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This Planning and Conservation Advice Note (PCAN) is one of a series published by The Gardens Trust's predecessor, the Garden History Society in 2009.

The PCANs predate the National Planning Policy Framework. Any references to the planning system and planning policy (and particularly Section 8 'Planning Context' and Appendix 3) in the PCANs has been superseded and the conservation advice must be read in the context of the current National Planning Policy Framework published by the Government.

Government department names have changed since the PCAN series was published.

More information on The Gardens Trust's role in the planning system, casework, and our conservation publications and resource hub is available at:

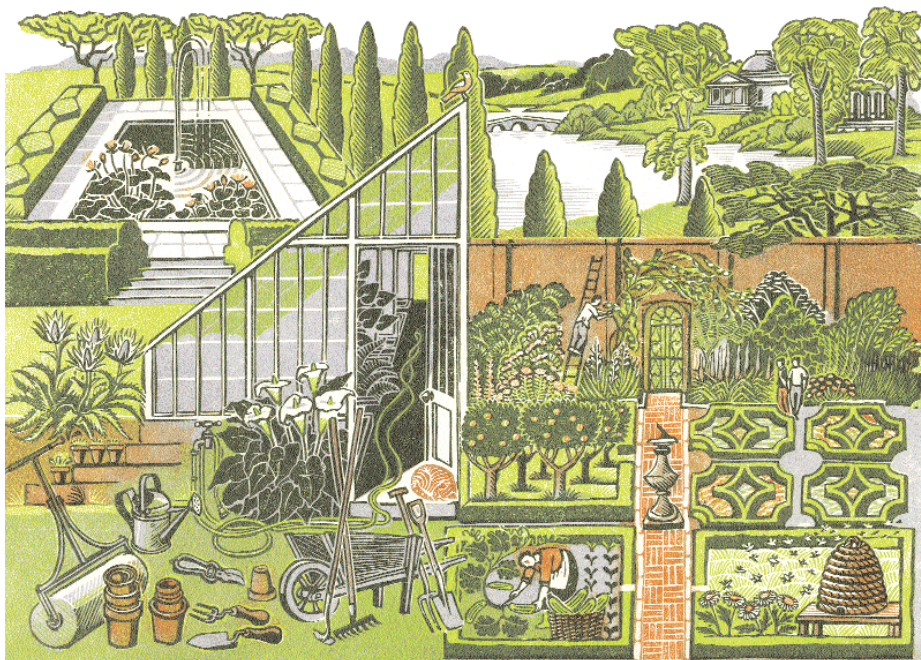
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THE GARDEN
HISTORY SOCIETY

Planning Conservation Advice Note 15

Play facilities



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The Planning Conservation Advice Notes (PCANs) listed below have been devised by the Garden History Society to advise those wishing to determine the impact upon historic designed landscape of specific proposals for change. This includes local planning authorities, potential developers, owners or other interested parties. These PCANs seek to inform on necessary background information and good conservation practice while at the same time encouraging critical evaluation of the likely type and extent of potential impact. Not all impact is adverse, change is not necessarily detrimental, and opportunities do exist both for development and, where adverse impact has been identified, for appropriate mitigation. Informed evaluation is essential however, if irreversible damage is to be avoided and change is to be implemented in a way that is sympathetic to the historic and visual value of designed landscape.

Titles List

PCAN 1: Change of Use (of landscape, and of principal and/or subsidiary buildings)

PCAN 2: Hotel and Leisure Development

PCAN 3: Extension of Educational/Institutional Establishments

PCAN 4: Executive Housing

PCAN 5: Golf

PCAN 6: Vehicle Parking and Access

PCAN 7: Treatment of Boundaries and Entrances

PCAN 8: Telecommunications Masts

PCAN 9: Development of Domestic Amenities

PCAN 10: CCTV and Lighting

PCAN 11: Development in the Setting of Historic Designed Landscape

PCAN 12: Evaluation of New Landscape Features

PCAN 13: Briefs for Historic Landscape Assessments

PCAN 14: Management Plans (including Statements of Significance)

PCAN 15: Play Facilities

Appendix 1: Lists of subsidiary development generated by particular types of change

Appendix 2: General Evaluation Checklist (All types development/all types landscape)

Appendix 3: Planning Context

Planning Conservation Advice Notes 1 to 12 deal with some of the most common types of change proposed in historic landscape or its setting. Notes 13 and 14 describe documentation required to evaluate and support proposals for such change. Appendices 1 to 3, which separate out specific aspects of proposals in note form for quick reference, may also be useful for evaluation of types of change not covered in PCANs 1 to 12.

