

unsuccessful, despite the Millennium Commission's earlier expressed enthusiasm. The sound of raspberries rather than of trumpets now greets the Commission and its decisions, and the Commission compares unfavourably with the Heritage Lottery Fund, which disburses grants with less fuss and to apparently much greater effect.

Bids for National Lottery funding - up to 90% for schemes of under £100,000 and up to 75% for larger projects under the *Urban Parks Programme* - have been made by local planning authorities and trusts for a wide range of historic parks and gardens in London including Gunnersbury Park and Osterley Park (both in Hounslow), the Old Deer Park (in Richmond), Emslie Horniman Pleasance (Kensington), Waterlow Park, St Pancras Gardens, St George's Gardens, and Russell Square (Camden), Battersea Park (Wandsworth), Crystal Palace (Bromley), Nunhead Cemetery (Southwark) and Well Hall Pleasance (Greenwich). The bids made include applications for funding for the acquisition of land (as at Osterley), for commissioning a Management/Restoration Plan (Old Deer Park), and to carry out the restoration of architectural detail and the reinstatement of the original planting scheme (Emslie Horniman Pleasance, designed in 1912 by C.F.A. Voysey).

Moves to protect and repair churchyards, burial grounds and cemeteries were given a boost by the conference held in November 1996 by the *London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust*, at which delegates were much encouraged by the work being done by Trusts and Friends at, for example, Abney Park Cemetery in Hackney and Kensal Green Cemetery in Kensington and Chelsea.

A STRATEGY FOR THE PARK and GARDENS at HAMPTON COURT PALACE

By David Jacques

Introduction

The gardens at Hampton Court are of world renown. Here, in the finest Baroque layout in Britain, elegant parterres, walks with fine vistas, exquisite statuary and ironwork, and numbers of walled enclosures, are set within a landscape of parkland cut by canals and framed on one side by the River Thames. Together, this combination of elements provides a setting for the six acres of building which go to make up Britain's largest country royal palace. The principal built elements and garden areas of this landscape remain largely unaltered, though their character has changed at various times with changing uses, garden fashion, and the growth of plants.

These alterations, although often being of interest in their own right, have also often contradicted the design intentions of the Baroque layout. As the various planted overlays themselves decay, numerous dilemmas arise as to the most desirable treatment, and these dilemmas are compounded by aesthetic considerations, modern pressures of use, and archaeological constraints.

A strategy for the gardens has now been prepared in order to establish the principles of care, the desired style and content of the gardens, and a framework for future restoration and upgrading. Its recommendations seek to ensure a consistency (though not uniformity) of approach, and that changes that are urgent and/or important are tackled in a rational way.

Background

Hampton Court became Royal in the late 1520s, and in the next decade the country's largest Tudor gardens were developed by Henry VIII. A tiltyard, ornamental orchards, a pond, yard and a privy garden were formed, whilst a walled deer-chasing course was made in the Home Park. The division of the estate in this way has largely survived to the present, moulding all future developments.

The gardens fell behind in fashion during the early seventeenth century, but it is clear that Charles I, with his uncompleted plans for



19. Queen Mary's Bower as it appeared in c.1920. The trees succumbed to Dutch elm disease in the 1970s, but this photograph provided a model for the bower planted in the Privy Garden in 1995.
(HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)

the Longford River, Charles II, with his Great Water, and then William III, all recognised the capability of the place to demonstrate the utmost in magnificence. William III came closest to realising his ideal, and the gardens he left, and which Queen Anne further embellished, stood as the quintessential Baroque garden in Britain. Ironically, this was amply shown by the frequent use of Hampton Court as the model of the type of garden that the proponents of the *landscape garden* wished to sweep away.

Fortunately their wishes were not gratified at Hampton Court. In fact, no less a figure than Capability Brown, Royal Gardener there from 1764 till his death in 1783, refused to modify the layout, 'out of respect for my profession'. In consequence, the Hampton Court gardens and parks are remarkable for the extent of surviving fabric from the periods of Henry VIII and William III. Indeed, taken as a whole, with its important Victorian additions, the ensemble is unrivalled in Britain and rivals the great Baroque gardens of Europe, such as Versailles, Schönbrunn and Herrenhausen.

