

Inquiry: Urban Green Spaces
Held By: EFRA Committee
Deadline for Evidence: 20 October 2023
URL: <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/7932/urban-green-spaces/>

The Heritage Alliance

Urban Green Spaces Inquiry: Response to Call For Evidence

October 2023

About Us

[The Heritage Alliance](#) is England's largest coalition of independent heritage interests, bringing together over 200 organisations, which contain over 7 million members, volunteers, trustees, and staff. The vast majority of England's historic environment is managed and cared for by Heritage Alliance members, including many sites within urban settings. Our members who have an interest in urban green or blue spaces range from large organisations (such as the National Trust, the Gardens Trust, the London Parks & Garden Trust, or the Canal & River Trust) to smaller groups focused on particular urban sites (from St John's Waterloo, to Bedern Hall in York, to the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust). The Heritage Alliance sits on the Government's Heritage Council, and on the heritage sector's Historic Environment Forum.

Urban green spaces with heritage value are irreplaceable resources that bring immense benefits to communities. However, they face growing pressures and require dedicated conservation. In this inquiry response, **we highlight the historic and cultural value of these spaces**, and recommend ways to safeguard them through policymaking and public investment. We believe that conserving and enhancing access to historic urban green spaces should be a key priority for the Committee's recommendations to Government.

In our recently published [Heritage Manifesto 2023](#), we outlined several policy and fiscal priorities for supporting the UK heritage sector and maximising its benefits for communities and the environment. Several of our Manifesto priorities align closely with the goals of this Inquiry – including supporting community cohesion through heritage-led regeneration, and embedding historic environments within nature recovery and net zero strategies. Conserving historic urban green spaces (or creating new green spaces on historic sites) presents both challenges and opportunities – but, through careful and attentive planning, we can unlock the full potential of these vital heritage assets.

General Comments

Introducing historic urban green spaces

The Heritage Alliance has a keen interest in the future of urban green spaces which hold historic significance. We believe that **the historic character of an urban green space makes a significant contribution to the benefits that it provides**. Historic urban green spaces may consist of both public and private sites, including (but not limited to):

- public parks and municipal gardens;
- private gardens or grounds (including school or institutional grounds);
- amenity green spaces (residential, business, and transport amenity spaces – including domestic gardens, communal recreation spaces, informal recreation spaces, and urban town squares, walks, or greens);
- play spaces for children and teenagers;
- sports areas (such as playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts, or bowling greens);
- green or blue corridors within urban environments (including green cycle ways, routes along canals and rivers, and waterways);
- natural and semi-natural green spaces (woodland, grassland, remnant countryside, nature conservation areas, commons, heaths, canals and rivers, beaches, and disused or derelict land);
- allotments, community growing spaces, nurseries, and botanical gardens;
- burial grounds (churchyards and cemeteries);
- sites of archaeological interest.¹

The value of historic urban green spaces

Historic urban green spaces serve as a material link to the past of the communities that surround, survey, visit, and inhabit them. Some spaces may have existed as common land for centuries, whilst others began as private estates or parks before eventually being absorbed by growing cities. From the late eighteenth century onwards, still more urban green spaces were established in response to significant events or cultural movements – from commemorations, to campaigns, to philanthropic donations – with such sites becoming particularly prevalent following the Victorian public parks movement. The evolution of individual urban green spaces over time may tell a story of shifting social demographics, changing public attitudes, or the impact of urbanisation and industrialisation. Although these spaces are rarely static, their gradual development over successive generations can foster a deep sense of place and continuity for local residents.²

Historic England's **Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England** [currently identifies over 1,600 sites](#) of particular historic significance, and a notable proportion of these are located in towns or cities. The Register's urban green spaces tell extraordinarily diverse stories: from [Stoney Road Allotments](#) in Coventry (which evolved from a medieval park, to eighteenth-century private gardens, to Victorian allotments for workers in the local silk weaving and watch-making factories); to Leicester's eighteenth-century '[New Walk](#)' (which was partly funded by a public subscription to pay for trees and shrubs); to the Japanese-themed [Peasholm Park](#) in Scarborough (which hosted enormously popular aquatic and light displays in the pre- and post- Second World War period).³

¹ This list has been adapted from the definition of 'greenspace' provided by Public Health England, within [Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020](#) (2020), pg. 17.

