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ROTHAMSTED
RESEARCH

The Gardens of Rothamsted Manor - Management Plan

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B3 Threats and Vulnerabilities

Rothamsted Research

Rothamsted Research (2003) *B3 Threats and Vulnerabilities* ; The Gardens Of Rothamsted Manor - Management Plan, pp 24 - 24

B3 Threats & Vulnerabilities

- The County Plan contains an intention to construct a Harpenden Bypass. If this were acted on, it would be likely to cross the Rothamsted estate. It is unlikely that it would cross the Manor gardens, but it would certainly damage the surrounding landscape and could even jeopardise the future of the field experiments.
- The majority of Rothamsted Research's funding comes from Government sources. The institute must compete with other sites and other priorities. There is no absolute guarantee that support will be maintained at current levels or at all. Without government support, the Lawes Agricultural Trust would struggle to ensure continuity of ownership and land management. The significance of the threat to the Manor gardens in these circumstances would be minor, however, compared with the threat to the 'Classical' field experiments. If continuity of management was lost there, a uniquely valuable scientific, historical and cultural resource of international importance could very quickly become an unremarkable set of fields.
- There are considerable commercial pressures for development land in the Harpenden area, especially for housing.
- The high cost of staffing and accommodation in this part of Hertfordshire makes Rothamsted a comparatively expensive place to carry out research, most of which could be done elsewhere in the country. Given the pressures on Government funding, this may lead to reductions in investment and commitment to the site.
- GMO trials at Rothamsted have resulted in some anti-GM protests. If these were to intensify, it could seriously damage both the fabric and the reputation of the site. This might make increased public access to the Manor House, gardens and experimental fields more difficult to justify.
- It is possible that further items may be stolen from the gardens.
- The current level of funding and its continued downward trend will gradually erode the value of the site and its features.
- The current status of the Manor gardens without specifically devoted resources, management, staff or policies will tend to militate against a clear sense of purpose in their management. The gardens have no specific individual or body in place to champion them, or to develop a strategy for their future. The gardens' particular needs will therefore not easily be recognised within an institution whose core interests lie elsewhere.