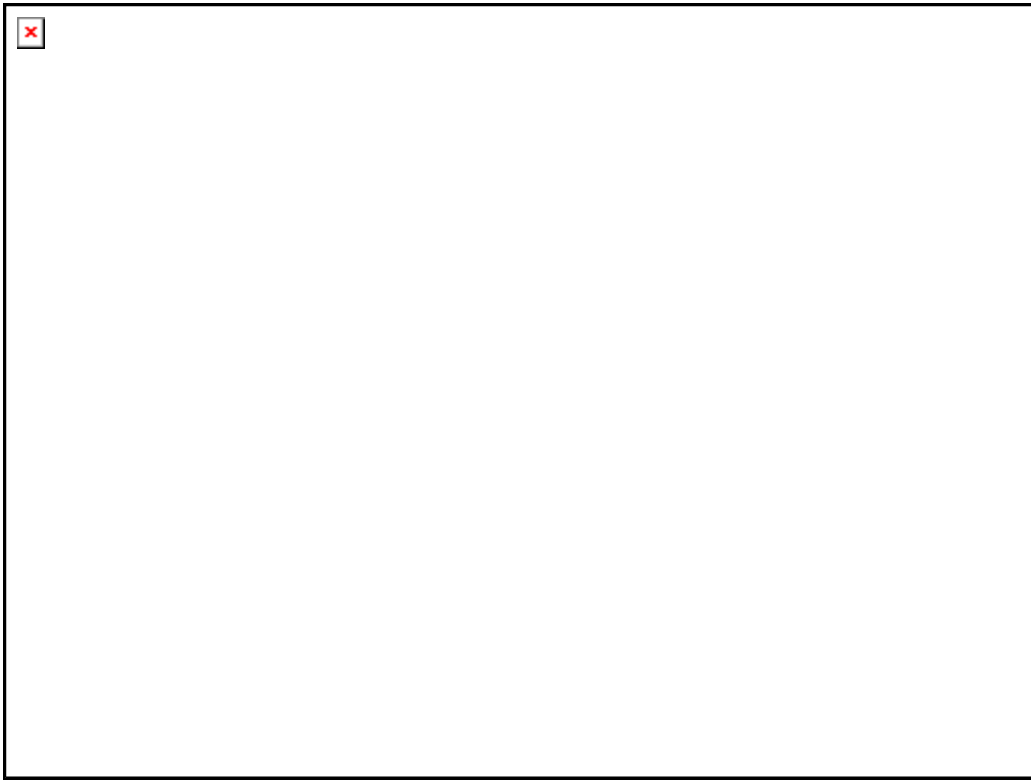
Communal value, which has become a thread running through Historic Interest

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





Incidentally, the National Trust talks about 'Spirit of the Place' in addition to 'Significance', which highlights particularly the meaning that sites have for people.



Now we'll consider each of the Heritage Interests briefly in turn, with examples.

***Archaeological interest:*** *if the heritage asset holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

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

We could say that one of the ways that Hampton Court is significant is its archaeological interest: its potential to reveal still more information about the development of royal palace gardens.

NB Obviously this is a big-name example, but the same could just as easily apply to less familiar landscapes and less dramatic archaeology, e.g. an 18<sup>th</sup> century parkland with an Iron Age fort underneath. But don't forget that the 'evidence about past human activity' needs to be 'worthy of expert investigation', so you can't use just any old thing.



**Architectural** and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

In other words, Architectural interest is about the design and aesthetics inherent in the heritage asset. Don't be confused, it doesn't need to mean 'architecture' as in a built item – it can include planting, paths, contouring, lakes – any garden feature.

Architectural Interest can be the result of the conscious design, primarily the qualities generated by the design of a building, park or garden, but it can also be the apparently fortuitous outcome of the way in which a place has evolved and been used over time, ie without design.

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

(Photo: Langar Hall deer park, Notts, thanks to Tamsin McMillan)



*Architectural and **artistic interest**: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*

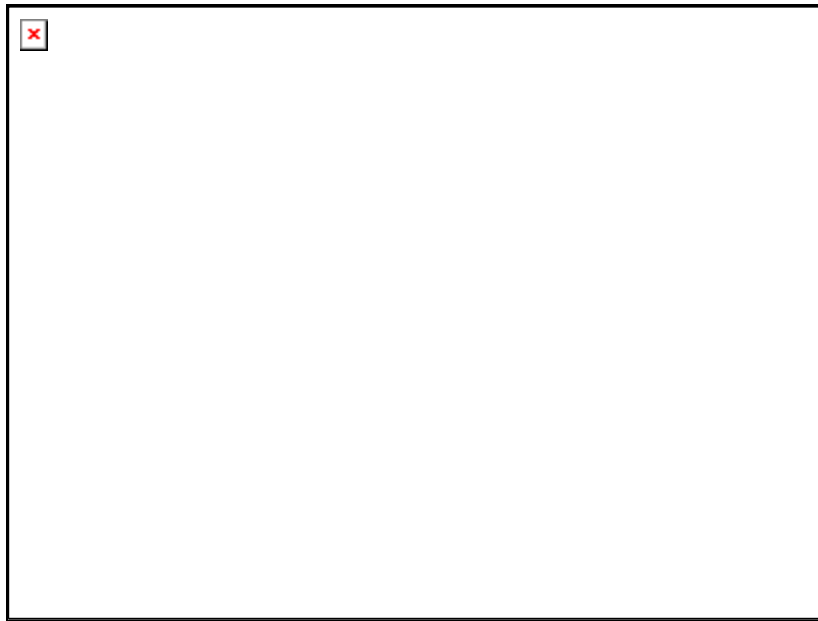
In other words, Artistic interest is about the design and aesthetic interest of something that has been added into the heritage asset, such as piece of sculpture.