² On the general history of urban green spaces in the UK, see Travis Elborough, *A Walk in the Park* (Jonathan Cape, 2016); and Carole A. O'Reilly, *The Greening of City* (Taylor & Francis, 2021).

³ See Historic England's publication [Urban Landscapes: Register of Parks and Gardens Selection Guide](#) (January 2018), which describes the different types of urban green spaces that are currently included in the register, and sets out the selection criteria for designation. See also Historic England's [response to the call for evidence from the London Green Spaces Commission](#) (June 2019).

Individual historic green sites may be of local, regional, national, or even international importance, and they often represent some of the UK's biggest green infrastructure assets.

Within urban green spaces, **heritage assets** contribute to the aesthetic and educational enrichment of the space, allowing people to enjoy the area's heritage and learn about its history, culture, and natural environment. Such assets might include: statues and sculptures; water features (fountains, pools); ornamental structures (temples, follies, pavilions); earthworks (terraces, moats); bridges or pathways; bandstands; boundary stones; memorials; gravestones; designed views and vistas; and planted features (from herbaceous borders, to rose gardens). Urban green spaces also offer ample opportunities for the integration of new, contemporary heritage installations – from interpretative displays and historical trails, to commemorative plaques and markers which honour local community history.

Meanwhile, the presence of '**natural heritage**' – which can include ancient and veteran trees, street trees, lakes and ponds, wetlands, waterways, and greenhouses or botanical gardens – can add significant social, cultural, and ecological value to an urban green space. The presence of living natural history encourages rich and unique biodiversity and provides opportunities for scientific study and conservation. More broadly, these historic natural elements help to connect people with nature, and in doing so they can provide substantial benefits for health and wellbeing (from stress relief, to heightened self-esteem) and promote a sense of environmental stewardship.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, The Heritage Alliance worked with the Government to allow the public to access local historic parks and gardens as a 'first step' out of lockdown in May 2020. As was established in the research project *Places of Joy: Heritage After Lockdown* (2020), access to these green spaces provided critical social connections, physical and psychological wellbeing, and **places of security and safety during this national health crisis**.⁴ *Places of Joy* found that heritage sites were perceived as particularly trustworthy by members of the public, which helped to encourage them to re-enter the outside world:

*Trust was an important value behind visitors' decisions to visit. Visitor responses show that heritage organisations were trusted to 'do things properly' and to put appropriate COVID-secure measures in place, such as handwashing facilities and ensuring social distancing. ... heritage sites were perceived as oases of safety in an otherwise threatening outside world; in our data 85% of visitors felt secure or very secure at heritage sites.*⁵

Our [Heritage, Health and Wellbeing](#) report (2020) provides several case studies from the lockdown period which further emphasise the value of historic urban green spaces to their local communities.⁶ Furthermore, our [Inspiring Creativity: Heritage and The Creative](#)

⁴ *Places of Joy* was supported by The Heritage Alliance and Historic England, and conducted by researchers at the University of Southampton, University of Cambridge and University of Surrey. See Joanna Sofaer, et al, '[Heritage sites, value and wellbeing: learning from the COVID-19 pandemic in England](#)'. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 27:11 (July 2021), pgs. 1117–1132.

⁵ Ibid, pg. 1125.

⁶ The Heritage Alliance, [Heritage, Health and Wellbeing](#) (2020).

[Industries](#) report (2019) highlights how these spaces can also be used as a showcase for local art, theatre, performance, and music.⁷

When thinking about **the heritage values that can be attached to an individual urban green space**, it may be useful to refer to the Conservation Principles published by Historic England in 2008, which aim to set out a clear, transparent, and sustainable management regime for all aspects of the historic environment. People value historic places in many different ways, but the Conservation Principles shows how they can be grouped into four categories:

1. **Evidential value:** the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
2. **Historical value:** the ways in which past people, events, and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be *illustrative* or *associative*.
3. **Aesthetic value:** the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
4. **Communal value:** the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.⁸

An existing (or potential) urban green space may hold ‘significance’ from a heritage perspective because some or all of the above values are attached to it by individuals or communities. It should be emphasised that – like the green spaces themselves – these values are not static, and that ‘judgements about heritage value ... tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as people’s perceptions of a place evolve’.⁹

Responses to Inquiry Questions

1. How successfully are the Government and Local Authorities protecting and increasing urban green spaces, and what trends can be seen in the extent and quality of those spaces?

