

## CAPABILITY BROWN'S WIMBLEDON PARK HELP US PROTECT AND PRESERVE IT!



A view of what All England Lawn Tennis Club's proposed new, 8,000-seater Stadium might look like in Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park - a Grade II\* Listed, registered park and garden of special historic interest

Wimbledon Park - one of Capability Brown's celebrated parks - is under threat from All England Tennis's multimillion-pound commercial expansion of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships.

The Park is unique. Its heritage value makes it Grade II\* Listed and a registered park and garden of special historic interest. Its environmental and ecological value makes it a Grade 1 Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (a.k.a Local Wildlife Site).

We want to preserve and improve the Park for future generations, to help the community that uses it, to protect their open spaces, and to protect other open spaces for London.

That's why The Capability Brown Society is campaigning to save the Park.

## Our Goals, and How You Can Help

1. All England's current expansion plans must not go ahead.
2. Any revised plans from All England must be right for the Park and the local area - smaller scale, smaller or no damage, no stadium.
3. Any plans for the Park's future must respect its unique value, Brown's legacy and the needs and wishes of the local community.

You can find more out about our vision for the future here:

<https://thecapabilitybrownsociety.com/the-synopsis/>

The Park can have a great future! With your help, our campaign can succeed.

**If you are able, please donate to the campaign here:**

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/saveourwimbledonpark](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/saveourwimbledonpark).

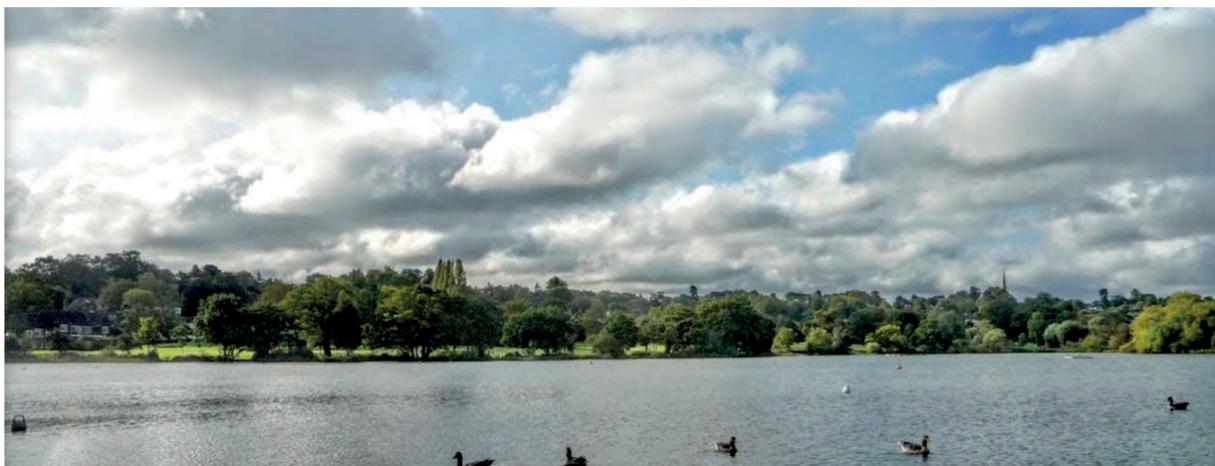
Please write to Merton and Wandsworth with your own objections. Or sign the petition that local residents have started:

<https://www.savewimbledonpark.org/>

And please pass on this message.

## The History

Capability Brown's Park was originally owned by John, 1st Earl Spencer. In 1765, he commissioned Brown to transform his formal gardens. Work continued until Brown's death in 1783. He designed a park which remains unique to this day. To quote English Heritage, "Brown's lake, and the lawned and wooded scene" is a "remarkable landscape survival" within modern London.



In 1993, Merton Council sold 73 acres of the Park to All England (who run the Championships). All England as buyer promised, in binding legal covenants, not to use the land other than for leisure or recreational purposes or as an open space. And Merton Council's Leader stated at the time that the land would be kept as open space and that Merton was determined that there should be no opportunity to use the space in future for any development.

