

## Suffolk's Unforgettable Garden Story: Research Training for Volunteers



## Threats to Historic Parks and Gardens



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

A training presentation from the Gardens Trust. 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022.

I'm Tamsin McMillan, Lead Volunteer Support Officer for the GT.

This presentation will show the great range of ways in which the historic landscapes we care about can be threatened , and help to underline why volunteer projects like Suffolk's Unforgettable Garden Story are so important in understanding the significance of our local historic parks and gardens (HPGs).

We have a very nicely mixed audience tonight, so some of you may already be familiar with this topic, but it's aimed at those new to garden history and conservation

'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.'



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Historic parks and gardens are part of our national landscape. We tend to take them for granted and assume that they will always be there for us to enjoy. And we often feel a sense of ownership, particularly of places that we visit frequently.

William Morris agreed. He 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, 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.

In this session, we'll now run through some real examples of fairly common threats to historic designed landscapes which the Gardens Trust's and County Gardens Trust's Conservation Teams have come across in their work.

How could a  
designed landscape  
be threatened?



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

But first, let's just have a quick warm up.

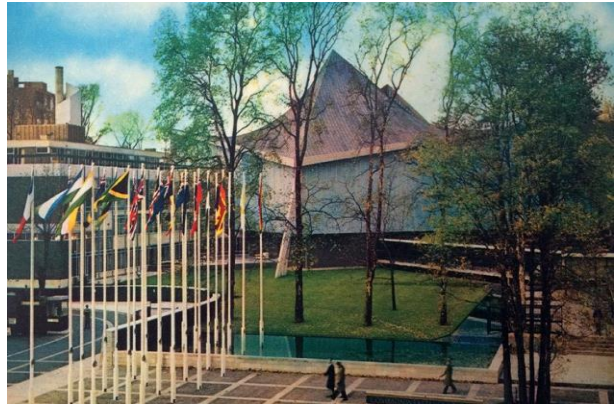
Can you use the chat box to suggest a few ways that historic parks, gardens and other designed landscapes might be threatened? We'll just take a minute to do this.

.....

As you have said, the landscapes we cherish are under pressure from development, be it roads and traffic, demolition (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 buildings, or even misguided interventions.



## DEMOLITION



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Let's start with a really extreme threat – demolition

Local Authority budgets and services are cut and Conservation Officers lose their jobs; Historic England specialist staff are disappearing; and development pressure increases. The result is less protection for green spaces.

These two important 20<sup>th</sup> century landscapes were both demolished to make way for new development.

Left is part of the Frederick Gibberd landscape at Harlow New Town: the developer of the prime site in central Harlow paid to move the Registered garden out of the way and they were bulldozed in 2004

On the right, the Commonwealth Institute garden designed by renowned landscape architect Sylvia Crowe - one of the founding members of the Landscape Institute. The Commonwealth Inst was designed in 1962 by architects Johnson Marshall and was considered by English Heritage to be the second most important modern building in London after the Royal Festival Hall. The garden, however, was obliterated between 2012-15, ironically for a new Design Museum.

## NEGLECT



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

**NEGLECT** –this is perhaps the most common problem we encounter. It's usually due to a lack of funding and staffing. But often also because there's a lack of understanding of how important it is to maintain a landscape. You will know from your own gardens how quickly they can become completely overgrown and lost if left untended.

The left image shows designed woodland by internationally famous 18<sup>th</sup> Century designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown at Belhus, Essex. You can see it's become very congested with self-set saplings.

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.





## NEGLECT OF STRUCTURES



thegardenstrust.org

 @thegardenstrust

Neglect of structures within landscapes is all too common

On the right is the famous Highgate Cemetery in London, with self-seeded trees slowly demolishing the grave monuments.

Bandstands were enormously popular in their heyday and are an iconic feature of many of our public parks. Sadly, even they will rot away if there are not funds and staff to properly maintain them.

This one in the public gardens at Treharris, Wales, has almost disappeared.

If you're interested in learning how public parks have struggled with huge budget cuts, since around 2010, have a look at the GT's publication 'Uncertain Prospects'.

