

# THE STANLEY SMITH (UK) HORTICULTURAL TRUST

## Application Summary Sheet (please do not extent beyond one page)

### Contact details

**Name:** Glynis Powell  
**Organisation:** Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens (Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust)

**E-mail:** genmanagercbhgt@gmail.com

**Address:** Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens, Chester Road, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham B36 9BT

**Telephone number:** 0121 749 4100 (direct 07790787479)

### About your project

*Please provide a project title and short, high level description of the project which you are applying for a grant for.*

**Restoring the Parterre: maintaining our historic integrity without Box**

The core action of this project is an urgent response to the devastation that Box-Tree Moth is wreaking on historic gardens like ours. Our protected 17th/early 18th century design depends heavily on extensive box hedging, topiary and parterres. The signature motif Parterre in the SE corner of the walled garden has dramatically succumbed this summer. With the help of our volunteers we hope to totally replant the parterre with Yew and replace the South Walk's Box 'dumplings' with standard roses. As part of a wider project revivifying this corner of the Gardens we hope to take our visitors along with us in understanding how we can creatively adapt to change and while maintaining historic integrity.

*Please identify the category of the Trust's objectives which you believe your project meets.*

This project involves the restoration of part of an historic garden.

*Please describe personnel who will be participating in the project (if appropriate).*

Our two part-time professional Gardeners have developed the plan with a small group of our (30) garden volunteers. The work including grubbing out, growing on, planting and building the decorative containers will be carried out by them over winter and into spring.

*Please describe your long-term plans for the future of the project once the grant has been used (if applicable).*

Long term care of the new Parterre will be absorbed into the team's seasonal work tasks, with growth and development recorded over two years (photo and time lapse) to enhance visitor engagement. The wider project, to rescue and revive the south east corner of the Gardens, will continue as funding and time permits: horticultural and trellis build work done internally, archaeological conservation and extensive tree work both needing external contractors and funding.

### Financial Information

*Please attach all relevant financial information such as expected other income and proposed expenditure.*

**Sum applied for: £4,300** (at the Trustees discretion, towards the cost of plants)

*Please send your application (including this cover sheet and any supporting documents) preferably in electronic form, hard copy or both to the following addresses:*

**Postal address (hard copies):** Dr David Rae, Director, Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 20a Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR

**E-mail address (electronic copies):** d.rae@rbge.org.uk



## Background to the Trust

**Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens and Parkland (40-acres, Grade II\*) is a nationally significant survival of 17/18th century formal garden design on the edge of a highly urbanised city (Birmingham), surrounded by intense industrial cityscapes.** As well as being a favourite for garden 'tourists', our impact runs far deeper. We are a key urban green space in populous East Birmingham serving nearly 60,000 people within a 15-minute walk, communities that rank among the top 10% most multiply deprived in the UK. For these residents, our 40 acres represent their only access to safe outdoor space and wildlife.

The formal Gardens and Parkland provide a distinctive educational and therapeutic resource. Our small independent Trust has been restoring the site for 30 plus years and, over the last decade, have become specialists in providing nature-based activities for our local and regional communities. Visitor numbers have more than doubled from 9,880 in 2019 to over 20,000 in 2024. We've expanded our programme to include around 100 events and activities annually; from forest schools and family bushcraft to music, theatre and creative programmes. This growth demonstrates a clear community need and our effective response to it.

The Trust, in its 40th year in 2025, continues to be the main 'stewards' of the wider Conservation Area which includes the privately owned Jacobean Hall (hotel) and an active Parish church - a range that in itself presents multiple difficulties.

With no regular funding support, nor endowments, our tiny Trust continues to meet the challenge of maintaining and sharing the Historic Gardens and Parkland by opening all year round to the public.

We raise approximately 60% of annual day to day needs through our own revenue generation, but long term planning for change, responding to sudden needs - like box moth, drought and building failures - requires substantial external funding support.

While our own efforts to raise revenue enables the Gardens to keep welcoming people, the growing cost of caring for the 'heritage premium' remains a major challenge.

