



Victoria Tower Gardens Conservation and Significance Statement

**Prepared
by London Parks & Gardens Trust**

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GLOSSARY

BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan

BSI - British Standards Institute

DCMS - Department of Culture Media and Sport

DDA – Disability Discrimination Act

DEFRA – Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DfES – Department of Education and Skills

ECE - Education and Community Engagement

GiGL - Greenspace Information for Greater London

GIS – Geographical Information Systems

HAP – Habitat Action Plan

HER – Historic Environment Record

HMSO – Her Majesty's Stationery Office

KPI - Key Performance Indicators

LBAP – Local Biodiversity Action Plan

OS – Ordnance Survey

NHLE – National Heritage List for England

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework

RCHME - Royal Commission on Historic Monuments in England

TRP OCU – The Royal Parks Operational Command Unit (Metropolitan Police)

TRP – The Royal Parks

UDP – Unitary Development Plan

VTG – Victoria Tower Gardens

WCC – Westminster City Council

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PART I: CONTEXT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I.0 INTRODUCTION

Victoria Tower Gardens

- 1.1 Victoria Tower Gardens (VTG) is situated between the Houses of Parliament and Lambeth Bridge on the Thames Embankment. It is wholly within the London Borough of Westminster. It is a trapezoidal piece of land which bounded by the Thames to the east, Palace of Westminster to the north and Millbank to the west. At the southern point the Gardens are enclosed by the approach to Lambeth Bridge. The gardens contain several historic monuments and sculptures of significant merit which are on the Historic England Register of Listed Buildings. VTG has a playground located at the southern end of the Gardens and is defined by the Spicer Memorial (not listed). The Gardens and its playground serve a diverse local population including the Peabody Trust properties, the Millbank Estate, the area behind St Matthew's, some areas of north Lambeth [Westminster Abbey] and a wide variety of visitors and tourists.

Background to the document

- 1.2 This document was prepared by the Planning and Conservation Group for London Parks & Gardens Trust (LPGT), which consists of landscape architects, researchers, planning professionals and interested individuals.
- 1.3 The plan provides the background history and significance to ensure the understanding of the intrinsic character of Victoria Tower Gardens. It gives a brief description of the values (as defined by Historic England) and significance of the site, analysis, priorities and it uses the subdivision of character areas as a management tool in recognising the relative complexities of historical layering and locally distinctive character of different areas within the Park.
- 1.4 The plan has been prepared within the context of Westminster City Council's (WCC) 2016 Local Plan, the Royal Parks Corporate Plan (2018) and the Royal Parks' Play Strategy (2015).
- 1.5 The special historical, architectural, natural or ecological interest of the landscapes, buildings, structures and archaeology has been based on detailed analysis of the Park considering:
- the origins and development of the topography;
 - the character and hierarchy of places and landscape quality;
 - the contribution made by trees, planting and other natural or cultivated elements to the character and ecology of the area;
 - the prevailing (or former) uses within the area and their historic patronage;
 - the importance and sensitivity of known archaeology and wildlife in the area and the potential for discovery of other significant concealed features;

- the contribution made by biodiversity to the area;
 - the architectural and historic quality, character and coherence of the buildings and structures and the contribution they make to the special interest of the Park;
 - the relationship and significance of the landscape to the built environment including the setting of significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas;
 - the extent of loss, intrusion or damage: features which detract from the special character of the area (and which provide opportunity sites where change is to be encouraged); and
 - climate change and its impact on the built and natural environment and the contribution VTG makes in combatting this.
- 1.6 The Royal Parks has an obligation to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 and constantly aims for the highest standards of conservation.
- 1.7 The purpose of The Royal Parks is to fulfil its responsibility to protect, conserve and enhance the unique landscape, environment, ecology, wildlife, heritage and vistas of the eight Royal Parks in London while developing active and creative policies to encourage wider access to them and to increase opportunities for enjoyment, delight, sanctuary, information, education, creativity and healthy recreation for everyone, now and in the future.
- 1.8 This document seeks to ensure that historic landscapes, buildings, structures and archaeology are protected, conserved and enhanced notwithstanding improved access.

2.0 GENERAL AND MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

Existing TRP Management Framework

- 2.1 The Royal Parks are owned by the Crown with their responsibility resting with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. ‘The Royal Parks’ (TRP) is a charity created in March 2017 and officially launched in July 2017 to support and manage 5,000 acres of Royal parkland across London. In 2017, TRP took over the role of managing the parks from The Royal Parks Agency – a former executive agency of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

TRP is led by a Board of Trustees, which decides how the charity is run, how money is spent and with responsibility to ensure the parks are run for the benefit of the parks and their visitors. The trustees are led by a Chairman and are appointed for their skills and experience. The day-to-day operation of the parks is managed by a Chief Executive and a senior management team. It is the responsibility of TRP to conserve and enhance London’s eight Royal Parks for current and future generations to explore, value and enjoy.

- 2.2 TRP’s charitable objects set out the main purpose of the charity, and what they aim to achieve.

They are:

- to protect, conserve, maintain and care for the Royal Parks, including their natural and designed landscapes and built environment, to a high standard consistent with their historic, horticultural, environmental and architectural importance;
- to promote the use and enjoyment of the Royal Parks for public recreation, health and well-being including through the provision of sporting and cultural activities and events which effectively advance the objects;
- to maintain and develop the biodiversity of the Royal Parks, including the protection of their wildlife and natural environment, together with promoting sustainability in the management and use of the Royal Parks;
- to support the advancement of education by promoting public understanding of the history, culture, heritage and natural environment of the Royal Parks and (by way of comparison) elsewhere;
- to promote national heritage including by hosting and facilitating ceremonies of state or of national importance within and in the vicinity of the Royal Parks.

Corporate objectives/priorities

- 2.3 The corporate objectives of the TRP are approved by a Board of Trustees and set out the high-level plans for the charity which help guide specific projects and pieces of work.

They are currently being considered by The Royal Parks Board of Trustees.

Opening Hours

- 2.5 The Gardens are publicly accessible between 7.30 am and dusk in summer or 7.00 pm in winter. There are four entrances which are locked at night.

Accessibility

- 2.6 The Gardens are accessible by the public from the gates that open onto Millbank at grade II. There are steps down from the approach to Lambeth Bridge to the south. The main access from the north, into the northern section of the Gardens is via the side entrance, specifically designed for the Emmeline Pankhurst Statue.

Local Context

- 2.7 The Gardens are surrounded by tourist attractions with Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament to the north and the Tate Britain further along the Thames to the south. The Garden Museum is just over the Thames on the other side of Lambeth Bridge. The Peabody Trust has properties close by and there are offices adjacent to the site most notably the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (Nobel House). The Abbey Community Centre is situated on the other side of Millbank.

Other Background Information

- 2.8 There is a wealth of knowledge concerning the Park, principally held by people with long associations with the Park (including staff, the Royal Parks Guild and members of local interest groups). There are a number of existing studies that provide useful background information. Of particular value is the information found in the Greater London HER report, available from the Heritage Gateway¹ and the Parks and Gardens UK Trust². A list of references concerning the Park, taken with permission from the Historic England National Heritage List for England³ (NHLE), is provided in Appendix I. The Thorney Island Society are effectively the Friends Group for the gardens.
- 2.9 TRP's Ecology Section can use its biological records system to access past species records and other ecological information. Such data are a valuable aid to understanding how species and wildlife communities have changed over the years. These data are obtained partly from the data-gathering and digitisation of past data sourced from within TRP and its volunteers (an ongoing process), and partly through TRP's partnership with GiGL. Historic records and other data supplied to GiGL by third parties (such as the London Natural History Society) are gradually becoming available as GiGL and its partners progress their programme of digitisation of data archives.⁴

¹ English Heritage, 2011. Greater London HER [online] London: available from http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MLO59282&resourceID=1031 [Accessed 8 November 2012]

² English Heritage, 2011 Parks and Gardens UK [online] available from http://www.parksandgardens.ac.uk/index2.php?option=com_parksandgardens&task=site&id=3382&preview=1&temid= [Accessed 8 November 2012]

³ Historic England, 2019, National Heritage List for England [online] available on: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/results/?searchType=NHLE+Simple&search=victoria+tower+gardens> [accessed 20 January 2019]

⁴ The Royal Parks, 2012 The Royal Parks Landscape Management Plan text

3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT: HERITAGE AND OPENSOURCE (UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE)

- 3.1 Victoria Tower Gardens (VTG) is a small but significant central London site, managed by The Royal Parks (TRP) and is registered on the Historic England Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England list as Grade II. Summaries from Historic England NHLE are shown in Appendix I.
- 3.2 The Garden sits within the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square Conservation Area with the northern end of the site included in the Area of Special Archaeological Priority: Lundenwic & Thorney Island, Tier I. It is also a Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest at grade II.
- 3.3 The historic monuments and sculptures contained in the gardens are the Buxton Memorial commemorating the Abolition of Slavery; a statue of Emmeline Pankhurst – remembering women’s fight for and achievement of voting rights; the sculpture of The Burghers of Calais by Auguste Rodin, remembering the bravery demonstrated by six members of bourgeois society in Calais during the 13th Century to secure their townsfolk’s freedom from the siege led by King Edward III of England during the ‘Hundred Years War’. The table of listed buildings and structures within or immediately around the Gardens are shown below:

Building	Listing status / grade
Statuary Group of the Burghers of Calais	Grade I
Buxton Memorial Fountain.	Grade II*
Statue of Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst	Grade II*
Houses of Parliament, The Palace of Westminster	Grade I
Lambeth Bridge and attached parapets, light standards, associated walls to approaches and obelisks	Grade II
River Embankment from the Houses of Parliament to G.V. II Lambeth Bridge	Grade II
Nos 1 and 2, The Church Commissioners (including No 3 Great College Street, No 2 Great Peter Street and Nos 5 and 7 Little College Street)	Grade II*
Victoria Tower Lodge and Gates to Black Rod Garden	Grade I
Other designations	
Historic England Archaeological Priority Area (March 2017) APA [24/01/07]	Tier I

Full listing summaries shown in Appendix 2.

Westminster City Council (WCC) Plan was adopted in November 2016.

VTG is in the south area of the city. At Part V: Creating Place, paragraph 5.54, the Plan recognises that there is a deficiency of public open space in the south of the city. It also recognises there is both an overall and localised shortage of open space in Westminster.

3.4 WCC Policy S35 Open Space states that:

The council will protect and enhance Westminster’s open space network, and work to develop further connections between open spaces. The council will seek to address existing public open space deficiencies, including active play space deficiency, and current and future open space needs by:

- Protecting all open spaces, and their quality, heritage and ecological value, tranquillity and amenity;
- Mitigating additional pressure on open spaces by securing new improved public open space in new developments; space for children’s active play; and seeking public access to private spaces; and
- Securing contributions to improving the quality, ecological value and accessibility of local public open spaces and delivering new open spaces from under-used land.
- Objective 7 seeks to protect and enhance Westminster’s open spaces, civic spaces and Blue Ribbon Network, and Westminster’s biodiversity; including protecting the unique character and openness of the Royal Parks and other open spaces; and to manage these spaces to ensure areas of relative tranquillity in a city with a daytime population increased every day by over one million workers and visitors.

3.5 WCC Conservation Areas: Local planning protection comes in the form of being in the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square Conservation Area. Westminster City Council classifies Victoria Tower Gardens as one of the four local parks in the borough defined as between 2 – 20 hectares and it is situated in the ‘South’ area of the borough. The Conservation Area Appraisal⁵ states that “The Victoria Tower Gardens, to the south of the Palace, provide an attractive escape from the busy routes around. This large area of green open space enjoys a riverside location, with expansive views along the Thames and to the Victoria Tower.” It goes on to state that “The large open space of Victoria Gardens, to the west of Victoria Tower, was created as part of Victorian improvements and slum clearance and provides a sheltered public garden and an escape from the adjacent busy roads.”

The appraisal also sets out three Local Views – these are views which are identified and described in the relevant policies of the WCC Unitary Development Plan:

⁵ WCC (2008) Conservation Area Audit & Management Proposals Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square September 2008

- Local View 30: Victoria Tower and southern facade of Palace, and river embankment from Victoria Tower Gardens
- Local View 31: Victoria Tower and the southern facade of Palace, Victoria Tower Gardens, the River Thames and the South Bank Conservation Area (Borough of Lambeth) from river embankment
- Local View 32: Victoria Tower Gardens, the River Thames and the South Bank Conservation Area (Borough of Lambeth) from Lambeth Bridge.
- The Appraisal also notes that VTG is the largest area of green space in the Conservation Area and characterised by its open nature framed by trees and planting.

3.6 Westminster City Council Ward Profiles 2018: These show demographic information for the two wards, St James and Vincent Square Wards. VTG is in the St James ward or immediately adjacent Vincent Sq.

Pertinent statistics for these two wards show:

- High percentage of housing estates near VTG in Vincent Sq. ward, with little or no access to private gardens space
- From 2010 census data, 28% (Vincent Sq.) and 30% (St James) Year 6 children were classified as obese.
- 23% of families (Vincent Sq.) were composed of lone parents with dependent children in Vincent Sq. Ward. 23% (Vincent Sq.) and 26% (St James) of the children in the ward were receiving free school meals in 2017, an indicator of the proportion of families financially stressed.
- **Vulnerable Older People:** Similarly, there is a greater number of over 65s in both wards, at 20% of the population. Vincent Sq. is ranked within the worst 30-40% in London for Income Deprivation among older persons and St James in the worst 20-30%.
- The WCC Open Spaces strategy (discussed below) describes the health benefits proven by parks in combatting loneliness and preventing illness, particularly relevant for the age groups mentioned above.

3.7 WCC draft Open Spaces Strategy 2018 (OSS) and 2007 OSS:

The Draft 2018 Draft WCC Open Spaces Strategy states: ‘The City Council reflects the aims of the Mayor’s London Plan in its own planning policy, with a clear strategic objective within Westminster’s City Plan to: “protect and enhance Westminster’s open spaces, civic spaces and Blue Ribbon Network, and Westminster’s biodiversity; **including protecting the unique character and openness of the Royal Parks and other open spaces; and to manage these spaces to ensure areas of relative tranquillity in a city with a daytime population increased every day to over one million workers and visitors.**”

3.8 Under Policy and Context - the Plan includes:

- S35 Open Space; S36 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation; S37 Westminster’s Blue Ribbon Network; S38 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure;

and S32 Noise; although additional policies on flooding, design, heritage and health are all relevant.

- **‘These unique landscapes are assets that can reinforce a sense of place and identity,** improve health and wellbeing, boost environmental resilience and make the city a more attractive and prosperous place.’
- The OSS shows that Victoria Tower Gardens is very close to an **area of Open Space Deprivation**, in the south of the borough, where other spaces (Vincent Sq.) are private and therefore inaccessible.

3.9 The Strategy states **‘The Importance of Open Space and Green Infrastructure’**

- **The Health and Wellbeing benefits from open space**
- **Physical health** ‘Insufficient physical activity is among the ten most important risk factors for the health burden in England, costing the NHS over £1 billion a year. In Westminster, over 58% of adults aged 16 and over engage in moderate physical activity only once a week or less and the percentage of children who are overweight is higher than the national London average.’ (OSS pg 5) - The figures relating to obesity in the Ward Statistics points to the importance of informal accessible green open space in combatting this problem.
- **Heritage and townscape**
(pg. 13) ‘Open spaces are also an integral part of Westminster’s historic fabric. They create attractive views and provide the setting for buildings, contributing to the character of the city. The Royal Parks and River Thames provide the setting for iconic landmarks, such as the Palace of Westminster...’
- **Tourism and Events:** The 2018 strategy joins a number of other documents and policy materials, most notably the council’s City Plan, in supporting us to balance the conflicting demands for open spaces as ‘venues’. The City Plan creates scope for events that will be beneficial to the local area and to Westminster’s communities and enterprises, provided that they do not unreasonably compromise or damage the quality, amenity and accessibility of our open spaces or green infrastructure for the public.

3.10 In the **Evidence Base** section of the plan, it recognises through its Community Engagement (pg. 11) section that:

- **Main reasons for visiting** (open spaces) are to get fresh air, to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city and to spend time in a natural environment.
- **Quiet, informal recreation** was by far the most popular purpose for which people use open space in Westminster. Walking was the most popular active pursuit.
- In the **‘Evidence Base and Priorities’** Section of the 2018 Draft Open Spaces Strategy, it’s highlighted that in Westminster only 57% of spaces are openly accessible to the public’ This therefore makes the accessible ones such as VTG all the more important.