<https://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/uncertain-prospects-2.pdf>

## VANDALISM



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Another problem, especially in towns, is vandalism. I'm sure you'll have all seen graffiti and damage in your local parks. 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



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

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

Temple Newsam, Yorkshire (Copyright Sarah Rutherford)



## COMPLEX HERITAGE ASSETS



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Complex ownership of parks and gardens can make management of a site really difficult.

Warwick Castle Park is a Grade I reg landscape, one of only 145 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.

Here, Merlin Entertainment is obviously managing the landscape in a very different way to the rest of the park. Look at the contrast between the tranquil 18<sup>th</sup> century Capability Brown parkland with the foreground view of a mock medieval trebuchet and other tourist facilities, right next to a 19<sup>th</sup> century boathouse.



## EVENTS IN PARKS



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)



[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

You've all seen the mess that crowds can make during events in Public and private Parks – just think of Glastonbury in the rain!

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

And 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. So, as well as causing damage, the events cause access to be barred to non-paying public, often for many weeks

Obviously, no-one would want to ban events in parks, but it's important to minimise damage, protect important planting and structures, and quickly repair soil and grass afterwards.

## POOR MANAGEMENT CHOICES - Appearance



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

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, an undesignated landscape by Capability Brown, have taken away much of the parkland feel and the agricultural practices used (ploughing, fertilising etc) used are also likely to damage the historic planting. (Photo copyright Kate Harwood.)

## POOR MANAGEMENT CHOICES – Circulation and Views



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegarc](https://twitter.com/thegarc)



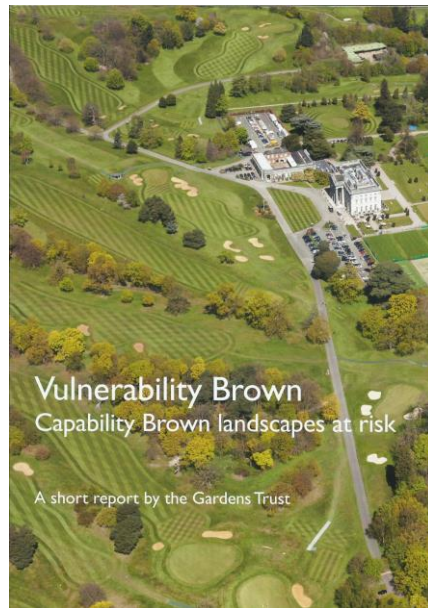
This is Burghley, Lincs. Here, a lack of understanding of the original design has affected circulation and views.

The Capability Brown temple was a key part of a circuit walk, designed to be approached through dark trees through the back of the building and then out into the front where is sunny with amazing view.

But this design intention wasn't appreciated, so now you approach the temple through a sunny walk amongst scattered trees, past the tennis court which is badly 'hidden' behind the building.



## CHANGE OF USE



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

You might think one open space is much the same as another – perhaps just a collection of lawns, trees and structures, but look at the changes made to this Capability Brown landscape at Moor Park in Herts, in order to use it as a golf course. It has lost almost all of its original layout and character; large areas of parking have had to be created, and any surviving trees are likely to be threatened by compaction, mowing regimes and chemical fertilisers.

There was a boom in golf course construction in the late 80s and early 90s and now at least 1 in 12 of the sites on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England now includes a golf course.

Another GT publication: Do read Vulnerability Brown,  
<https://thegardenstrust.org/vulnerability-brown-capability-brown-landscapes-at-risk/>



Another, devastating change of use is Mineral Extraction – when parklands effectively become quarries.

Our huge national road network requires mineral extraction on an enormous scale.

Tarmac got permission in the 1980s to extract gravel at Panshanger in Herts, the grade II\* 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape on which both 'Capability' Brown and Humphry Repton worked, on condition that they restored the country park and provided public access. It is a massively destructive scheme in one of our few "outstanding" registered landscapes.

Some restoration work has been carried out but not to the standards expected and access remains limited. The Brown parkland has been chewed up, and now the beautiful Repton lake is threatened with destruction by further extraction. 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.

## MISGUIDED RESTORATION

Before the fence...



...and after.



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Even when they meant to do well and open up the site for public access, some of Tarmac's interventions caused further damage to the original design.

