

'Vulnerability Brown: Capability Brown Landscapes at risk'

Landscape Institute AGM Launch 2/11 2017

The Gardens Trust successfully launched our new report

'Vulnerability Brown: Capability Brown Landscapes at risk' at the Landscape Institute AGM, Bristol on the 2nd November 2017.

The report is a follow up to the CB300 tercentenary celebrations held last year which was project managed, supported and coordinated by the Landscape Institute – so it is very fitting that we announced this legacy through their good auspices.

The report is intended to draw public and professional attention to the ongoing threats to Brown landscapes across the country.

Its message is, that despite the recognition of last year, many continue to be damaged by ill-informed changes and lack of expert advice.

'Capability' Brown should arguably be regarded as the father of landscape design, and today's landscape architects, designers and managers have a key role to play in the conservation of these great artistic creations.

We all need to enforce the message that a Brown landscape is a work of art in its own right- any intervention needs to respect the overall vision, landscape structure and views.

The report describes how not only built development but poorly informed, incremental and permitted development and management can damage Brown landscapes.

It is immensely troubling that well over 1,000 planning applications affecting Brown's nationally important sites were made since 2002, affecting about two thirds of them. This is probably a considerable underestimate of the true number of applications.

Major harm from changes outside development control also have a significant detrimental impact on these landscapes - for example change of use from grazed parkland to arable, loss of park trees - inappropriate planting, loss of views (or intrusive views) changes to surfaces, fences and other permitted development.

Historic England's *Heritage at Risk Register* is only the tip of the iceberg - many more sites face risks.

The distinctive qualities of Brown's landscape parks are hard to protect - for example, large lakes and long winding drives, views and setting which are essential to a park's quality.

Change in ownership and subdivision are major risks - so we must use every opportunity to bring owners together for joint working and importantly commission Management Plans that cover the whole of fragmented ownership sites.

We need to remain vigilant and work collaboratively and the Landscape Institute professionals and County Gardens Trusts have a major role to play in protecting these sites for future generations to enjoy.

I would like to extend our gratitude to Historic England for funding this important research report and to thank our authors Sarah Couch and Sarah Rutherford.

Finally I would like to particularly thank David Lambert for his expert input, advice and guidance in compiling the report.

The report is downloadable from the Gardens Trust website and a link to pdf on the Landscape Institute website.

Dr Marion Harney

Chair, Gardens Trust Conservation Committee