Don't be confused, 'artistic' doesn't mean it has to be 'art'.

In my opinion, the distinction between architectural and artistic is a difficult one for landscapes, which can be so layered, and where the sculpture, or whatever, can have been an integral part of the overall design from the beginning. It doesn't really matter though if you can't distinguish between whether it is Architectural or Artistic, as helpfully they are bundled together.

As with architectural interest, the aesthetic can be conscious or fortuitous, it doesn't really matter.

This is Highfield Park in Nottinghamshire.



Historic Interest lies in the potential to tell stories about the past using the site as a key to unlock a narrative.

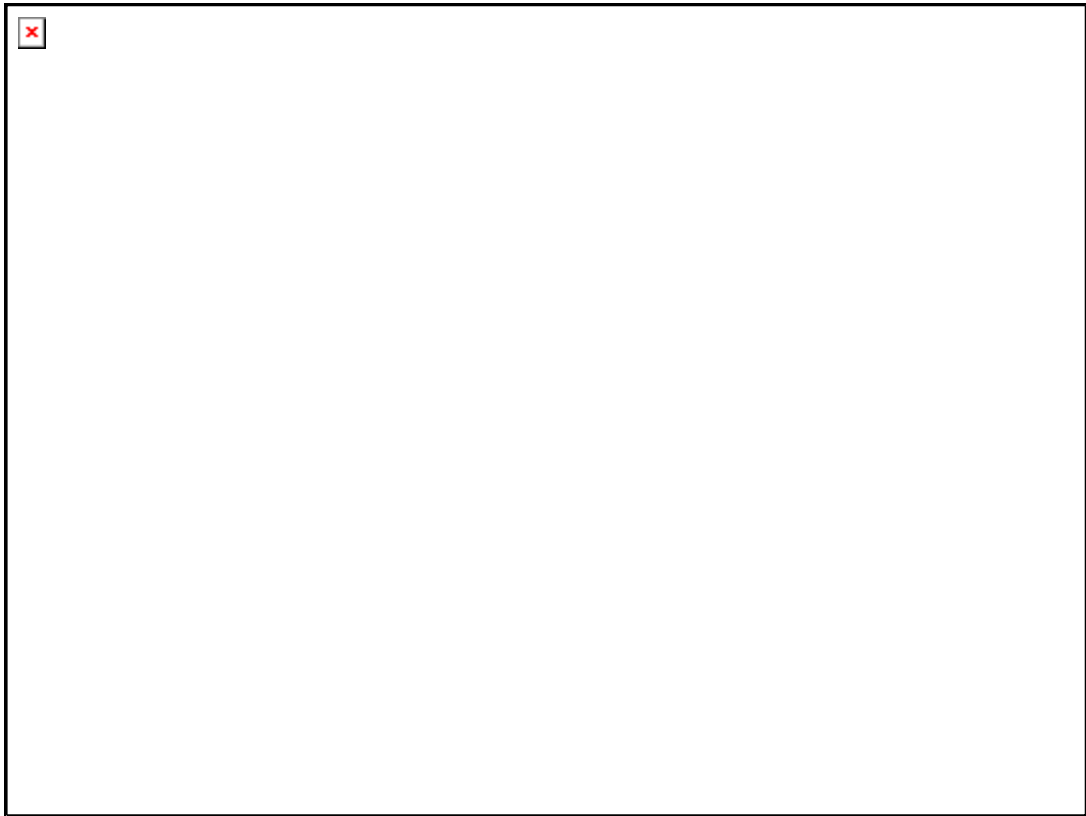
**Historic interest:** *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

I'm going to look at this distinction of how 'heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them', but first I just want to unpick this concept of 'meaning for communities' as it is a thread that runs through Historic Interest.

Community meaning derives from all the other meanings that people assign to a place. It is not the same as Community and isn't as basic as public access – stay focussed on the word 'meaning'! Often expressed in a sense of belonging and can have a profound effect on local identity.

This is a picture of Calverley Grounds in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. It's a public park well-used for recreation by the local community for many generations and a great source of civic pride. It's an obvious example of community meaning. But don't forget, community meaning is not as simple as public access or ownership. I often give the example of Buckingham Palace – most of us will never visit, but nevertheless it has huge community meaning as home of our monarch, and the location of historic national events. People gather there at times of national importance.