3.11 **The Action Plan** (pg. 13) of the **WCC 2018 draft Open Space Strategy** is set out in 3 sections, Quantity, Quality and Impact and states the following ‘commitments’, pertinent to VTG:

- **‘Protecting Existing Green Assets:** ‘We will robustly protect and preserve existing green space’
- **‘Ensure planning decisions strictly align with our policies,** with particular reference to the City Plan. ‘As part of the ongoing City Plan revisions, incorporate specific policies to protect, preserve and where possible increase open space and green space, and the ecological value of it. Include specific provisions to support protection private garden space and waterways.’
- **In the Impact Section under ‘Health and Wellbeing’ it identifies key actions such as:**
 - Explore how we can build the benefits of access to open and green spaces into targeted provision for older people.
 - Through robust application of our City Plan policies, protect our open and green spaces as spaces of relative tranquillity, offering opportunities for rest, calm and reflection.

3.12 In the Quality Section, under ‘Managing and Balancing Demands’ key actions are identified:

- Develop a specific approach to facilitating events in appropriate locations in open and green spaces, while avoiding undue harm to biodiversity and heritage assets. We want to ensure successful events can be hosted for the benefit of the local area, but that enjoyment of these spaces by others is not unduly compromised.

3.13 From the 2007 Open Space Strategy Appendix Plans

- Identified in Map WR5: as an Area deficient in publicly accessible Play Space
- Identified in Map WRI: VTG is near to several Major Development sites in the UDP
- Identified in Map WR2: Public Open Space Deficiency: That in the south of the borough, VTG is located less than 400m from a ‘Revised Priority Area for Additional Public Open Space’ and that within 400m of VTG there are the highest number of households in the borough without gardens or cars and the highest proportion of children per hectare.
- Identified in Map WR3: VTG is adjacent to an Area of Wildlife Deficiency.

3.14 **Play** It is noted at the time of the Open Space Strategy Audit (2007) there were only two out of the 57 publicly accessible playgrounds specifically designed for disabled people. The strategy notes that there are only four local parks in the city of Westminster and therefore there are significant Areas of Deficiency for access to local parks throughout the City⁶. The Strategy also indicates that the current playground has a small (100m distance) threshold and then is surrounded by an Area Deficient in publicly accessible Play Space.

⁶ Westminster City Council – Open Spaces Strategy February 2007[online] available from

http://www3.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications_store/Open_Space_Strategy_March_2007.pdf [Accessed 18 March 2013] Part of the councils Local Development Framework supplementary planning documents

3.15 In section 4.7 of the 2007 Strategy, WCC stated they will:

- increase the provision of both private and public open space including new civic spaces, and play/youth spaces by a variety of means, including S106, planning briefs and Area Action Plans and revive relevant UDP Policy;
- ensure the needs of children with disabilities are met;
- Investigate opportunities for the provision of refreshments in selected open spaces;
- investigate ways to provide and maintain toilet facilities in or close to popular open spaces;
- investigate opportunities for increasing the amount of seating; and
- reappraise the type of seating provided in parks to make it more useable by those less mobile.

4.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE GARDENS

- 4.1 The 1745 John Rocque map (Lambeth and Vauxhall) shows the area of the garden with buildings, most likely warehouses and wharfs. The horse ferry was used to cross the river to the south of the site in the location that Lambeth Bridge is now sited. Lambeth Palace would have been visible across the water. The location of wharves? gives some indication of the unstable ground conditions found on site today as the majority of the Gardens is “made-up” ground.

Development of the Embankment

- 4.2 The development of the Embankment is one of the key enablers for the creation of the Gardens as construction of the Embankment wall and removal of wharfs and warehouses along the Thames adjacent to the Houses of Parliament was considered necessary for the health of Londoners and the presentation of the city. Sarah Couch, 2006, quotes the descriptions of the tidal beaches of the Thames prior the Embankment as:

‘From about 1840 to 1870,...., I could attentively watch the river getting dirtier, and the buildings on its banks growing uglier, dingier and squallier year after year; until at the length the stream was little better than an open sewer, bordered by uninteresting brick tenements and warehouses, with few notable exceptions here and there, such as the Houses of Parliament, Somerset House and the Temple; but on the whole the condition of the Thames and its shores, in the midst of the mightiest and wealthiest capital in the world, had become a national scandal and a national reproach.’ Sala 1895

- 4.3 She goes on to describe the construction of the Embankment: ‘there was increasing concern over public health, with several Cholera outbreaks culminating in the ‘Great Stink’ of the Thames in 1858. This led to the project which included the major new sewer....’⁷ which was designed by Bazalgette and Vulliamy.
- 4.4 The creation of the gardens therefore provides a key symbol in the transformation of the environment from one of squalor and the open sewer of the river, to one providing fresh air and health for its residents.
- 4.5 The wharfs remained over the majority of the Gardens until the construction of the Houses of Parliament between 1837 and 1858. Following the embankment of the Thames, and as shown in the OS 1st edition map survey in 1872 there is a small section of land to the south of the Victoria Tower which allowed vehicular access. The Greater London HER quotes (from Works file 11/63) that in 1879 a gift from the Rt Hon W H Smith and Government money (£2400 combined) went towards ‘enclosing and laying out of the gardens for the use of the public the ground to the south of the Houses of Parliament which has recently been embanked.’ This design shown in the image shown in historic context map sections (see Figures 4.3 & 4.4) which show a square with bisecting paths and a circular central feature. This area

⁷ Sarah Couch, July 2006, Embankment in Victoria Embankment Landscape Conservation Assessment pg10

takes up the northern section of the current park. The development of the Park is well described in these reports.

Figure 4.1 Photo Sheet – Historical Images



Burghers of Calais (1915)
(c) Getty Images



Emmeline Pankhurst Statue (1930)
(c) Getty Images



Children using Sandpit (1933)
© Linden Groves



Unveiling of Emmeline Pankhurst Statue (1930)
(c) Getty Images

- 4.7 1900 Act: The northern part of what is now Victoria Tower Gardens, about as far south as Great Peter Street, was purchased by the Government under an Act of 1867. This land was turned into a public open space in 1879, when Mr W.H. Smith donated £1000 towards laying it out and the Government then gave an undertaking that it would maintain the space laid out as a recreation ground.
- 4.8 During the course of the 1890s the House of Commons rejected a private scheme for extending the embankment southwards from there, mainly on the grounds that what was required was an open space next to the river with room for a better approach to Lambeth Bridge. The newly-formed London County Council then came up with its own scheme to create such a public open space between Millbank and the new embankment, and replanning and rebuilding the whole area around Smith Square, as well as extending the embankment and widening and rebuilding Millbank on a new alignment.
- 4.9 The Government (the Commissioners of Works) and Westminster Council agreed the plan, with LCC contributing some of the land and Westminster Council making a large contribution of £100,000 towards the Millbank scheme in 1900 on condition that, as regards the land between Millbank and the river (now the southern part of the Gardens), “ ***the lands... between the new [Millbank] street and the new embankment wall shall be laid out and maintained ... [and] provided for use as a garden open to the public and as an integral part of the existing Victoria Tower Garden***”.

This is the scheme that was carried out to create a single unified open space out of several separate pieces of land.

Turn of the Century - Play in the gardens and Views to Parliament

- 4.10 The series of historical maps shown in Figures 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 & 4.6 show the incremental changes to the Park. From the 1895 map that shows the Gardens in their initial form moving through the extension of the Embankment until the whole area is enclosed as park and no wharfs remain north of Lambeth Bridge.
- 4.11 Into the early 20th Century, proposals were made for the Gardens under the London County Council (Improvements) Act 1900 to extend the embankment and continue the gardens along that line. In the 1920s the Gardens developed further with the introduction of the sandpit in 1923 made possible by the Spicer family and commemorated by the large wall at the southern end of the playground, now at the northern end of the play area following its recent (2014) redesign. Playgrounds were developing in public parks around the turn of the century: in Victoria Park, London’s earliest park designed specifically for public use, a ‘sea sand playground’ was documented as being installed in 1892 along with the ‘Victoria and Albert play shelter’ in 1894. Its creation was begun in 1914 and has a similar timeline as the sandpit at VTG, which was installed three years later than the sand play at Wicksteed Park. It was clearly an emerging idea to provide play spaces for children, particularly from deprived backgrounds.

- 4.12 The new Lambeth Bridge was completed in 1932 creating the southernmost boundary, and the gardens were simplified to give clear views of the Houses of Parliament, with the east west trees removed to give those views.
- 4.13 In the 19th century the Gardens were heavily used by local children, living in the nearby slums. Around this time the Peabody Estate was built. So, a proposal was made, in 1898, by The Westminster Committee for Health to establish a children's playground there - but it was declined by the authorities. There were further attempts by the Chairman of the Westminster Committee for Health, Temperance and Morality, Rev Thicknesse and Basil Holmes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, to provide some play provision in the Gardens as '*St. James's Park is not readily accessible to those who inhabit the many small streets to the west of the garden and to the south of Victoria Street.*'
- 4.14 In 1912 Mr Henry Gage Spicer, a local paper merchant and philanthropist, appeared on the scene, prepared to donate money for a drinking fountain in the Gardens for the benefit of the children. Thankfully by then the Office of Works position had changed. The First Commissioner proposed something rather special - that a drinking fountain, in an architectural surround (Now the Spicer Memorial) could be accompanied by a small children's playground, similar to the sandpit in St James's Park.
- 4.15 Mr. Spicer recognized the opportunity and offered to fund both the fountain and the playground. He wanted to provide a safe and exciting area for children, especially those from the poorer neighbourhoods, to play and socialise together, which has continued to the present. By Spring 1923 the playground, consisting of a huge sandpit, was open and proving hugely popular with local residents. The First Commissioner writing to Tilden (the architect who designed it) that: "The sandpit is daily swarming with children." [National Archives WORK 16/1214, letter from First Commissioner to Philip Tilden, 9th May 1923] Mr Spicer was, of course, thanked in glowing terms: "both you and Mrs Spicer must feel in some measure compensated for your generosity by the masses of poor children who frequent the pit, apparently obtaining incessant and endless joy therefrom." [National Archives WORK 16/1214, letter from First Commissioner to HG Spicer, 5th June 1923]
- 4.16 A few years later, and the success of the sandpit was inspiring a trial of allowing the children to be allowed greater freedom in the rest of the Gardens, i.e. to play on the grass. In later years the sandpit was supplemented with, and eventually replaced by, play equipment more traditionally associated with a municipal play area, namely swings and a small slide.
- 4.17 Thus, the Gardens became a vibrant, joyful place filled with children on sunny summer days, as it remains today. Not only enjoying the playground and education centre, but also the expanse of grass and dappled shade from the majestic plane trees for picnics, games and running around.

Mid 20th Century and the setting of monuments in the gardens

- 4.18 The main changes to the Gardens during the latter part of the C20 are shown in Figures 4.7 & 4.8, dated 1949. These show the proposed and existing site layout, designed specifically with the relocation of the Abolition of Slavery Monument, moved from Parliament Square to VTG in 1956, and the placement of the other two key sculptures, to give them their own suitable, uncluttered settings. They indicate the major change in the path layout with the relocation of the Burghers of Calais and Emmeline Pankhurst Statue and the introduction of the Buxton Abolition of Slavery Memorial, relocated from Parliament Sq. The proposal plans were not realised until 1956. This 1949 re-design was significant – it looked holistically at the entire park and emphasises and develops the open nature of the Gardens and the approach to providing suitable settings for important monuments. [Reference Figure 4.7 of this document.]

Figure 4.2 Historic Context – Aerial Photographs



Photograph taken April 1921 in the Britain from Above archive shows the gradual extension of the Gardens south with newer tree planting along the embankment area and the central circular feature.

⁸ Britain from Above, Westminster Abbey and environs, Westminster, 1921 [online] available from <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/epw006162> [accessed 15 November 2012]

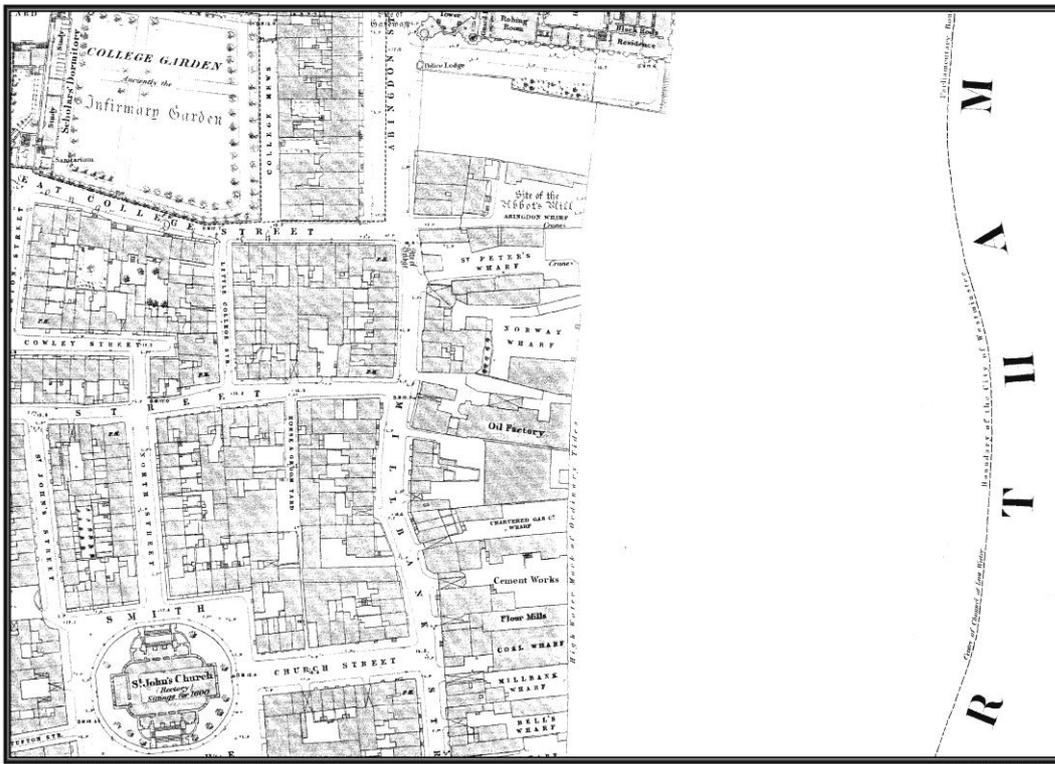
Figure 4.2.1 Historic Context – Aerial Photographs



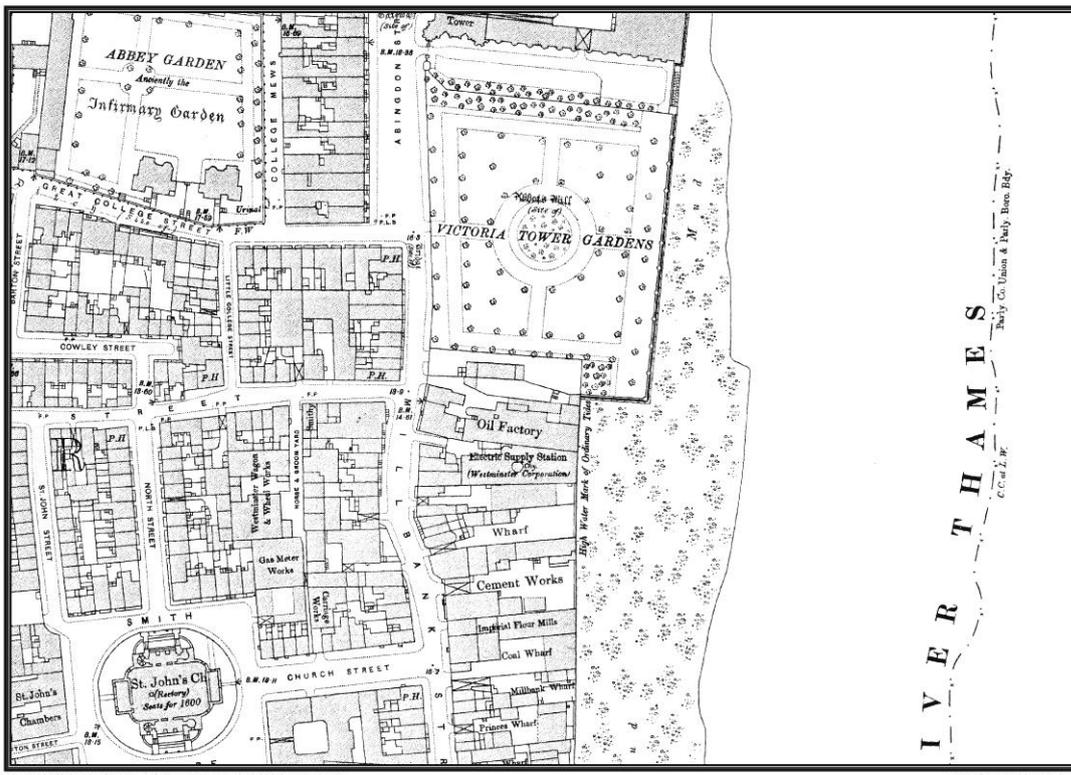
Photograph taken October 1928 in the Britain from Above archive shows completion of the Gardens to the southern tip to Lambeth Bridge with the large sandpit in place. Lambeth bridge is the original bridge which was replaced with the current bridge in 1929-32.

