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The Gardens of Rothamsted Manor - Management Plan

[Full Table of Content](#)



Preface

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Rothamsted Research (2003) *Preface* ; The Gardens Of Rothamsted Manor - Management Plan, pp 0 - 0

Preface

This Management Plan has been produced as coursework for the Architectural Association's Diploma in 'Conservation (Gardens and Landscapes)'. It builds on an earlier historical research project also undertaken for the course: 'The Gardens and Landscape of Rothamsted Manor - An Historical Report', completed in May 2001.

I have had two sets of objectives for this project. Firstly, to meet the requirements of the course and to learn from the process. In addition to this I have been motivated by a desire to produce something that may be of use to Rothamsted itself. I have been fascinated by Rothamsted and its history ever since I started my research and got to know the gardens, and have built up an affection for the place. I hope with this document to be able to make a contribution to thinking about its future as well as its past.

This Management Plan is fundamentally an 'academic exercise'. Although it was prepared with as much rigour as could be mustered, it has not been through the process of discussion and review that it would if commissioned from a consultant in the normal way. No-one at Rothamsted has even commented on a draft, and this clearly undermines any pretensions it may have to be a real working document. There may, however, also be benefits in that academic work of this kind brings greater freedom to venture opinions and ideas than may be the case under contractual obligations.

Given the limitations of the process it is likely that there will be some inaccuracies in matters of fact, that some of the proposed objectives are unrealistic, and that certain aspects of the wider institutional picture have not been fully understood. Also, I will not deny that the values that lie behind the assessment, vision and objectives may be influenced by personal interests and ideas. Nevertheless, I have tried to retain a sense of balance and to create something that might be of use, and I believe that the document offers a useful basis and structure for thinking about the future of the gardens, whatever that might be.

I would like to thank all who have helped me with this project: Karen Bowen (House Manager); Julian Franklin (Head of Horticulture and Controlled Environment Services); Richard Bromilow (Chair, Woodland Advisory Group); Professor Roger Plumb (Senior Fellow); and in particular Winston Bothwell (Head Gardener) and Kate Harwood (Rothamsted staff & Herts. Gardens Trust) for their help and support. I am especially indebted to Romilly Cook for her patience and forbearance.