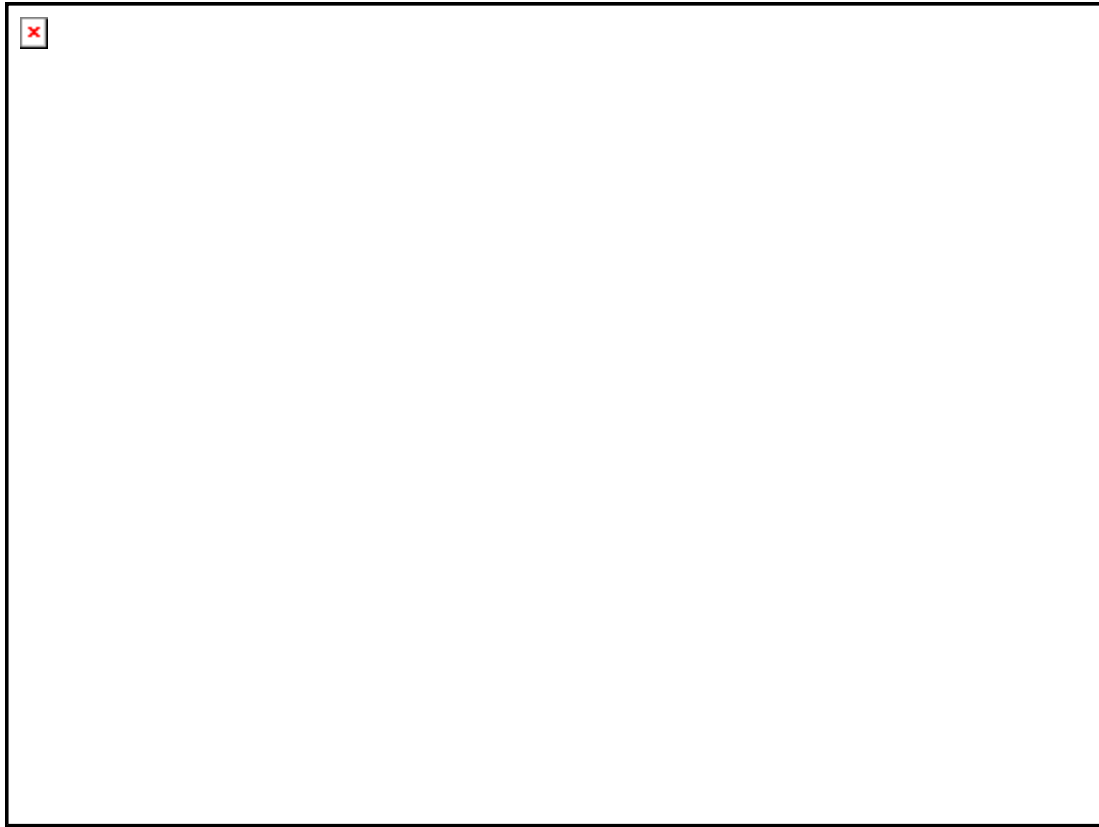
Sites with considerable community meaning would also include cemeteries and memorials. An awareness of community meaning needs to thread through our assessment of Historic Interest.



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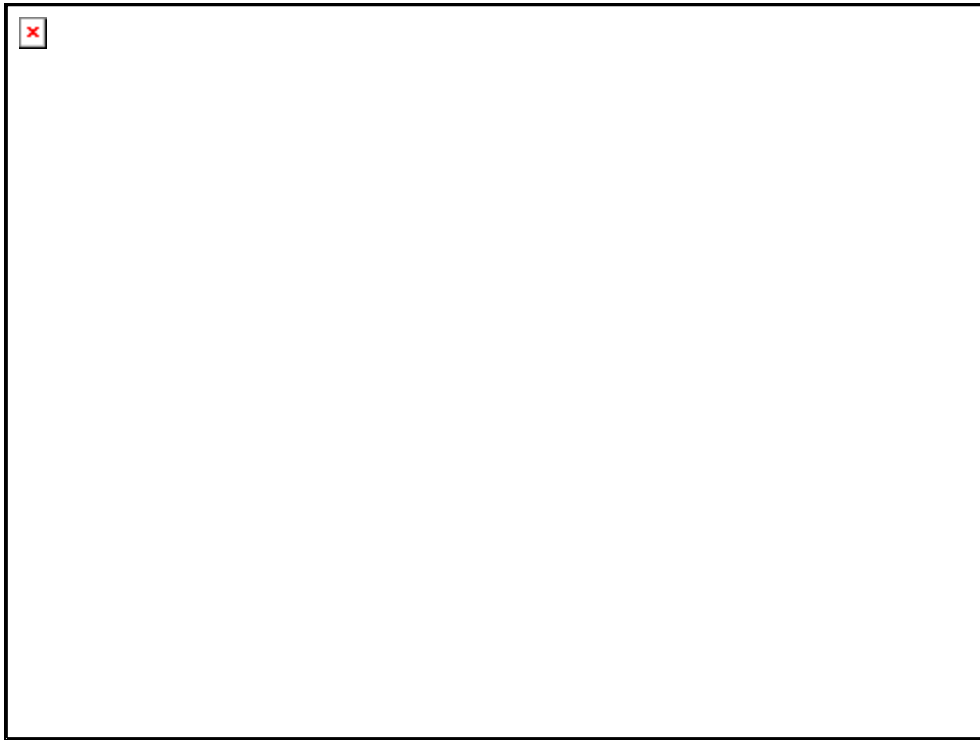
Illustrative Historic Interest has the power to demonstrate some historical point, to narrate an historical story or to evoke the past.

So, you could say that the Orangery at Mount Edgcumbe in Cornwall, pictured here, illustrates the popularity of ornamental buildings to grow exotic fruit under cover in the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.



A word on how community meaning can relate to illustrative historic interest.

St Ann's Allotments in Nottingham – community meaning in terms of its showing the collective interest in allotment growing, which has always been a community activity. Arguably it has stronger community meaning than the Fenton House kitchen garden in London, which is now accessible, and run by a charity for the benefit of the nation, but was originally the private garden of a merchant's house, and so only tells the story of vegetable growing in private houses – less community meaning.



***Historic interest:*** *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

Associative interest 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, The Royal Pavilion in Brighton has historic interest in its associative connection with George IV. The Royal Pavilion, also known as the Brighton Pavilion, is a Grade I listed former royal residence located in Brighton, England. Beginning in 1787, it was built in three stages as a seaside retreat for George, Prince of Wales, who became the Prince Regent in 1811, and King George IV in 1820.

We can probably all think of landscapes that we can connect to a historically important figure, including designers, so Associative Historic Interest is a 'biggy' for historic landscapes.