Eg a particularly unattractive fence for watching waterfowl blocks views across the lake and valley looking west.

Due to the damage caused, Panshanger is now on the Heritage at Risk register administered by Historic England.

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

## TOURISM – Warwick Castle



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Many historic landscapes rely on visitors and tourism to fund maintenance and, since Covid and the massive popularity of staycations, this has hugely expanded in the UK. You'll have noted glamping sites popping up everywhere! but unsympathetic developments within RPGs can detract from the significance and setting of the landscape.

This is Warwick Castle, which I mentioned earlier – a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I Listed building surrounded by a Grade I Registered designed landscape, created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with assistance from Capability Brown.

In 2013, the owners, Merlin Entertainments, initiated “glamping” in an area called 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 Merlin obtained a temporary permission for 42 tents. And 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 43 tents, 12 trailers of loos and showers, and four large service tents. 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. Interestingly, 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 the application for lodges and tents the year before. It is a permanent permission and runs concurrently with the tents which had temporary permission until end of 2018.

There are now 28 lodges and 37 permanent glamping tents on the site. That's quite an impact!



## ROAD-WIDENING SCHEMES...



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

The materials extracted by quarrying are often used for road building. One of the most serious proposals we've fought recently drastically affected the Grade I landscape at Painshill in Surrey. It was 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 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) and cutting off the only maintenance access for the Tower. The aerial photo shows the current position of the road in relation to the Gothic Tower.

After a long fight by the GTs and volunteers at Painshill, the result was a compromise: less land was taken for the new sliproad in the NE and National Highways will be providing a new access gate and track from the sliproad so that emergency vehicles can enter the parkland.

... THREATENING AWARD-  
WINNING RESTORATION



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

I thought you might appreciate a cheerful slide having seen so many slides of dereliction! So these are some of the restored parts of Painshill. 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.

## DEVELOPMENT: within the site



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

In the next few slides, we'll look at development, on a variety of scales.

Parks and gardens can be seen as a bit of spare space, especially walled kitchen gardens which are sometimes seen as an add-on to the rest of a designed landscape. This is Compton Verney, Warwickshire II\*. (Copyright Sarah Rutherford.)

You might think that one new house won't make much of an impact, but you can see how construction of a modern house and gateway has completely removed the character of the kitchen garden, even from outside the walls.

And allowing one new building also sets a precedent for more.

It's worth noting here that designed landscapes are particularly vulnerable to enabling development.

HE defines this as development that would not be in compliance with local and/or national planning policies, and not normally be given planning permission, except for the fact that it would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset.

### Examples

extensions or internal alterations to listed buildings to convert them to their optimum viable use;

new development within the setting of a heritage asset to help subsidise its costly restoration;

or; where very special circumstances apply, development within the Greenbelt may also be granted.



## CULTURAL VANDALISM ?



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Sept 2020

We have had an ongoing saga with the Grade II RPG at Warmley, in Bristol, which was created by the C18 industrialist William Champion. The site contains a number of historic features with the most memorable being the 7 m tall Statue of Neptune (aka The Warmley Giant); and one of the largest grottos in the country.

An unfortunate planning permission in the 1960s allowed a large static caravan site to be built in what was once the 13 acre lake, within which Neptune formerly stood on an island. The site belongs to South Gloucestershire Council but since the 1980s Kingswood heritage museum has ensured that the gardens and grotto are maintained and opened occasionally to visitors. A Friends of William Champion's Garden has recently been set up and they are urgently engaged in the repair and conservation of the heritage assets as resources allow. The static caravan site is just yards from Neptune and in 2020 the owner of the caravan park began to clear the grass in order to make additional car parking. This was urgently referred to the council and an enforcement notice was issued, but it's rather depressing to encounter this sort of thoughtless cultural vandalism.



## MISGUIDED INTERVENTION ?



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

The proposed United Kingdom Holocaust memorial, next door to the Houses of Parliament within the Grade II Victoria Tower Gardens, was a very sensitive case, and one you might have seen in the news or social media.