## Project background

Retaining, almost unchanged, the walled Gardens layout of 1740 when the Earls of Bradford family moved out to their 'other house' at Weston Park, the formal garden, typically, consists of a series of smaller spaces with vistas and 'wilderness' walks connecting the areas.

More than thirty years have passed since the Trust's original restoration and our 'dynamic duo' of professional gardeners alongside a troupe of dedicated and skilled volunteers have maintained and renewed the complex 10 acre site with amazing resilience. Working with consistently little budget and outdated machinery they have nevertheless enhanced and extended the 'visitor appeal' across all four seasons.

Over the last few years they have creatively responded to the less than sympathetic actions by the current owners of the neighbouring Hall (hotel); losing most of our nursery and storage spaces and dealing with their major neglect of boundary trees as well as the loss of some public gardens areas. The gardens team have revived and supported the two heritage fruit orchards and coped with a 60m



wall fall during Covid, which destroyed a small demonstration garden, alongside a number of espaliered fruit trees.

The Box-tree moth *Cydalima perspectalis* reached our West Midlands garden around 2022. In keeping with our organic practices, we successfully used biological controls and altered cutting regimes to keep it, successfully, under control. However, this year, possibly due to the exceptional weather conditions, almost every single one of our box hedges has succumbed - suddenly and shockingly- to a greater or lesser degree.

Page | 2

The Gardeners forward plan had already identified some hedging and topiary that could be regarded as potentially 'sacrificial'. Those areas which define the early 18th century style and which are most on view to the visitors have been prioritised. Over this summer many of the 'sacrificial box' has been either cut to the ground or grubbed out entirely - to be replaced by appropriate fencing or with our own propagated hedge germander (*Teucrium lucidrys*).

### **The South East Corner revival project**

**Hedges (600m plus!) are one thing, but the small box parterre, the pattern of which is our main logo, is proving more upsetting and difficult to deal with.**

The parterre (153m<sup>2</sup> all in all) is in the far South East corner of the Gardens, bordering the South Walk, between the Music Room and remains of the Gazebo/Belvedere.

This corner provides two of the main 'vistas' of the Gardens. From one angle the remains of belvedere/gazebo punctuates the long Allee view from the entrance gate, from the other angle it leads down towards the Music Room and Batty Langley Kitchen Garden.



The parterre was planted during the original restoration in the 1980s in order to draw the visitor through the gardens and beyond the traditional wildernesses.

In the intervening years this corner has struggled to retain its clarity because of overgrown neighbouring trees (the Hotel car park and local authority road), which as well as seriously shading the area are compromising the 18th/19th century retaining walls and gazebo steps. The long term shade, combined with this year's devastating moth infestation has effectively reduced this corner to a sad and dreary place where neither visitors nor gardeners wish to dwell.

### **Replanting the parterre**

The imminent loss of our signature 'logo' in the Gardens has provided our gardeners with a renewed energy in the 'fight to resist' the effects of Box Tree moth.

As the most urgent part of an overall two year project to revive this corner, we hope to totally re-lay the Box Parterre with Yew and to replace the row of Box 'dumplings' with an avenue of standard roses - which will be set off by the terracotta brick walls down to the Music Room.

While the architectural, archaeological and arboreal work in the corner will have to be done by specialist contractors, our own team of gardeners and diy volunteers are able to tackle the horticultural work.



The cost of the appropriately sized yew plants is, nevertheless, beyond our budget and we are appealing for financial support to enable us to fulfil this part of the project.

Please see attached outline.

Our part-time social media and marketing team are equally keen to engage our audiences with what's going on, especially where change is happening. Many of our visitors and users feel passionate about the Gardens and often have a favourite space responding energetically to social media highlighting 'their' areas. We think an extended programme of social media posts and videos mapping the changes in this corner would draw more people to explore this corner, allay any fears of those who have memorial bricks on the South Walk and gently inform people of the scientific and historical challenges we face.

