

# Myddelton House and Gardens

## Conservation Management Plan

### Phase 2



Prepared for

*Lee Valley Regional Park Authority*

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## **MYDDELTON HOUSE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN PHASE 2: OUTLINE ACTION PLAN AND OPTIONS**

### **Development of a vision for the gardens**

The aim is to develop an action plan which is realistic and achievable, but flexible enough to accommodate new initiatives should circumstances permit, by setting wider objectives to conserve and enhance the heritage merit of the Gardens. The plan should also take into account the educational, participation and heritage training benefits that could be delivered or enhanced on completion of each element of the Conservation Management Plan.

During the period of development between the completion of CMP1 and CMP2 several significant changes occurred which have influenced the vision for the Garden. These are:

- A planning application by Tottenham Hotspur Football Club for a Premiership football academy on land west of Myddelton House, made in October 2005, has been approved. This will involve the demolition of the pavilion and removal of the vehicle access through the Myddelton House site. It will also include more intensive use of the playing fields with additional fencing and hedging as well as buildings and additional grass and all weather floodlit pitches further to the west – outside the Authority's boundary.
- The delegation of work to the Volunteers Manger who will lead the completion and implementation of the CMP.
- The establishment of a new Myddelton House Gardens Steering Group comprising LVRPA Members.

### **CMP1 and interim report**

The first phase of the CMP identified various possibilities for conserving the existing garden, bringing areas back into use and increasing education, participation and heritage training. Following the completion of the CMP 1 an interim report on policies, actions and options for completing the second stage of the CMP was prepared.

This interim report identified several factors on which the extent to which a vision can be realised is dependent:

- Use of resources currently available
- Requirement for further staff time on a paid or voluntary basis
- Securing additional funding including grants

- Increased visitor numbers and therefore revenue
- Extending the range and type of access to the garden and providing facilities for increased access, e.g. educational use, participation events and heritage training

These issues and options are discussed and updated below with overall objectives and detailed actions. These are also summarized in table form (Appendix 1) and this forms the framework for the detailed Management Plan .

## **CMP2**

Phase 2 of the CMP sets out the immediate actions which will be achieved within current resources and with, for example, greater use of volunteers. It also sets out a timetable of preparatory work and decision making to allow longer term objectives to be considered, refined and achieved.

The following sections follow the format of the Conservation Policies and the relevant issues and policies are summarized (in box) for clarity.

### **Understanding the Significance of the Site**

**Issue:** it is essential that those involved in the management of the site are aware of its significance deriving from its long history.

**Policies 1-5** Adopt Conservation Plan, Co-ordinate work with other plans, Assessment, Recording, Materials

#### **Actions:**

- LVRPA staff to take on ownership and management of CMP and incorporate it into workplans and longer term Management Plan.
- CMP and gazetteer to be placed on LVRPA computer system.
- Garden staff meetings and meetings of Garden Advisory Committee and Myddelton House Gardens Steering Group to include regular item on implementation of CMP.

- Programme of work to include routine reference to gazetteer and updating gazetteer as a record of decisions taken and work carried out.
- Carry out a heritage impact assessment for new work, detailing the need for, benefit of, potential harm or risk to the heritage and the need for additional information (following HLF guidance).
- Football Academy plans to be reviewed in relation to CMP updated accordingly and Management Plan amended to include any work connected with the building of the academy e.g. fencing, hedging tree planting, access and layout of nursery yard.

### **Natural features: Geology, Topography and Nature Conservation**

**Issues:** The natural habitat is highly vulnerable to changes in management and recently acquired areas need to be included in the management plan. Natural history was of great importance to E.A. Bowles.

**Policy 6: Natural Landscape and  
Policy 7: Nature conservation**

### **Overall objective: to understand, record and enhance natural features within the context of the designed landscape**

Wildlife is important to the site but needs to be balanced against the heritage interest of the gardens as part of the Management Plan.

#### **Actions:**

- Complete surveys to establish existing and potential wildlife interest.
- Incorporate findings into Management Plan, prioritising elements or areas of historic significance, such as ancient trees, hedgerows, ditches meadow and pasture while respecting the design intentions of the historic landscape.

## Designed features: Archaeology, Buildings, Structures, Landscape and Setting.

**Issues:** Protecting and conserving the quality of the buildings, garden features and artefacts, gardens and landscape including recently acquired parts of the site, the wider landscape and views. Accommodating changing uses and demands on the buildings and grounds and adjoining areas. Minimising the impact of vehicle movement and parking.

**Policies 8-11:** The future management and development of the site should be based on an understanding of the site's significance as an historic landscape and respect views within the garden and wider landscape.