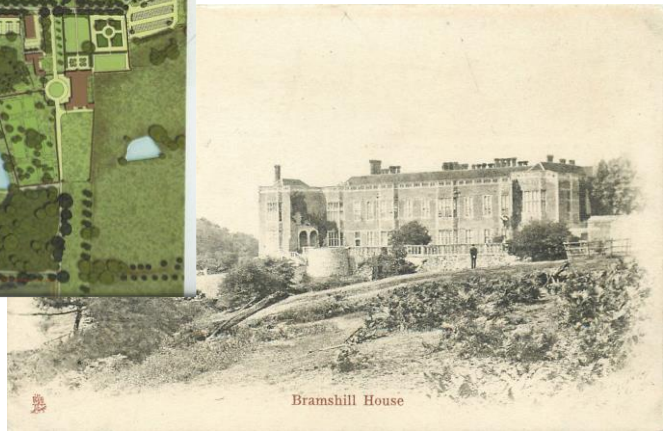
The Gardens Trust wholeheartedly endorsed the principles behind this monument but felt this was not the right place for it. Numerous listed memorials already exist in this garden, including the Grade II\* Buxton Memorial to commemorate the 1807 Abolition of Slavery Act, which is positioned on an axis 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 have been 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.

Planning permission had been granted but, after a long-running campaign and public inquiry, during which London GT worked tirelessly to put together the documentation required, planning permission was quashed and the government has been told that it cannot appeal again, either to the Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court. This sends a really strong message about the importance of public parks as open green spaces.



## LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT within the landscape



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

The need for new houses 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 for 200 houses was rejected at appeal but has not gone away.

We are also unsure of what the Govt's planning reforms will mean for historic landscapes. It is likely that many new houses will be built, without any ability to object once zoning has been agreed. If you're interested in hearing more, we'll be discussing planning reforms at our Historic Landscapes Assembly in London on 17<sup>th</sup> November. Again, I'll give you the link for that at the end.



## DEVELOPMENT IN SETTING



400 new houses outside park at Kedleston



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Of course, it's not just development within a park or garden which can cause damage – development in the setting – the land around the site, which is important visually or audibly for maintaining the significance of the designed landscape – can also be really damaging.

This planning battle, at Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, went on for some years. Originally the developer put in a plan for 400 houses outside the park (outlined in red in top photo) which were visible within a designed view from the circuit walk. Campaigners were concerned that Kedleston Hall would suffer lost views, increased traffic and possible increased flooding, from the loss of absorbent surfaces! 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 went ahead. Ironically, the estate's roads are named after features from Kedleston's Hall and landscape. This is Orangery Road!



## NON-CONSULTATION



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Although the Gardens Trust is required by law to be consulted about planning applications affecting registered landscapes, sometimes that just doesn't happen.

Newark Park, Gloucestershire, is a Grade I, C16 house in a Grade II landscape. It was remodelled in the 1790s in Gothic style by James Wyatt now owned by the NT

The map shows the layout of house on escarpment above lake, gothic summer house, crinkle crankle wall and view out from summerhouse. The NT wanted to install a playground in front of the woodland you can see in the view out of the summer house door. Play equipment brochure showed that playground specifically designed to draw visitors' attention to it. : 'we suggest focusing on creating a 'wow' factor play element to draw interest to the development.' Hardly what you expect in a deep and secretive little valley!

Our conservation officer was asked to go and have a look at the nt's plans. She stressed there was a direct sight line to the proposed play area from the listed folly and that the area by the summerhouse, lake and folly was 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.

She suggested a better place for a playground up by the old stable yard and kept an eagle eye out for the application and when time went by and no sign of it she hoped it had gone away.

Some months later she discovered quite by chance that the application had gone through, we were not consulted, and that the playground was already almost built. A very nice play area but just not in this particular spot. When she remonstrated with Cotswold District council she was assured that this was a one-off mistake. However, when she logged into the council website just 7 working days later, she was completely amazed that a further application had been submitted regarding the landscaping with the same case officer. Again, we hadn't been consulted.

## MISGUIDED RESTORATION



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

As we've seen at Panshanger, sometimes well-intentioned restoration can be a threat in its own right.