⁹ Britain from Above, Westminster Abbey and environs, Westminster, 1921 [online] available from <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/epw025096> [accessed 15 November 2012]

Figure 4.3 Historic Context – Maps

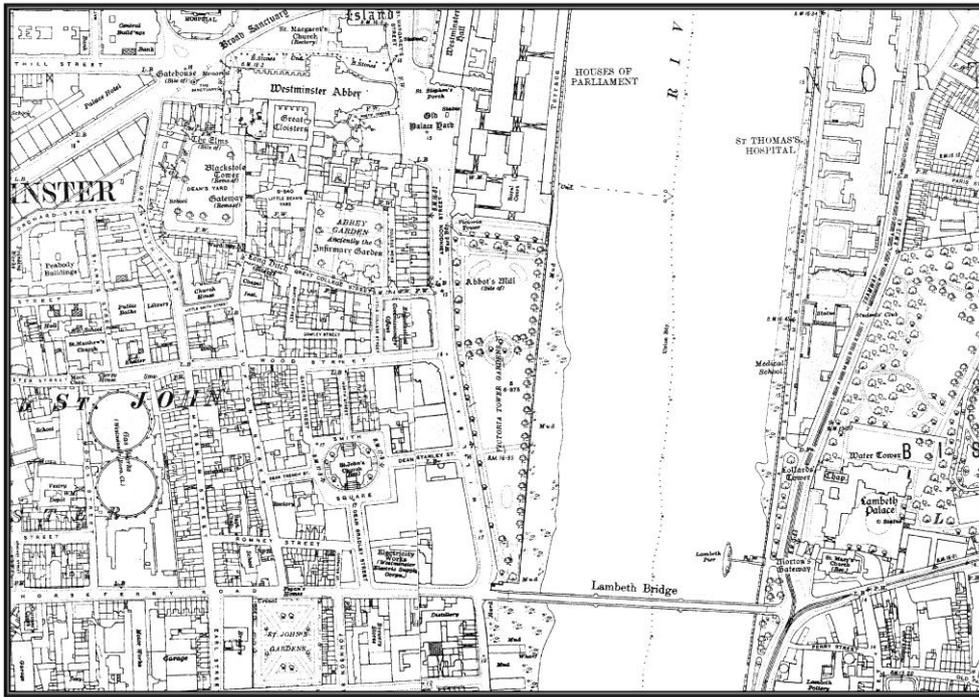


The Garden area is clearly mostly taken up by wharfs in this 1873 OS map. (Source: www.old-maps.co.uk)



First Edition OS 1895 shows the northern section of the park in place with the central circular horticultural feature and embankment section. Screening of the vehicular access within the Garden is shown to the north and the symmetrical path layout with four lawn areas. (Source: www.old-maps.co.uk)

Figure 4.4 Historic Context – Maps

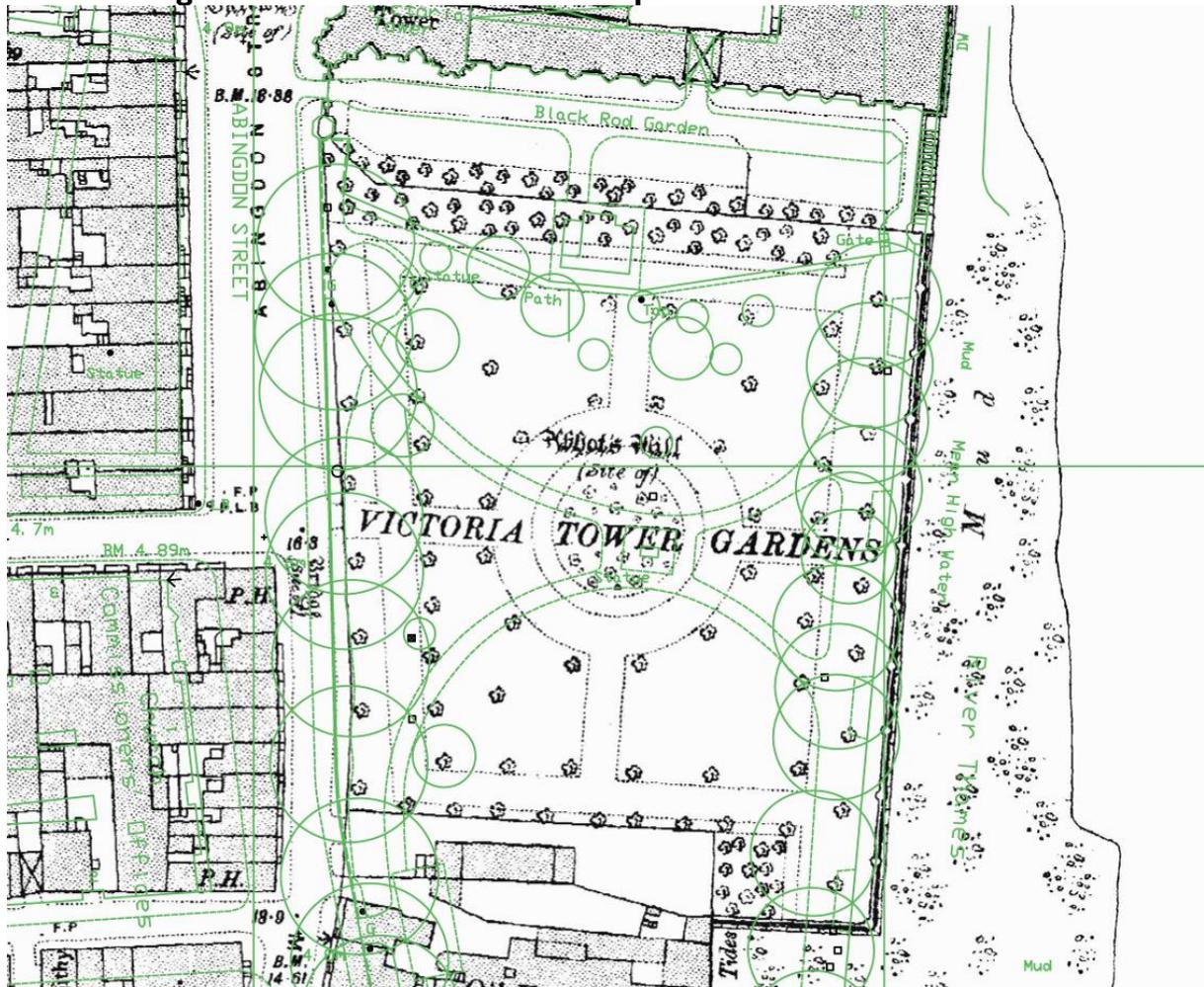


The map shows the whole triangular plot taken up by the Gardens in this 1916 Second Edition OS map. The trees along the embankment have been surveyed and plotted. There is an indication of an avenue across the site to the circular central feature but the central north south paths bisecting the lawns have disappeared. (Source: www.old-maps.co.uk)



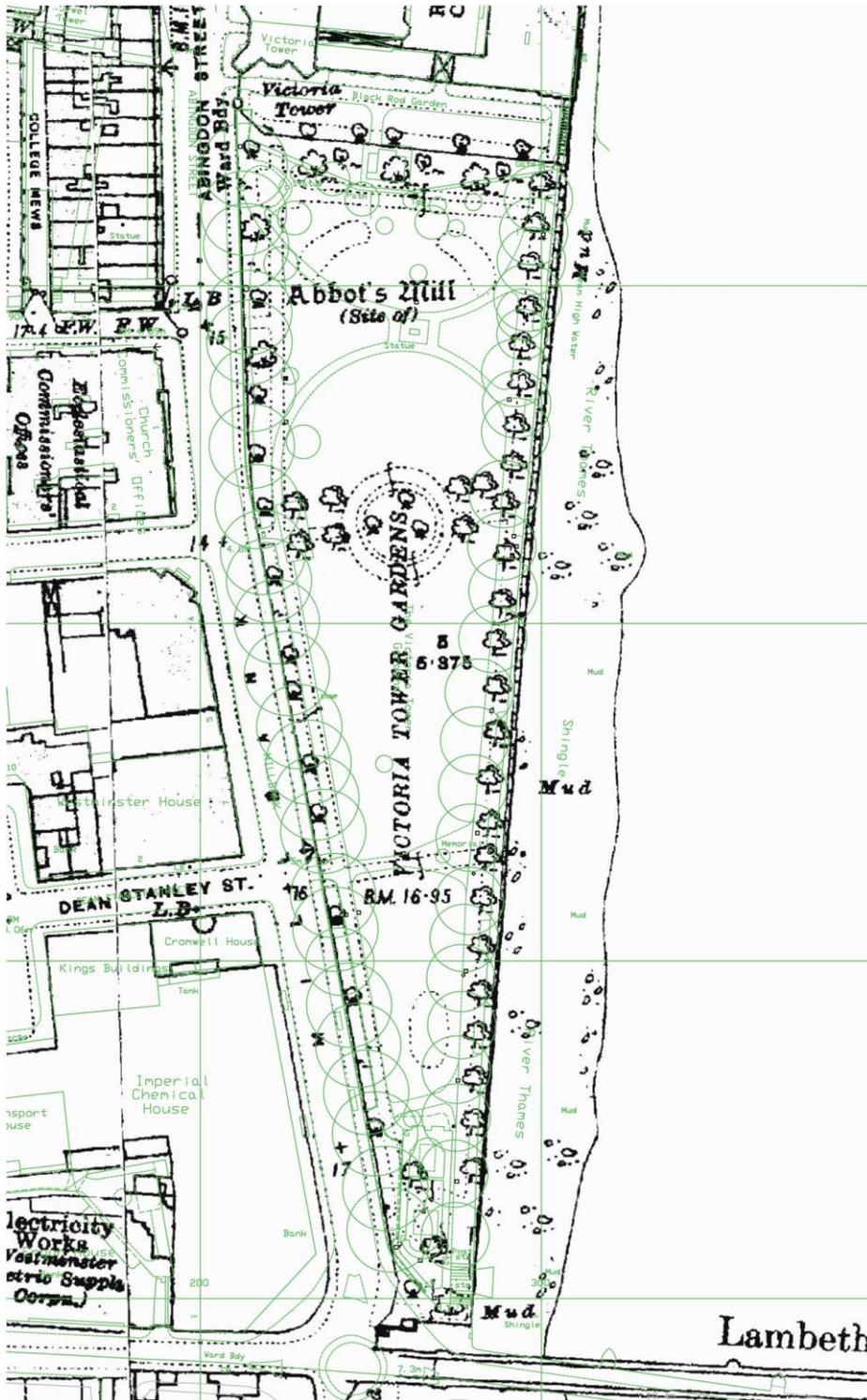
This 1951-52 OS shows the sandpit boundary trees but there appears to be a building and no screening planting in the northern section of the Gardens and the E-W tree lined avenue in the middle section has been cleared to enable the long views to the Houses of Parliament. (Source: www.old-maps.co.uk)

Figure 4.5 Historic Context – Maps



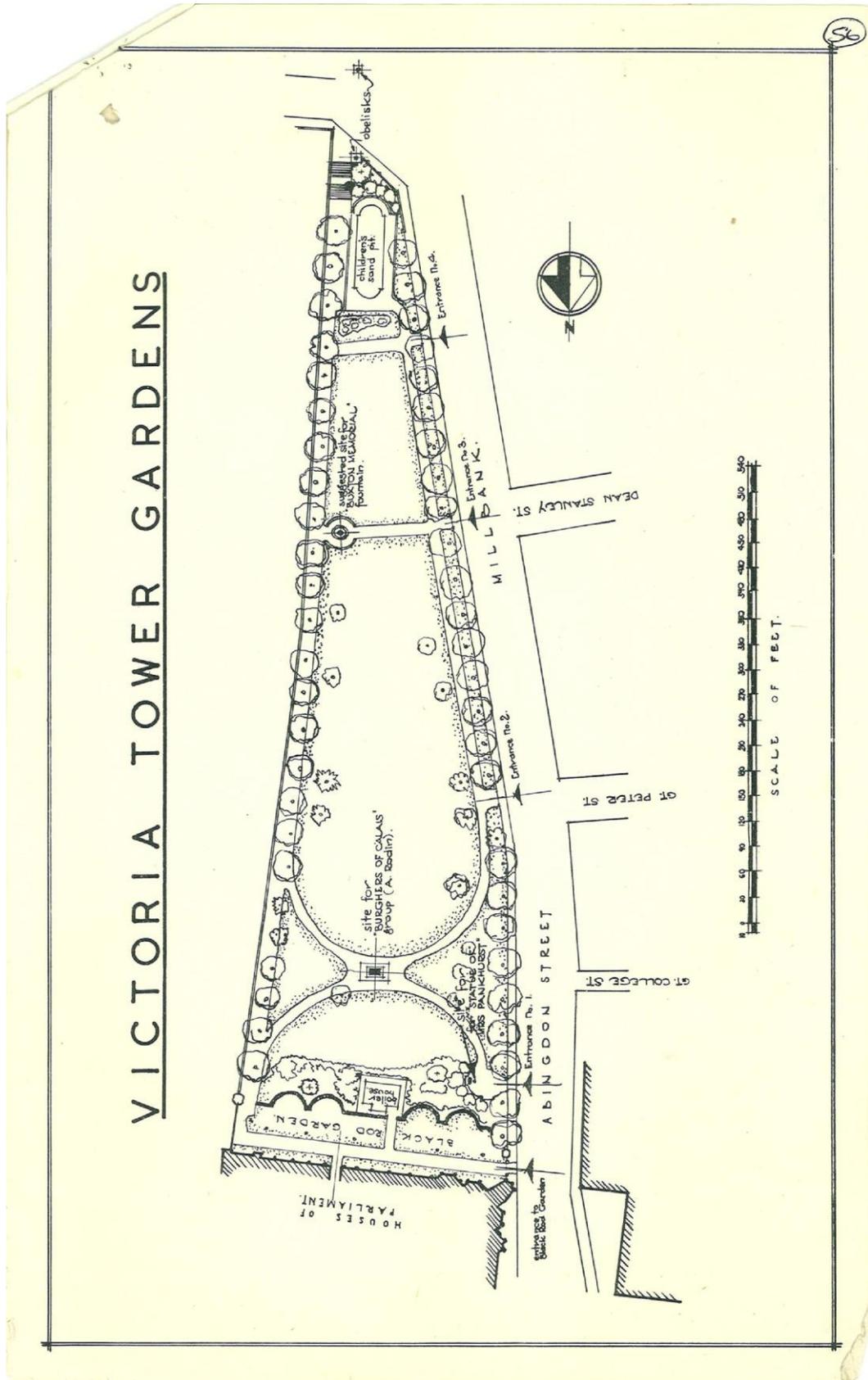
This is an overlay with the current site layout over the 1895 which shows the Burghers of Calais are positioned in the same location as the original central circular feature of the gardens, in the vicinity of the Old Mill. The boundary trees are original. (Source: www.old-maps.co.uk and OS digital held by The Royal Parks)