**Policies 12 and 13:** Develop and implement a long term management and maintenance plan for the site and a programme of regular inspection of built features and artefacts.

**Policy 14:** Minimise the impact of vehicle movement and parking on the historic landscape.

### Overall objective: to manage and maintain the site to enhance its significant qualities and respond to change

There are a range of possibilities for the designed features. To conserve, repair and bring back into use all garden areas and buildings would be a major undertaking which would have to take place over a long period and would require significant capital and revenue funding. This option will need careful consideration by the Authority.

However beginning the task of systematic recording and identifying plant collections, structures and artefacts will aid the understanding and protection of what remains and will inform the production of a detailed Management Plan. This process will form the basis for developing any future, larger projects.

#### Kitchen gardens

This area, only acquired by LVRPA in 2002 from the London School of Pharmacology, was a key part of Bowles' Garden. After thirty years of being under-used the kitchen gardens are now mostly wild and overgrown with plants from Bowles era under threat.

The Authority recognised the kitchen garden's importance when deciding to acquire the site and is already taking steps to rescue the area through careful survey and renewed management. Various character parts of the area could be restored with some wilder parts managed for nature conservation – particularly birds and insects - the latter being a keen interest of Bowles.

Future possibilities include: opening up the kitchen garden, restoring the potting shed, glasshouse and crocus frames, using an area for plant propagation or a training scheme, and allowing public access.

### Stable block

Presently the stable block is used for storage and office space and the key features have been preserved. The Authority recognises the value and importance of this building but the capital funds required for conversion to another use would be considerable and to date viable other long term uses have not been identified. Any option would also need the revenue implications to be carefully considered.

The Authority will consider the current facilities for visitors and whether they could/should be improved. Improvements could include an enhanced plant sales operation of 'Bowles' varieties, improving garden interpretation and creating a modest visitor reception with information and refreshment facilities.

### The wider garden and landscape

Visitors enjoyment will be augmented by the new planting, improved parking and reinstatement of the daffodil meadow – all associated with the new office. The possibility of expanding use to include an increase in compatible events by providing a marquee site will be considered. Improving the relationship between the parkland and Myddelton House could be also bringing significant community improvements.

There are also options to consider regarding the existing nursery yard. These include splitting the nursery function between the kitchen garden and a secondary yard behind the stable block, allowing restoration of the current nursery to grass and garden and improving further the link between the gardens and the parkland.

## **Actions**

- Set up system and identify resources needed for recording artefacts and undertaking condition surveys
- Improve security, particularly out of opening hours
- Review existing garden staff structure
- Develop outline plans for new work with garden staff
- Develop plans for archive
- Consider options for kitchen garden
- Develop Management Plan

## **Historical Theme 1: archaeology (pre 1818 - before the building of Myddelton House)**

**Issue:** the whole site and surrounds have a highly significant history and high archaeological potential.

**Policy 15:** Any essential excavation should be monitored and recorded and reported under an archaeological watching brief.

**Overall objective: to gain further understanding, protect and interpret the archaeology of the site**

### **Actions:**

- Collate and update records of all archaeological investigation
- Provide interpretative material
- Consider requests for further investigation of former Bowling Green House from other organisations

## **Historical Theme 2: History and engineering achievement of the New River**

**Issue:** the character and quality of the garden and landscape has been fundamentally altered by the filling in of the New River Loop.

**Policy 16:** Take into account the significance of the New River in long term strategies.

**Overall objective: to interpret and mark the site of New River loop**

The recreation of this part of the river is not seen as a viable option due to the complexity of engineering and securing the water supply, extremely high costs and safety concerns.

Nevertheless, there is interest in marking and interpreting the feature in some way. This could be through temporary or permanent changes of surface and/or planting, possibly in conjunction with an artist or other designer and providing information about this important historical feature. For instance, a very shallow water feature or changes of surface could evoke the former course of the river and restore structure to this part of the garden. The areas around the bridges would respond to a detailed design to give these stranded features some context.

### **Actions:**

- Provide information and interpretation
- Develop designs for future development.
- Include this area in any future artists in residence programme

### Historical Theme 3: Social, Community and Educational use

**Issues:** defining appropriate uses, accommodating and providing facilities for new uses, access to existing and newly acquired areas, safety, conservation of archives.

**Policy 17:** access and circulation strategy and provide appropriate facilities.

**Policy 18-19:** interpretation and education strategy and promote education and opportunities for training.

**Policy 20:** seek to accommodate, conserve and disseminate archival material.

#### **Overall objective: to build on the strong tradition of community use and specialist and educational visits**

The kitchen garden may offer an opportunity for a training project. There is a recognised national skills shortage in caring for historic gardens and a training project may be possible if existing links with other organisations are strengthened e.g. Capel Manor, RHS, Kew. The site could provide valuable training experience and bring areas such as the historically significant kitchen garden, alpine meadow and rock garden back into condition.