From the 1530s the Royal Court regularly stayed at Hampton Court, but its last visit was in 1737. After this date the Palace and gardens gradually became the semi-private preserve of 'grace-and-favour' residents, whilst the house-keeper and gardener operated a remunerative sideline in showing Palace and gardens to suitable persons.

With the incentive to modernise having been removed, no further radical changes took place, and successive Royal Gardeners saw no need to do more than fulfil their contracts to maintain the place. Meanwhile, a slow decline of the fabric was underway. The Wilderness lost its hedges as the infill planting started to form a high canopy and the clipping of the topiary was stopped, probably by Capability Brown. In time, the resulting growth changed the appearance of the parterres radically, so that the borders were eliminated, and, in the *Fountain Garden*, the hollies were too.

It was this picturesque and rather decrepit scene which presented itself to Edward Jesse, the Office of Woods and Forests' Itinerant Deputy Surveyor, who assumed responsibility for the highly successful improvements of the Hampton Court gardens from the mid 1830s. Jesse's initiative proved to be a prelude to the

creation of purpose-made public parks a decade later, and at least one innovation at Hampton Court proved particularly influential - the massed bedding in the Fountain Garden.

Visitor numbers to the gardens had been rising during the early nineteenth century but shot up after the Palace was opened to the general public in 1838 and the South Western Railway was extended to Hampton Court in 1849. With the hordes at the gate, the residents retreated to the Privy Garden, and new planting was designed to provide privacy. In 1890 even the Privy Garden was made public, the Home Park was opened for the first time and a golf club established in the park.

The new breed of Superintendents at Hampton Court shared the ideals of park superintendents up and down the country, and were just as interested in the latest fashions in horticulture. In the 1870s they tried carpet bedding in the Fountain Garden, the Wilderness was converted to a *wild garden* in the 1900s, a superlative herbaceous border was established along the wall in the Fountain Garden in the 1920s, cherries and other ornamental trees were planted extensively post-war, and ornamental conifers were established in the apprentice training ground in the 1970s.

The desire of successive superintendents to provide for the public has left a legacy of exceptional horticultural achievement, but also one of *municipalisation*. Seating, bins, mettelling of gravel paths, metal edges, and horse rides are to be found in the Fountain Garden. Dust and dirt rises from the loose gravel paths, and they are not most convenient for wheel-chairs and buggies. In the Tiltyard, a restaurant, lavatory blocks, car parking, and tennis courts have invaded the walled garden compartments. Traffic levels on Hampton Court Road and Hampton Court Green have led to various traffic improvement measures, urban road furniture and an adverse environment of fumes and noise. Vrow Walk was given a highly urban landscape treatment in the 1970s. Traffic within the outer court led to paths being laid outside the lines of bollards on the West Front.

Concentration upon horticultural display over the last 160 years has focused attention on the plant content, rather than on the overall character of the gardens or the views. An early example was the change to the Privy Garden

in the 1830s, when the planting for privacy counteracted William III's intention of opening a view of the River Thames. More recently, planting on the far bank of the canal has reduced the important views out over the park. Overall, the original design intentions have been largely forgotten, and views to the River Thames, and over the park, have been obscured.

A considerable number - thousands - of ornamental trees and shrubs have been planted at Hampton Court this century. Planting in the Wilderness, in the park, and along the Barge Walk has usually been historically inappropriate. There are over 5,000 trees in avenues in Hampton Court and Bushy Park, mostly the common lime (*Tilia x vulgaris*). Almost all came to the end of their lives in this century. Superintendents have adopted the conventional dislike of the common lime, and replacement planting has mostly been with broad-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*), a tree of quite different shape in later years. A variety of different spacings has also been tried, and there has been sporadic planting of a variety of trees in the park, and repeated grass cutting along the avenues, contradicting its essential character as an open deer park.

Avenue trees may last for 250 years, and clipped trees even longer. However, there are now few specimens remaining from before 1735. The hedges in the Wilderness disappeared over 100 years ago, and the hornbeam in the Maze became decayed in the early part of this century, and is now totally replanted with yews. The condition of the yews in the Fountain Garden is a continuing concern, unlikely to diminish in view of their antiquity.

