YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

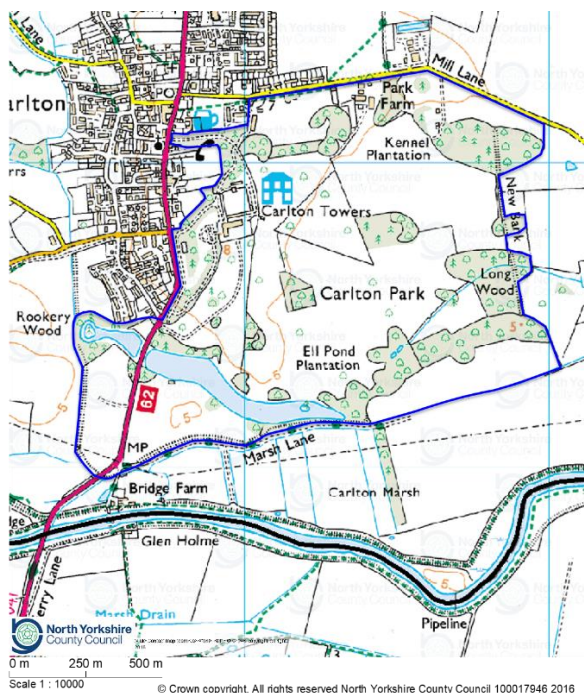## A guide to researching an historic designed landscape by Louise Wickham

Part 3 – Site survey

In the previous guides, we looked at how to get information from various sources including archive material. Now we have a chronology and a list of features of interest. The next step is to look at what remains on the ground, whether any other features are there and get a 3D sense of the place including looking at views.

Step 1 – Define your area of interest

We need to define our area in terms of the historic designed landscape. We have already discussed that we only include areas that are primarily of aesthetic as opposed to functional interest, for example arable farmland would be excluded. It should also only be land in the same ownership, so would exclude any 'borrowed landscape' and be connected in some way so that you can draw it as one enclosed area. Doing the list of features first also helps as it ensures these are included.

Returning to our example of Carlton Towers, here is the boundary marked in blue on the map:

Scale 1 : 10000

0 m   250 m   500 m

This is broadly based on historic OS maps and represents all areas that were at any time part of the designed landscape such as parkland, plantations, water features, gardens, estate buildings (lodges, follies) etc. It does not matter that they are no longer extant or have changed for example, parkland that is now arable fields or a golf course.

Before the visit, these boundaries are your best guess based on documentary evidence, but of course when you get on the ground and look at the views, this may change. For example, an isolated building on the estate that appeared to be part of the design may be in fact completely detached.

Step 2 – Planning the site visit

The first question to ask is whether you need to look at **all** the designed landscape on the ground. Some large areas of woodland for example are better to view from satellite images. There are two useful tools on the National Library of Scotland website: georeferencing and side by side view.
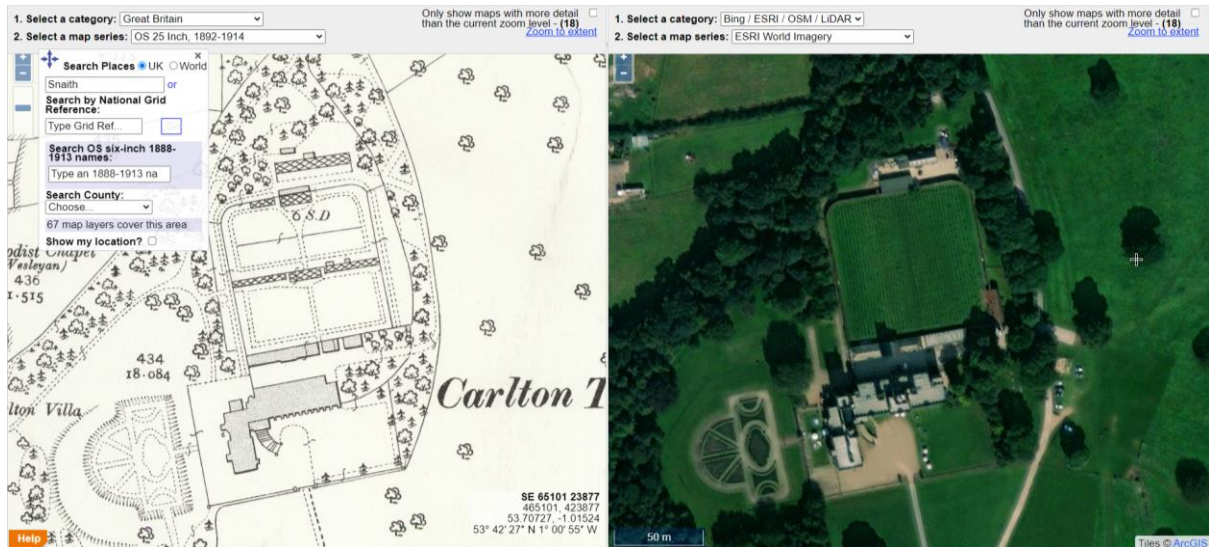
Georeferencing

