

EMBARGOED UNTIL 0600HRS TUESDAY 23 JUNE, 2009

# ENGLISH HERITAGE PUBLISHES LIST OF ALL REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS AT RISK

## English Heritage *Heritage at Risk* Register 2009 Reveals 96 Registered Parks and Gardens Are At Risk -

A full list of England's registered parks and gardens most at risk from neglect, decay and pressure from development has been published for the first time by English Heritage in its *Heritage at Risk* Register 2009. The register highlights the challenges owners face and will help English Heritage to prioritise the advice and grants it offers owners.

The annual *Heritage at Risk* Register, published today (23<sup>rd</sup> June 2009), contains details of the declining condition of 96 registered parks and gardens from all over the country, from public parks and the gardens of stately homes to the grounds of hotels and historic cemeteries. There are 1,600 registered parks and gardens so this figure represents 6% of all registered parks and gardens.

Registered parks and gardens are the first category of the nation's heritage to be comprehensively assessed for the *Heritage at Risk* register with the survey covering Grade I, II\* and II sites. The findings were similar across the country with neglect, the impact of development within or near to the park or landscape and multiple ownership of the site being the main factors that put parks and gardens at risk. Only 6% of those at risk are registered at Grade I while 65% of those at risk are registered at Grade II.

Many of the landscapes at risk were originally designed as the gardens or grounds of a family home but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been broken up into multiple ownerships, making co-ordination for landscape conservation challenging.

The Heritage at Risk register also includes public parks and seven of the large cemeteries. Three of these cemeteries are registered at Grade I – Brookwood in

Surrey, and Highgate and Kensal Green cemeteries in London. Many of the cemetery buildings and memorials are in poor condition and the neglected landscape management is threatening the special historic interest of these designed landscapes.

Jenifer White, Senior Landscape Advisor at English Heritage, said: "The register has helped us to see the scale of the problems and identify where we should direct our attention. We will work with owners to help them find ways to manage and conserve their parks and gardens. The *Heritage at Risk* Register will, we hope, raise awareness of the fragility of these landscapes and highlight the need for English Heritage to work together with the owners to ensure that they are not lost for future generations."

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### Notes to Editors

1. The *Heritage at Risk* register 2009 gives details of 5,094 nationally designated sites that are at risk of neglect, decay or inappropriate change. For more information on the Grade I and II\* buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and protected wreck sites included, please visit [www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk)

2. English Heritage did the preparatory work identifying which parks and gardens were at particular risk in the period leading up to the launch of *Heritage of Risk* in 2008. However, because we did not wish to produce a public list of individual sites until we had first talked to the owners, in 2008 we only produced national and regional statistics, rather than identifying all of the sites affected. Work on checking the assessments, and in contacting owners has gone on through 2008-09. The dialogue generated by the release of the national statistics has been a catalyst for positive changes to the management of historic parks and gardens.

### 3. CASE STUDIES

**Abney Park Cemetery, Hackney** was London's main non-conformist cemetery during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its monuments include those to Isaac Watts and General William and Catherine Booth. Created in 1840, it featured 2,500 varieties of plants from the nearby Loddiges nursery.

The cemetery decayed rapidly after the Second World War and was purchased in 1979 by the London Borough of Hackney. It is managed by the Abney Park Cemetery Trust.

Resources for upkeep have been limited; the chapel is a building at risk and the landscape and many of the tombs and monuments are in poor condition. A Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid prepared with English Heritage and HLF funding is planned for submission in summer 2009. Proposals include restoring the mortuary chapel and improving access.

**Tilmouth Park, Northumberland** was developed throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century to create scenic pleasure grounds and formal gardens. The site is a Grade II\* registered park and garden that contains eleven listed buildings and two scheduled monuments.

The park, which is in multiple ownership, is being maintained but there are significant pockets that need attention if key features are not to be lost. Problems include encroachment of self-sown trees that are obscuring important views of the landscape, including a waterfall and tufa-covered rocks.

Ironically, nature is one of the biggest threats to semi-natural picturesque landscapes such as Tilmouth Park. English Heritage plans to work with the owners to determine a strategy that will conserve the park.

**Shrubland Hall, Suffolk** has an extensive mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Italianate garden by Charles Barry is set in a 17<sup>th</sup>-century park, for which Humphry Repton prepared a Red Book in 1789 and William Woods made additional proposals in 1808. Today the garden features and planting are significantly decayed and the park is in need of improved management.

The site is also at risk because of its uncertain future – part of it is currently for sale leading to fears about how the garden will be managed in the future.

Divided ownership of sites such as Shrubland Hall has been identified as one of the major risks to their historic integrity, which is why English Heritage encourages the development of conservation management plans for registered parks and gardens, especially those in complicated multiple ownership.

For further case studies and photographs of Parks and Gardens at Risk all over England, please contact English Heritage Corporate Communications as below.

4. For information on Conservation Areas at Risk, the main theme for *Heritage at Risk* 2009, please visit [www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/conservationareas)

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