Protecting historic urban green spaces

When it comes to protecting historic urban green spaces for future communities, there is currently a need for more systemic protections. Historic England’s Register of Parks and Gardens is an important tool, but the inclusion of a site on this register does not guarantee protection or resources. Furthermore, there are many green spaces that are of historic interest, but have not yet been included within the register.

In fact, many registered parks and gardens are simultaneously listed within Historic England’s **Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register** – which tracks [heritage sites that are at most risk of being lost](#) as a result of neglect, decay, or inappropriate development. The 2022

⁷ The Heritage Alliance, [Inspiring Creativity: Heritage and The Creative Industries](#) (2019).

⁸ Historic England, [Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance – For the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment](#) (April 2008), pgs. 27–32.

⁹ *Ibid*, pgs. 36.

edition of the HAR Register features 200 entries within the ‘gardens, parks, and urban spaces’ category, which cite issues ranging from vandalised and crumbling heritage buildings, to poorly maintained veteran trees and gardens, to historic areas that have been sold into commercial use and re-developed or built upon.¹⁰

Numerous entries highlight pressures from new housing, roads, and other unsympathetic developments which erode the historic character and fabric of sites. Urban green spaces that are connected to historic houses or estates – which are themselves particularly at risk of being converted into housing, schools, hotels, or other structures – are particularly vulnerable to decline or re-development. For example, [Grovelands Park](#) in the North London borough of Enfield – a Grade II* listed Registered Park & Garden – is in the ‘Priority A’ category for immediate action, and is described as follows:

Late C18 landscape park and lake by Humphry Repton, extended in the mid-C19 and laid out as a public park in the early C20 by Thomas Mawson. The mansion and immediate grounds are now a private hospital. The divided ownership of the park between the Local Authority, Thames Water and the hospital has led to differential management regimes. The sports area is in very bad condition with intrusive fencing and redundant structures.¹¹

As this particular case highlights, many historic urban green spaces are also subject to divided, multiple, or ambiguous ownership, which leads to uncoordinated management and conservation, and can make it challenging for heritage organisations to intervene.

Developing new urban green spaces on historic sites

The Heritage Alliance welcomes the development of new urban green spaces – including the Government’s aims to increase the amount of green cover to 40% in urban residential areas – and recognises the significant value that such spaces can bring to the health, environment, and culture of urban communities. However, the development of new urban green spaces should give due consideration to several key heritage factors.

Firstly, we would flag that the development of urban green spaces **should not involve the redirection of investment from rural agri-environment schemes**. Rural heritage assets face substantial threats – from traditional farm buildings, to dry stone walls, to ancient woods and historic landscapes.¹² We would urge complementary investment in rural and urban heritage green spaces, rather than a redistribution from one to the other.

Secondly, when new urban green spaces are being created, the development process must take consideration of the historic setting. New parks or open green spaces will **require careful planning and impact assessments** – particularly within conservation areas. Ground disturbance (including levelling) may damage buried archaeology, or destabilise the foundations of nearby historic buildings. Once destroyed, intentionally or otherwise, historic assets cannot be replaced. The same is true of historic natural heritage, such as designed

¹⁰ Historic England, [Heritage At Risk Register 2022](#) (2022), Excel database (filtered by ‘Broad Term’, ‘gardens parks and urban spaces’).

¹¹ Entry for [Grovelands Park](#), in the [Heritage At Risk Register 2022](#).

¹² For more information on the vulnerability of rural heritage, please see the Heritage Alliance publication, [Rural heritage under threat: looking after our landscapes post-Brexit](#) (July 2017).

landscapes or veteran trees (which may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders – but equally, may not yet have been assessed for protected status). The planning system should be utilised to protect both built and natural heritage assets on or near the proposed site, and existing assets should be retained and integrated into the new green space.

Thirdly, Natural England's recently published Green Infrastructure Framework (GIF) states [that a key principle for what good green infrastructure should look like](#) is that it should **'respond to an area's character'** – including responding to the historic and cultural associations that can bind a community to the location.¹³ A historic character assessment should be conducted for any new urban green spaces, and planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history.

