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ROTHAMSTED
RESEARCH

The Gardens of Rothamsted Manor - Management Plan

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Introduction

Rothamsted Research

Rothamsted Research (2003) *Introduction* ; The Gardens Of Rothamsted Manor - Management Plan, pp 1 - 1

INTRODUCTION

Aims

To set out a vision for the future of the gardens of Rothamsted Manor and to propose objectives to achieve it. In doing this the Plan will also aim to:

- Survey all aspects of the site, its management, and the influences upon it;
- Identify the value and significance of the site;
- Conserve, maintain and enhance the value of the site;
- Consider the site and its context as holistically as possible.

Overview of site

Rothamsted is internationally known as the site of the 'Rothamsted Experimental Station' - probably the oldest agricultural research centre in the world. The estate is situated on the south-western edge of Harpenden in Hertfordshire. It is owned and administered by the Lawes Agricultural Trust, which is also responsible for supporting the work of the research institute, Rothamsted Research. A series of continuous agricultural field experiments were begun in the mid-19th Century by the owner of the estate, Sir John Bennet Lawes. Several of these experiments are still ongoing and continue to be of scientific value, while other areas of research have developed in many new directions. The work done at Rothamsted has been of great significance in the development of modern farming, plant sciences and statistics.

Rothamsted was Sir John Bennet Lawes' ancestral estate and had been owned by his forebears, the Wittewronges, since 1623. The Manor House and gardens lie in the centre of the estate on a site occupied since at least the 13th Century.

The gardens, including the Manor Wood, retain many fine and historic features, and are of significant interest and value. They are well-kept immediately around the House, but in common with many other sizeable gardens around the country, resources for their maintenance have been dwindling for nearly a century and some areas and features have inevitably been comparatively neglected or virtually abandoned.

What is a Management Plan?

A management plan is a document that provides a vision for the future of a site and the means to achieve it. It is now accepted as a key tool in the management of gardens and landscapes, particularly where they have significant historic, landscape or ecological value, and is a requirement for most forms of grant funding and support. The management planning process recognizes that gardens and landscapes are dynamic and constantly changing. It establishes strategies and an action plan to manage this change in order to maintain and enhance the key values of the site. Once completed, the management plan is itself not static and is monitored and reviewed to ensure it can adapt to changing circumstances.

Scope

This management plan is principally concerned with the Manor Gardens, but looks at them in the context of their surroundings, the wider management issues, and their role within the estate as a whole. Detailed analysis and proposals focus on the gardens, but other areas and activities are covered where relevant.