Figure 4.6 Historic Context – Maps



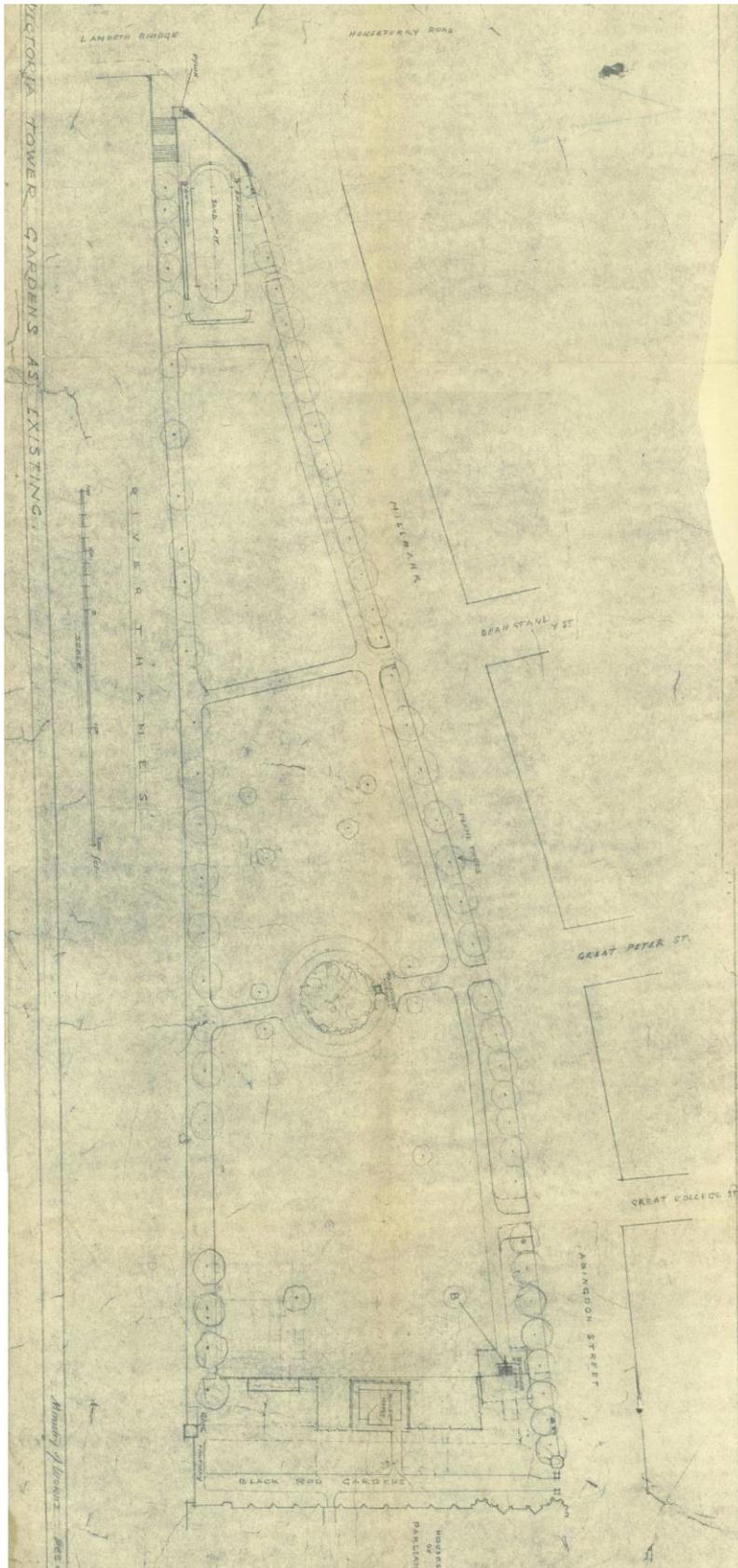
Overlay of existing site layout on the 1916 OS base show the surveyed trees on the embankment are still in place. The central circular feature has moved south. (Source: www.old-maps.co.uk and OS digital held by The Royal Parks)

Figure 4.7 Historic Context – 1949 Proposals Plan



Source: Ministry of Works File Work 16/826

Figure 4.8 Historic Context – 1949 Site as Existing Plan



Source: Ministry of Works File Work 16/826

5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Statement of Significance

- 5.1 The statement of significance explains what matters about the Gardens, why it matters and to whom. It sets out why the site is unique and what is important or 'significant' about it. The statement of significance draws together the site evaluation to set out those features that define the essence of the place. It is the basis for developing policies, management guidelines and identifying the positive aspects of Victoria Tower Gardens so they can be conserved in perpetuity whilst weak or declining aspects or features can be enhanced in the most appropriate manner. The statement of significance answers what heritage **'Values'** the site has, as suggested by Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' categorised into **historic (associative and illustrative) aesthetic, evidential or communal**. It also discusses its significance in terms of its contribution to health and wellbeing of the local community, visitors and workers, therefore its 'social' significance, as well as biodiversity.

Summary of Key Significance

- 5.2 Victoria Tower Gardens is a significant historic landscape of national importance in its own right, as well as providing the setting for grade I and II* listed buildings and monuments. The key historic significance of the landscape lies in the following:
- its creation as a garden as a result of the embankment of the Thames in response to pollution of the river
 - its archaeological potential to reveal more of the area's development as an area at the centre of the country's most historic events
 - its provision for the use of the public as a philanthropic act to be maintained as a recreation ground, reflecting the increased understanding of the importance of such provision for all classes in a densely populated city
 - its philanthropic development as a playground for local children in the C19 reflecting the contemporary development of recognition of the importance of play, particularly for those with a lack of access to such amenity
 - its simple design aesthetic affording long views to the internationally recognised buildings of the Palace of Westminster, framed by London Plane trees, some of which are the original plantings, and open expanse for recreation
 - the chosen open setting for monuments to slavery, emancipation and heroism, with the symbolic juxtaposition of Parliament, accessible and open to all
 - its continued use by the public since its creation for national celebrations and gatherings, including marking royal events.

- 5.3 The Garden's key social and ecological significance lies in the following:
- its importance as a valued open space for recreation and relaxation as refuge from the noise and frenetic activity of the nearby major tourist areas, bot for visitors and local residents and workers
 - its amenity provision in an area with very limited access to open space and nature
 - its potential as wildlife habitat, providing cover and food in a wildlife corridor in a very heavily urbanised area
 - its mature tree growth mitigating noise and air pollution, particularly given the characteristics of the London Plane.
- 5.4 These significances are recognised by the numerous national historic and landscape designations contained in the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens and listed buildings. The 'Values' it holds that make up its significance are discussed here in more detail.

These long views to parliament across the lawn, as described in Historic England's listings for them. The location of the Buxton Memorial was specifically designed to be on axis with Dean Stanley St, with the approval of the Anti-Slavery Society and the Royal Fine Art Commission on its relocation from Parliament Sq. (see letter in Appendix 5).

The well-considered play provision provides delight and a joyous atmosphere, in contrast to the sobriety of Westminster; and a vital service for the St James and Vincent Sq. wards where 23 and 30% of children are classified as obese.

The London Planes and simple grass lawns provide visual calm and physical relief and respite from the busy traffic and make up the unique qualities of this iconic part of central London.

Historic Values

- 5.5 The creation and development of the Park is based on Acts of Parliament and the creation of the Embankment in response to the pollution of the Thames (the Great Stink). The management was transferred to the Royal Parks (illustrated in correspondence Works File 3114/1), associating it with the highly significant grouping of Royal Parks managed for the nation on behalf of the crown.

The Gardens were originally designed and opened for public access through a gift and parliamentary funds in 1879. This was a time when the health benefits of public parks and gardens were well understood and their creation and provision deemed important for densely populated areas of towns and cities.

The gardens were chosen for the location of the Abolition of Slavery (Buxton) monument, once it was moved from Parliament Square. Historic England's 'Reason for Designation' in the list entry states: 'The significance of the monument is enhanced by its location; it commemorates one of Parliament's most momentous

Acts, and its principal dedicatee is the parliamentarian responsible for ensuring the passage of that Act’.

The Gardens have a significant association with play as one of the earliest playgrounds in central London’s parks to be developed in recognition of the need to improve health and wellbeing. (This continues to reflect a **Communal value**, as borne out by consultations prior to the play area’s redesign, (based on its early heritage), and subsequent upgrade in 2014.) The Spicer Memorial is an important reminder of the site’s original purpose as a dedicated area for play, and the donation of such a feature by philanthropic donation, as a precursor to widespread public funding for play.

Aesthetic Values

- 5.6 The simplicity afforded by the mature London Planes and simple sweep of grass designed as such to provide the setting and frames the view to the elaborate architecture of the Grade I Victoria Tower from the whole lawn area, and fine monuments and statues in its foreground. They are the iconic setting to these listed buildings and monuments.

The gardens were specifically de-cluttered and redesigned in the early 20th century (refer 1949 plan) to give long views to Parliament across the lawn, as described in the entry on the Register of Parks and Gardens.

The location of Buxton Memorial was specifically designed to be on axis with St John the Evangelist, Smith Square (grade I), along Dean Stanley St, with the approval of the Anti-Slavery Society and the Royal Fine Art Commission on its relocation from Parliament Sq. (see letter in Appendix 5).

The well-considered play provision provides delight and a joyous atmosphere, in contrast to the sobriety of Westminster and is a vital service for the St James and Vincent Sq wards of Westminster where 23 and 30% of children are classified as obese.

The London Plane trees and simple grass lawns provide visual calm and physical relief and respite from the busy traffic and contribute to the unique qualities of this iconic part of central London.

Evidential Values (Archaeological Values)

- 5.7 The Park sits within the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square Conservation Area with the northern end of the site included in the Area of Special Archaeological Priority. The Queen’s Slaughter House from mediaeval times is clearly shown on the Pieter Van den Keere and Norden’s 1593 maps housed in the British Museum with the Mill and Mill Brook shown.

Historic England’s City of Westminster -Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal, March 2017, pg. 27 describes the Significance of the Westminster Archaeological Priority Area (APA) 1.1 Westminster and Whitehall, as follows:

'Westminster and Whitehall have been central to royal government administration of the country since the medieval period and has spiritual, symbolic, political, historic, architectural and archaeological significance. For nearly 1000 years it has been at the centre of the country's most historic events such as coronations, royal weddings, state funerals and general elections. Buildings within the APA are recognisable throughout the world and few other places within London or the rest of the country have such a richness of archaeological potential which can be associated with so many historic events over such a prolonged period of time.'

'The archaeological significance of Westminster and Whitehall is closely allied to the wider heritage interests outlined above and resides in both the area's built structures and its below-ground archaeological deposits. Any ground disturbance within the APA is likely to come across archaeological remains. Foundations of former buildings and substantial structures, such as medieval river walls, have been uncovered while remains of earlier phases of Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster may survive, including Edward the Confessor's royal villa and great abbey church. Well preserved timber structures also survive in deeper waterlogged deposits, for example a sequence of watermills (13th century to 16th century) to the south of the Jewel Tower at the end of Great College Street.'

'Relevance to the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site could indicate international significance. In these circumstances a strong emphasis is placed on minimising disturbance to achieve preservation in situ.'

Its **evidential (archaeological) value** is therefore high.

Communal Values

- 5.8 The Gardens have played host to events of varying magnitudes and are prepared for significant ceremonial events and activities that have national, regional and community significance, such as New Year's Eve celebrations, as a Diamond Jubilee flotilla viewing point and often hosts big screens showing nationally important events. The location makes the Gardens a significant respite for tourists visiting the area and is also a venue for large art installations, e.g. the Nuevos Silenco installation and Westminster Youth Fete.

Large gatherings, demonstrations and political rallies of all types often end up at VTG making it an important communal space, and the only space to facilitate such events. Its size and location enable people to demonstrate their freedom of speech, right next to Parliament.

The gardens were used by crowds queuing to enter Westminster Hall, where Winston Churchill was lying in state in 1965.

Filming and broadcasting also often take place in the Gardens and news interviews are conducted due to its proximity to Parliament and access to Ministers. The large open area has the capacity to have multiple broadcasts going on at the same time and the images are transmitted across the globe with the iconic view of Victoria Tower in the background.

In the 1920s the Gardens developed further with the introduction of the sandpit in 1923 made possible by the Spicer family and commemorated by the large wall and memorial at the southern end of the playground. Playground development was starting to become popular around this time with Wicksteed Park in Kettering Northamptonshire being one of the first. Its creation was started 1914 and has a similar timeline as the sandpit at VTG, which was installed 3 years later than the sand play at Wicksteed Park. It was clearly an emerging idea to provide play spaces for children particularly from deprived backgrounds, and the early installation of this feature at VTG adds to its **associative (historic) value**.

Visitor numbers using the play area have increased since the redesign and expansion in 2013 and with the new kiosk and toilets it provides a valuable amenity in an area acknowledged as 'deficient in play' in WCC's Open Spaces Strategy 2007. It is usually busy especially at weekends, with tourists and residents. WCC's 2007 strategy states VTG is also located bordering an area of 'open space deficiency', making its **communal value** as a play and open green space all the more significant.

Social Values

- 5.9 The gardens also hold demonstrable community significance for the many communities and workers living-in and visiting this densely populated area of London. They value it as a quiet, green oasis as well as a venue for play, picnicking, visiting the sculptures (particularly the Buxton, Burghurs of Calais and Pankurst), ballgames, fitness training, walking, dog-walking and enjoyment of nature as well as local activities and events such as the Westminster Youth Fete.

The location makes the Gardens an important respite for office workers and tourists visiting the area. Its contribution to the local population's health and well-being is considerable. Most local residents do not have any access to gardens and VTG provides access to nature and open space which offers considerable health benefits. The Gardens are in an areas of Open Space Deprivation and within an Area of Play Deprivation as shown in the 2007 WCC Open Space Strategy.

The VTG Playground Refurbishment Consultation Report July 2012 carried out to inform its sensitive redesign and investment by the Royal Parks, makes it clear that this provision has extensive community value with many associations for people as a place they played and subsequently brought their children.

- 5.10 The Gardens provide vital services for wards where very significant numbers of children are obese (23-30%). St James's and Vincent Sq. wards are in the 30-40% most deprived in the UK for the average overall rank. This rises to 40-50% for some local areas within these wards near to VTG, making the benefits of the play and open space provision to the health and well-being of the residents very important.

Refer to the Planning Section 3.0 of this document and the WCC Open Spaces Strategy 2018 for more detail of the Health and Wellbeing benefits of Parks and Open Spaces.

Views and Setting: (Associative, illustrative and communal values)

- 5.11 The Gardens themselves provide the best viewing area for the grade I Victoria Tower (completed 1860), and therefore also provides the setting for this important part of the Houses of Parliament World Heritage Site. The key views and vistas are shown on LPGT Plan I at the end of this document. This is a key reason that the location is often used for news reports and interviews outside Parliament.

The gardens were specifically de-cluttered and redesigned in the early 20th century (refer 1949 plan) to give these long views to Parliament, as described in the Register of Parks and Gardens description.

The simple, uncluttered presentation and views to Victoria Tower and Parliament, juxtaposed with the listed sculptures and monuments, is unique. The gardens provide the setting for them, enabling the monuments to be visited by all, whilst allowing the gardens to act as a greenspace amenity in their own right.

The Emmeline Pankhurst statue's location was specifically designed as an integral part of one of the key entrances to the gardens in the 1949 improvements, and subsequently improved in 2018.

The Buxton Memorial was located specifically on an axis with St John the Evangelist, Dean Stanley Street, and as such sits in its own uncluttered space, allowing free movement all around and easy access for groups of visitors.

The location of the existing memorials and sculptures allows free use of the large central grass area as an open recreation and play area, without adversely affecting the monuments located around.

The open nature and uncluttered quality of the settings of the various listed structures as described above is a key quality of the gardens and must be considered to be of **high significance**.

Ecology and Trees (Ecological Values)

- 5.12 The tree species and vegetation are of wildlife significance, particularly given the maturity of the trees, and the association with the River corridor and presence of open space in proximity. The tree lines help combat pollution and filter dust particles from the busy adjacent roads, improving air quality. Due to the poor nature of the soil because it is made up ground, it is likely that the trees have deep 'anchor' roots, that go well beyond the normal rooting zone – the open nature of the grassed areas contributes to the protection of this zone, dispersing the pressure of footfall away from any one area, and facilitating less compaction.

The possibility of bats using these mature trees and river corridor is high and further light pollution would be of detriment to this potential bat habitat.

The mature trees and open green space provide a very important contact with nature for the large numbers of workers and residents who visit regularly, as well as the many tourists.