(Portrait, Thomas Lawrence, George IV coronation, the Royal Collection)



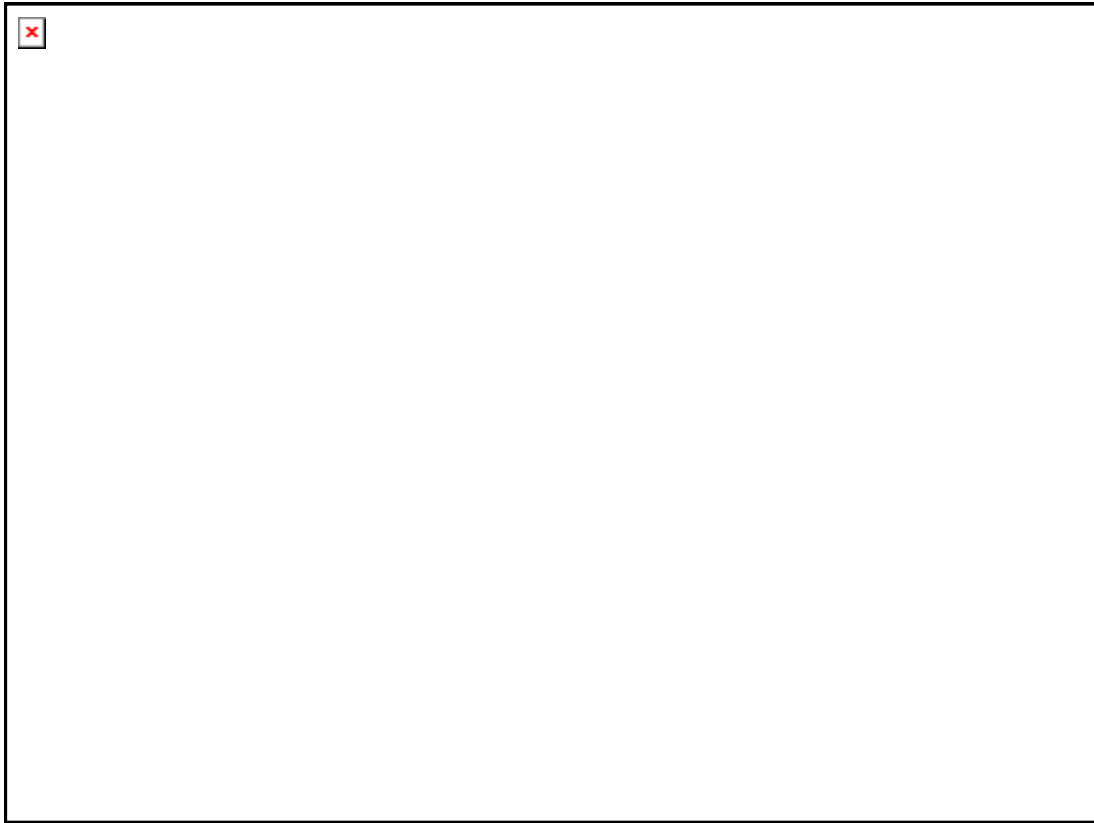


A word on how community meaning can relate to associative historic interest.

Community meaning for Blenheim, as home of Prime Minister Winston Churchill who saw Britain through the Second World War is going to be higher than, say, Stowe, even though they are both open to the public, and indeed Stowe is owned by the National Trust for the benefit of the nation whereas Blenheim is just owned by the Duke of Marlborough as a private home.

This pic is of Chequers, and it's an interesting question is to consider where Chequers fits into this. I'd say it has high associative community meaning as country residence for Britain's Prime Ministers, even though you can't visit it as a member of the public – there are few historic landscapes that I've been so unable to get close to, yet I'd say it has a high community meaning for me in terms of its association with my nation's elected leaders.