Page | 3

## Who

The parterre project will be led by our Head Gardener Denise Seckham supported by Gardener Tanya Upton. Three, long term and very skilled, volunteers all over 70 years old, will tackle the new physical layout and build the plant boxes. They and other volunteers, will manage the planting, immediate and long term after care. This will be the first planting of new yew in the Gardens for some decades and will provide the opportunity for some of the other volunteers to learn care and control of young clipped yew.

Our social media team includes much younger staff and volunteers, some of whom are young carers who appreciate our flexible working practices while in return we get their fresh and younger eyes on our work. Working with the General Manager we will devise a programme of social and blog posts to track the transformation and will use our existing wildlife cameras to take a timelapse record of the initial part of the process. Together with the Events Co-ordinator we hope to be able to highlight and share the new area with visitors in the Spring- incorporating it into our 'meditation mile' - a self-guided wellbeing walk around the Gardens.

1. South Walk towards Batty Langley – before Box hedges taken out
2. 2023 – parterre and South Walk 'summer shagginess' before trim
3. Allee punctuated by trellis arch (no longer there-to be replaced





## South East Corner revival project

Page | 4

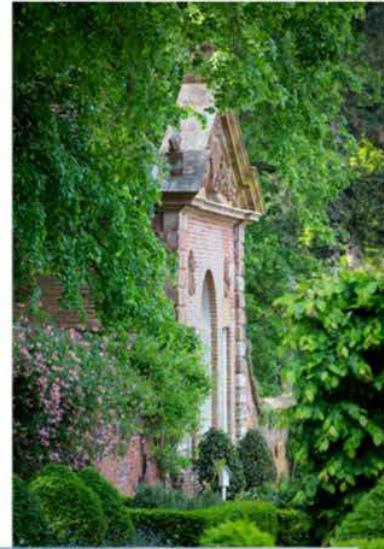
action	timing	cost	In house /voluntary labour: diems
Management oversight			10
Interpretation and signage (including timelapse) 1. Existing equipment 2. Social Media/Bloomberg app (staff time) 3. Onsite signage	Autumn - summer	£180	3
<b>ParTerre project</b>	Autumn to spring 2026		
Dig out			3
Construct new boxes/paint/place		£478	4
Prepare ground/pattern layout			2
Purchase plants: appx 1000 Taxus baccata	Asap - price rising	£3600	
Store /grow on			3
Gravel purchase		£110	
planting			7
After care			...
Plant up boxes	Fritillaria imperialis (probably)	£70	2
		<b>£4438</b>	
<b>South Wall Walk</b>			
Grub out box			3
Purchase /plant standard roses	David Austen x 8	£700	
plant/after care for whole of walk			4



		<b>£700</b>	
<b>Belvedere and Allee</b>			
Conservation architect re-survey: steps including planning permission		£1800	
Border trees reduced (external)- including permissions		£1200	
Re-bed brickwork- repair fracture, install mortar cap Repair of steps, making safe, rebed and replace missing steps with sandstone for support (where permissible)		£7,000	
Existing yew hedge /cypress trimming	inhouse		1
Design approval (NT)			
Wood purchased/constructed (voluntary labour)		£600	8
Placement and decoration		£250	1
		<b>£10,850</b>	
			51 days
	Total project cost	<b>£15,988</b>	£6120 in kind labour

The direct costs of Parterre and South Wall Walk project total £5138. We would very much appreciate a contribution to those costs, especially covering the purchase of plants.