These are photos from a 2019 planning application affecting a Grade I RPG and its Grade I listed cascade.

The width of the new steps (highlighted in purple) and the dominance of the hard landscape materials within the woodland setting introduced a formal, urban quality that was alien to the surroundings.

The new construction is highly visible in woodland views, with stone balustrading, piers and lighting columns projecting up through the woodland understorey.

Views up to the temple are obstructed by the new steps, when approaching from the river walk below.

It has not yet been decided how to mitigate this inappropriate design.

Unfortunately the modern steps have destabilised the cliff so the structure cannot just be removed and replaced with something less intrusive.

View of cascade copyright British Listed Buildings website

## LEGISLATION



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

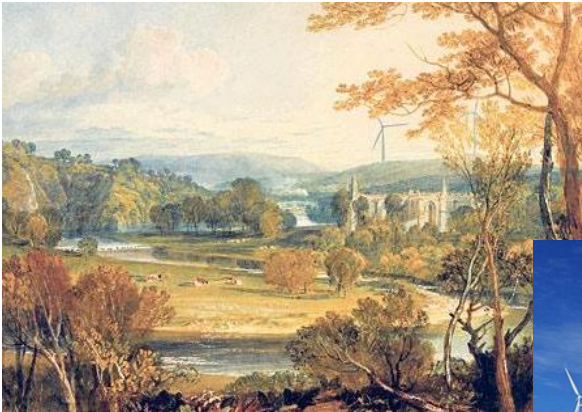
Sometimes legislation which is put in place to protect us, has unexpected and unfortunate consequences. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 applied the 1975 Reservoirs Act to lakes which had previously been too small to require the full standards of flood protection. Some of our most iconic water features have had to have brutal engineering amendments, like the one at the top 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 (bottom left) – this was not the original design intention.



## RENEWABLE ENERGY

Lyveden New Bield,  
Northamptonshire



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



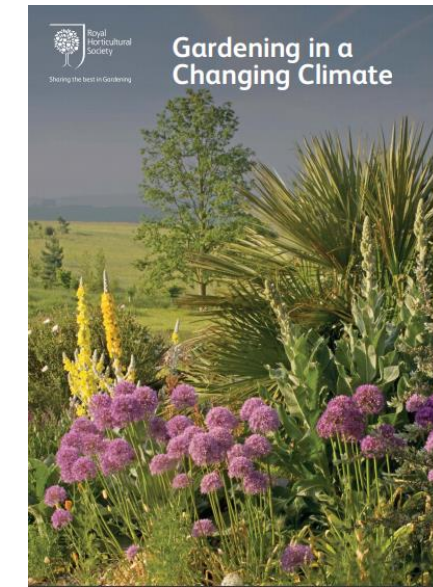
[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

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, especially with the current energy crisis, 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, Northants, and artist's impression of wind turbine imposed upon painting of Bolton Abbey by JMW Turner. Both applications were turned down.



## CLIMATE CHANGE



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

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 the record for the warmest year on record being broken in 2019 and then again this summer.

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 such as flood alleviation, carbon sequestration and the provision of habitats for wildlife, formerly delivered by the natural environment 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 – in 2017. The new report has been written in collaboration with researchers from the Universities of Sheffield and Reading. It 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 lock in carbon and retain rainwater.

Again, we'll be discussing the impact of climate change at our Historic Landscapes Assembly in a couple of weeks.



Grade II Registered Westbury Court in Gloucestershire is the last surviving example of a 17th Century 'Dutch' garden in the UK. (Image copyright National Trust/Jenny Green)

Created in the late 1600s, the garden is designed around a series of canals and water features bordered by formal hedging. It's managed by the NT.

It suffers from regular 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.

Emmetts Garden, Kent, the day after the Great Storm of 1987 (photo ©NTPLMike Howarth [http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/content/image\\_galleries/1987\\_great\\_storm\\_gallery](http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/content/image_galleries/1987_great_storm_gallery))

And of course we have had numerous storms since then, including Storm Eunice in February this year, which did so much damage to trees and infrastructure.