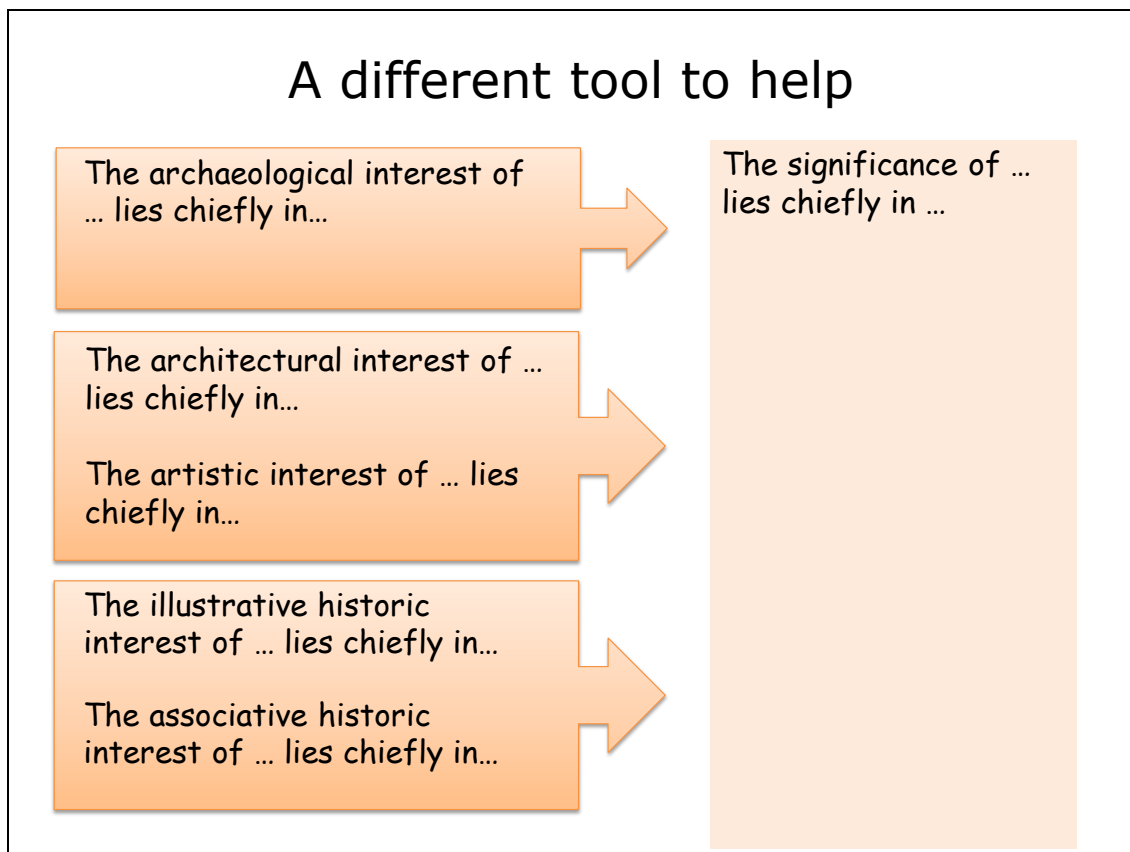


We probably need a mechanism or process to order our thoughts about what values apply. I offer this table as a perhaps manageable way to think about assessing significance.

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

Don't forget, you wouldn't expect sites to necessarily have something for each of the heritage interests – you go through them all to ensure that your approach is methodical and fair, but you may well decide that it doesn't carry all heritage interest. Many sites, for example, will not have Archaeological Interest.



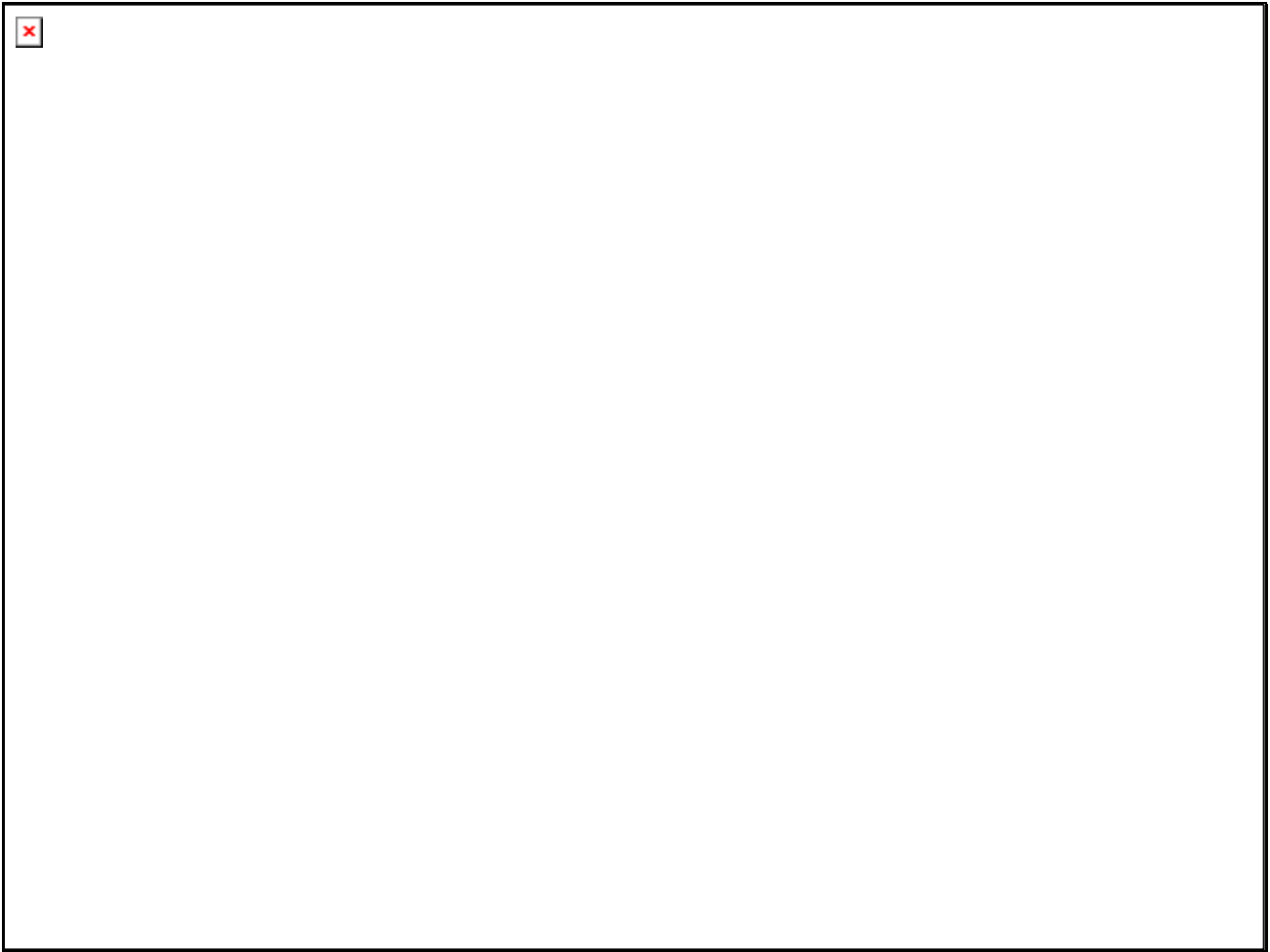
You might prefer this form instead, either using one for each feature, or looking at the site as a whole.

Obviously, these are just representations of how you might want to make your notes. You can do it in whatever way suits you!