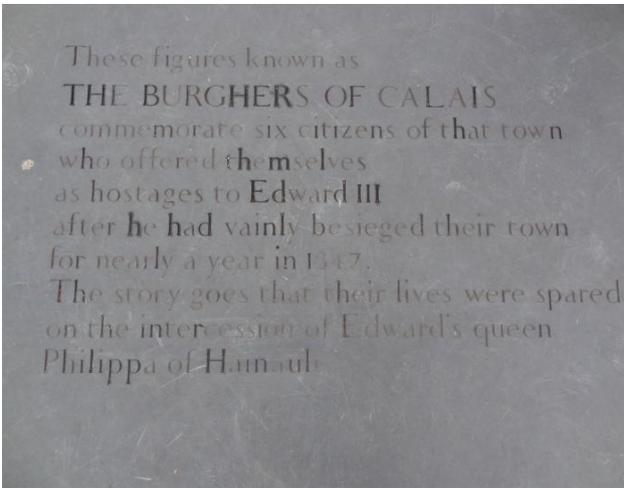
Figure 5.1 Photo Sheet of Listed Features



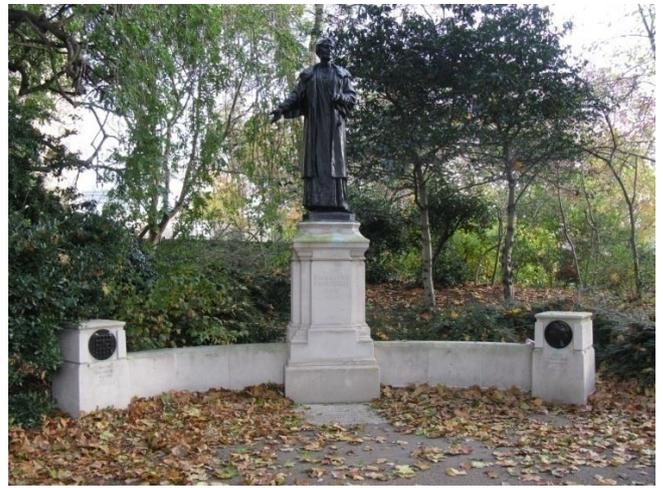
Burgers of Calais 2011



Buxton Memorial 2011



Burgers of Calais inscription 2011



Emmeline Pankhurst Statue 2011

PART 2: DESCRIPTION, USE AND CHARACTER

6.0 NATURAL FABRIC

Introduction

- 6.1 The following section describes the essential elements which create the natural fabric of Victoria Tower Gardens. The Gardens contain shrubberies to the north and western boundaries with a holly hedge that runs the length of the site. There is a small planting area at the southern point of the Gardens. There are shrub areas around the Playground. The majority of the plant material on site is formed by the 50 large, mature plane trees, protected with Tree Preservation Orders due to their inclusion within the Conservation Area, and the amenity grass.

Ecology and Wildlife

- 6.2 Victoria Tower Gardens is important for ecology and wildlife as greenspace along the Thames corridor and within central London.

Managing with Partners

The Central Royal Parks Wildlife Group comprises Royal Parks staff, volunteer naturalists, ecologists and other professionals and provides a forum for discussions relating to wildlife and nature conservation in the Park. The Group's members carry out and promote the surveying and monitoring of wildlife. The Group has set up two main areas of recording interest (Birds and Butterflies) and flora, which are also recorded on an occasional basis. Data are submitted to the TRP Ecology Section. Members of the group also participate in work parties to carry out conservation management work.

Information gathered from the Gardens contributes to understanding of London's ecological value, particularly through Greenspace Information for Greater London and opportunities for training and research. Park staff disseminate information and share best practice with other professionals and organisations such as Natural England, the GLA, and Kew Gardens.

Trees

- 6.3 As described, the trees in Victoria Tower Gardens play an important role defining and creating the space. They create and frame the vista to the Houses of Parliament. The majority of the trees are London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) that run along the western and eastern boundaries of the site. The trees are of ages in two sections having been planted in the northern site around the 1890s and the southern section in the early 1900s. Key to the development of the site, the trees were set at the current level though the embankment was built in 1916 which has precluded the raising of the ground level to allow clear views over the parapet. This has led to the benches being set on plinths to achieve views of the Thames.

There is a mix of other small trees in the northern shrubbery but nothing of great note or historical significance. The mix is approximately 50 London Plane with 12 trees of a variety of species.

The large plane trees are pruned to maintain views from the embankment as well as the safe passage of buses along Millbank. Due to the shallow rooting area because of poor soil, it is likely that the rooting depth is greater than normal and their RPA extends further into the grass area than normal BS5837 would indicate, because of the hard landscape to the road and riverside.

Shrubberies

- 6.4 The main shrubberies run along the northern and western boundaries of the site. Works File 3114/1 contains some of the planting plans for the 1950s redesign of the area along with plant selection for the shrubbery enclosing the northern boundary of the play area.
- 6.5 More recent planting, especially to the north and around the Pankhurst statue, has recently been replaced with drought tolerant species reflecting the challenges faced by urban planting in recent, drier summers and the necessity for them to be resilient to drought conditions.

Herbaceous and ornamental planting

- 6.6 Currently there is limited ornamental herbaceous planting which is predominantly located in the lower terrace south of the Spicer Memorial and playground.

Lawn Areas

- 6.7 The lawn areas make up the majority of the central core of the Park. They are formed by the paths to the periphery and crossing to features such as the Burghers of Calais and Buxton Memorial. The lawns are hard-wearing amenity grasses which enable several events and activities to take place all year round, as well as quiet relaxation and contemplation. This is an invaluable resource in this densely active part of London, and contributes to the health and well-being of those who live and work nearby. The current lawn layout was designed and implemented in 1955 to the 1949 Design shown in Figure 3.7

7.0 BUILDINGS AND HARD LANDSCAPE FABRIC

This section describes those buildings in the park and the main elements of the parks built fabric but does not detail the listed structures already discussed.

Buildings and Main Structures

- 7.1 Victoria Tower Gardens contains the Embankment wall, railings, gates, benches and signage. The most significant elements are the sculptures and the Embankment wall which are listed.

The Embankment Wall

The Embankment wall is an important part of the historic landscape fabric of the park and is a Grade II listed structure. It encloses and defines the eastern boundary of the site. There is a high-water mark on the northern end of the wall along with evidence of World War II bomb damage in places.

Education centre associated with the Houses of Parliament.

In 2013, a new Education Centre was given temporary permission for a period of 10 years, and constructed in the north end of the site. It has had an adverse effect on the 'values' of the Pankhurst statue, entrance to the gardens, Black Rod's Garden and Lodge, as well as the gardens themselves.

Railings

Part of the boundary of the park alongside Millbank is ornate iron railing with three gates. There was some debate (Works file 3114/1) regarding replacing the railing with a low wall. This however never materialised and the railings remain as first installed in 1895.

Park Furniture

- 7.2 A variety of furniture (litter bins, benches and signage) has been introduced to the Park to facilitate public use.

Litter bins found at the entrances of the Park and playground.

Benches are mostly on the perimeter paths and elevated on pedestals to allow views of the Thames over the embankment wall. There is a mixture of bench types include the 'Hyde Park' Timber benches, O'Brien Thomas Replica benches and bespoke Embankment benches.

Signage within the Park includes mapboards, information boards, finger posts and advisory notices. All entrances are equipped with The Royal Parks map boards (replaced 2009) and glass fronted information boards.

Paths

- 7.3 There is approximately 1 km of metalled footpath in the Gardens that run around the perimeter of the site and to features. The footpaths are generally considered to be in a fair condition, mainly requiring routine upkeep such as occasional resurfacing. The path that runs along the embankment wall is paved and suffers from disturbance by tree roots.

Figure 7.1 Photographs of the Spicer Memorial and Views



Ram feature on Spicer Memorial with Inscription 'Erected for the Children through the generosity of Mr & Mrs Henry Gage Spicer and Lambeth Bridge Obelisk 2012



Playground well used at mid-morning in September 2018.



Victoria Tower Gardens South (view of Lambeth Bridge)



Playground showing the outline of the original Sandpit with clear views to Victoria Tower in background



View from Lambeth Bridge including foreshore (outlet under bridge steps visible)



View from Lambeth Bridge of Victoria Tower Gardens and Palace of Westminster

8.0 PUBLIC USE

- 8.1 This section further describes the existing public use of Victoria Tower Gardens and considers the volume of park visitors. The historic features in the Gardens, along with the playground serve a diverse local community ranging from Peabody Trust properties, built in 1882 and housing 1700 residents then, and the Millbank Estate to Westminster Abbey and the World Heritage site including the Houses of Parliament. The Gardens also attract visitors and school groups from around the world who enjoy the green open space, visit the Pankhurst and other memorials, enjoy the iconic views and the chance for some peaceful relaxation from the hubbub of London life.

Public Access

- 8.2 The Gardens were originally designed and opened for public access through a gift and parliamentary funds in 1879. This is a core objective of TRP and applies to the whole site.

Health and Wellbeing

- 8.3 This is covered in section 3.0 planning, and 4.0 Significance sections so not repeated again here.

Events

- 8.4 Victoria Tower Gardens has hosted many events and activities most notably during the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations being a major viewing point for the celebration flotilla and Big Picnic Community Event (see VTG Playground Refurbishment Consultation Report July 2012). The site copes with several thousand people for events and activities. There are also more community-based events such as the Westminster Youth Fete held in 2011 and Annual Parliamentary Pancake races.

Tourism

- 8.5 Due to the location close to major tourist attractions and the view of the river and the Houses of Parliament a large proportion of visitors are tourists.

Visitor Facilities & Activities

- 8.6 Refreshment Facilities comprise of a new kiosk provided in the Gardens near the play area. The Playground is located at the southern end of the Gardens which is very well used, as well as the grassed area for informal play.

A small toilet is situated under the approach to Lambeth Bridge – they have been brought back into use recently.

Informal and formal activities that take place in the park are football, running, jogging, walking, dog walking, and children's play.

The Park is well connected to long distance walking routes; the path from the bridge along the Thames to exit on Millbank forms part of the Jubilee Walkway.

Figure 8.1 Photographs of Activities



Buxton Memorial refurbishment ceremony with John Prescott (c) Wasilewski



Lumiere Cinema event (c) Wasilewski



Spectra WWI commemoration art installation with light (c) Wasilewski



Nuestros Silencios 2011 Art Installation (c) Wasilewski



Diamond Jubilee Celebrations (Big Lunch) 2012



Youth Festival crowd (c) Wasilewski

9.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

9.1 This section describes the visual and aesthetic characteristics of the park and associated issues. These aspects are considered in relation to specific views and vistas - within the park, of the park and from the park – and the variation in character across the park as a whole. Because ‘character’ is in effect a combination of the different elements that make up the landscape described in the previous sections, many similar issues are raised. This approach highlights where particular areas of concern occur and indicates where combinations of issues cumulatively impact upon landscape character or quality.

Views

9.2 The visual character of the park is dependent upon the quality and nature of views. There are three key relationships to consider:

- Views into the Park
- Views from the Park
- Internal views

9.3 Key views are as follows:

- Designed long views from the southern lawns to the Houses of Parliament
- Designed views along the axis of St John the Evangelist, Dean Stanley St, to and from the Buxton Memorial and the Church.
- Of the River Thames from within the gardens
- Of artefacts and sculptures within the Gardens
- Of Lambeth Bridge
- From Lambeth Bridge and the approach

9.4 Screening or restricted features

- Parliament Learning Centre cuts off views toward Parliament
- Spicer Memorial

Character Areas

9.5 To describe the features and discuss the issues in more detail the site has been broken down into character areas. The definition of character areas has been based largely on the sense of place created by features, planting or uses.

The six-character areas are bounded mainly by (often historic) geographical features such as paths or defined by patterns of vegetation, land use and management.

Figure 9.1 Photos of Embankment Walk and Temporary Sculptures



London 2012 Wenlock Statue
(Garden Design)



London 2012 Wenlock Statue
(Westminster Abbey)



Embankment Path with ample space and benches



Embankment Path with view of Lambeth Bridge

Area 1: Emmeline Pankhurst and northern shrubbery

- 9.6 The Emmeline Pankhurst statue stands in the north western corner of the Gardens with a backdrop of shrub planting, but currently compromised by the Learning Centre. This planting continues along the northern boundary of the site, screening the access areas to the Palace of Westminster.

Area 2: Embankment Walk

- 9.7 This is a mainly paved area bounded by the Thames with the high granite wall to the east. The route is in most places around 5m wide with a line of large plane trees running the complete length. Elevated benches have been placed between the trees. The Walk is approximately 300mm below the lawn areas of the Gardens. The Walk terminates abruptly at the northern end of the site and to the south the steps lead up to Lambeth Bridge. There is an obelisk at the end of the bridge which is visible from the Gardens and is the terminus of the Walk.

Area 3: Central Lawns

- 9.8 The majority of the Gardens are made up of lawned areas defined by the path network. The grass is amenity turf and provides a space for small scale events such as the Westminster Youth Fete and activities such as the Parliamentary Pancake Race. It was a key location to view the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations (Flotilla) and more recently it has hosted New Year's Eve activity. The site is used by schools, local nursery groups and tourists viewing Victoria Tower and the Memorials and sculptures within the gardens. It is often the location for Film Screenings for open air cinema, and filming mostly news reports.

Area 4: Buxton Memorial

- 9.9 The Buxton Memorial is situated toward the south of the site and is a memorial to slavery. It is an octagonal structure approximately 4m tall with ornate stonework and tiling. It sits within the path network on an axis with Dean Stanley Street. There is a small interpretation panel and the memorial is often a feature for living history projects and school visits, given the ample space around it, and its relevance today with the Modern Slavery Act.

Area 5: Playground

- 9.10 The Playground is situated to the southern end of the site. It is enclosed by low interlaced bow-top fencing and shrubbery and a large stone wall; the Spicer Memorial with integrated seat once housed a drinking fountain and was erected as the surrounding to the sandpit play feature, donated by the Spicer family for the enjoyment of children. The paving around the edge of the area indicates the outline of the original sandpit.

Area 6: Lambeth Bridge Approach and Toilet Access

- 9.11 South of the Spicer Memorial the site slopes quickly down to the toilets. An herbaceous planting bed is retained by a low retaining wall and the display can be viewed from the approach to Lambeth Bridge. Four flights of granite steps lead up from the Gardens to the bridge, where an obelisk is a very visible architectural feature.

10.0 RISKS

- 10.1 The challenge for TRP is to respond to the increasing complexity of overlapping pressures placed on the park's management due to the need to protect its significant value for heritage, biodiversity, community and well-being, while also taking account of the views of stakeholders and visitors concerning the Park's role, function and character.
- 10.2 In addition, the park is affected by a range of external pressures and stresses. For example, the likely impacts of future piecemeal interventions such as buildings or structures imposed from outside sources.
- 10.3 An impact of climate change on the Park is warmer winters, more extremes in drought, gales and local flooding with potential repercussions for the parkland ecosystems. There is therefore a need to monitor the park so that such changes can be detected and appropriate action taken.
- 10.4 The paragraphs below highlight the main management risks faced by the park, these are arranged under headings which relate to preceding sections of this plan.

Natural Fabric

- 10.5 Climate change, which is manifesting in very unpredictable weather patterns and extremes in weather, is having an adverse effect on wildlife in the Parks. There is also continuing pressure to increase illumination for night-time use of open spaces, which may pose a risk to wildlife; especially bats.
- 10.6 The population of trees in the park needs to be managed to maintain a dynamic and evolving landscape respecting historical patterns and assemblies. One of the key risks is the stresses placed on the London Planes and the potential effects of pests and diseases on the tree-stock such as Massaria.

Buildings and hard landscape fabric

- 10.7 There are four listed structures within the Gardens which require careful conservation and protection, but probably most importantly from a landscape perspective it is their setting that is vulnerable by pressures placed on the park to host more and more events, or to place more objects including buildings and statues into the space. There are other features such as the Spicer Memorial, which while not listed has cultural significance as it forms an integral part of the playground as the donors' contribution to the play in public parks movement, and the long association of play with the gardens since its creation.
- 10.8 The installation of additional permanent monuments or artefacts would have a negative impact on the calm and contemplative landscape character of the Park.
- 10.9 The Embankment Wall is Grade II listed and requires management and maintenance.
- 10.10 A review of Park furniture in 2008 led to the development of the Royal Parks Landscape Design Guide. Clear guidance is set to agree the appropriateness of bench

styles, numbers and locations, together with an agreed policy on sponsorship and plaques.