## DISEASE



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

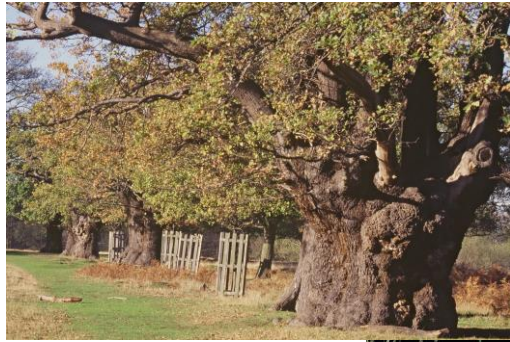
[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

We are seeing more and more serious plant diseases in the UK, posing a great 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.

As we know from our experience of Dutch elm disease in the 1920s, 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 left photograph (copyright RHS) shows box blight, a fungal disease. And ash dieback, which we can now see all over Britain.





NATURE  
CONSERVATION



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

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, with species-rich grassland, veteran trees, scrub and waterbodies forming a mosaic of habitats.

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 on right: Durlston Castle, Swanage, Dorset - key circulation route within Grade II RPG is now overgrown and key designed views obscured due to inhibition on appropriate tree management as a result of a blanket TPO.





## UNDESIGNATED LANDSCAPES



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Many designed landscapes are undesignated, so not offered any kind of protection in the planning system – not nationally (as a Registered park or garden or a scheduled monument) or locally listed or even on the Historic Environment Record. I shan't go into this in much detail, as Caroline Skinner from HE will be talking to us about this on 28<sup>th</sup> November.

But I will give you an example: at Finedon Hall, Northamptonshire, detailed planning permission was granted for, as the brochure says, “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 mentioned, none of which are statutorily Listed, were once part of the Hall's landscape which may have been designed by Humphry Repton. 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.

Northamptonshire GT was dismayed to see this advertised as a property to be built and then sold. Not much they could do, because so little designation protection for it. Fighting this application is like working with one hand tied behind your back, and of course now NGT are wishing they had managed to research Finedon and get it ideally Registered, or more likely at least locally listed and on the HER, before the developer came along.

## UNDESIGNATED LANDSCAPES



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

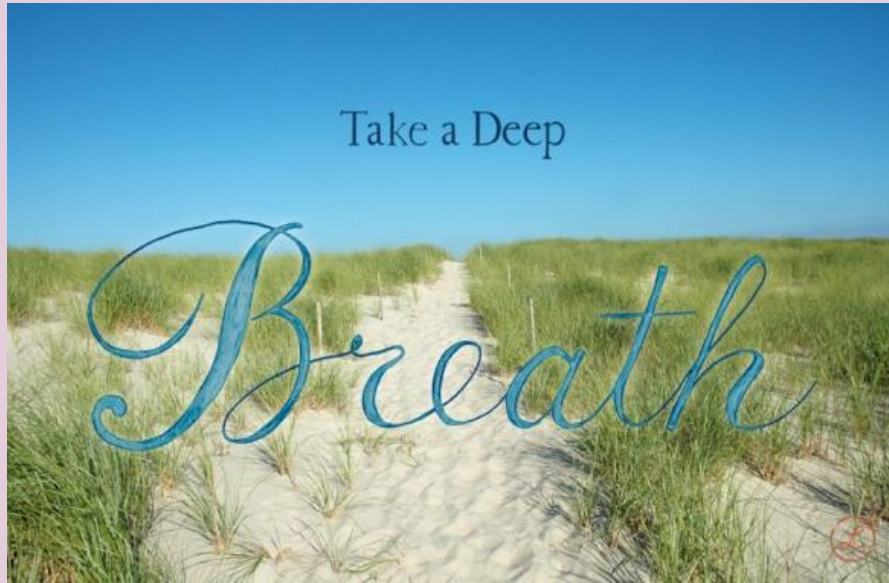
[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

Photo ©KarenFitzsimon – Sun Life of Canada HQ, Basingstoke

It's not just undesignated parks and gardens that can be so easily lost or damaged. Industrial designed landscapes and business parks are currently being eyed up by developers as owners generally appreciate the large footprint of such sites and their redevelopment potential. One such is Sun Life of Canada HQ in Basingstoke (now known as Matrix House) which was assessed by HE as part of Compiling the Record – a recent campaign to get some important C20 designed landscapes registered. It was nominated it as it is the most complete example of Preben Jakoben's work that Karen Fitzsimon (the author of a forthcoming book on PJ) had found. Between 1984-7 Jacobsen filled a giant atrium with palm trees and created an outdoor Scandinavian inspired amphitheatre to enliven a sloping site, its shallow grassed steps constrained within a framework of brick paviours.