In 2021, however, All England - having paid £65m to buy the golf club that had been using the land - applied for planning permission to create a vast development next to its existing site, and to more than double the footprint of its tennis championships.

### **All England's Development**

The scale of the development is enormous.

We've shown above what the proposed 8000-seater stadium might look like: 28m high, 104m wide - the size of a block of flats. This is to be built next to the three tennis stadiums All England already have on their "main" site.

We haven't pictured the whole development above. Some more facts and figures can tell the story:

- 50 acres of the Park will be built upon.
- 38 new tennis courts will be built, requiring 4000 tonnes of concrete for foundations.
- Combined with All England's existing "main" site, that means:
  - 92 acres devoted to tennis competitions - by comparison, Buckingham Palace covers a mere 19 acres
  - Well over 60 tennis courts in total, creating the biggest tennis centre in the UK.
- A 30,000 square foot maintenance building, numerous other buildings and 9km of new paths will be built.
- A 600-metre long, 3-metre wide, raised boardwalk will be built within the lake, ruining the profile and the beauty of the open water setting.
- 54,000 cubic metres of earth will be excavated and removed (22 Olympic swimming pools).
- 35,000 cubic metres of topsoil will be stripped.
- 300 trees will be felled. 500 trees will be uprooted and moved.
- Construction over 6.5 - 8.5 years.

Over 2000 residents, interest groups, local councillors and MPs have objected to the plans. All England's response has been to press on without any compromise. Merton Council's official position is that they will "respect" the covenant not to develop but they have given no stronger assurances.

### **What does this mean for Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park?**

If All England's development is permitted, the Park's heritage, ecology and environmental value, its openness, and what remains of Capability Brown's vision will be lost or changed forever. Contrary to All England's claims, their tree felling and replanting proposals will not conserve or restore Brown's historic views or his designed landscape heritage.

The Capability Brown Society loves the Park and all remaining Capability Brown landscapes. The protection and preservation of these landscapes - the Park in particular - is a core part of our mission. Many of Brown's parks are targeted by planning applications, especially those (like the Park) in multiple ownership and high-pressure development areas. Well over 1,000 planning applications affecting Brown's nationally important sites have been made since 2002, affecting about two-thirds of them. All England's development would set a precedent for hundreds of sites (including over 60 Brown sites) judged by Historic England, like the Park, to be "of more than special interest". So the outcome of All England's application is hugely important to Brown's legacy to the nation.

Just as important are the implications for an open space on the border of (and partly within) Inner London. An additional 50 acres of precious green space in London - 92 acres of land in total - will be permanently devoted to professional tennis competitions which will play no more than four weeks a year. No other sports club, operating on a commercial and mostly an exclusive private basis, could dream of doing this.

We've got nothing against tennis, but there are so many other ways that All England could expand without ruining the Park. There are other sites available, which All England refuses to consider.

### **The bigger picture**

The sad passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II has reminded the whole country of the importance of our **history and heritage**.

The pandemic reminded us how important **open spaces** are to local communities.

And the ever-present signs of climate change remind us of the vital contribution that **green spaces** make to the future of our planet and our way of life.

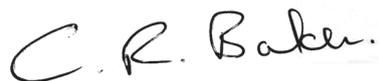
Let's unite to protect them!

### How We Can Save The Park

Donations will be used to ensure that our important campaign receives the public attention and support it deserves, and to make sure that it succeeds.

It's too soon to talk about legal action - the plans are still before the planning authorities and are awaiting a decision. But we will take all necessary steps - including legal steps if and when the time comes - to ensure that planning and any other decisions by public bodies which potentially harm the Park are taken properly, carefully considered, and reflect and give proper weight and effect to all applicable planning policies, precedents, legislation and the covenants.

We believe - and our legal advisers agree - that the case for refusing planning permission is overwhelming.



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