For example, having this on one page might be for your initial notes, then you might want to take a whole new page for more detailed notes on each Interest.

Write it into a text. Don't need the headings in the actual Statement of Significance – readers can tell what historic interest you are referring to.

Don't forget there is also great advice at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/heag279-statements-heritage-significance/>



Please don't try to read these words – I've only put them up on the screen to give you a sense of length!

There is no real right or wrong for how to write up a Statement of Significance, so I'm going to show you some examples here, but please don't think that they are templates.

One of the things that I want you to take from these examples, is that you don't have to, and indeed perhaps it is better if you don't, actually keep the headings of the Heritage Interests explicitly within the Statement of Significance. You can use the headings to write it, but then take them out and restructure it in a way that works for you as prose, if you prefer.

Conversely though, by referring to the Heritage Interests in the Statement of Significance, or in your correspondence with local planning authorities, you can help planners who may not be garden or even historic environment 'literate' to apply what they do know about (i.e. planning and planning terms) to landscapes, and thus help protect them. You're using the Heritage Interests to translate your garden history knowledge into something that planners can understand and use.

We're going to use Temple Newsam in Yorkshire as an example.

More recent Historic England Register entries include a bullet point list of Reasons for Designation. I'd say that this reads very much like something that has been arrived at after someone's gone through the process of considering the Heritage Interests, although they're not generally labelled as that.

Let me read it out to you.

### ***Reasons for Designation***

*The historic park and garden at Temple Newsam is registered at Grade II for the following principal reasons:*

*\* **Historic interest:** it reflects changing tastes and fashions in garden design during the C18, blending formal and informal, and redesigning and remodelling earlier gardens;*

This is illustrative historic interest.

*\* **Type:** it is a good example of an C18 landscape park and pleasure grounds, a landscape type that was hugely influential across Europe and North America and is considered to be one of England's most significant contributions to art and design;*

This is illustrative historic interest.

*\* **Designers:** it is largely the work of William Etty, a notable architect and designer, and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, England's most influential designer of informal landscapes, who both worked on the landscape in separate phases during the C18;*

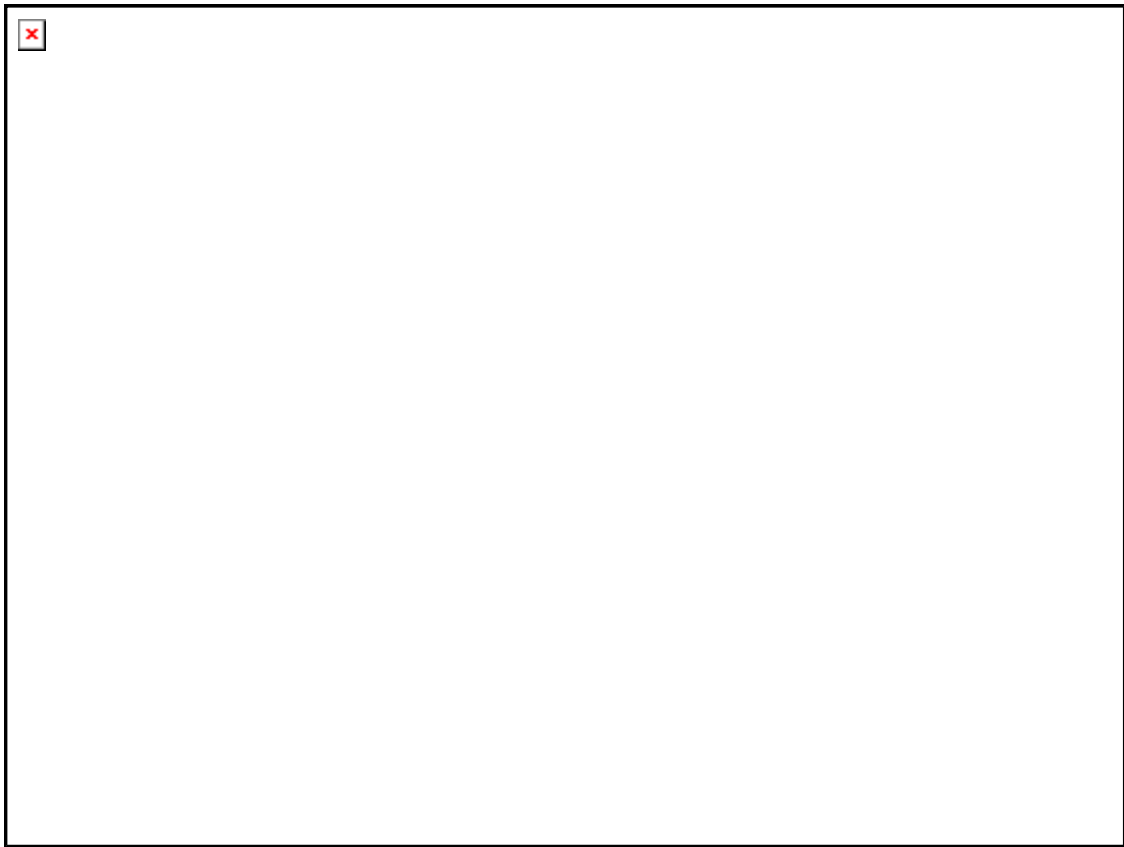
This is associative historic interest.

*\* **Design interest:** its informal parkland landscaping retains key signatures of Brown's work and highlights the influence of Claude Lorrain's C17 paintings of ideal landscapes on his designs, whilst Elm Walk, Sycamore Walk and Etty's The Avenue remain as important survivors of the estate's earlier more formal schemes;*

I'd say this is illustrative historic interest, but perhaps has a little of Architectural Interest.