Two great disasters have struck the tree population in the last quarter-century. First, Dutch elm disease killed all elms on the estate, including those in the Wilderness, those in the bower in the Privy Garden, and those in the hedgerows. Second, the Great Storm of October 1987 carried off most of the remaining elderly population of lime trees. A four-year restoration programme of planting over 1,250 lime trees on the Cross Avenue in Home Park was completed in 1995, but the whole of the *patte d'oie* seen from the Fountain Garden is still very gappy.

The Landscape Strategy

The need for a strategy for the gardens and park at Hampton Court has never been stated, though studies in recent years have paved the way. The first was a comprehensive historical survey, undertaken in 1982 by Travers Morgan Planning. There were further reports in 1988/9 on the management of the gardens and park, undertaken by Land Use Consultants. The urgent need to replant some of the avenues following the Great Storm in 1987, and the restoration of the Privy Garden following the repair of fire damage in the South Wing, have intervened, but, on the other hand, have confirmed the desirability of an overall strategy for gardens and park.

A *Gardens Strategy Review Group* started meeting in 1995 under the chairmanship of Dr Simon Thurley, the Curator of the Historic Royal Palaces Agency (HRPA). It comprised the Palace Director, Robin Evans, the Gardens and Estate Manager at Hampton Court, Terry Gough, the Consultant on Historic Parks and Gardens, David Jacques, the Horticultural Consultants, Jan Woudstra and Tom Wright, the Landscape Architect, Marylla Hunt and an Assistant Curator of the HRPA, Susanne Groom. The strategy being discussed here is one result of its deliberations.

The principal dilemmas to be resolved relate to conserving the historic qualities of the estate whilst catering for the millions of visitors who come to see them, and how to combat decay. The value of a strategy is not only in identifying such dilemmas, but in clarifying the aims of management, and pointing the way ahead to changes that are desirable.

The following general principles were agreed by the HRPA to guide the development of the strategy:

1. To adopt a conservation approach to the care of the property, strengthening the historic character of each garden area and its relationship to the whole.
2. To provide a framework for future maintenance and development of all areas within the estate including the built elements within them.
3. To relate the gardens and park to other important landscapes adjacent to the Palace, notably Bushy Park and the River Thames.
4. To provide for visitors a beautiful, informative, relaxing and enjoyable experience within the gardens.



20. The Great Vine in the eighteenth-century Vinery, c.1920.
The old Vinery was replaced with an aluminium structure in the 1970s.
(HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)

5. To obtain the best value for money in the maintenance and restoration of the gardens.
6. To enhance the gardens' reputation for horticultural and arboricultural excellence.
7. To provide guidance on functions, events and entertainments held on the estate.

Although views within and out of the gardens are important at Hampton Court, the compartmental structure makes it possible to consider each area relatively autonomously. The *Gardens Strategy Review Group* thus broke the whole estate down into eleven areas. The history of each garden area was researched in order to chart the progress of design form, appearance and wildlife content, and then each was analysed in detail by considering its present built fabric, horticultural content, ecological value, aesthetic quality, functional considerations, potential and maintenance aspects.

The *Group's* concept of a conservation approach was to return areas to a state in which they had a positive identity and meaning. Sometimes this could mean simply tweaking existing maintenance arrangements; in others, where the planting had lost its form, a significant degree of restoration was worth investigating. The restoration of the Privy Garden is an example of the latter. There and in any other restorations, the highest respect is to be given to the workmanship of historic overlays, and decisions will take into account wildlife factors and existing horticultural value.

In some places, new design was recognised as desirable if it would help resolve a larger conflict between conservation requirements and improvements for the sake of, or because of, the public. An example of this was the designation of the Tiltyard as a place for modern requirements such as parking, restaurants, toilet facilities and picnicking, so that other areas could be spared them. Appropriate historically-based modern garden design would accompany them.

In addition to the consideration of the estate in its eleven areas, a number of guiding principles were formulated:

A. *Conservation*

It was affirmed that conservation should remain the overriding priority which would dictate the overall character, appearance and usage of the estate.

B. *Public Access*

The *Group* saw no reason to depart from the general objective, established in the 1830s, of opening the gardens to the public. There are some sensitive areas, though, where visitor pressure can be controlled by restricting public access. Some areas are less sensitive than others and this is reflected in the report.