Unfortunately HE's inspection of the site alerted the owners to the matter & they applied for and got a Certificate of Immunity, in Feb 2020. So, within the 5 designation-free years afforded by the COI the landscape may be lost to development. We need to consider when assessing sites for designation how

best to do this (either by HE or CGT volunteers) without increasing negative action by the landowner.



Hope this has not made you too depressed, so before I go on to remind you of just how we can all help, and the structures we have in place to defend these landscapes, let's all take a deep breath!



## PROTECTION THROUGH AWARENESS



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

The good news is that there is plenty we can do to help!

By understanding how a designed landscape developed, why it is significant and what is left today, we can help to protect it.

Raising awareness amongst those who own, manage or make planning decisions about the landscapes is key to their conservation.

County and district-based planning departments are understaffed and planners generally have little time to research sites before having to make decisions about their future. We can help by getting our knowledge of the sites onto national and local platforms.

### Registration

If the landscape is of national significance, it can be put forward for addition to the National Heritage List for England –which is maintained by Historic England and is the official register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England – it includes listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields. Historic designed landscapes could be designated as registered parks and gardens of special historic interest or as scheduled monuments, if the remains are more archaeological than above

ground.

The general criteria for registration are age and rarity. The older a designed landscape is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to have special interest.

The Register is thought to represent only around 2/3 of sites potentially deserving of inclusion.

Registered parks and gardens do not have statutory protection, as listed buildings and scheduled monuments do, but Registration is a 'material consideration' in the planning process, meaning that local authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscape's special character.

The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) sets out criteria for considering impacts, levels of harm and the affect on the significance of designated designed landscapes (as well as other heritage).

### Local Lists

Plenty of sites are valuable but not eligible for national Registration, so wherever possible these are added to Local Lists held by local authorities.

Around half of local PAs have compiled Local lists of locally important heritage assets which make a positive contribution to local character and sense of place because of their heritage value.

Whilst local listing provides no additional planning control, the fact that a building or site is on a local list means that its conservation as a heritage asset is an objective of the NPPF and a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application.

You can generally view your local list online and are encouraged to nominate heritage assets for inclusion.

### Historic Environment Records

HERs are incredibly important.

They are a county-based collection of information, both textual and mapped, covering thousands of archaeological sites, fieldwork and other elements of the historic environment of the county.

They include material, including Statements of Significance, Reports, illustrations and site notes, from lots of different sources, including specialist academic groups such as CGTs, and hold this in a database.

There are over 85 HERs in England which are maintained and managed by local authorities as the essential core of historic environment services. And similar records are maintained by major landowners and managers, such as the National Trust and national parks.

Nearly two-thirds of HERs are searchable online through the Heritage Gateway.

The two main uses of HERs are as material for academics, researchers etc, but also to inform planners and planning decisions.

When a planner receives a planning application, NPPF requires them to assess it against the heritage asset's Significance.

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.

This is particularly where Statements of Significance come in, because planners and developers won't have the time or skills to digest a researcher's huge dissertation, so it's important that material goes onto the HER with an easily pick-up-able Statement of Significance which immediately explains to them what is important to conserve about a heritage asset. (By the way, it's worth remembering that by adding something to an HER you qualify it as a heritage asset, which gives it a degree of protection or at least acknowledgment in the NPPF.)

### PGUK

You can also share information about landscapes via parks and gardens UK, a freely searchable database of nearly 10000 sites which is administered by the Hestercombe Gardens Trust, in Somerset. <https://www.parksandgardens.org/>

### Listed Buildings

Designed landscapes may also be able to achieve some protection via their association with other designations, even if they are not themselves designated.