Format

PCANs 1 to 12 are divided into the following sections:

Section 1.0: Introduction

Section 2.0: Information Needed to Evaluate the Impact of Proposals

Section 3.0: Further Information Needed

Section 4.0: Potential for Mitigation

Section 5.0: Watchpoints

Section 6.0: Unavoidable Development/Damage

Section 7.0: Application of Advice

Section 8.0: Planning Context

Section 9.0: Evaluation

Evaluation

Most sections follow a set format but Section 9.0 on evaluation differs between various PCANs.

PCANs 3; 6; 8; 9; 10; 11 have a flow chart evaluation questionnaire. This may assist planning officers in particular, both in assessment of proposals and in preparation of recommendations for committee – the advice shown in upper case and bold type being intended to inform particularly on the following:

- level of potential impact
- further input which may be needed from other professionals
- further information which may be required
- where condition or legal agreement would be required to avoid adverse impact

PCANs 1; 2; 7 have checklists of questions intended to:

- highlight other relevant evaluation tools
- highlight potential implications of proposals
- list questions relevant to evaluation of impact

PCANs 4; 5 have short checklists of questions intended to:

- direct evaluation to specific conservation advice in the relevant PCAN
- assist evaluation by highlighting potential implications of proposals

PCAN 12 seeks to assist evaluators by offering conservation advice for particular situations.

Current status of advice notes

These planning conservation advice notes may be amended following trialling or with the introduction of new legislation. Any comments, and suggestions for improvement would be welcomed by the Society and feedback on content, usefulness, layout etc. of the sections on evaluation (including flow-charts) would be particularly appreciated.

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

- 1) Visually, physically, and sensorily, play facilities in or adjacent to historic parks or gardens may have a detrimental effect on the historic designed landscape.
- 2) A thorough understanding of the site's history, the play facilities' impact and a justification for them should be demonstrated when applying for planning permission.
- 3) The detrimental effect of play facilities can be mitigated, for example with careful positioning and design.
- 4) With some imagination, children's play in historic designed landscapes can often be accommodated without the need for formal facilities and equipment.

1.0 Justification

When considering an application for play facilities within a historic park or garden, the first question to consider is whether there is a genuine need for such facilities.

The planning authority should require a detailed Justification Statement that addresses this.

- 1.1 In the case of privately-owned gardens that are opened as visitor attractions (including those owned by charities), the applicant may have decided that they need to offer play facilities as a means of boosting visitor numbers. There will be some cases in which formally built play equipment is of benefit but there will be many cases in which children's play could be better accommodated by more imaginative approaches (see Section 6). Correctly applied these will have a less detrimental effect on the historic landscape and are likely to also be of greater benefit to the child and their engagement with the site. In many cases, a play area may actually detract from a child's appreciation of the heritage attraction as the children tend to spend their time there rather than exploring the rest of the site.
- 1.2 In the case of public parks, it is more likely that formal play provision is necessary (indeed, play provision was included in the original design of many public parks) but the reasons for the failure of the existing provision should be carefully examined. For example, the authority should be wary of applications whereby existing provision has failed due to lack of maintenance when the same maintenance regime is still present, or where equipment has been vandalised but the overall problem of vandals has not been addressed.
- 1.3 Local authority play areas are particularly prone to 'Kit, Fence, Carpet' syndrome whereby little or no thought has gone into designing the play area and instead items have simply been chosen from a catalogue and placed in the designated area. Such an approach is uninspiring to the children's play and usually also uninspiring in its effect on the historic designed landscape. If the reason for replacement is under-use, then it is likely that simply buying slightly more expensive 'kit' will not solve the problem in the long term.