C. *History and Beauty*

In most places the conservation approach would have positive aesthetic benefits. However, a prohibition of changes not sanctioned by historical precedent might leave some areas looking somewhat destitute. A modern embellishment of these places might well be acceptable, provided that the changes are reversible, compatible with their surroundings, and not passed off as original. Notwithstanding the emphasis on conservation and history, the gardens must continue to be a source of delight and beauty for the visitor.

D. *Pedestrian Priority*

Vehicles passing through the gardens are a nuisance to visitors and detract from the ambience. Some traffic is unavoidable, for example delivery vehicles to the restaurant in the Tiltyard, but the possible relocation of the glasshouses provides an opportunity to re-think vehicular routes elsewhere - particularly in the Wilderness and the Fountain Garden. Pedestrian access should have priority throughout the gardens and vehicular movement should be kept to an absolute minimum.

E. *Ecology*

The Home Park, especially, is valuable as an open area and wildlife reservoir in an otherwise densely populated part of Greater London. The grassland grazed by the deer provides the natural-looking setting for the gardens and the avenues that cross it. The wet areas have particular ecological interest. Careful control of the quality of ground water would ensure that this remains the case. All future activity should consider the implications



21. Flower gardens in the Fountain Garden, c.1930.

Hampton Court has had an uninterrupted tradition of carpet-bedding from the early 19th century to the present day.
(HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)

22. Fountain in the Great Fountain Garden with its early 19th-century jets, c.1929.

(HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)



23. The East Front Gardens to-day.
(HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)

on wildlife, and their habitats should be enhanced whenever the opportunity exists. Water quality from the Longford River must be regularly monitored and the use of chemicals in the gardens reduced to the minimum possible.

F. Horticulture

Restoration of the gardens will require a supply of historic plants, many of which are scarce or unobtainable from commercial nurseries. The Estate Nurseries will be available for propagation, whilst parts of the Arboretum area and possibly the Pond Yard area can be given over to raising these plants outdoors. This presents an opportunity for the estate to contribute to garden restoration on a national level, and to provide additional interest in its own gardens. Hampton Court should become a reservoir of scarce plants from the periods of history reflected in the gardens.

G. Nurseries

The present Nursery is situated in the old melon ground for historical reasons, and has been used principally for propagating bedding-out plants which are available commercially. Although this is a suitable location from which to distribute plants around the gardens, the requirement for propagation in the future is likely to shift from plants commercially available at reasonable cost towards rare trees and shrubs. Meanwhile the space is rather restricted, and movement into and out of the Nursery conflicts with visitors in the Wilderness. The possibility of combining the Nursery with the Stud House Nursery in the park is under consideration.

H. Gardens Management and Training

The gardening staff will need training in the establishment and maintenance of historic plants. This may require old skills to be re-learned, or re-discovered. Close collaboration between historians and gardening staff would be necessary to make this a reality. Staff and management must continue to develop their skills and knowledge (particularly of garden history) through training and external advice into the day-to-day management and presentation of the gardens.

I. Buildings and Structures

The gardens and Palace were designed to be

one and the same. This axiom has guided the recent restoration of the Privy Garden. All future developments within the gardens or the Palace must consider and emphasise the links between the two.

J. Paths and Roadways

The historic materials for paths and roadways - generally bound gravel - have very often been replaced by loose gravel, tarmac and other modern substitutes for reasons of availability or ease of maintenance, though to the detriment of the gardens' character. Whilst a full conversion to bound gravel may not be possible, it will be feasible in many locations, and more acceptable substitutes are available where vehicular traffic makes a hard-wearing surface necessary. There should be an urgent and thorough examination of path and road surfaces in respect of their use and attractiveness. This should be followed by the adoption of standard specifications for path and road surfaces throughout the estate.

K. Visitor Services

Visitors are the lifeblood of Hampton Court, and means have to be found to accommodate their requirements, despite this not being easy in such an historic context. There should be adequate provision of visitor services (information, refreshment, toilets) within the gardens.

L. Parking and Traffic Management

Parking is one of the most difficult visitor requirements to accommodate as its presence often conflicts with the historic character of the estate. Whilst, for practical reasons, removal of parking from the Tiltyard cannot be achieved immediately, in the long term Hampton Court should work towards the elimination of visitor traffic and parking.

M. Signs and Interpretation

It is vital for visitors that sufficient information and directions are provided to enable them to gain the maximum from a visit. On the other hand, the character of the gardens could be marred by over-officious signage. Appropriately designed signs and printed guides should be provided to enable visitors to find their way around the gardens and to fully enjoy and appreciate them.