*\* **Group value:** it has strong group value with the main house of Temple Newsam (Grade I), as well as the neo-classical stable block (Grade II\*), numerous Grade II buildings at Home Farm, north lodges (Grade II), and listed garden structures, including the Little Temple (Grade II\*), the Sphinx Gates (Grade II), walled garden (Grade II), cast-iron fountain (Grade II), and stone bridge (Grade II).*

Perhaps you could say that this is a blend of illustrative historic interest, in that it demonstrates the various key features of a certain type of 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape, and Architectural Interest in that it looks at the different things you can see in the landscape and how they work as a whole for aesthetic effect.

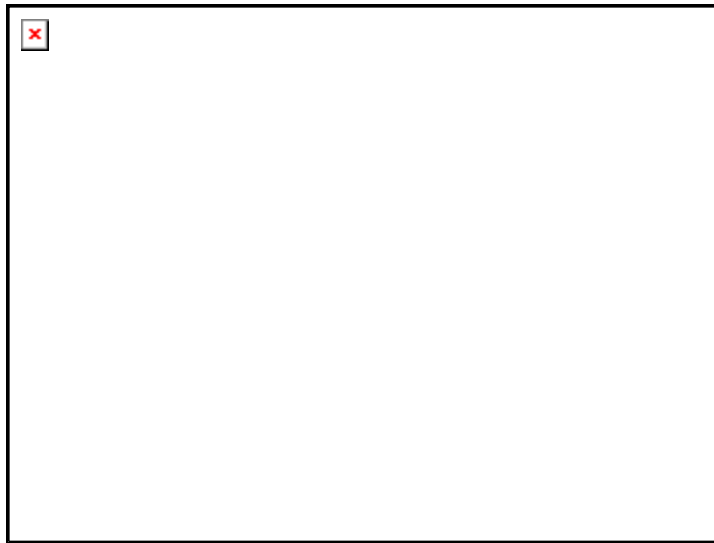


Again, please don't try to read this!

This is one that we wrote a few years ago, to show the kind of short Statement of Significance you might want to include in a planning comment letter. To be honest, you might even want a shorter one. I'll read it for you:

*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 features characteristic of Brown's work, with sweeping lawns, varied woodland, scenic drives, and classical temple eyecatcher, in places 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.*



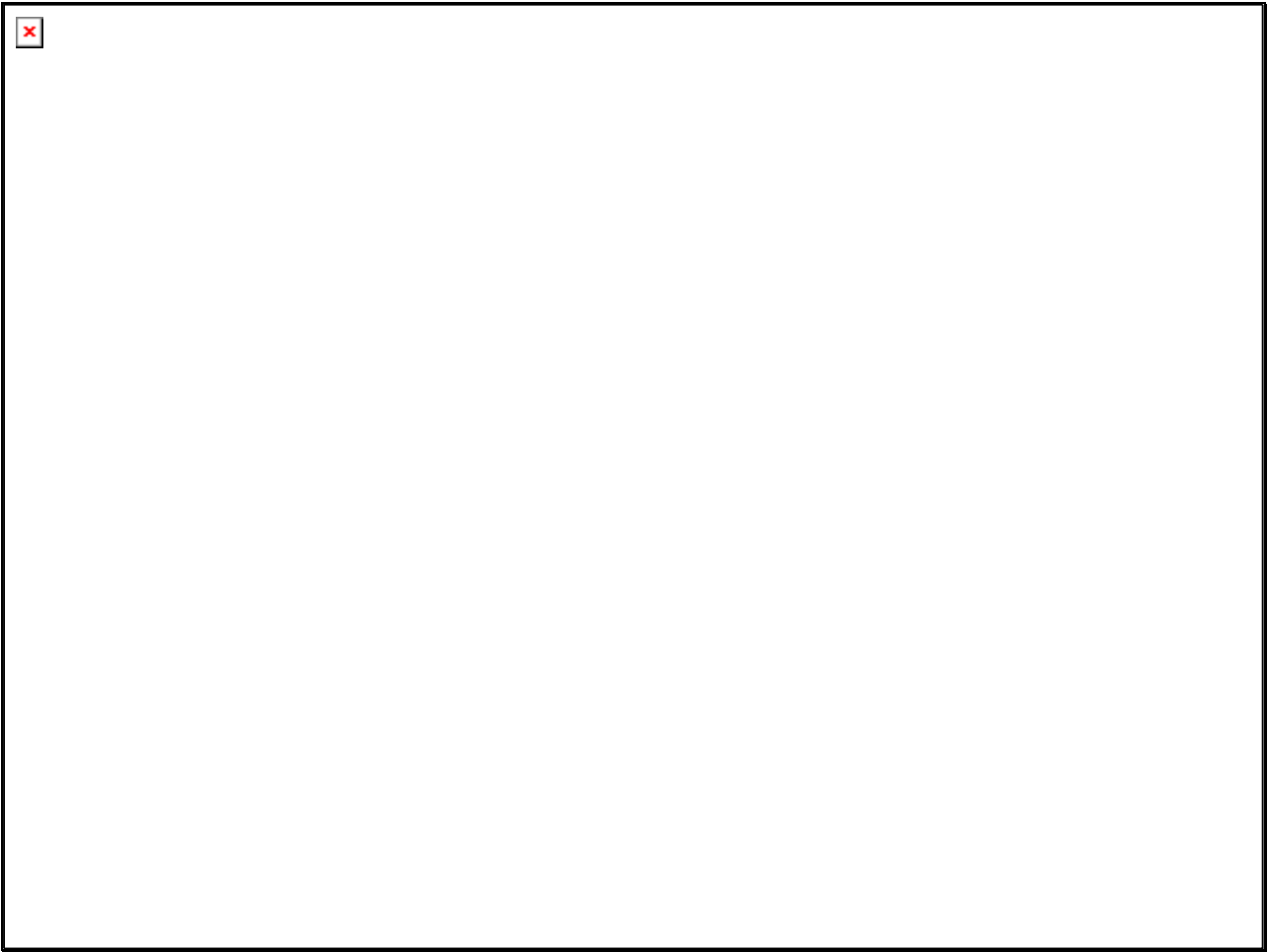
Don't read this!

