

Looking at old ground in a new way: Options appraisal summary

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Dated: 30.10.17

Revised: 31.12.17

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An options appraisal in part fulfilment of the UCL HEIF Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund grant (15 September 2017 - 15 January 2018)

A field study was held on 24th October 2017 at Burghley Park which continued later at the Burghley Estate Office. Stakeholder areas included Management, Events, Heritage and Sport. From UCL, May Cassar and Shaun McKinnar were in attendance.

Options appraisal: Ranking of objectives

To select a location for the competition arena in Burghley Park, the following initial list of objectives developed from the Burghley House Preservation Trust Annual Report 2015/16 and the Burghley Park Management Plan were discussed:

1. To maintain the Burghley Horse Trials at the highest international level of the sport
2. To make a significant contribution to the longevity of the great House and Estate
3. To attract a sustainable number of visitors to Burghley
4. To advance the preservation, conservation and educational objectives of Burghley
5. To conserve and enhance the historic designed landscape of which the Burghley Horse Trials forms part of the setting for Burghley House
6. To protect and interpret the wealth of above and below ground archaeology found across the park
7. To conserve and enhance the nature conservation values of the park

The participants first ranked the objectives individually, and then discussed and reached consensus as follows:

OBJECTIVES	Individual Rankings [1=highest; 7 = lowest]				CONSENSUS
	DP	EI/SA	MT	AD	
1	5	1	7	1	3
2	2	2	5	3	2
3	4	3	6	7	7
4	1	6	4	6	4
5	3	4	1	2	1
6	6	7	2	4	5
7	7	5	3	5	6

The consensus re-ordered the ranking of the objectives as follows:

1. To conserve and enhance the historic designed landscape of which the Burghley Horse Trials forms part of the setting for Burghley House

2. To make a significant contribution to the longevity of the great House and Estate
3. To maintain the Burghley Horse Trials at the highest international level of the sport
4. To advance the preservation, conservation and educational objectives of Burghley
5. To protect and interpret the wealth of above and below ground archaeology found across the park
6. To conserve and enhance the nature conservation values of the park
7. To attract a sustainable number of visitors to Burghley

Options appraisal: preferred location for competition arena

The three locations were first individually ranked by the participants following the ranked objectives as summarised in the first table in grey [below]:

	LOCATION PREFERENCES BEFORE DISCUSSION			
	Management	Heritage	Event	Sport
1 st preference	1 ⁱ	3	1	1
2 nd preference	3	1	2	2
3 rd preference	2 ⁱⁱ	2	3	3

The second table [below] shows that following discussion the group, the present location [1] emerged as the preferred option:

	LOCATION PREFERENCES AFTER DISCUSSION			
	Management	Heritage	Event	Sport
1 st preference	1	1	1	1
2 nd preference	3 ⁱⁱⁱ	3	2	2
3 rd preference	2	2	3	3

As can also be seen in the above table, no decision was reached on the 2nd and 3rd preferences as there was no time for discussion. However, the conversations throughout the day on all three locations can be summarised as follows:

Location 2 was preferred by the Sport and the Event participants and location 3 was preferred by the Management and Heritage participants. Yet, the difference was not clear cut as this distribution suggests. The conversations revealed that differences over location 3 might be bridgeable, while the Heritage participant was unconvinced by location 2.

The main benefits of location 3 would be:

- Close proximity of the arena to the stables for the horses.
- Distance from the house would mean any future consideration of a synthetic arena surface would mean that it would be hidden from the main Brownian vistas.

The main losses with location 3 would be:

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- Loss of views of the House: this could be overcome by the removal of recently planted trees between the field and the House.
- Loss of the centrality of the arena to the Event: this could be overcome with a comprehensive redesign of the showground and infrastructure – at a price.

Any move of the arena from the present location would entail considerable work to the infrastructure and importantly, to the re-design and flow of the showground. Since there is no unused space, the knock-on effect on the design of the Event would be extensive and potentially more disruptive to buried archaeological features in the Park, as well as costly. It was frequently mentioned that the remains of a monastery could be buried under Locations 1 and 2. This would require investigation.

The preference of Location 1 also involved a discussion on how a synthetic surface might be integrated and comparisons were made with the arena of London 2012. The idea of a temporary or removable synthetic surface emerged which would provide a quality competition surface for all competitors while impinging as little as possible on the surface and any buried archaeology. Consideration would however need to be made to the additional cost and physical impact on the ground of additional haulage.

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ⁱ Location 1: With the House taking centre stage and overseeing proceedings, the present location of the arena encourages the flow of visitors around the showground. This location is central to the logistics of the event. The underground infrastructure such as the large septic tanks is already installed thereby minimising disruption. The downside of this location is limited space for expanding the collecting ring.

ⁱⁱ Location 2: The location would be suitable because it presents flat ground and could use the infrastructure of Location 1 thus minimising further disruption and intrusion into the landscape. It could possibly also provide an opportunity to increase the size of the collecting ring. It also maximises opportunities to promote the beautiful House, televisually and photographically. The advantage of this location is the capacity to include a collecting ring and it is also easier and safer for the equine athletes to access the arena from the stables.

ⁱⁱⁱ Location 3: From an equestrian perspective, this location is ideally suited to the equine athletes due to the proximity of the stables and space for the collecting ring. A downside is that the inevitable changes that could be necessary to the showground layout as a whole, may result in this location for the arena feeling disassociated from the main event and the House.

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