From the main menu of https://maps.nls.uk/, choose the georeferencing option and then search for the site as before using name of location or grid reference. Then choose an historic map overlay (6" or 25" options from late 19th century are the best) together with a background map that shows satellite images (e.g. ESRI World Image). Next choose 'Full/Screen Draw' at top and use slider to change the transparency of the historic image. Below is using the 6" map to highlight plantations.

We can see many are still there and have in fact been expanded.

Side by side view

An alternative is to use the side-by-side function. It works in the same way as georeferencing where you choose which maps you want but can give a clearer view. For instance, using the 25" historic OS map, you can see more detail such as the fact that the interior of the walled kitchen garden no longer has its glasshouses:

Having decided the specific areas you wish to look at on the ground, you will need to contact the land owners if it is a private space. You will need not only permission to visit but also to take photos as a record for your own use.

When to visit? It is generally thought best to go when trees are not in leaf so features are more obvious and undergrowth is less of a hindrance.

Step 3 - Complete the Site Record Form

Complete the Site Record Form with features already identified and notes for you to use on the ground.

The form is divided into areas within the designed landscape as per the historic report: Entrances and Approaches, Buildings (including Structures), Gardens, Parkland, Water Features and Trees (woodland and plantations). For each you need to identify what type it is, the latest evidence (see Appendix for terms to use that record what you see on the ground) and make notes both before and during the visit. The latter will become the summary on the final form.

Any names of buildings, ponds or tree plantations go in the Summary and you may wish to add grid references in the Summary if a feature is not obvious on OS maps.

All Ordnance Survey maps are reproduced here with permission from the National Library of Scotland

Appendix - Evidence terms

Documentary evidence

Any feature known from a primary source e.g. maps, plans, books, contemporary accounts

Buildings e.g. House, Stable, Gate Lodge, Orangery, Garden Temple, Greenhouse, Summerhouse

Extant building - Complete, with roof and full height walls

Ruined building - No roof, has some walls

Demolished building - No roof, walls reduced to foundations, plan survives above ground, or below surface

Structures e.g. Icehouse, Gate Piers, Walled Garden, Fountain, Cascade, Ha-Ha, Bandstand
Extant structure - Complete man-made construction (generally with no roof)

Ruined structure - Some elements removed, but architectural details still visible

Demolished structure - Reduced to foundations, so plan survives above ground, or below surface

Moved structure - A man-made construction or object (e.g. Statue) which has been moved from its original site

Earthwork
Upstanding or cut feature e.g. Bank, Ditch, Terrace, Mound, Pond, Canal, Lake

Levelled earthwork
Feature has been reduced in height, or filled in, so the ground is now flat e.g. was depicted on historic maps, but no longer visible above the ground, but may still survive below the surface

Cropmark
A mark in crops showing features that survive below the ground. Also use for parchmarks in grass.

Soilmark
A mark in ploughed soil showing features that survive below the surface of the ground

Destroyed monument
Rarely used, only if features have been quarried away and there are no traces at all. If built over by housing they are not destroyed, they are levelled or demolished

Botanical feature
Composed of extant plants and trees e.g. Grove, Orchard, Tree Avenue, Tree Clump, Belt, Plantation. If they do not survive and have been removed, then use Documentary Evidence