The archival material and plant database would also provide an important source for horticultural and garden history students.

#### **Actions:**

- Take advice on setting up and housing archive; choose location and develop set-up during 2006/07
- Support volunteers in completing research
- Develop draft visitor and education strategies



## Historical Theme 4: E.A. Bowles Plant Collection

**Issues:** Garden changed many times in Bowles lifetime, many unique plant varieties have been lost and may continue to be lost, identification and records are incomplete, many areas had a high maintenance requirement.

**Policy 21:** Update and maintain database of the plant collections

**Policy 22:** Locate, record and where possible conserve plants lost from the collection

**Policy 23-4:** Protect the significance of the collection by the choice of appropriate plants and co-ordinate the conservation of collections with an overall site management and maintenance and security plan.

### Overall objective: to record, protect and enhance the plant collection

Gaining a better understanding of the past and present garden is the essential first step in planning its future care. Systems will be developed, staff time allocated and external expertise secured to complete this task.

Additional resources would be required to replant and maintain areas which are currently maintained at a low level especially the kitchen garden, rock garden and alpine meadow. There is some reluctance to work on the rock garden as Bowles' ashes were scattered there. Nevertheless, a strategy is needed to undertake sufficient work to ensure that the spirit of Bowles garden is not lost.

### Actions:

- Enter existing records into appropriate database
- Complete and update surveys of trees and plants
- Make full use of expertise of RHS and NCCPG
- Cross reference to Bowles records
- Incorporate programme of replanting into Management Plan
- Systematic replanting and rejuvenation of garden, using carefully chosen material, and removal of inappropriate material
- Bring remaining areas back into use, e.g. kitchen garden, rock garden (see below).

## **The Future: A Phased Masterplan**

The consultant team and the Authority have many ideas for interventions which vary in scale and cost and a scheme which includes all the proposals may well be difficult to achieve. Nevertheless some of the smaller actions, already underway, will enable future plans and make a positive impact on visitors' experience of the Gardens.

A phased approach is proposed with a first phase including a range of smaller interventions to widen understanding and secure wider support. The second phase of smaller scale desirable projects will be considered and where possible programmed during this time. This second phase will also include an options appraisal of the larger issues outlined in the policies section above for inclusion in the Management Plan.

The broad themes are captured in the masterplan maps .

### **A First Phase: Preparatory work**

Surveys and changes for future site management

- 1) Plant, tree and artefact surveys
- 2) Entering and updating database
- 3) Research and consolidation of archive
- 4) Information leaflets and events programme
- 5) Develop links with potential partner organizations e.g. RHS, Capel Manor, Kew, NCCPG, Forty Hall
- 6) Develop new ways of working for Gardens team, to enable delivery
- 7) Review processing of visitors
- 8) Produce interpretation and education strategy for the garden
- 9) Implement Volunteers Strategy in relation to garden restoration – develop links with Capel Manor and volunteer bureaux
- 10) Improve security situation
- 11) Begin programme of clearance and rescue, especially in Kitchen Garden

**B Second Phase: Desirable smaller scale projects -**  
improvements to existing situation with additional funding required.

- 1) Develop and implement Management Plan for whole garden area
- 2) Recording, selective clearing of kitchen garden and bringing some areas back into use including (a) iris, (b) crocus, (c) pharmacy, (d) Nut Walk, (e) potting shed and (f) a safe visitor route.
- 3) Begin to move plant nursery functions to kitchen garden
- 4) Reduce existing nursery area for limited hardstanding and storage and plant sales; reopen views from Myddelton House to garden
- 5) Following identification and recording begin systematic programme of rejuvenating Bowles' themed garden areas
- 6) Increase plant sales operations.
- 7) Make further information available through publicity and events
- 8) Increase training opportunities for volunteers and students
- 9) Begin conservation management of wild area in Kitchen Garden
- 10) Research options for larger projects – including funding options

**C Third Phase: Possible projects for later years**  
dependent on funding

- 1) Planting in Gardens to screen football use
- 2) New railings at openings in hedges along sportsfield boundary
- 3) New River design features to illustrate course of New River and to improve setting of bridges
- 4) Reinstate features of Kitchen Garden including narcissus steps, woodland path and other hard features
- 5) Complete path network
- 6) Continue refurbishment of garden areas including rock garden and cactus bank with path link to parkland (potential events site)
- 7) Enhancement of visitor facilities: new information and refreshments area