Public Use

- 10.11 Increasing pressure can lead to erosion of both physical fabric and sense of place. It has also led to disturbance of wildlife, as well as conflicts between different users and user activities. The challenge for TRP is to satisfy the “wants” of different users such as peaceful enjoyment, recreation and entertainment while continuing to delight, enhance, protect and preserve the park’s integrity for the benefit of this and future generations.
- 10.12 Park Management aims to ensure the intensity of any one, sole, particular recreational activity does not conflict with the landscape or ecological qualities of the park; which remain their core values.

Landscape and Views

- 10.13 The key views and vistas could be eroded as a result of changes within the park (in particular by placement of urban elements into the landscape) and management of trees or by development beyond the Park boundary.

APPENDIX I

English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

List Entry

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest.

Name: VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS

List entry Number: 1000845

Location

The garden or other land may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
Greater London Authority	City of Westminster	London Borough	

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first registered: 01-Oct-1987

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: Parks and Gardens

UID: 1841

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Garden

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

Public garden laid out in 1879 and extended in 1900 or 1913/4, with the layout revised in 1955-6.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Houses of Parliament were built by Charles Barry (1795-1860) and Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-52) between 1837 and 1858, and in 1867 an Act was passed allowing land to be obtained to construct an embankment to the south. The OS 1st edition map (surveyed 1872) shows the new Houses of Parliament with the Victoria Tower in the south-west corner and a small area of ground to the south which had been embanked to provide a vehicular entrance to the south side of the buildings. The remaining ground to the south had not been embanked and was occupied by wharves, a cement works, an oil factory, and flour mills. In 1879 a gift of £1000 from the Rt Hon W H Smith was supplemented by £1400, voted by Parliament, towards 'enclosing and laying out for the use of the public the ground to the south of the Houses of Parliament which has recently been embanked' (Works file 11/63). A design for the garden dated November 1879 (Works file 11/63) shows a simple formal design of four grass lawns around a central circular lawn, all divided by paths. There were shrubberies with a grass verge around the south, west, and north sides, and a row of trees along the embanked east side. The gardens occupied the square northern end of the present gardens. This scheme is shown on the OS 2nd edition map (revised 1894-6), with regularly placed trees on the grass plats. These trees (plane, lime, Pyrus, elm, and thorn) were shown on early C20 plans (Works file 16/826), symmetrically positioned on each lawn. The land to the south of the gardens was still unembanked and occupied by wharves.

In 1909 there were proposals under the London County Council (Improvements) Act 1900 to extend the embankment and continue the gardens along the line of it. The plans were approved in 1912, the gardens laid out in 1913, and opened in 1914. The northern end of the gardens were redesigned at the same time with the circular feature positioned further south and the Burghers of Calais statuary group by Auguste Rodin positioned near the north-west corner. The revised layout is shown in the 3rd edition OS map (revised 1914).

In the 1920s the southern end of the gardens was redesigned as a children's play area (Works file 16/1214) and was partially altered by the building of the new Lambeth Bridge, completed in 1932. In 1933 the gardens were simplified in order to give clear views to the Houses of Parliament and trees (remaining from the 1870s scheme) and some of the shrubberies (from the 1890s scheme) were removed. The north lawn was also kept clear of people, the middle lawn was open but ball games were forbidden except in the summer holiday, and the south lawn was for children (Works file 16/1510).

The gardens were altered to their present appearance in the 1950s. In 1952 there were proposals for resiting the statues and for the incorporation of the Buxton Memorial Fountain from Parliament Square. A scheme for altering the gardens was finally agreed in 1955 and carried out in 1956, with the re-siting of the Burghers of Calais and the Pankhurst statue, the installation of the Buxton Memorial Fountain, the planting of new shrubberies at the northern and southern ends of the gardens, the removal of the circular feature, and alterations to some of the paths and entrances (all references Works file 16/1940-1). The shrubbery at the northern end was designed to mask a new boiler house in Black Rod Garden and a fence which was realigned around it.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Victoria Tower Gardens, c 2.5ha, lie within the London Borough of Westminster, immediately south of the Houses of Parliament (listed grade I), and c 150m south-east of Westminster Abbey (listed grade I). The gardens are bounded by Abingdon Street and Millbank to the west, the Thames to the east, Lambeth Bridge to the south, and Black Rod Garden with the Houses of Parliament to the north. The entrance to Black Rod Garden from Abingdon Street lies immediately north of the gardens (outside the area here registered) and is marked by a small octagonal lodge with iron gates (Barry and Pugin c 1850-60, listed grade I). The approximately triangular gardens are laid out on level ground with excellent views looking north to Victoria Tower (on the south-west corner of the Houses of Parliament) and east over the River Thames. The boundaries to the west and north are marked by iron railings, to the south by the retaining wall of Lambeth Bridge, and to the east by the granite embankment wall (northern section 1870s, southern section 1900 or 1913, listed grade II).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The gardens are entered from four gateways along the west side. The northernmost entrance leads from Abingdon Street and was made in 1955-6, replacing the original late C19 entrance, which was aligned on Great College Street. The middle two entrances, aligned on Wood Street and Great Stanley Street on the far side of Millbank, were made when the gardens were extended in 1914. The southernmost entrance on the west side was formed in the 1930s, and replaced the 1914 entrance which was c 20m to the south. A fifth entrance is from Lambeth Bridge to the south and was formed when Lambeth Bridge was rebuilt in 1929-32. The gate is on the bridge, beside an obelisk, and to the north of the gate a flight of steps leads down to the gardens.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Just inside the northernmost entrance to the gardens there is a circular area of asphalt with a bronze statue of Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst (A G Walker, listed grade II) on the eastern edge, facing west and backed by a shrubbery. The statue was commissioned in 1929 and was unveiled in 1930, and was positioned on the western edge of a circular shrubbery in the centre of the gardens, facing west along the line of Wood Street. It was

moved to its present position in 1956 as part of the revised layout of the gardens (all references Works file 20/188). The shrubbery which backs the statue is on a slight bank, and runs east from this point along the northern boundary of the gardens, masking a fence and boiler house which were installed in 1955-6.

A shrubbery runs along the northern end of the west boundary (between the two northern entrances) but the central area of the gardens is laid out as open lawn, kept clear of planting to preserve the views. The areas of lawn are divided at the northern end by arching paths, which cross just east of the centre, with the northern branches leading to the north-west and north-east corners of the gardens, and the southern arms joining onto straight paths which run south along the west and east boundaries. At the point where the paths cross, c 60m south-east of the northern entrance, there is a large bronze statuary group of six figures by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), known as the Burghers of Calais (first version 1895, listed grade I). The group was donated by the National Arts Collection Fund and erected in the gardens in 1914. Because of the outbreak of the First World War and anxiety of offending the French Allies, the statuary group was not formally unveiled but the tarpaulin was removed informally in 1915. It was sited approximately on the present position of the Pankhurst statue, on the west end of a path which ran west/east across the north end of the garden. This path was removed and the Burghers of Calais were re-sited as part of the alterations to the gardens in 1955-6. The original position had been chosen by Rodin, who had also requested that the piece was placed on a high plinth (the versions in Calais and Copenhagen had been placed on lower plinths). Objections to the high plinth were made from the start on the basis that it was difficult to view the piece properly and the piece was therefore placed on a lower pedestal when it was re-sited in 1955-6 (all references Works file 20/124 and 20/243).

The open lawns in the centre of the gardens are lined by rows of planes along the perimeter paths on the west and east sides. The east path, which forms a terrace walk along the embankment wall, has a row of benches set on high pedestals looking out over the river. A path crosses the gardens from west to east, aligned on the entrance opposite Dean Stanley Street. At the east end of this path, dominating the southern end of the gardens, is the Buxton Memorial Fountain (S S Teulon 1865, listed grade II) c 200m south-east of the northernmost entrance. The octagonal gothic fountain has a limestone and granite pavilion which supports a pyramidal spire roof decorated with enamelled metal. The fountain was erected in Parliament Square (qv) in 1865/6 but was removed in 1950, following the Parliament Square Improvements Act 1949. It was finally re-sited in Victoria Tower Gardens in 1955-6 (Works file 20/266 and 20/301-2).

A path runs west/east from the southernmost entrance across to the terrace walk, with a shrubbery (planted in 1955-6) on the south side dividing a children's playground from the rest of the gardens. The southern end of the playground is terminated by a curving screen wall incorporating a seat, three wall drinking fountains, and carved animals at each end of the wall (all

references Works file 16/1214). The wall and seat were part of a scheme laid out in 1923 to the designs of Philip Tilden. The playground now has play features on asphalt, surrounded by the 1920s paving. The centre of the 1920s scheme was taken up by a sandpit, which was extended in 1927, and filled in with asphalt in the late C20. The area to the south and east of the playground was altered in 1932 following the building of Lambeth Bridge (Works file 16/1216). To the south of the curving fountain wall is a works area with shrub planting surrounding rose beds and storage within the wall of Lambeth Bridge. The southern end of the eastern perimeter path terminates at the flight of steps up to Lambeth Bridge.

REFERENCES

B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London I The Cities of London and Westminster* (3rd edn 1973), p 598 B Weinreb and C Hibbert, *The London Encyclopaedia* (1988)

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1872, published 1879 2nd edition revised 1894-6, published 1897 3rd edition revised 1914, published 1916

Archival items Victoria Tower Gardens files: Works 11/63; 16/826; 16/1214; 16/1510; 16/1940-1; 20/124; 20/188; 20/243; 20/266 (PRO)

Date written: June 2002 Register Inspector: CB Edited: August 2003

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TQ 30258 79170

APPENDIX 2

English Heritage Listed Buildings Entries

There are 8 listed building entries for Victoria Tower Gardens and Mill bank which are summarised in table below with the extract summary from the English Heritage Register.

Building	Listing status
<p>TQ 3079 SW CITY OF WESTMINSTER VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS, 101/38 MILLBANK , SW1 5.2.70 Statuary Group of the Burghers of Calais</p> <p>Statuary group. Erected in 1915, Auguste Rodin sculptor. Bronze group of figures on stone pedestal, resited and pedestal reduced in height according to Rodin's tenets.</p> <p>Listing NGR: TQ3026379286</p>	Grade I
<p>1900/101/68 MILLBANK 05-FEB-70 101/68 Buxton Memorial Fountain, VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS</p> <p>(Formerly listed as: VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS SW1 BUXTON MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN) (Formerly listed as: MILLBANK SW1 BUXTON MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN)</p> <p>Drinking fountain, erected 1865-6. Designed by Samuel Sanders Teulon, with what appears to have been a considerable creative contribution from Charles Buxton.</p> <p>Limestone and granite, with an enamelled roof, made by Skidmore, and mosaic decoration. Elaborate and delicate Gothic pavilion with rich use of polychrome materials. Octagonal with pointed arched shafted openings and pyramidal spire-roof of brightly enamelled iron with finial. Inside, four granite drinking basins arranged around a central shaft. Eight metal figures of British rulers, by T. Earp, which once stood at eaves level, were stolen, some in 1960, the rest in 1971. These were recast in 1980, but have since disappeared.</p> <p>The fountain is no longer working. It was restored by the Royal Parks in 2007.</p> <p>The original plaques were subsequently removed, and two plaques have been added to the monument in the twentieth century. On the west side a plaque gives an incorrect date for the erection of the fountain: 'Erected in 1835 / by Charles Buxton M.P. / in commemoration of / the emancipation of slaves 1834 / and in memory of his father / Sir T. Fowell Buxton / and those associated with him / Wilberforce, Clarkson, Macaulay, Brougham / Dr Lushington and others'. A plaque on the east</p>	Grade II*

Building	Listing status
<p>side of the fountain reads, 'This plaque / commemorates the / 150th anniversary of / The Anti-Slavery Society / 1839-1989'.</p> <p>The fountain was originally sited in Parliament Square, but was removed in 1949, and placed in Victoria Tower Gardens in 1957.</p> <p>HISTORY: The Buxton Memorial Fountain was erected by Charles Buxton to celebrate the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, and the achievement of his father, Thomas Fowell Buxton, and his associates, in bringing it about. The Act, which came into force in 1834, made the ownership of slaves throughout the British colonies illegal. Following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, the men commemorated by this fountain strove to secure the full emancipation of slaves. To this end, the Anti-Slavery Society was formed in 1823, principally by Buxton, Wilberforce, Clarkson and Macaulay.</p> <p>Wilberforce had been foremost in driving the 1807 Act through Parliament, Clarkson having gathered much of the evidence on which the campaign was built. Buxton, named by Wilberforce as his successor in the fight against slavery, was especially active the second part of the campaign, culminating in the Act of 1833, and in promoting the interests of former slaves in subsequent years. He once observed of himself and his achievements that, 'with ordinary talents and extraordinary perseverance, all things are attainable.' Zachary Macaulay, a prominent campaigner, was for several years governor of Sierra Leone, the colony for emancipated slaves from the United States and Nova Scotia founded in 1787. Henry Brougham, a promoter of abolition, was Lord Chancellor when the 1833 Act was passed. Stephen Lushington, lawyer and MP, was a particularly close associate of Thomas Fowell Buxton's in the anti-slavery movement.</p> <p>Charles Buxton was the third son of Thomas Fowell Buxton. He served as a Liberal MP for fourteen years, as well as being a partner in the brewing firm of Truman, Hanbury, Buxton & Co, of which his father had been director. He was an amateur architect, and is believed to have contributed to the design of this fountain.</p> <p>The fountain was erected in Parliament Square in 1865-6, possibly in connection with the abolition of slavery in America at that date. It is thought that Charles Buxton took over the project from the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association, which, since its inception in 1859, had wished to build 'a costly and handsome fountain in Palace Yard'. By 1949 the fanciful Gothic design of the fountain had few admirers, and it was removed when the Government redeveloped Parliament Square in preparation for the Festival of Britain. Speaking in the House of Lords, Viscount Simon defended 'a memorial erected in the symbolic heart of the Empire to record one of the greatest Parliamentary events in our history'. In 1957 the fountain was re-erected in Victoria Tower Gardens, where it joined Rodin's sculpture of The Burghers of Calais and a statue of the suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst (both listed).</p> <p>SOURCES: J. Oldfield, 'Chords of Freedom', (2007), pp. 57-9; S. Bradley and N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England, London 6: Westminster (2003); Dictionary of National Biography; The Times, 14 December 1949</p>	

Building	Listing status
<p>REASONS FOR DESIGNATION</p> <p>The Buxton Memorial Fountain is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * An unusual and exuberant example of the work of S. S. Teulon, in association with Charles Buxton * A notable landmark in an important setting, next to the Thames, and alongside the Palace of Westminster; the colourful Gothic pavilion makes a light-hearted companion to the giant of Victorian Gothic architecture * Lavish and imaginative use of materials, especially in its enamelled roof * The fountain is of particular historic interest having been erected to celebrate the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. The significance of the monument is enhanced by its location; it commemorates one of Parliaments most momentous Acts, and its principal dedicatee is the parliamentarian responsible for ensuring the passage of that Act. This monument was upgraded from II to II* in 2007, the bicentenary year of the 1807 Abolition Act. 	
<p>TQ 3079 SW CITY OF WESTMINSTER VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS, 101/24 MILLBANK, SW1 Statue of Mrs Emmeline 5.2.70 Pankhurst Statue. Erected 1930 and moved to present site in 1956, A.G. Walker sculptor. Bronze statue of the women's suffrage leader on stone pedestal with side screens.</p> <p>Listing NGR: TQ3022579329</p>	Grade II*
<p>TQ 3079 NW and SW CITY OF WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENT SQUARE, SW1 92/53; 101/7; (east side) Houses of Parliament, 5.2.70 The Palace of Westminster</p> <p>Houses of Parliament with the surviving parts of the Palace of Westminster. Westminster Hall 1097-99, remodelled 1394-1401 by Henry Yevele with Hugh Herland, carpenter; St Stephen's Chapel "crypt", probably c.1292-97 and c.1320; St Stephen's Cloister and chantry chapel 1526-29 (considerably restored after World War II bomb damage; Houses of Parliament (the New Palace of Westminster). 1835-60 by Sir Charles Barry with detailing, interior decoration and furnishings by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin; offices against side of Westminster Hall, 1888 by J L Pearson; House of Commons and Lobby rebuilt after World War II bombing. Stone with slate roofs and galvanised cast iron plate roofs to Barry's work which also has an internal fireproof construction of iron joists and brick jack-arches. Cruciform, axial spine plan and massing by Barry combining symmetry on the river front terrace with the asymmetry of the major vertical accents: Victoria Tower, Big Ben and the central fleche and turrets above the roof line. Pugin's 5 particular contribution the perpendicular Gothic detailing of rhythmic buttresses and bay windows, the close panelling with open and blind tracery and the wealth of sculpture, carved crockets, pinnacles and finials. Great vaulted Royal Entrance at foot of Victoria Tower; Lords entrance with buttressed, pinnacled porch in centre of Old Palace Yard range; St Stephen's Porch gatehouse across south end of Westminster Hall (giving access to cross-axis of plan); north entrance to Westminster Hall with great window above and crocketed finialed gable flanked by</p>	Grade I