N. Events and Entertainments

The Hampton Court Flower Show has highlighted the dilemma of short-term events, which raise welcome funds, but which have the potential to damage a site in the longer run. The acceptable frequency and intensity of events will depend crucially upon how they are managed, and the reversibility of the effects. The trade-off between semi-permanent installations such as roadways which reduce the impact of a repeating event, against their impact at other times, also deserves consideration. This is a legitimate and historic use of the gardens which should continue, provided that visitor enjoyment is not unduly compromised or lasting damage inflicted.

O. Regular Review

Devising a strategy is the beginning of a lengthy process of devising details, implementation, review, adjustment and further action. The detailed strategy makes a large number of recommendations and in several cases advises that further research or investigation is necessary in order to develop specific recommendations. A regular review mechanism should be put in place to monitor the progress of the strategy.

P. Resources

The gardens and park remain one of the chief tourist attractions of Britain because the considerable effort by the gardening staff maintains them at an exceptional level of care. The gardens and estate must receive sufficient resources to reflect their international importance and the vital part they play in attracting the paying visitor to the Palace.

The preceding sixteen guiding principles were foremost in the *Gardens Strategy Review Group's* mind when they began work on the following eleven specific areas of the Hampton Court estate which are as follows:

I. HOME PARK

Home Park, which covers 750 acres and is bounded by long stretches of Tudor and seventeenth-century boundary walls on the north and on the south and east by the Barge Walk, is intersected by the largest and most important set of eighteenth-century avenues in the country. The park was opened to the public in

1893 and suffered severe damage in the Great Storm of 1987.

The long term aim should be to strengthen the character of Home Park as an open deer park, reinstating the avenues and waterways as they formerly were, and addressing vehicular movement.

2. HAMPTON COURT ROAD

Hampton Court Road, bounded on either side by long stretches of Tudor and later walls, links Kingston with Hampton Court. Concern here centres on the existing, and increasing, urbanisation and development of a highway in the remains of what is a royal park.

Hampton Court Road should become an appropriate and significantly different environment from the surrounding roads so that motorists, cyclists and pedestrians can appreciate the area as part of an important historic royal estate.