Finally, we want to highlight that historic character assessments can offer **rich opportunities for protecting and incorporating heritage into the 'vision' for new urban green spaces** – which will help to ensure that these spaces are valuable and sustainable for future generations. As Natural England puts it, 'heritage is a great springboard to engage with people and get them involved in designing, planning, and looking after green infrastructure features such as parks, and in doing so socialise and bond, and revitalise and enrich their local culture'.¹⁴ Some of our suggestions for ways to incorporate heritage into new urban green spaces include:

- funding research into the history of the site, partnering with local heritage groups and museums, and interpreting key findings through information panels, interpretative trails, and digital content;
- displaying artefacts that were discovered during archaeological surveys, and reusing excavated materials (like bricks) where possible;
- identifying tree or plant species with historic significance to the area, and reestablishing these throughout the site, with labels to educate visitors about their uses and origins;
- ensuring that any new structures or landscaping align with local vernacular architecture and landscape character, using traditional materials and techniques to support heritage craft skills;
- commemorating historic events, industries or movements associated with the site or wider area – by installing commemorative plaques and markers, commissioning new public art, and/or adopting historic names for areas or routes within the green space;
- hosting heritage workshops, activity days, and events in collaboration with local groups – possibly demonstrating traditional crafts associated with the area;
- burying time capsules to be opened by future generations, and encouraging the community to contribute items and messages that reflect contemporary life.

¹³ Natural England, [Natural England Green Infrastructure Principles](#) (January 2023), pgs. 34–35.

¹⁴ Natural England, [Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide](#) (January 2023), pgs. 53–54.

2. What environmental challenges are urban areas facing, and how could wider access and inclusion to green spaces (including dog-friendly spaces) address these challenges?

Urban areas face numerous environmental challenges that degrade quality of life for residents and threaten ecological sustainability. Key issues include increased carbon emissions, rising temperatures and heatwaves from the 'urban heat island' effect, air pollution from congested traffic, noise pollution from transport and industry, risks of flooding due to impermeable surfaces, loss of biodiversity, and increased carbon emissions. These challenges disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities residing in city centres.

Historic urban green spaces and environmental challenges

The Heritage Alliance's recent [Heritage Manifesto 2023](#) calls upon all political parties to **embed the historic environment in nature recovery and net zero strategies**.¹⁵ The climate emergency poses an existential threat to heritage, including historic urban green spaces. Increased carbon emissions, acid rain, and thermal stress can accelerate the deterioration of building materials, monuments, and statues. Rising temperatures can also lead to the loss of biodiversity, and cause historic gardens to wilt and wither.

Historic urban green spaces provide immense value in addressing environmental challenges – often **offering superior environmental benefits to newer green sites**. For example, the typically larger size of veteran trees enhances their environmental benefits: their trunks can store more carbon than younger trees, their larger canopies absorb more air pollutants and provide greater shade (mitigating urban heat islands), and their extensive root systems help to reduce the runoff of water pollutants. Biodiversity is higher within historic parks that have existed for centuries compared to newer parks, as they contain well-established ecosystems, as well as potentially rare or endangered plant species. The fact that many historic urban green spaces have withstood the test of time showcases the resilience of their natural systems, and they can serve as inspiring examples of adaptability in the face of environmental challenges.

Currently, the National Trust is actively embedding [a climate adaptation policy](#) alongside specific mitigation strategies at individual sites. For example, the seventeenth-century [Ham House and Garden](#) – located on the banks of the River Thames – is prone to flooding in winter and soaring temperatures (even wildfires) in summer. [To combat these significant challenges](#), the Trust has restored Ham House's Victorian water irrigation system, and established new Mediterranean plant varieties that can withstand warmer temperatures. Their engagement with the general public throughout this process – such as opening earlier and later during heatwaves, and providing movable shade shelters throughout the garden – is **enhancing public awareness of adaptation strategies** whilst ensuring that the site remains accessible and engaging for a wide range of visitors.¹⁶

¹⁵ The Heritage Alliance, [Heritage Manifesto 2023](#) (2023), pg. 3,

¹⁶ Making Climate Adaptation Matter, 2023 (<https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/National-Trust-Making-climate-adaptation-matter.pdf>)

Member Case Study: The Chelsea Physic Garden

The Chelsea Physic Garden is a historic botanical garden located in London, covering approximately four acres along the banks of the River Thames. It was founded in 1673 for the purpose of training apothecaries to identify, cultivate, study, and use medicinal plants. It is one of the oldest botanical gardens in the world, and played a significant role in the development of botanical and horticultural science.