Building	Listing status
<p>square battlemented towers (restored 1820); 3 gateways in E M Barry's cloister-arcade to east range of New Palace Yard terminating in virtually free-standing clock tower of Big Ben. Perpendicular fenestration with shallow oriels. The riverside terrace has cast iron ornamental lamps on the buttress-piers of the Embankment wall. Interiors: Westminster Hall has vast hammerbeam roof of exceptionally early date and scale and outstanding late C14 figure sculpture flanking dais arch; St Stephen's Chapel "crypt", though much restored, retains perhaps the earliest surviving lierne vault; Pugin's interiors are the best preserved and most complete example of the quality and ideals of his secular decoration including all details and furnishings and are combined with a complete programme of mid C19 and early C20 wall paintings. (Loose items of furniture not covered by listing.) The Houses of Parliament; M H Port [R C R M] History of the King's Works Survey of London: Vol X</p> <p>Listing NGR: TQ3026379543</p>	
<p>1900/0/10197 Lambeth Bridge and attached parapets, 26-NOV-08 light standards, associated walls to approaches and obelisks</p> <p>Bridge, 1929-32, by Sir George Humphreys with Sir Reginald Blomfield and George Topham Forrest as consulting architects.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: Lambeth Bridge is a five-span steel arch structure carried on granite-faced reinforced concrete piers and abutments. With a total length of 236.5m, the steel superstructure is made up of a 50.3m centre span, two intermediate ones of 45.4m, and two shore spans each 38.1m long. The shallow steel arches, each consisting of nine ribs, support a reinforced concrete roadway between the balustrades, divided into a carriageway flanked by two footways. Steel caissons were used in the construction of the concrete piers which, like the abutments, are cased in polished Cornish granite. The coats of arms of London County Council are sculpted on the piers, below which two granite arms curve down to the top of the cutwaters.</p> <p>The cast-iron balustrade and lamp stands augmented by steel latticework pylons were designed to honour the bridge's inauguration by King George V. Double lamps carried on granite uprights adorn each of the piers, and single lights on black lattice supports stand at intervals along the balustrades. On the approach to the bridge, the lamp standards are blue and supported by a LCC crest. In recognition of its proximity to the Palace of Westminster, Lambeth Bridge is painted predominately red, a reference to the colour of benches in the House of Lords (Westminster Bridge (qv) is painted green symbolising the benches of the House of Commons). Obelisks at either end of the bridge are topped by stone pinecones, ancient symbols of hospitality; they are also thought to resemble pineapples and are linked to the renowned C17 botanist John Tradescant who is thought to have introduced the fruit to this country and is buried in the former Church of St Mary-in-Lambeth (now the Museum of Garden History) on the eastern approach to the bridge.</p> <p>HISTORY: Lambeth Bridge was begun in 1929 and opened by King George V and</p>	Grade II

Building	Listing status
<p>Queen Mary on 12 July 1932. The bridge was fabricated and erected at an approximate cost of £80,000 by Dorman Long & Co Ltd, one of the foremost bridge building firms of the era who also built the Tyne Bridge (1925-28) and the Sydney Harbour Bridge (1928-32). In 1965, Lambeth Bridge became the first of London's crossings to be tunnelled beneath to provide pedestrian access along the embankment.</p> <p>The site of Lambeth Bridge was an ancient landing stage from the C13 that was used to receive the monarch on state occasions. Before a bridge was erected, a horse-ferry operated between Lambeth and Millbank under the control of the Archbishop of Canterbury who resided at Lambeth Palace. It is remembered in the name Horseferry Road, the western approach to the bridge.</p> <p>An Act of Parliament authorising the construction of a bridge at Lambeth to serve the growing population was passed in 1809 but nothing came of it. The 1820s, 30s and 40s saw further bills, acts and other attempts to resurrect the proposal, all fruitless, and it was not until 1861 that the Lambeth Bridge Act incorporated a company to construct a toll bridge to connect Church Street (now Lambeth Road), Lambeth with Market Street (now Horseferry Road), Westminster. The bridge, erected from the designs of Peter W Barlow at a cost of £48,924, was opened in November 1862. It was of stiffened suspension type, 252.4m long, divided into three spans, each 81.7m wide, by piers carrying the towers which supported the suspension cables. Tolls were abolished in 1879 but by this time the iron structure had begun to rust severely and major repairs had to be carried out in 1887. Despite this, the state of the bridge continued to deteriorate and in 1910 it had to be closed to vehicular traffic. Rebuilding was delayed owing to the 1914-18 war, but in 1924 the London County Council obtained parliamentary powers to construct a new bridge and to widen and raise the approaches at either end. In 1929 a temporary footbridge was placed across the river, which was removed when the new bridge was completed and opened in 1932.</p> <p>REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lambeth Bridge's urbane classical appearance is a landmark on the Thames and the bridge has an interesting mix of stone and steel and a graceful arched profile. * The bridge also has special historic interest as part of the continuum of river crossings at a place where Londoners have traversed the Thames since the C13. * Of further historic note is the symbolism of the ornamentation on the bridge celebrating the LCC and the reign of George V. The red paint is a further point of note, and links the bridge to the unique ensemble of political institutions on this stretch of the Thames, including the Houses of Parliament and the former headquarters of the LCC at County Hall. * Lambeth Bridge has group value with these buildings and others in close proximity: Lambeth Palace (Grade I); the Palace of Westminster (Grade I); the Church of St Mary-in-Lambeth(Grade II*); the contemporary Norwest and Thames Houses of 1928 which frame the northern approach (both Grade II); and, further downstream, Westminster Bridge of 1862 (Grade II*). <p>SOURCES: G Phillips, 'Thames Crossings' (1981), 200-2. 'Report of the Select Committee on the Design of Lambeth Bridge' (1928). 'London County Council, Opening of Lambeth Bridge' (commemorative brochure,</p>	

Building	Listing status
<p>19 July 1934). 'Engineer' (June 1932), 630-2.</p>	
<p>TQ 3079 SW and 3078 NW CITY OF WESTMINSTER VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS, 101/58 MILLBANK, SW1 River Embankment from the Houses of Parliament to G.V. II Lambeth Bridge Embankment wall. Mid C.19, contemporary and of a piece with Barry and Pugin's Palace of Westminster. Granite. Battered river wall with mooring rings and weather coped parapet; to landward side a plinth, die and coping cranked in 2 stages. The mouldings break round canted buttresses at frequent intervals. Southernmost portion isolated by western abutment of Lambeth Bridge.</p> <p>Listing NGR: TQ3029979274</p>	Grade II
<p>TQ 3079 SW CITY OF WESTMINSTER MILLBANK, SW1 101/43 Nos 1 and 2, The Church 5.2.70 Commissioners (including No 3 Great College Street, No 2 Great Peter Street and Nos 5 and 7 Little College Street)</p> <p>Large island block of offices. 1903 by W.D. Caroe. Red brick with lavish Portland stone dressings, slate roofs. An eclectic yet sophisticated Free Style northern Renaissance design including Renaissance Plateresque motifs, only slightly asymmetrical and with "rational" expression of staircase fenestration, 5 and 6 storeys plus 2 tiers of dormered attics. Close set window ranges and corner "staircase towers". Recessed entrance bays to Millbank and to Little College Street with enriched stone doorcases. Stone dressed sash and mullioned-transomed casements with scrolled pediments on 1st floor. The central range of windows to each front through 1st to 2nd floors are prominently articulated by scrolled buttresses with Plateresque pinnacles. Bowed oriels to outer bays. Arcaded loggias to top floor. Shaped gables in parapet and pyramidal roofed corner towers.</p> <p>Listing NGR: TQ3016579262</p>	Grade II*
<p>TQ 3079 SW CITY OF WESTMINSTER VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS, 101/21 MILLBANK, SW1 Victoria Tower Lodge and Gates to Black Rod Garden G.V. I Lodge and gates. C.1850-60 by Sir Charles Barry and Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, part of the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster as the Houses of</p>	Grade I

Building	Listing status
<p>Parliament. Magnesian limestone, Gothic/Tudor domestic. Small octagonal lodge; 1 storey with pointed arched doorway to side and small cusped lancet lights. Stepped and weathered plinth, scroll moulded string capping wall head with miniature crewel cresting, pyramidal stone roof. Tudor-Gothic panelled octagonal gate piers with Puginesque Gothic ironwork to gates.</p> <p>Listing NGR: TQ3022379372</p>	
<p><i>Source: English Heritage</i></p> <p>List of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, District of City of Westminster, 09-NOV-2012. NHLE: 1065878 [Accessed 09-NOV-2012]</p>	

Bibilography

Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England: (London Volume): English Heritage.

Visitor's Charter: The Royal Parks 1997.

Buildings and Monuments in the Royal Parks: The Royal Parks 1997.

Victoria Tower Gardens Restoration and Enhancement Project, December 2003,
Land Use Consultants

Victoria Tower Gardens Playground Refurbishment Consultation Report June 2012, The Royal Parks

Victoria Embankment, London Conservation Assessment Final Draft, July 2006,
Sarah Couch

A Place for People, Proposal for Enhancing Visitor Engagement with Parliaments Environs, 2011, Hansard Society

Ministry of Works Folder 1938, Public Records Office reference Works/16/1214 – 3114/2 Part 1

Ministry of Works Folder 1938, Public Records Office reference Works/16/628 – 3114/2 Part 1

APPENDIX 4

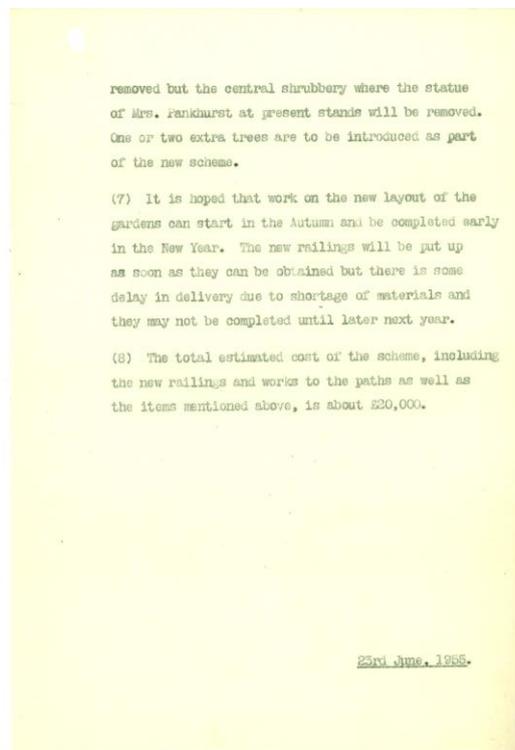
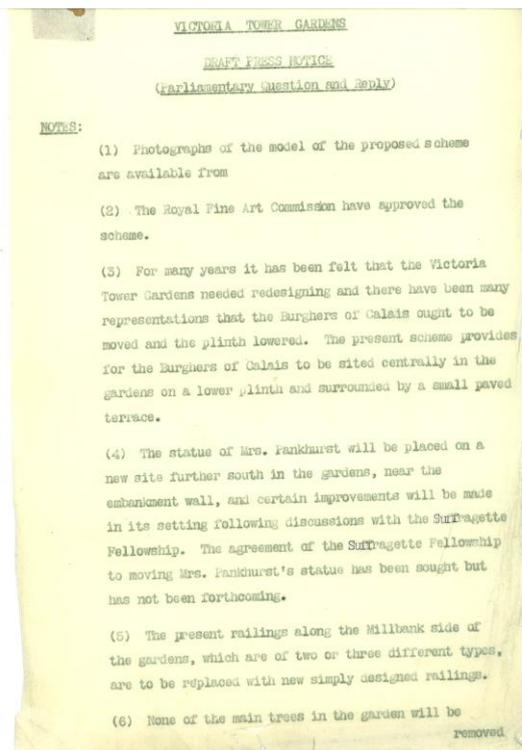
The Royal Parks Supporting Documents:

- The Royal Parks Framework Document April 1993
- The Royal Parks and Other Open Spaces Regulations 1997 (as amended)
- The Royal Parks Corporate Plan 2012-2014
- Royal Parks Operational Command Unit (TRP OCU) Policing Plan
- The Royal Parks Annual Report and Accounts
- Events Strategy, 2005 (to be updated 2012)
- Royal Parks Sustainability Action Plan 2006

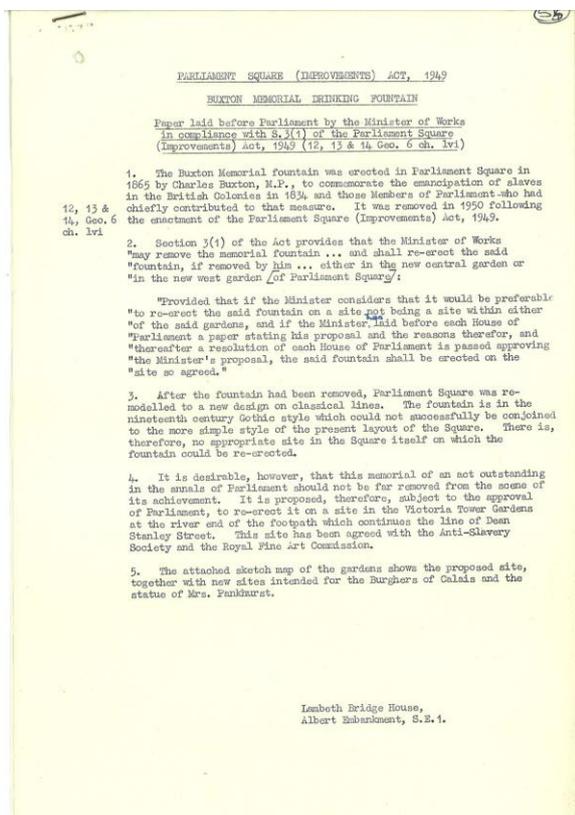
Documents relating directed to Victoria Tower Gardens and Environs:

- Victoria Tower Gardens Restoration and Enhancement Project, December 2003, *Land Use Consultants*
- Victoria Tower Gardens Playground Refurbishment Consultation Report June 2012, *The Royal Parks*
- Victoria Embankment, London Conservation Assessment Final Draft, July 2006, *Sarah Couch*
- A Place for People, Proposal for Enhancing Visitor Engagement with Parliaments Environs, 2011, *Hansard Society*

APPENDIX 5



Agreement for 1949 redesign proposals to go ahead relocating statues and changing path network (1955) Works 16/628



Approval for relocation of Buxton Memorial Works (1949) 16/628

13th June 1918.

TELEPHONE: 351 VICTORIA
 FIRST "DEPARTMENT" LONDON

OFFICE OF WORKS
 20, OLD QUEEN STREET,
 WESTMINSTER.

28528

To the Right Hon^{ble} Mr Alfred Mond Bart M.P.
 First Commissioner of Works
 Storey's Gate S.W.

My dear Sir,

If of any use, and agreeable to you, I am prepared to be the benevolent-minded person and give a sum of from five hundred to seven hundred & fifty pounds, according to cost for the provision of a drinking fountain in the Victoria Tower gardens. I don't know of course what your ideas are as to expenditure for one of artistic design, but everything in connection with that you would decide.

