



Kings Weston Action Group

Newsletter number 2

Tour success...

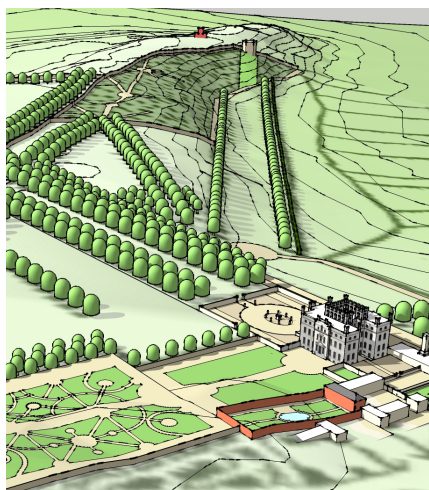
We hope you enjoy following updates on current progress.

KWAG's walking tour of the lost landscape of Kings Weston ran on Sunday 3rd July and proved hugely popular. Booking quickly becoming over-subscribed it was fortunate that some late cancellations left a manageable group of 27 to undertake an extensive circuit of the historic estate. The tour visited many familiar landmarks as well as some brand new discoveries including the terrace behind the Echo where it was revealed that 30ft of Kingsweston Hill had been removed in an ambitious and early attempt to unite Kings Weston and Shirehampton Parks. Although the two-hour walk over-ran considerably the majority of attendees stuck it out to the end and remarked, almost universally, that they hadn't realised just how much there was of the historic parkland still left to explore.

Thanks are due to Nicola Brownlie, ranger of Blaise Castle Estate for assisting in organising and marshalling the event and to all those who attended for making it such a success. Following the interest in the walk it will now be re-run on Sunday October the 2nd.



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New dimensions for the Kings Weston landscape

A 3D reconstruction of Kings Weston Estate as it might have appeared in about 1720 has recently been completed and is adding considerably to our understanding of the formal landscape around the 'new' Vanbrugh house. Based on an estate plan held in the Bristol Record office the model shows for the first time the layout of the park in relation to its unique topography. The steep slopes surrounding the house offered spectacular views, once renowned throughout the UK, but most of which have since been lost to overgrowth or the development of industrial Avonmouth.

The model identifies important lost features such as the Great Court, a previously unknown hexagonal pavilion, and the vast scale of a viewing terrace designed to mimic an ancient fortification. With changing fashions in garden design all these features were lost within a generation. The model will be used to help inform a new approach to the conservation of remaining historic features and identify where future work might uncover archaeological remains.

Urn rediscovered

Most people will know of the sad story of Penpole Lodge, the "Breakfast Room", that was demolished by the City Council in 1950, but two weeks ago one small but significant part of that building was rediscovered. Designed by Vanbrugh in about 1724 with his usual Baroque swagger, the lodge replaced an earlier structure marking the limits of the estate where it met the common land on Penpole Point.

The building was topped by four extravagant urn-like finials and it is the larger portion of one of these that has recently been identified at the bottom of Penpole Wood. The doughnut-shaped stone apparently rolled the considerable distance during demolition works some sixty years ago and has lain there unidentified ever since. The hope is that it can now be salvaged and restored to help tell the story of the lost building.

Planning peril

One of the recent threats to Kings Weston has been a planning application for commercial development on Penpole Lane. The Karakol site, has remained developed as a small business unit since WWII, but the proposals were to greatly increase the density of the buildings in a sensitive position within the Registered Historic Landscape. After a wave of objections from local residents, English Heritage, the Conservation Advisory Panel, and KWAG the Planning Authority eventually refused the application, but the applicant still has the option to go to appeal. KWAG remain dedicated to opposing any inappropriate development within English Heritage's Registered Park boundary and continue to monitor the situation closely.