2.0 Impact of play facilities on historic parks and gardens

- 2.1 Some possible detrimental effects of play equipment in historic designed landscape:
 - 2.1.1 Any new features within a historic park or garden have the potential to be detrimental to the integrity of a historic designed landscape.
 - 2.1.2 Play equipment, especially standard items chosen from a catalogue, are unlikely to be in character with the designed landscape and so will stand out as a new feature.
 - 2.1.3 Play areas may appear as inappropriate new structures within significant views.
 - 2.1.4 Brightly coloured equipment may be excessively visually apparent and distracting within a view.
 - 2.1.5 The play area may be within an area of historic importance and so its creation may have destroyed an important element of the design or its archaeology.
 - 2.1.6 The play area may require landscaping works which would confuse any reading of the historic landscape (as well as causing physical damage).
 - 2.1.7 In accessing the play area visitors may create desire lines or damage nearby structures and planting, or want to picnic on nearby lawns.
 - 2.1.8 Play areas may require subsidiary development such as additional signage, car parks, toilets, litter bins, benches, and new access.
 - 2.1.9 Hard surfacing within play areas may be particularly visually unattractive.
 - 2.1.10 Children at play are usually noisy which will impact on the ambience of the historic park or garden (usually intended as quiet places, although less so in the case of public parks).
 - 2.1.11 The movement of large numbers of children at play may be visually distracting within a view.
- 2.2 The applicant should clearly assess and demonstrate the impact of the proposed play facilities on the historic landscape. This information is best presented in an Impact Assessment, which will include assessment of:
 - 2.2.1 Existing damage, its potential for reversibility, and the effect of the proposed facilities on this potential.
 - 2.2.2 Decay (e.g. lost features, lost or overgrown planting), the potential for its repair, and the effect of the proposed facilities on this potential.

- 2.2.3 The potential for the facilities to result in wear and tear on the surrounding area.
- 2.2.4 Likely subsidiary development to arise from the play facilities (e.g. toilets, cafe, seating, signage, litter bins, car parking, access, boundaries).
- 2.2.5 Whether an increase in visitor numbers is likely and the impact this would have on the park or garden.
- 2.2.6 The effect of the noise generated in the play area.
- 2.2.7 Whether any damage would be caused to the surrounding landscape by the construction and maintenance of the facilities (e.g. with vehicle access and heavy machinery).
- 2.2.8 How many views within the park or garden would be affected by the addition of play facilities. (The more areas of a landscape from which development is visible the greater the cumulative effect.)
(NB Views within and across a historic landscape may change markedly in different seasons.
Any evaluation of potential impact should take this into account.)

3.0 The need to understand the site

Any application for works within a historic park or garden should demonstrate that the applicant has a reasonable understanding of the site, of its history, and of its sensitivities.

- 3.1 The Garden History Society would expect that the applicant would provide some research into this history, but at the very least the information (for Registered sites) can be found in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest or the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales and also, where appropriate, within any available listed building or conservation area descriptions. For unRegistered sites the information may be on a local authority list of sites of local historic interest.
N.B. While such documents are reliable guides, they should not be viewed as a comprehensive description, and the potential for additional structures and areas of importance to be identified should be recognised.
- 3.2 The Garden History Society would urge managers and owners of all historic sites to ensure that the site has a **Historic Landscape Assessment** (See PCAN 13) and **Conservation Management Plan** (See PCAN 14), against which any application, including for play facilities, can be judged. Where the HLA suggests existence of areas of potential archaeological significance, and earthworks are proposed, an archaeological evaluation should be considered.
- 3.3 In the absence of an HLA and CMP, the **Design and Access Statement** for any proposal should competently set out the history of the relevant park or garden.

4.0 Location

If the authority accepts that there is a genuine need for formal play provision, then the next issue to consider is whether the proposed site is the most appropriate one.

- 4.1 There is a balance to be struck when siting play equipment within a historic designed landscape. Clearly it must be within an area where any detrimental effect on the landscape (visually, physically, and sensorily) will be kept to a minimum.

Yet consideration must also be paid to where the equipment will be most successful for children's play - it is to no one's benefit to provide equipment that is under-used.