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. I'm going to read you key phrases to show how they address the Heritage Interests:

- *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. [Historic interest – associative and illustrative]*
- *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. [Architectural and Artistic Interest]*
- *Etty's treatment of the bridge and Avenue Ponds bears witness to the contemporary engineering limitations to hydrological works and bridge design. [Historic Interest - illustrative]*
- *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 Historic interest 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 Historic interest, getting in plants!]*
- *Within the parkland lie the earthworks of a shrunken mediaeval village, [Archaeological interest]*
- *Small-scale memorial planting in this area has created places of some significance for the relatives of those commemorated. [Historic interest – community meaning, 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 Historic interest, 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.

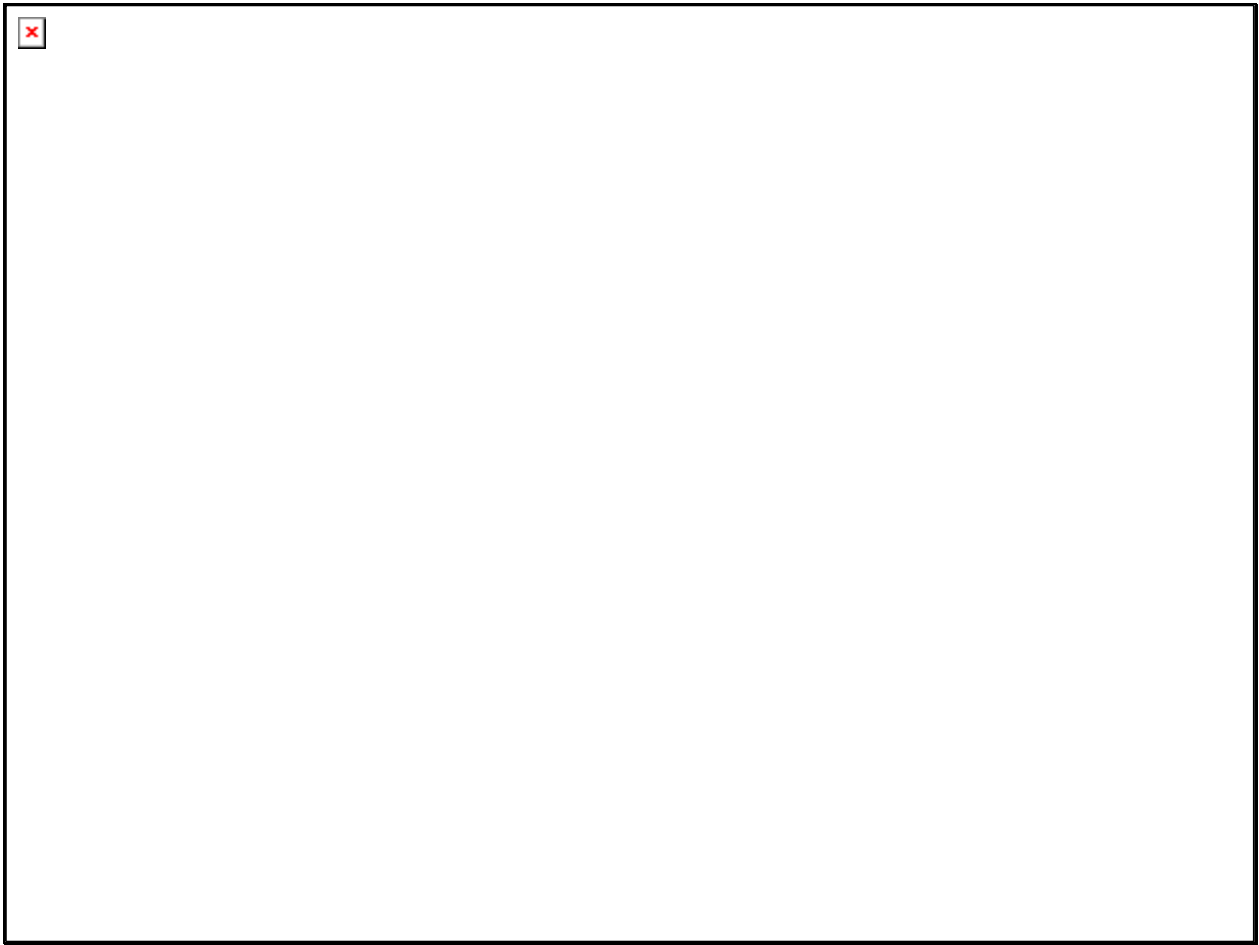




I'm going to leave you with this image, which I think is a visual landscape representation of a Statement of Significance.

There's no undergrowth, no useful but distracting benches or signs, no well-meant flowerbeds, no disorganised self-seeded growth. This view is simple but its components well-chosen and well-maintained, and as a result, it's harmonious and easy to see what's going on and appreciate the contents from the carefully designed path that navigates the whole to steer you to the best views.

Specimen cedar trees at Clumber Park, Notts (thanks to Tamsin McMillan for the pic)



Thank you for listening!