



47 Denmans Lane
Lindfield
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 2JN

Via e-mail to: Wealden DC
FAO: Case Officer: Mr S Robbins

11th October, 2017

Re Application Number: WD/2017/1812/MAJ
Sheffield Park: Use Of Agricultural Land For Overflow Parking For Up To 60 Days

Dear Sirs,

The Gardens Trust (The GT) - formerly the Garden History Society (GHS) - is a statutory consultee on matters concerning registered parks and gardens, and is now working closely with County Garden Trusts, such as Sussex Gardens Trust (SGT), with regard to commenting on planning applications.

Summary

The evidence provided with the application does not demonstrate that the proposals provide the least harmful long-term solution to parking arrangements at Sheffield Park. The Trust therefore recommends that any approval should be limited to, say, three years.

Background

Sheffield Park is a nationally significant historic landscape Registered at Grade 1. The site has a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (ACTA Associates 2010) which sets out a thorough assessment of the significance of the landscape and the management issues that need to be addressed. Additionally, there is a detailed Conservation Statement for the Entrance Drive and Environs (Sarah Rutherford 2009).

The parking area is located in the South Park, recognised as a fine example of the work of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Moreover, the area is located exactly where the Hexagon Room and the Gothic Seat (features of the 18th Century landscape, now lost) are believed to have stood.

Reasoning

SGT is concerned that permanently extending the number of days this area may be used for parking would:

information@sussexgardenstrust.org.uk

www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk

- increase the visual harm by interrupting key historic views identified in the Conservation Management Plan
- frustrate plans to identify, mark and interpret the sites of the Hexagon Room and Gothic Seat (as recommended in both the 2010 Conservation Management Plan and 2009 Landscape Conservation Statement)
- conflict with the implementation of elements of the 2010 Conservation Management Plan such as the reinstatement of historic routes through the South Park (including the Park Circuit walk, which is known to have passed through the car park area).
- further divide the garden from the wider parkland, making it more difficult to interpret the early 18th and 19th century historical periods

A temporary toilet, bollards and extensive white rope lane markings (not mentioned in the application) have been installed at the highest point in the South Park causing visual harm even when the area is not being used for parking. The cluttered arrangement is out of keeping with the 18th century Brownian landscape – see photo below taken on 11th Oct 2017:



In an earlier planning application (WD/2016/0697/MAO), now withdrawn, several options were identified for additional car parking. However, the documents submitted with the present application do not explain why none of these are now being considered. SGT recommends the present proposals and these alternatives should be fully evaluated alongside each other before long term approval is given to extending the use agricultural land as envisaged in this application.

See the Annex for relevant extracts form the 2009 Landscape Conservation Statement and 2010 Conservation Management Plans.

Conclusion

Sheffield Park is a nationally significant historic landscape Registered at Grade 1. The South Park, where the parking is proposed, is of exceptional significance as a fine example of the work of Capability Brown. SGT recognises the need for additional parking and acknowledges there are no easy solutions. SGT also accepts the current proposals and the management of park visitors have been designed to restrict potential harm.

Nevertheless, SGT considers the case for the use of this area being the least harmful long-term solution for parking has not been made. For this reason, any approval should be for a limited period of, say, three years.

Yours faithfully

Jim Stockwell.

On behalf of the Sussex Garden Trust.

CC: The Gardens Trust

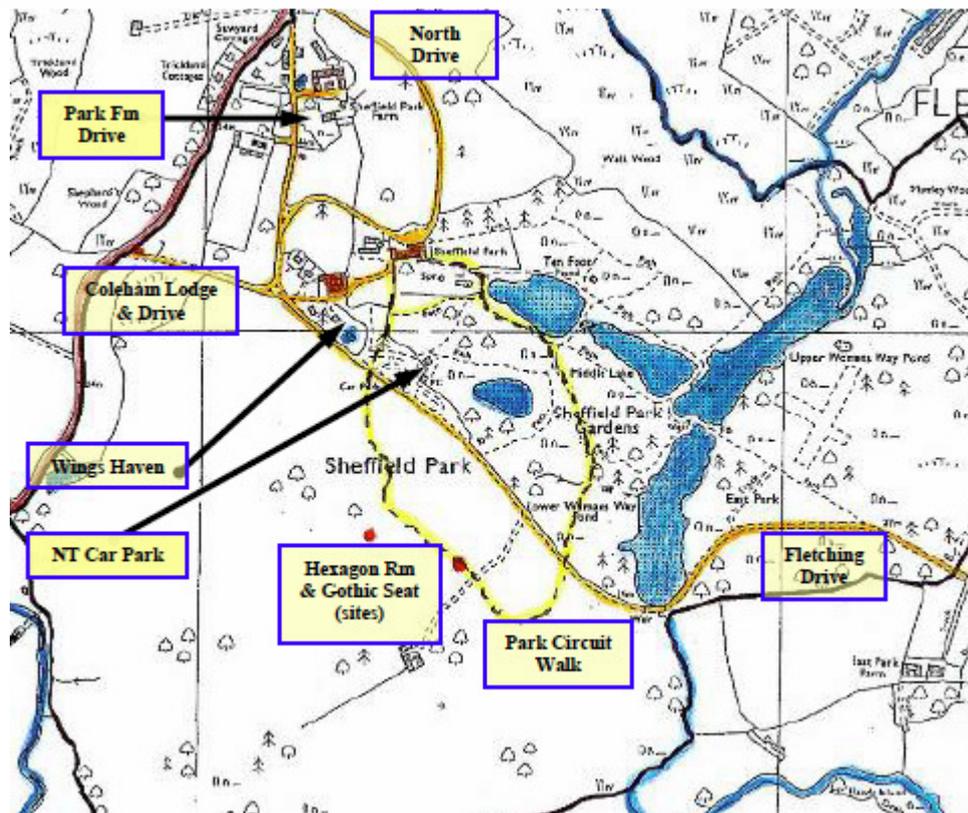
Extracts From Entrance Drive & Environs Landscape Conservation Statement
(Sarah Rutherford Jan 2009)

Page 46

Assessment of Significance.