- 4.2 Wherever possible, play equipment should be kept away from the most sensitive areas of the historic landscape. This is to avoid any detrimental effect to the current experience of the historic landscape (i.e. visually and sensorily), but also to avoid any damage to the landscape's structure.
Areas where the equipment is likely to be most detrimental include next to or within formal gardens, close to the house, on open lawns, within key views, and near to park features such as eyecatchers and avenues. Areas where equipment is likely to be least detrimental include near to park gates, within woodland, in parkland that is not part of a key vista, or near to service buildings such as stable blocks or home farms.
(For exceptions to this rule, please see Section 7.)

4.3 In the case that it is not possible to keep equipment away from all sensitive areas, the applicant will instead have to ensure that the equipment is not near to the most important of these.
The planning authority should require an assessment of the key areas within the historic designed landscape, placing them in order of significance and sensitivity. As a result of this exercise, it should become apparent which location can accommodate play equipment with the least impact on the landscape.

Such information would normally be provided within a **Statement of Significance**.

4.4 N.B. Where a historic landscape has been unmanaged or inappropriately managed for some time, the significance of a particular area may not be immediately apparent, e.g. where these are overgrown or where new structures have been sited, or areas hard surfaced.
Evaluators need to ensure that development will not compromise future restoration of important historic landscape areas and features, e.g. the reopening of a vista through woodland; replanting of an avenue; reinstatement of a circuit walk with associated features etc.).

5.0 Mitigation

Once the planning authority is satisfied that the equipment is proposed for the most appropriate location, it should then consider whether the effect of the equipment in this area has been mitigated as fully as possible.

Ways in which detrimental effects can be mitigated include:

- 5.1 Choosing colours that blend in with the surrounding area.
- 5.2 Placing the equipment within existing planting such as shrubberies (or creating new planting in keeping with the historic design and in accordance with a HLA and CMP).
- 5.3 In natural setting choosing equipment that uses natural materials such as wood, stone and sand.
- 5.4 Choosing equipment that does not rise above any surrounding planting.
- 5.5 Avoiding the introduction of fencing or other boundaries where possible.
- 5.6 If boundaries are deemed necessary, then careful thought should be given to arrive at a solution which is either least visually intrusive, or most historically appropriate.
For example, in open parkland, post and wire fencing is likely to be less visually intrusive than a substantial post and rail construction and would certainly be more appropriate than planting. In other instances, a horizontal metal park rail may be most historically appropriate or careful earthworks may be the most discreet option. Different solutions will be appropriate for different situations.
- 5.7 In garden areas, mixed shrubbery planting around the play area may disguise its presence, visually and acoustically. It can also provide a means of securing the area for the children, and less intrusively than a fence.
- 5.8 Designing the play equipment to be relevant to the site – e.g. a mock castle within a historic castle grounds, a plant theme within a botanic garden, or a nautical theme in seaside gardens.
- 5.9 Placing smaller play incidents throughout the designed landscape rather than having one, larger, play area.
- 5.10 Where toilet and café facilities are desired, use of otherwise redundant entrance lodges may be considered. The small scale of such buildings may be particularly appropriate for use by children, and those areas of a lodge curtilage not designed to be on view can usually be secured and screened for children's play without adverse visual impact on the wider landscape.

(For exceptions to these rules please see Section 7.)

6.0 Alternative approaches to children's play in historic designed landscapes

Where appropriately applied,* imaginative approaches to children's play in historic landscapes can sometimes obviate the need for formal built play facilities.

These include:

- 6.1 Allowing play within mature shrubberies.
- 6.2 Facilitating opportunities to feed the fish/birds/parkland animals.
- 6.3 Model boat sailing within existing ponds or fountains.
- 6.4 Parkland mowing regimes to encourage explorations.
- 6.5 Leaving fallen trees within woodland settings for climbing.
- 6.6 Better interpretation for children.
- 6.7 Use of play leaders etc, perhaps as hermits within a hermitage etc.
- 6.8 Rolling down banks.
- 6.9 Shelter building within woodlands.
- 6.10 Balancing on less sensitive walls.
- 6.11 Introduction (or re-introduction), where appropriate, of playful garden features such as mazes or water jokes.

* Many historic landscapes are however too fragile for such activities with, for example, particularly old or ornate stonework and delicate or rare plantings. Wherever possible, the advice of a historic landscape professional should be taken before embarking on these kinds of alternative play strategies.