3. ARBORETUM

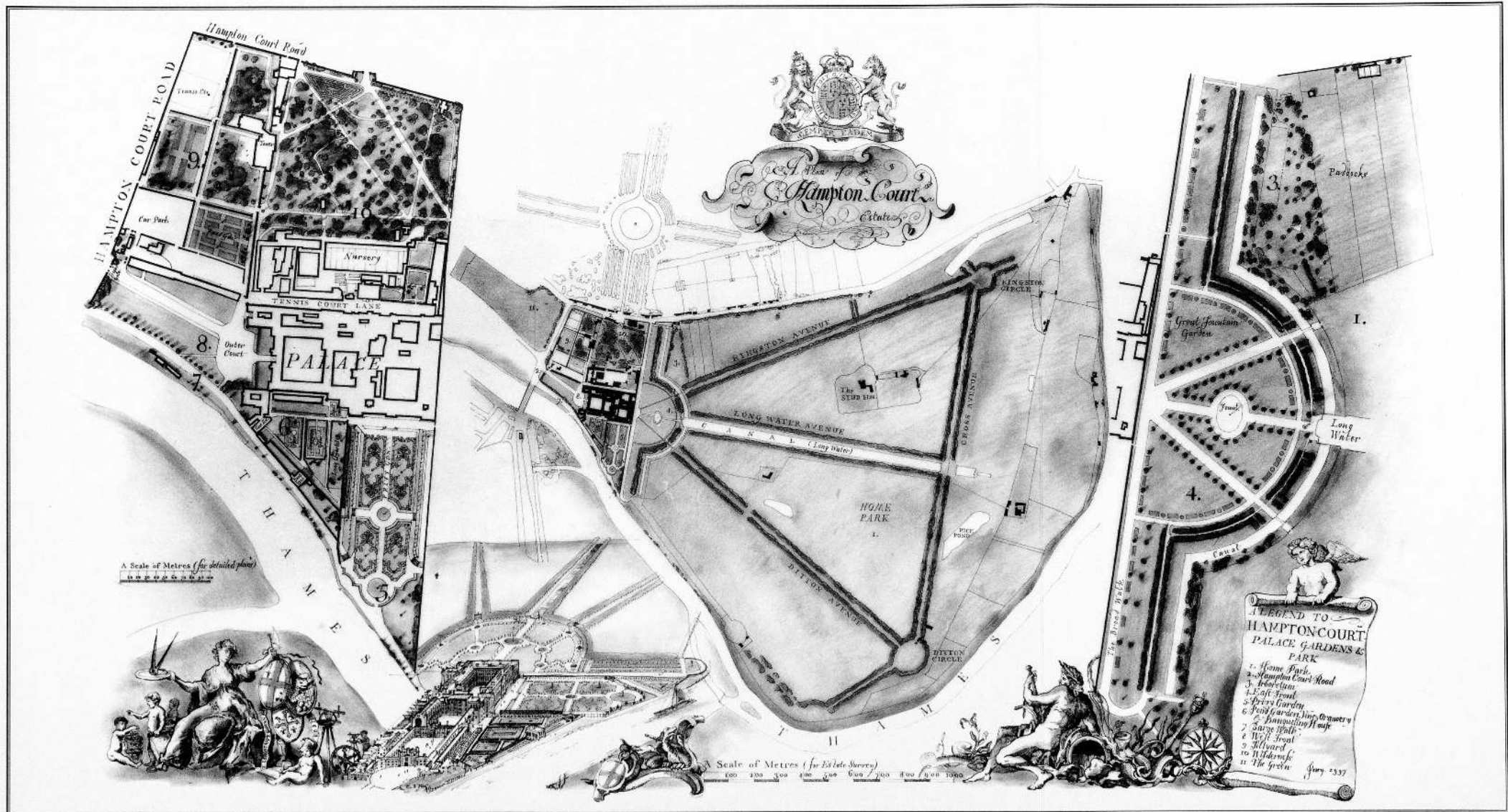
The Arboretum was historically part of the park in the foreground of the Fountain Garden. From the 1970s onwards it has been used as a garden for Hampton Court apprentices. Today it contains a number of ornamental trees, shrubs and flower beds.

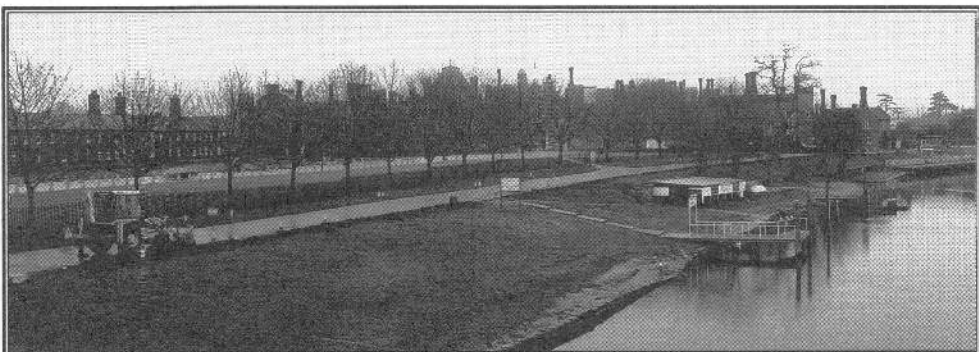
The character of this area is felt to be out of sympathy with the majority of the historic estate and it should gradually change to a shrubbery, maintaining and displaying historic plants with a minimal maintenance regime.

4. EAST FRONT

The East Front is one of the most historically significant areas in the whole estate. From 1689 it was brought into the gardens immediately adjacent to the Palace and still retains important yew trees planted by Queen Anne. Since the nineteenth century it has been planted up with double rotation bedding, and in the 1920s two long herbaceous borders were introduced along its western edge.

The aim for this garden is to retain a mix of historic periods loosely based on its Victorian plan as modified during the 1920s. It has always been the largest and grandest public garden at the Palace and this character should be retained and embellished. The important elements are the retention of wide, open spaces and bold planting with clear views in towards the Palace and out towards the park.





24. Trophy Gate, 1996. (HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)

25. Lion Gate, 1996. (HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)

Trophy Gate and Lion Gate - among the most monumental gateways in Britain - presently sit amidst a sea of tarmac. Their presentation will be addressed in the Landscape Strategy.

