

HANDOUT 5

Researching Historic Designed Landscapes for Local Listing

Historic Landscape Project – Southeast



SITE SURVEY CHECKLIST

Gather features and information from site maps and documents which you will then check on site, to record the site *as it is now*. These are features you might be looking for:

Principal building/ building group

House, conservatory, orangery, outbuildings, carriage house, stables, dovecote

Ornamental garden areas: compartments – walled or otherwise enclosed or open parterres, informal lawns with planting, wild garden, woodland garden, rockery, dell, rose garden

Kitchen garden: walled or otherwise enclosed; orientation; layout and use; internal structures

Principal ornamental plantings within garden areas: herbaceous borders, roses, herbs, shrubberies, bog and waterside plantings, any outstanding and/or specialised/national collections which contribute to the garden's character and form e.g. rhododendrons

Garden structures: all garden buildings (record type, function, materials), pergolas, screen walls, gateways, paving, ponds, canals, fountains; system of garden walks and paths

Structures associated with changes of level: steps, banks, retaining walls, terraces, ha-ha's etc

Garden topography: on a hill or in a valley; level or on a slope, evenly graded or terraced, enclosed or open to the rest of the site

Relationships: entry points to the garden (s) from the house: can they be seen/entered easily from the house, seen only from its upper floors or not at all? Are they visible to visitors 'on arrival' or from the surrounding parkland? Key views within and beyond?

Trees and woodland: woodland blocks – forestry or ancient woodland, belts, shaws, clumps, scattered individuals, avenues. Main species of each, e.g. native parkland or ornamentals or a mixture. Age profiles of trees – young, mature, over-mature/veteran

Overall site topography: level or sloping, if latter in which directions; valleys, ravines, hollows, gentle or steep hills; orientation – do these run n, s, e or w?

Views and vistas: to and from house and gardens, to and from park, house and gardens, to focal features within the site (e.g. at the end of an avenue) and outside the site (e.g. church spire, distant hills, hill-top clump?)

Entrances, drives and footpaths: where entrances are located, routes drives follow (through what type of landscape) and their destination; the hierarchy – i.e. distinguish between major and minor ones; components of entrances - lodges, screen walls, gates; materials and widths of main drives; historic drives now lost or surviving as footpaths

Site boundaries: how these are marked physically - by fences, walls, water courses, roads, woodland edges

Setting of the designed landscape: immediate adjacent – village, housing estate, farmland, woodland; wider setting – topography; enclosed or open landscape; rural or urban.

Use this checklist to list the features you want to look for in the field. As you carry out your survey, record the degree of survival of features – i.e. complete survival, part above ground, parts below ground (e.g. humps and bumps in surface), lost; reconstructed; make an estimate of the historic period features survive from.

Feature	Check off
<p>For example: Dovecote – early C19th? 20m northwest of stable block; circular; brick; 2 rectangular (portrait) windows to west and east; doorway but no door; roof gone apart from a few timbers; floor covered in rubble; brickwork in poor condition but evidence of previous repairs to top of walls. Eyecatcher in views from the main drive; on bank 10m high above the service road to the house, backed by northern shelter-belt 15m to the rear</p>	✓