7.0 Exceptions to the usual rules of mitigation

- 7.1 When **very carefully applied**, it may sometimes be possible to accommodate play facilities within sensitive areas of the park or garden. Indeed, when this is achieved it may well provide the most rewarding play experience. Times when this is possible include the creation of bespoke facilities that reflect the site's history and design (for example, a folly-shaped climbing frame tucked behind an existing folly, the creation of a well-designed water game in a garden known for its water features, or even a 'landmark' play area so well designed as to be a welcome new garden within the site's development history).
Please note however that, whilst desirable as a means of encouraging children to engage with historic landscapes, such facilities must be extremely well-executed to be successful and so should be approached with caution.
- 7.2 A fenced off 'kit' playground with coloured surfacing and bright equipment is usually the most visually detrimental kind but if approached carefully it can work well within some traditional public parks where other features include bright carpet bedding, bandstands, recreational activities (bowls, tennis etc).
- 7.3 If play facilities are justifiably being placed in a public park or garden area where the design emphasis has historically been on formality and ornamentation, and are intended to be visible, then a 'natural play' approach (i.e. logs, sand, etc) is likely to be inappropriate.
- 7.4 Public parks have had a long tradition of play provision, with some having included playgrounds since their opening in the 19th century.
In these instances it is entirely appropriate to include substantial play provision and, depending on the original provision, it may even be appropriate for new equipment to be clearly visible within the landscape. Here, the Garden History Society would welcome applications for play provision that reflect provision made historically.

7.5 Further information on the history of children's play in public parks will soon be available from English Heritage.

NB It is possible that existing play provision and associated landscaping may include important examples of the development of children's play (e.g. mounds within playgrounds, paddling pools, sculpture, sandpits). Wherever appropriate this should be assessed and retained.

8.0 Summary of questions to consider before determining an application

- 8.1 Are there existing facilities that contribute to the site's historic character or have historic value themselves? If yes, then has adequate effort been made to re-use these?
- 8.2 Has adequate effort been made to make the historic park or garden interesting and entertaining to children, thus negating the need for formal play facilities?
- 8.3 Can the applicant demonstrate that play facilities would improve visitor numbers or their experience?
- 8.4 Where the proposal is for new equipment, has the use of natural features (logs, slopes, water) been considered?
- 8.5 Has the historic character and design of the host site been reflected in the play facilities?
- 8.6 Will the facilities augment understanding and appreciation of the historic landscape in which they are sited?
- 8.7 Does the proposed location minimise the physical and visual impact on the historic landscape?
- 8.8 Does the proposed location maximise the facilities' success as a play resource?
- 8.9 Is the historic significance of the chosen location fully understood?
- 8.10 Do the play facilities' design minimise their impact on the historic landscape?
- 8.11 Would the play area require new access, car parking, toilets, cafes, seating, litterbins, signage, CCTV, fencing and have these been appropriately addressed as part of this proposal?
- 8.12 Will the proposed facilities discourage antisocial behaviour?
- 8.13 Do the proposed facilities maximise the range of society that will engage with the park?
- 8.14 Has the applicant demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the play facilities?
- 8.15 Are the proposed facilities resulting from imaginative engagement with the site and its users?

9.0 Planning Context

This section highlights some parts of government Planning Policy Guidance notes (general guidance on specific topics), which may be particularly relevant to applications for change on historic landscape. Further information may be accessed via the planning website (see 9.9 below).

