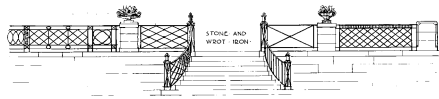


Patrons Sir Mark and Lady Lennox-Boyd



Lancashire Gardens Trust

County Gardens Trusts are being asked to tell their members about the proposal by this government to remove the (national) Gardens Trust from the list of Statutory Consultees who are informed about planning applications week by week.

The 38 county Gardens Trusts (CGTs) watch over parks and gardens (and other Historic Designed Landscapes such as promenades and squares) to ensure their preservation. Not only are they a valuable asset as places of beauty, but also as wildlife havens.

We are being made aware of the desperate decline in numbers of birds, insects, butterflies and bees which are crucial to the food chain; only government policies can address this disaster by regulating the use of pesticides and herbicides, and, to emphasise the case for historic parks and gardens, by preventing the loss of historic parkland to building. HDLs are the perfect habitat for all wildlife; they have been more or less undisturbed for decades, even centuries. And yet they have no legal protection.

The 38 CGTs watch over these invaluable places and try to ensure their preservation; recent governments have paid lip service to worthy environmental targets, but now there is the proposal to abolish the GTs role as statutory consultee in planning applications. We know that the 8 largest construction companies exert strong influence over ministers in the corridors of Westminster by lobbying. The CPRE (Council for the Protection of Rural England) has calculated how much land is already owned by these companies and already has planning permission, but is lying unused.

The national GT is putting its case to government, to Historic England, and every other relevant body just now. At county level, we are asked to join the campaign by writing to our MP. We are sending to members a template to use. Here on the website within Parks and Gardens you will find 2 sections, one listing those sites on the Historic England Register (of national importance) and the other listing those which are of local importance; all are grouped by their local authority (LA) district.

A debate will take place soon in the House of Commons; please write a letter now.

THIS IS THE INVALUABLE WORK WE DO

1 Planning applications affecting HDLs: the GT receives these on a weekly basis from Local Authorities (LA) then sorts and distributes them to the relevant CGT immediately. THIS IMPORTANT FUNCTION WOULD CEASE

2 The CGT uses its detailed local knowledge on its records and, if necessary, makes a site visit, to ascertain whether the proposed plan will enhance or harm the garden or its setting. Our letter of support or objection is sent to the planning officer.

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3 The LA planning officer considers all representations (traffic, ecology etc) when advising the elected councillors as to their vote – for or against the planned development. In some cases the heritage consideration is the most important, especially concerning a Register site.

4 It is now a legal requirement to consult the Historic Environment Record (HER) in a proposal and to include its information in the Heritage Statement. We provide these records.

5 HDLs are a vital reserve for wildlife, lying undisturbed for many years; they are the only repositories for endangered species, especially in densely built urban areas. Even in rural areas, this can be the case due to intensive farming methods.

6 CGTs continue to research and record those HDLs of ‘secondary’ importance: these are not in HEs Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. In post-1974 Lancashire a survey (HE, 1998) lists over 250 such sites; these are chiefly private gardens surrounding an historic house or farm, and form the important, attractive setting to the pleasing building. They also provide invaluable sustenance to wildlife.

NON-MEMBER PLEASE JOIN IN!

In your letter, make a heartfelt plea for your local HDLs, those within your constituency. Public places can improve our health, physical and mental, because beauty brings joy. Even private gardens can enrich our lives when we see their flowering shrubs and majestic trees over the wall, and hear the birdsong they foster. Private gardens are continually under threat because they can be sold as building plots and are considered ‘brownfield’. More tarmac, more concrete, more fumes, more lights.

To discover minor HDLs in your constituency, on our website search Conservation & Planning, go down 3 paragraphs, look for titles in blue, and click Lancashire’s Unregistered Historic Designed Landscapes. The first part describes in detail our Category 1 sites, then the second part lists the remainder, grouped by Local Authority. You will then need to check which of them lie within your parliamentary constituency. It seems a tricky exercise – but surely it’s worth it!

Your chairman, *Elaine*