## South Walk in better days (2023)



Allee view with trellis  
(collapsed in 2019)

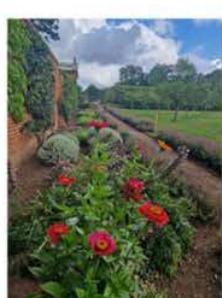


Aerial view of Gardens and the Hall - 2018- before  
the 'annexation' of land by Hotel

## Parterre and 'dumplings'- July and August 2025



## Elsewhere in the Gardens - problems and solutions



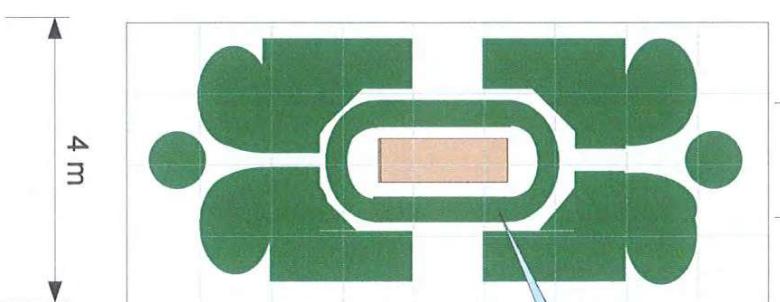
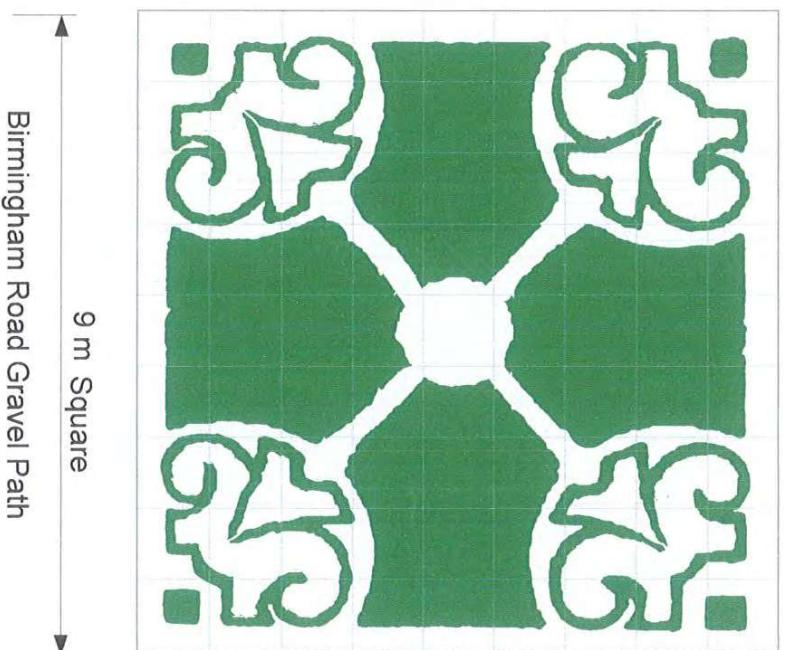
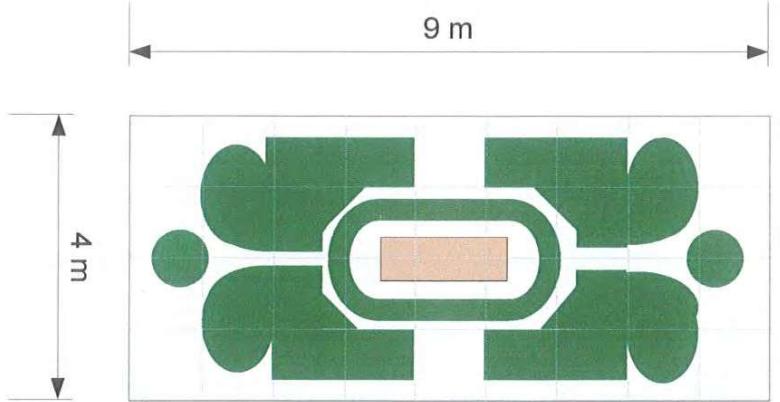
and a random happier picture..

# Castle Bromwich Hall & Gardens Trust

Each square = 1 metre

Upper Wilderness Parterre ~ Database Code UWP

Gravel Margins 30cm all round each bed



1.8 m  
3.3 m

Centre Oval Hedge  
Is 30cm thick and  
Extends 30cm above the  
Surrounding block