PPG15: Planning & the Historic Environment

- 9.1 Para 2.24 instructs that ‘planning authorities should protect registered parks and gardens in preparing development plans and in determining planning applications’.
Para 2.24 also confirms that the effect on a registered park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in assessing an application.
N.B. It is important to recognise the difference between setting of a listed building, which may comprise historic landscape, and the setting of the landscape itself, the evaluation of which involves a range of issues. (See GHS PCAN 11: Development in the Setting of Historic Designed Landscape)
- 9.2 Para 2.16 notes that when authorities consider applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works which potentially affect a listed structure they should pay special regard to certain matters including the desirability of preservation of the setting of a listed building.
Para 2.16 also notes that, ‘The **setting** is often an essential part of the building’s character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function’ and para 2.17 continues, ‘In some cases setting can only be defined by a historical assessment of a building’s surroundings’.
- 9.3 Para 4.6 notes that **conservation area** ‘... designation may well ... be suitable for historic parks or gardens and other areas of the historic landscape containing structures that contribute to their special interest’.
Para 4.40 directs that, ‘...when considering whether to extend protection to trees in **conservation areas**, local planning authorities should always take into account the visual, historic and amenity contribution of trees’.
- 9.4 Para 2.24 notes that, ‘Planning and highway authorities should also safeguard registered parks and gardens when themselves planning new developments or road schemes.’
Para 5.2: **Transport & Traffic Management** continues, ‘Local highway and planning authorities should ... integrate their activities and should take great care to avoid or minimise impacts on the various elements of the historic environment and their settings’.
Para 5.3 notes that, ‘The Secretaries of State also attach particular importance to early consultation in traffic management and highway maintenance schemes, and associated development proposals which could affect listed buildings or conservation areas or parks, gardens or battlefields, and their settings’.

PPG16: Archaeology and Planning

A significant number of historic parks and gardens (registered and unregistered) are included on county sites and monuments records (SMRs) either in their own right or as part of the setting of other monuments.

- 9.5 B21: **(b) Field Evaluations** ‘Where early discussions with local planning authorities or the developer’s own research indicate that important archaeological remains may exist, it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on a planning application is taken.’
B22: ‘Local planning authorities can expect developers to provide the results of such assessments and excavations as part of their applications for sites where there is good reason to suspect there are remains of archaeological importance If necessary, authorities will need to consider refusing permission for proposals which are inadequately documented’.

PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation

- 9.6 Para 14: **Maintaining an Adequate Supply of Open Space And Sports And Recreational Facilities** – ‘Parks, recreation grounds, playing fields and allotments must not be regarded as ‘previously developed land’ as defined in Annex C of PPG3. Even where land does fall within the definition of ‘previously developed’, its existing and potential value for recreation and other purposes should be properly assessed before development is considered’.

- 9.7 Para 17: **Developments within Open Space** ‘Local authorities should (i) avoid any erosion of recreational function and maintain or enhance the character of open spaces ...’
- 9.8 Para 31: **Sports and Recreation requiring Natural Features and Water** ‘...the visual amenity, heritage and nature conservation value of water resources should also be protected’.

Planning Website

- 9.9 The **website** of the Department of Communities and Local Government (www.communities.gov.uk) may be accessed for full information on the above PPGs and other relevant planning guidance e.g.
PPG13: Transport
Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide

Permitted Development Rights

- 9.10 Local planning authorities may consider the serving of an Article 4 Direction to withdraw permitted development rights and to require specific planning permission to be obtained before development can proceed.
See also [GHS Appendix 3](#) for further parts of
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment
PPG16: Archaeology and Planning
PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation
AND Planning Policy Wales