**Listed buildings** have statutory protection – in terms of planning, any proposal for change must be accompanied by an application for listed building consent. When considering an application for works affecting a listed building, the developer must take into account impact on its setting, ie the land around it. This can be immensely helpful in protecting historic landscapes which so often provide the setting for a principal listed building, or subsidiary listed structures such as kitchen garden walls, gates, gatehouses, temples and follies etc.

### Protected Areas

And landscapes which are part of a conservation area, AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or National Park may also be given some protection by the policies which govern management of these areas.

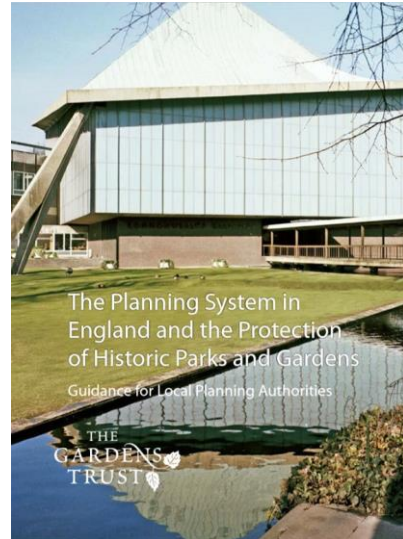
In short, the more ways we can share what we know about significant parks and gardens, particularly on platforms where they would be recognised by national planning policy as heritage assets, the more likely they are to be protected.

## WHO ARE "WE"?

Gardens Trust



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)



 [@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

So what do I mean when I say '**we** can help'?

Well, partly I mean the Conservation staff at the Gardens Trust. If you don't know us already, we're

The GT is a statutory consultee for Registered parks and gardens, which means we must be consulted about planning applications affecting registered sites. But we have a very small team of conservation officers – Alison, Margie and Daniel - to cover the whole of England, and we receive thousands of planning applications every year.

(Margie and Alison's photos are from Volunteers' Week – with smileys to thank CGTs for their ongoing contributions to the planning and conservation).

We regularly remind local planning authorities of their obligation to consult us via our planning leaflet, which was last updated in 2019. Much thought went into how much detail to include : too much would risk it being chucked away; too little would not be useful enough.

You can find it here:

<https://thegardenstrust.org/conservation/conservation-publications/>



## WHO ARE "WE"? Volunteers!



- Research and recording
- Raising awareness
- Conservation and planning



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

But as we are such a tiny team, we are absolutely reliant on volunteers.

There are around 7500 members of the 37 County Gardens Trusts and a proportion of them are involved in

- researching and recording sites,
- making sure that their work joins up with the planning system by entering it in local lists, HERs and PGUK;
- Putting forward important sites for registration;
- and helping to respond to planning applications, often providing our conservation team with their invaluable local knowledge.

The GT conducted a membership survey in autumn 2018 which overwhelmingly found that members felt that conservation and planning work was the most valuable thing the GT does (82% of members), followed closely by research (78%), so this reinforces the importance of the conservation work undertaken by the GT and CGTs.



THE  
GARDENS  
TRUST

[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)



[@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)

As you know, this talk is part of a series of training webinars for new volunteers in Suffolk.

Suffolk only has 23 Registered parks and gardens but we know there are many more fascinating and important sites in the county which currently lack understanding and so are very vulnerable to the threats I've talked about tonight.

By volunteering with the Suffolk's Unforgettable Gardens Project, or doing similar work in your own county, you can help to protect your local heritage, ensuring that it survives to be enjoyed and treasured not just by you, but by generations to come.

Thanks for listening.

[tamsinmcmillan@thegardenstrust.org](mailto:tamsinmcmillan@thegardenstrust.org)



@thegardenstrust



@thegardenstrust



[www.thegardenstrust.org](http://www.thegardenstrust.org)

*All materials produced by The Gardens Trust and its predecessor organisations are available for free download and reuse for non-commercial purposes.*

*All such materials are subject to the © copyright of The Gardens Trust and may not be used for any commercial purpose without the permission of The Gardens Trust.*



[thegardenstrust.org](http://thegardenstrust.org)

 [@thegardenstrust](https://twitter.com/thegardenstrust)