

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY
HISTORIC BUILDINGS & PLACES
THE GARDENS TRUST
THE GEORGIAN GROUP
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION
OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIETY
THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

The Right Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister for Housing and Planning
Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government

By email

15 May 2025

Dear Mr Pennycook,

PLANNING CONSULTEES: THE GARDENS TRUST

The Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies (JCNAS) is a grouping of heritage organisations interested in the built historic environment, its archaeology and landscapes. Among our number is The Gardens Trust, mentioned in the announcement of 10 March 2025 about a review of the role and status of consultees within the planning system.

The JCNAS fully appreciates your government's wish to promote economic growth and the provision of housing. None of our members wish to see (or cause) delays within the planning process. The Gardens Trust will offer evidence to show that it provides helpful advice to planning authorities, rarely makes formal objections, and almost always responds within the limited consultation period. In the case of historic parks and gardens that are grade II registered, no other body except The Gardens Trust provides expert advice to local planning authorities. They and their members do this without charge.

The wider point we wish to offer collectively is that expert advice is an asset to the planning system. Studies, such as one recently conducted for the Historic Environment Protection Reform Group, show that poor applications and a lack of expert advice often cause slow or poor decision-making. Within a democratic system, where non-specialist elected councillors are sometimes required to make decisions on specialist matters, expert advice is invaluable.

Applications affecting historic parks and gardens form a tiny minority of the planning applications submitted in this country. These sites have been designated for their public value and interest to the nation. Change to them will sometimes be necessary and on these occasions we believe it essential that the helpful, constructive and timely advice of the Gardens Trust should continue to be obtained.

Yours sincerely,



Nichola Tasker
Chair