Appendix 1: History of children's play provision in parks and gardens

- i It is likely that until the 'invention of childhood' in the 19th century, there was no differentiation between the amusement of children and adults in gardens. Designs of earlier periods did nevertheless have the potential for play – historic features such as parterres, topiary, allées, paths, mounts, mazes, pools, menageries, aviaries, croquet lawns, bowling greens, tennis courts, grottos, hermitages and treehouses may have all been appealing to children.
- ii Paintings from the late 18th and early 19th century show swings, ferris wheels, rollercoasters, see saws and carousels in gardens and pleasure grounds.
- iii The 'cult' of childhood began in the 19th century and it is at this time that we start to see private garden features designed specifically for children. Examples include the Swiss Cottage and accompanying vegetable garden (and battlefield!) for Queen Victoria's children at Osborne on the Isle of Wight, and the Swiss Cottage and Petit Trianon at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire.
- iv When public parks began to be created in the 19th century some, but certainly not all, included children's play provision from the start. In 1845 the brief for three new parks in Manchester specifically asked for play facilities to be included.
Facilities in the period included archery, quoit alleys, skittle grounds, bowling greens, climbing poles, gymnasia (large wooden constructions for climbing, swinging or balancing), marbles, and see-saws. That some of this play equipment was also introduced in private gardens is demonstrated by Glendurgan in Cornwall, where in 1913 was introduced a Giant Stride (a maypole-type construction for swinging on).
Provision was free (although features such as boating had to be paid for).
It was usual for separate playgrounds to be provided for girls and boys, with distinctions sometimes also being made between boys and 'men' (presumably these were young men that today we would class as teenagers).
Playgrounds were closed on Sundays, a practice that continued to be observed until the mid-20th century.
- v For many years playgrounds continued to be focussed mainly on gymnasia and games. Then in 1914 engineer-businessman Charles Wicksteed donated Wicksteed Park to the people of Kettering. It soon became clear to him that provision for children's play was desirable and, being an engineer, he set about making appropriate equipment, including the slide, which he is credited with inventing. Wicksteed Park's play provision went from strength to strength and Charles Wicksteed ended up with what is still one of the largest suppliers of play equipment to the UK's public parks (Wicksteed Leisure).
- vi Another resurgence in interest in children's play provision occurred in the interwar period. Typical features of the interwar playground (stocked largely with Wicksteed equipment) was that it would be fenced off with tubular iron posts and rails, slides, swings, giant strides, joy-wheels, coaster slides, ocean wave slides, rocking horses, paddling pools, sand gardens and Babies Lawns for younger children to crawl or toddle on.
- vii Adventure playgrounds began in 1920s Denmark as playgrounds made from 'junk' materials such as timber and old cars. The concept moved to Britain in the 1940s, pioneered largely by Lady Allen of Hurtwood. Inventive activities and supervision by play leaders were a key part of adventure playgrounds and of the similar movement of Play Parks.
Over the course of the 20th century the term 'adventure playground' increasingly began to be used as a reference to large scale wooden climbing equipment.
- viii The Playground Safety Standard (BS3178) was introduced in 1959.
- ix In the 1960s there began to be an increasing emphasis on landscaping in playgrounds, particularly with mounds.
Less enduring was the use of play sculptures and other artist-led concepts.
- x In the 1970s there was a spate of reports into the safety of children's play equipment and in 1990 the Department of the Environment issued official instructions as to the safety of local authority playgrounds.

- xii The 1990s saw the use of a decreasing palette of play equipment and a culture of playgrounds based on the principle of choosing equipment from a catalogue with little design intervention. This type of playground has since been labelled 'kit, fence, carpet' in reference to the emphasis on play kit surrounded by a fence and resting on a protective artificial surface.
- xiii From 1994 onwards the Heritage Lottery Fund provided a much-needed injection of capital into public parks and many projects have included the provision of new playgrounds.
- xiv By the 21st century an emphasis on natural and imaginative play was evolving, seen most famously at the Princess Diana Memorial Playground at Kensington Gardens, where naturalistic sandpits and water features sit alongside tunnels through hedges and musical games in the paving.
- xv Meanwhile, many country house gardens were beginning to be opened to the public and were having to compete fiercely for visitors. It was increasingly felt that visitor numbers and satisfaction could be increased if the garden could offer 'something for all the family'. Adding a playground was seen as the most obvious way to add appeal to children so many country houses open to the public started to create such facilities, tending to use the public park model of buying items of equipment from a catalogue (typically a slide, a swing and a small climbing frame) to keep in an allocated area.

Appendix 2: Play areas of interest

(Please note, these are not necessarily considered to be exemplars but may provoke useful ideas)

Alnwick, Northumberland
Bellehouston Park, Glasgow
Belton Hall, Lincolnshire
Borough Gardens, Dorchester
Brodsworth, South Yorkshire
Claremont, Surrey
Coombe Abbey Country Park, Warwickshire
Devonport Park, Plymouth
Glendurgan, Cornwall
Kensington Gardens, London
Kew RBG, London
Mile End Park, London
Osborne, Isle of Wight
Savill Garden, Windsor, Berkshire
Stanley Park, Liverpool
Telegraph Hill Park, London
Trentham, Staffordshire
Waddesdon, Buckinghamshire
Wicksteed Park, Kettering
Wilton, Wiltshire
Wimpole, Cambridgeshire