The South Park is of exceptional significance:

- A fine example of the work of Capability Brown.
- A key part of the whole landscape of Sheffield Park – park, house, woodland and lakes, linked by drives, garden buildings and views.
- Its topography forms a natural landscape of great beauty.



Current Circulation, Key Features related to study area

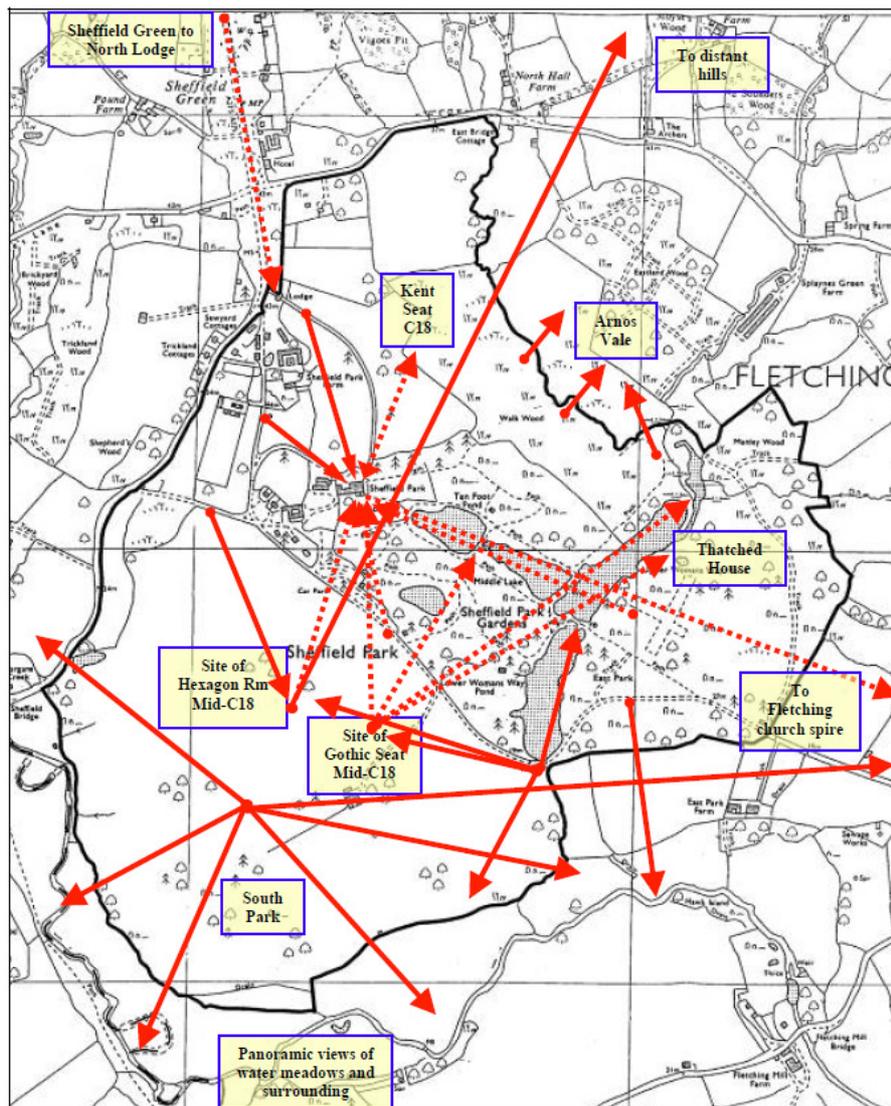


Figure 11, Key Views established C18 - early C19, (dotted lines = obscured views)

Page 47

Hexagon building (site of)

B

A building present by the 1740s and marked on the Scalé map of 1774, now lost. It occupied a significant view point in the park.

- Find and mark the site. Reinststate views associated with this feature as far as practicable.

Gothic Seat (site of)

B

A building present by the 1740s and marked on the Scalé map of 1774, now lost. It occupied a significant view point in the park.

- Find and mark the site. Reinststate views associated with this feature as far as practicable.

Extracts form Conservation Management Plan (ACTA May 2010)

10.11 **Policy 11:** To improve the landscape quality of Coleham Drive.

Reason: This is now the principal entrance, not only for the National Trust. Regardless of any new car parking arrangements or visitor centre the approach between Coleham Lodge and the car park lets down an internationally significant garden and nationally significant park.

10.12 **Policy 12:** To relocate the car park and over flow car park to cause least disruption of the historic landscape.

Reason: The location of the present car park is an historical accident resulting from the wartime use of the site. New locations should be better integrated with the historic landscape.

10.14 **South Park Policy 1:** To continue the restoration of South Park, including historically accurate replanting.

Reason: The National Trust already made good progress in the restoration of this area. It now requires a sustainable grazing regime, replanting of copses and adjustment of fence lines.

10.16 **South Park Policy 3:** To reinstate historic routes through the park.

Reason: The Gothic Seat Walk and the drive at the edge of the flood plain were significant features in the nineteenth-century landscape. Further research may reveal other routes which could also be reinstated.

11.8.5 Pending a long-term solution to seasonal car parking, to maintain the central part of the park as a flexible area for public access and occasional parking and with rush pasture (NVC community MG10) on the adjacent slopes