26. The Barge Walk, 1996.
(HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES)

5. PRIVY GARDEN

The Privy Garden has recently been restored to its appearance in 1702 when William III completed his great parterre there.

This garden should be maintained as a faithful reproduction of William III's Privy Garden of 1702. The accuracy and type of planting should be developed and in due course the holly and yew trees should be replanted with the historic clones from the original garden.

6. POND GARDENS, VINE, ORANGERY AND BANQUETING HOUSE GARDEN

This area is the most intensively gardened part of the estate; it contains the only surviving Tudor garden features and a number of ancient banks, buildings, walls and other features of importance. It also embraces William III's Banqueting House, the Great Vine and its greenhouse, and the Lower Orangery now housing Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*.

The Pond Gardens are one of the most popular parts of the estate and should retain the subtle mix of historic periods in a number of distinctly planted areas. Visitor circulation needs to be improved to allow access to each of these. This should include making a link with the Privy Garden from the Banqueting House terrace. Priority should be given to the planting of the 1950s Sunken Garden, the area before the Orangery and the grace-and-favour orchard. All three of these areas have the potential to represent seventeenth-century phases of garden history.

7. BARGE WALK

Barge Walk runs between Kingston and Hampton Court Bridges and was used as a tow path until the 1920s. There is very little of built or horticultural importance along its length and a period of neglect has led to overgrown and inappropriate edging to the river and the park.

This area should form a visual screen between the river and the park and retain an echo of its former use as a barge walk. The maintenance regime should be substantially less rigid than elsewhere on the estate allowing a natural rural aspect to develop. The ornamental planting should be allowed to die out and the former hedgerows and tall tree screen should be re-established. The inappropriate and ugly development along the Hampton Court Bridge end of Barge Walk should be cleaned up and rationalised, and a stricter regime of management introduced.

8. WEST FRONT

This large and disparate area contains a number of important built structures including Trophy Gate and the moat. There is little of horticultural importance in the area, which was intended as a first courtyard to the Palace, lined with buildings both to the east and west. Today the tarmac produces a bleak windswept appearance and the traffic conflicts with visitors.

The West Front should be a grand, magnificent entrance to the Palace with a real sense of enclosure beyond Trophy Gate. There should be a bold overall design creating a traffic-free environment. The West Front and its grace-and-favour gardens should be reconfigured in order to create a grander entrance. The West Front footpaths and roads should be resurfaced to provide a less ugly and brutal appearance.

9. TILTYARD

The Tiltyard was laid out for tournaments in the reign of Henry VIII but was later laid down to horticultural use. During the seventeenth century, the area fell into use as kitchen gardens and only in the 1920s was much of it given over to recreational uses, including tennis, a tea-house and lavatories.

Changes to the Tiltyard should emphasise its role as primarily a centre for visitor activity and education, with possibilities for picnicking, eating, children's activities, demonstration fruit and vegetable growing, parking and lavatories. A series of improvements should be undertaken to the gardens in order to emphasise their former historic uses and to provide a robust and sympathetic visitor environment.

10. THE WILDERNESS

This area in the sixteenth century was an orchard, but was laid out as a wilderness in the early eighteenth century. It contains some of the most famous features in the Hampton Court gardens including the Maze and the spring bulb display, but for much of the year it is a roughly mown grass area with a number of trees.

The Wilderness should more closely reflect its historic appearance. There should be a phased policy of recovering the historic elements in the garden such as the hedges and path layout, but these should not jeopardise the famous bulb displays or views of the Palace. The area between

the Wilderness and the Nursery should be reordered on the basis of its seventeenth-century layout. Improvements to the Maze, which does not meet the standard of presentation set elsewhere in the gardens, are urgently required.

II. THE GREEN

The Green is an ancient grazing common which has been part of the Palace since the sixteenth century. There are no important buildings on the Green but it performs an important role for the local community and the Palace.

The footpaths should be redirected to meet pedestrian needs by providing a more direct route from the car park to the Palace. The grass should be cut a little higher to make it more consistent with a green and less of a garden. The car park should be screened by planting trees in front and within the car park.

After consultation has been completed, the Strategy will be adopted by HRPA and a prioritised action list created to guide implementation over the next 5 years.