Today it functions as a museum, educational institution, and a living collection of over 5,000 plant species. The Garden actively engages with school children, young people, and community groups throughout London – co-ordinating greening projects, hosting community meet-ups, and running gardening programmes to support individuals recovering from physical and mental illness.

During the July 2022 heatwave, the Garden shared that temperatures as high as 39.3°C meant that many plants were ‘showing the effects of water and heat stress, such as shedding, brown, crispy, curling or yellow leaves, and wilting’.¹⁷ It has [declared a ‘microclimate emergency’](#) within its grounds, and is actively identifying ways to combat the changes. The Garden is providing scientific evidence to track the impact of climate change, hosting events and workshops, and helping visitors to learn more about the relationship between humans and plants. It has called upon visitors to make ‘micro changes’ within their own lives to make a positive environmental impact (from using reusable cups for hot drinks, to collecting rainwater for watering their gardens).

As is epitomised by the title for its 350th anniversary celebrations – [A Physic Garden for the Future](#) – the Chelsea Physic Garden is taking the knowledge, biodiversity, and public interest that it derives from its unique historic status, and using this to advance new innovations and interventions to confront climate change.

3. To what extent will Government initiatives such as the Green Infrastructure Framework, the Levelling Up Parks Fund and Urban Tree Challenge Fund adequately address the issues associated with a lack of green space in towns and cities?

The Heritage Alliance is supportive of current government initiatives, and would particularly highlight for praise the acknowledgement of heritage within Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Framework.¹⁸ However, we would welcome the publication of **more detailed, heritage-focused Government guidance** – to assist planning authorities, developers, and community groups to recognise the unique challenges and opportunities offered by existing historic urban green spaces and/or developing new green spaces on historic urban sites. Making historic conservation an integral pillar of all current and future initiatives will help to maximise their environmental and community benefits.

¹⁷ Chelsea Physic Garden Facebook page, [Garden updates: micro climate emergency](#) (11 August 2023).

¹⁸ See, in particular, Natural England’s [Green Infrastructure Principles](#), pgs. 4–5, 34–35, 44–48; and its [Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide](#), pgs. 30–31, 52–55, 82–83.

4. Will the Government achieve its aims to increase the amount of green cover to 40% in urban residential areas? What other additional measures should the Government take to increase green urban space?

In order to achieve its 40% target, it will be essential for the Government to **integrate existing historic sites and green spaces into future development plans**. As we have already discussed (see our response to Question 1), such integration should always be approached carefully, and be mindful of the impact of new green cover on existing historic settings and heritage assets.

Member Case Study: Castlefield Viaduct, Manchester

Castlefield Viaduct is a 330-metre long steel viaduct located in Castlefield – the heart of historic Manchester, with origins dating back to Roman times. Built in 1892, the Grade II listed viaduct was praised as ‘a triumph of engineering skill’, and carried heavy rail traffic into Manchester Central Station until its closure in 1969.

After over 50 years standing unused, this Victorian viaduct is now being transformed into an urban green space as part of a pilot project by the National Trust. Launched in 2022, the two-year pilot aims to turn Castlefield Viaduct into a temporary ‘garden in the sky’ public park.

The project has repurposed half of the viaduct’s deck into garden areas and walkways, which are open freely to visitors. Local partner organisations including City of Trees and Hulme Community Garden Centre have [created unique garden plots reflecting Manchester’s heritage](#) – showcasing plants like cotton grass (Manchester’s county flower) and other species connected to the city’s history. The National Trust provide free guided tours to visitors, and regularly host special educational events, workshops, and trails.

If successful, there are [plans to make Castlefield Viaduct a permanent park and cultural amenity](#) – building on the site’s rich history to create a new community asset that blends urban green space with local heritage. The viaduct’s ongoing transformation offers valuable lessons for how historic structures can be successfully and creatively adapted to respond to new environmental needs: engaging with local partners and community groups, sourcing sustainable materials and fostering site-appropriate biodiversity, and sharing historical research with visitors. By repurposing the viaduct – rather than redeveloping or demolishing the site – the National Trust have preserved an iconic piece of Manchester’s industrial heritage whilst creating an new, inclusive urban green space.