Residing, as I do, near by, I have made many pleasant visits there, and having seen so many children use the garden, I know the

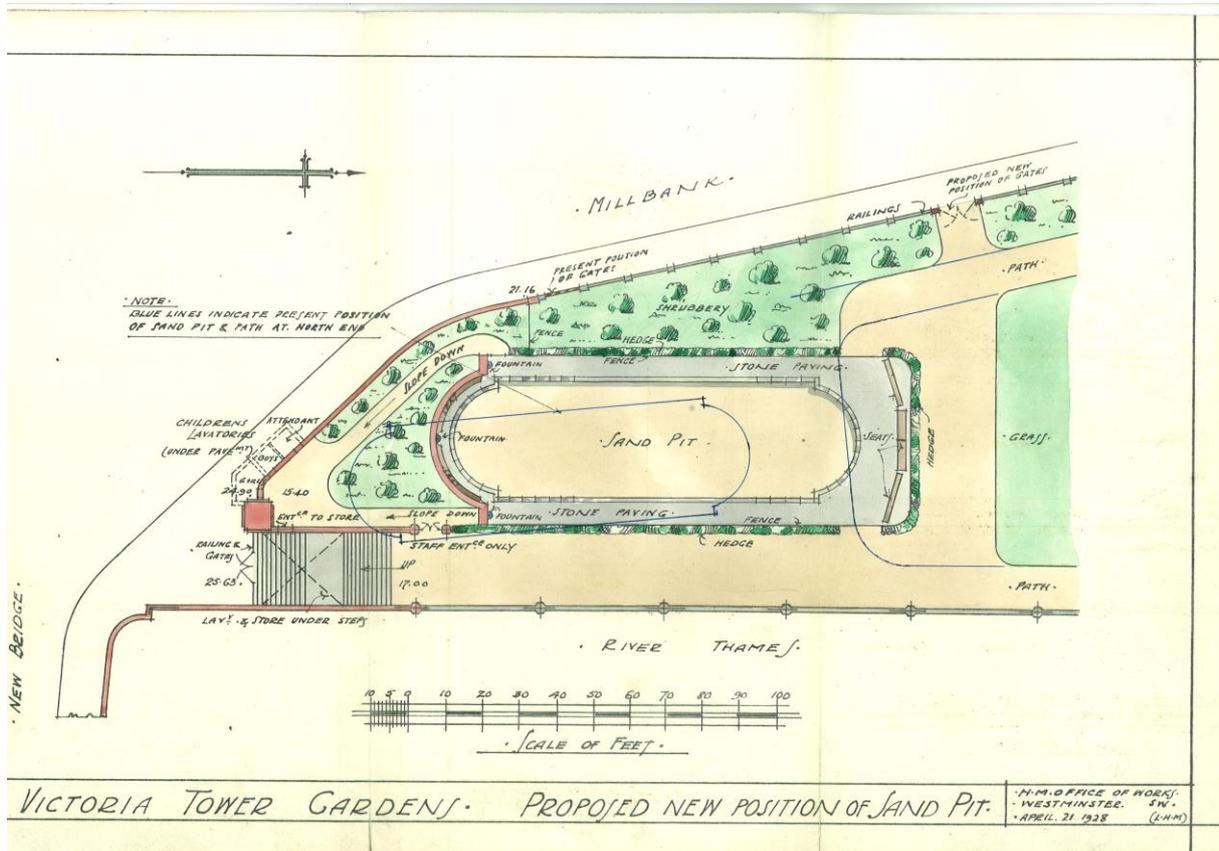
opportunity of obtaining drinking water will be fully appreciated by them at least.

As it has been decided to provide for drinking water, - the fountain should, if possible, be worthy of what it is a beautiful spot.

Yours faithfully
 H. G. Spicer

As a suggestion - perhaps something on the lines of Peter Pan in Kensington gardens might be considered.

Letter from Henry Gage Spicer (1918) Works 16/1214



Relocation of the Sand Pit proposal (1928) Works 16/1214

Significance explains what matters about the gardens, why it matters and to whom. It is based on the following 'Values' as defined by Historic England, as the basis for developing management guidelines so the positive aspects of Victoria Tower Gardens can be conserved in perpetuity.

The following 'Values' explain why the Gardens are of National significance and must not be compromised.

Aesthetic Values

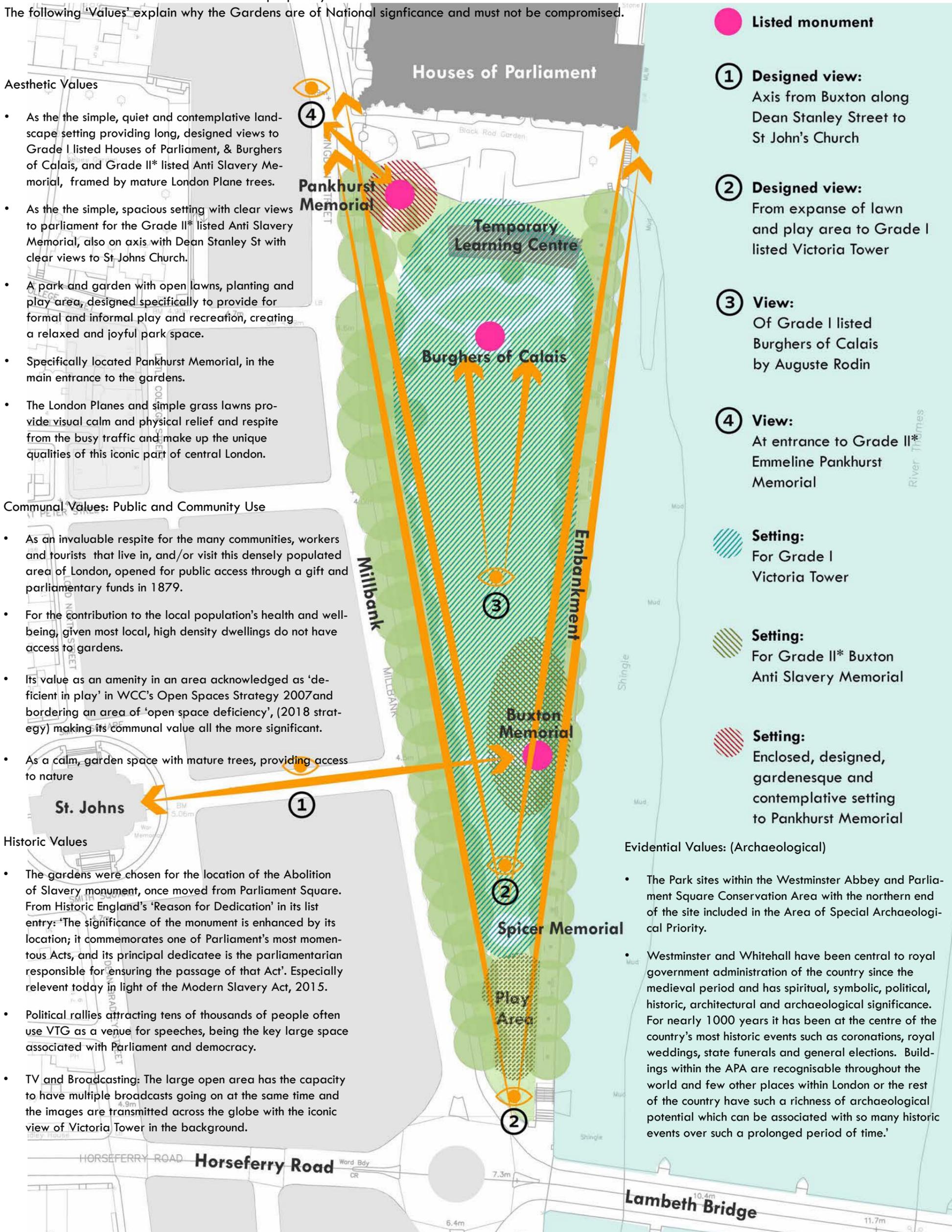
- As the the simple, quiet and contemplative landscape setting providing long, designed views to Grade I listed Houses of Parliament, & Burghers of Calais, and Grade II* listed Anti Slavery Memorial, framed by mature London Plane trees.
- As the the simple, spacious setting with clear views to parliament for the Grade II* listed Anti Slavery Memorial, also on axis with Dean Stanley St with clear views to St Johns Church.
- A park and garden with open lawns, planting and play area, designed specifically to provide for formal and informal play and recreation, creating a relaxed and joyful park space.
- Specifically located Pankhurst Memorial, in the main entrance to the gardens.
- The London Planes and simple grass lawns provide visual calm and physical relief and respite from the busy traffic and make up the unique qualities of this iconic part of central London.

Communal Values: Public and Community Use

- As an invaluable respite for the many communities, workers and tourists that live in, and/or visit this densely populated area of London, opened for public access through a gift and parliamentary funds in 1879.
- For the contribution to the local population's health and well-being, given most local, high density dwellings do not have access to gardens.
- Its value as an amenity in an area acknowledged as 'deficient in play' in WCC's Open Spaces Strategy 2007 and bordering an area of 'open space deficiency', (2018 strategy) making its communal value all the more significant.
- As a calm, garden space with mature trees, providing access to nature

Historic Values

- The gardens were chosen for the location of the Abolition of Slavery monument, once moved from Parliament Square. From Historic England's 'Reason for Dedication' in its list entry: 'The significance of the monument is enhanced by its location; it commemorates one of Parliament's most momentous Acts, and its principal dedicatee is the parliamentarian responsible for ensuring the passage of that Act'. Especially relevant today in light of the Modern Slavery Act, 2015.
- Political rallies attracting tens of thousands of people often use VTG as a venue for speeches, being the key large space associated with Parliament and democracy.
- TV and Broadcasting: The large open area has the capacity to have multiple broadcasts going on at the same time and the images are transmitted across the globe with the iconic view of Victoria Tower in the background.



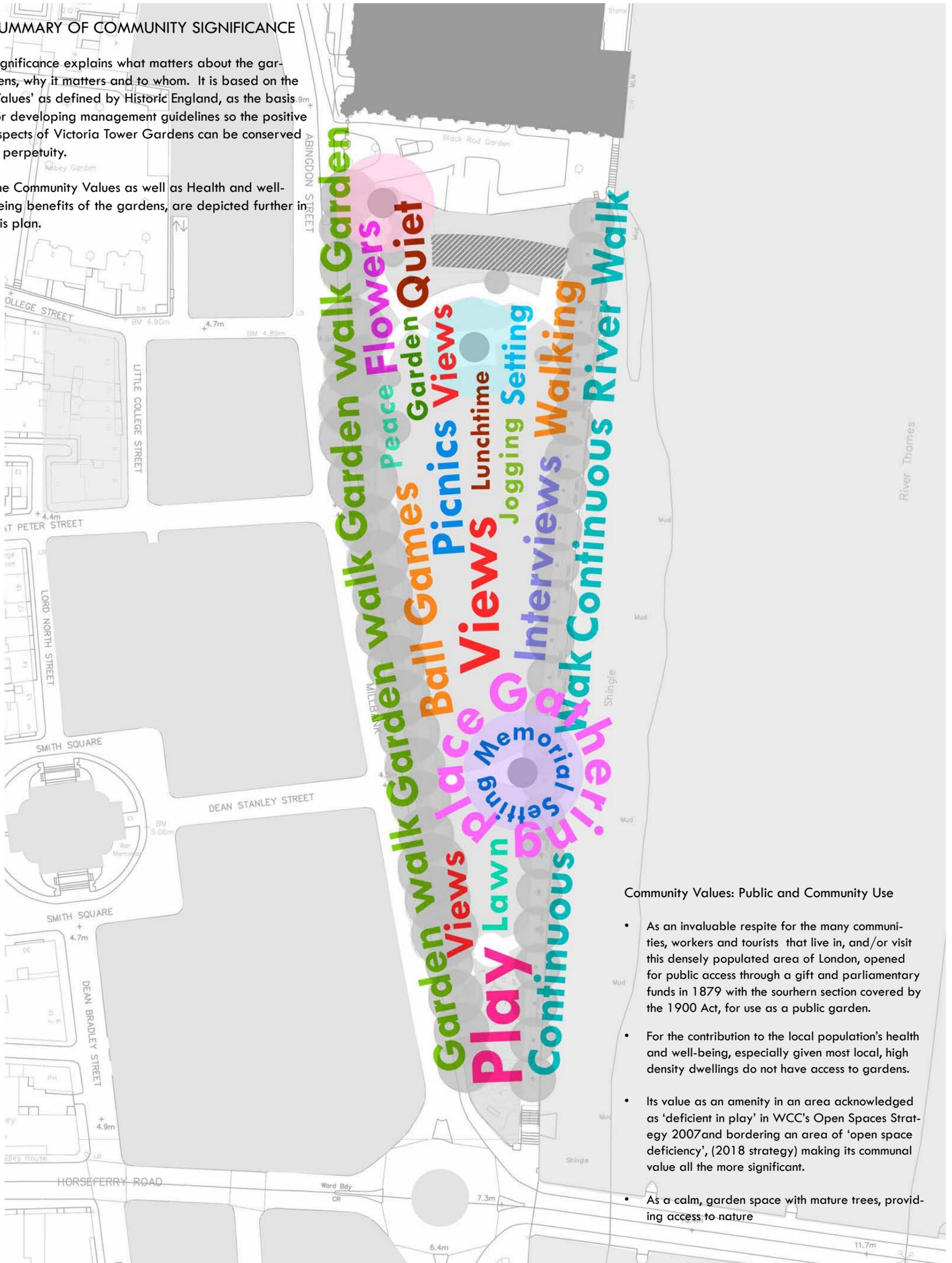
- **Listed monument**
- ① **Designed view:**
Axis from Buxton along Dean Stanley Street to St John's Church
- ② **Designed view:**
From expanse of lawn and play area to Grade I listed Victoria Tower
- ③ **View:**
Of Grade I listed Burghers of Calais by Auguste Rodin
- ④ **View:**
At entrance to Grade II* Emmeline Pankhurst Memorial
- ▨ **Setting:**
For Grade I Victoria Tower
- ▨ **Setting:**
For Grade II* Buxton Anti Slavery Memorial
- ▨ **Setting:**
Enclosed, designed, gardenesque and contemplative setting to Pankhurst Memorial

- Evidential Values: (Archaeological)**
- The Park sites within the Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square Conservation Area with the northern end of the site included in the Area of Special Archaeological Priority.
 - Westminster and Whitehall have been central to royal government administration of the country since the medieval period and has spiritual, symbolic, political, historic, architectural and archaeological significance. For nearly 1000 years it has been at the centre of the country's most historic events such as coronations, royal weddings, state funerals and general elections. Buildings within the APA are recognisable throughout the world and few other places within London or the rest of the country have such a richness of archaeological potential which can be associated with so many historic events over such a prolonged period of time.'

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY SIGNIFICANCE

Significance explains what matters about the gardens, why it matters and to whom. It is based on the 'Values' as defined by Historic England, as the basis for developing management guidelines so the positive aspects of Victoria Tower Gardens can be conserved in perpetuity.

The Community Values as well as Health and well-being benefits of the gardens, are depicted further in this plan.



Community Values: Public and Community Use

- As an invaluable respite for the many communities, workers and tourists that live in, and/or visit this densely populated area of London, opened for public access through a gift and parliamentary funds in 1879 with the southern section covered by the 1900 Act, for use as a public garden.
- For the contribution to the local population's health and well-being, especially given most local, high density dwellings do not have access to gardens.
- Its value as an amenity in an area acknowledged as 'deficient in play' in WCC's Open Spaces Strategy 2007 and bordering an area of 'open space deficiency', (2018 strategy) making its communal value all the more significant.
- As a calm, garden space with mature trees, providing access to nature

LPGT PLAN 3:

CALCULATION OF OPEN SPACE and GREEN SPACE LOST TO DEVELOPMENT



AREA of CURRENT, OPEN, grassed RECREATIONAL SPACE (light blue line) = 10952m²

TOTAL AREA of PARK (red line) = 19078.836

AREA of PARK NO LONGER FREELY ACCESSIBLE is 7.1% of total park area. (solid yellow line denotes ticketed are, built structures, viewing points and ticketing/security building) = 1,353m²

LOSS OF EXISTING GREEN SPACE by AREA of ADDITIONAL HARD STANDING, (Shown by dashed yellow line) ACCESS AND PLAZA AREAS, CURRENTLY GREEN SPACE. = 1,594m²

- 1. Lost area of existing play area = 167 m²
- 2. Plaza and access paths: 1366m²
- 3. Lift access / hard-standing 61m²

Therefore LOSS OF TOTAL GREENSPACE BY MEMORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HARDSTANDINGS = 26.9%

$$\frac{(1353 + 1594) \times 100}{10952} = 26.9\%$$

Note the encroachment into the play area by 9.6m

TOTAL PARK lost to development = 2947m²

1:1000 @ A3

River Thames