5. Is access to urban green spaces equally distributed across all sectors of society? Do the environmental and associated health risks disproportionately impact certain groups? What barriers to access exist and how can they be addressed?

Urban green spaces face several barriers to access, including cost, lack of proximity, concerns over safety, and inadequate facilities. These issues disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities, including low-income households, elderly residents, and ethnic minorities.

Access challenges for historic urban green spaces

In addition to these common barriers, **historic urban green spaces can face additional access challenges** – for example, their heritage features may pose accessibility challenges for some users, or mean that paid entry is required to support continued maintenance. Urban green spaces which contain specific heritage assets (such as statues or monuments) will require more maintenance in the form of capital costs from Local Planning Authorities. This means that councils in wealthier areas are, in general, more likely to be able to keep historic parks or gardens in better condition. Regional disparities are also evident in the provision of conservation expertise in Local Authorities, meaning that some areas have reduced capacity to maintain and invest in heritage assets. A 2020 report from the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) highlighted that, since 2009, the overall conservation specialist advice available has decreased by 48.7% – with the North West region being the worst hit.¹⁹ Furthermore, 6% of Local Authorities in England do not have access to conservation advice in any form.

Using heritage to enhance the health benefits of/access to urban green spaces

Regional and demographic inequalities in access to urban green spaces lead to unequal distribution of their health and environmental benefits. As the Heritage Alliance’s [Heritage, Health and Wellbeing](#) report (2020) reveals, historic sites can have a significant positive impact on both mental and physical health: providing opportunities for exercise, recreation, and volunteering; offering therapeutic or mindful spaces to reduce stress and mental fatigue; and boosting social cohesion through feelings of stability, comfort, shared identity, and historic perspective.²⁰ This means that **the presence of a heritage dimension can enhance the broader health and wellbeing benefits of urban green spaces** – in both tangible and intangible ways.

Furthermore, **heritage elements can help to encourage and support access to these spaces**. As Natural England’s *Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide* observes:

Heritage values are often the catalyst for visiting, enjoying green spaces, engaging with others and getting involved. The historic public parks were designed for fresh air, recreation and exercise; and their creation and other spaces such as cemeteries were about improving the health of communities

¹⁹ Institute of Historic Building Conservation, [Local Authority Conservation Staffing Resources in England](#) (2020), pgs. 1, 4.

²⁰ The Heritage Alliance, [Heritage, Health and Wellbeing](#) (2020).

and sanitation. Returning to these historic values offers the potential for addressing similar modern day health issues.²¹

This highlights the important role that heritage has to play in supporting urban green regeneration – not only in creating well-designed and distinctive spaces, but in encouraging the general public to use, connect, and learn about them. By engaging with the historic fabric of the local area, urban green spaces can become more inclusive, accessible, vibrant, and impactful.

Our Heritage Manifesto's call to **support community-led regeneration** suggests that community ownership and stewardship of historic urban green spaces could give people a stake in their preservation and help to ensure that they reflect community needs. Small grants could support outreach programmes and basic accessibility improvements. The **promotion of heritage skills and learning** (another Heritage Manifesto priority) can also expand access and inclusion – providing apprenticeships and volunteering roles in historic landscape management would offer opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to actively participate. Free or subsidised educational programmes centred on the history of local parks would make them welcoming and enriching for all.

Conclusion

The Heritage Alliance believes that the UK's historic urban green spaces deserve celebration and support. Their unique historic lineage provides social, cultural, environmental, educational, and health and wellbeing benefits that cannot be easily replaced or recreated if lost. We urge the EFRA Committee to integrate heritage considerations into all aspects of its response to this inquiry – ensuring these irreplaceable assets are conserved through careful planning, enhanced through targeted investment, and made accessible to all. By actively incorporating heritage into urban green spaces, we can link communities to the past, bring life to the present, and promise hope for the future.

For further information or queries, please contact The Heritage Alliance.

Lydia Gibson
Head of Policy and Communications
The Heritage Alliance
020 7233 0700
policy@theheritagealliance.org.uk

The
Heritage
Alliance

*The Heritage Alliance is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales.
Registered No: 4577804. Registered Charity No. 1094793. Registered Office: St Martin Within
Ludgate, 40 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7DE.*

²¹ Natural England, [Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide](#) (January 2023), pg. 9.