

## Memorials in the Royal Parks

This document sets out the policy for dealing with requests for monuments and memorials in the Royal Parks.

People, understandably, want a prominent position for their memorial and often look to the Royal Parks because of their place in the heart of the capital. But the Royal Parks are historic landscapes and memorials that are introduced out of context are not only inappropriate, they are also liabilities that involve The Royal Parks in substantial and ongoing maintenance costs.

As Dame Jennifer Jenkins's Review of the Royal Parks, states "*From time to time, individuals and organisations believe that they are doing the parks, as well as themselves, a favour by offering yet another memorial or sculpture. They are not.*" and it goes on to recommend that "*The rural landscape of the parks is not an appropriate setting for memorials, new sculpture or objets d' art, even if offered as gifts.*"

### Our policy

There is, therefore, a presumption against any further memorials in the Royal Parks, other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Any we might consider would have to be world class statues and would have to meet the following criteria.

- The subject would have to be of national and historical importance; that is, it commemorates an event or a person whose contribution is substantial and of genuinely national or international importance.
- As celebrity becomes ubiquitous, it is important that the subject being commemorated should stand the test of time and consideration will not be given to a request until at least two years has elapsed since the event being commemorated.
- The subject has a direct and demonstrable connection with the proposed location; i.e. the event should have taken place there, or there is documented evidence that the location played a significant part in the life of the person or the event it commemorates. (For instance, it would not be enough to show that the person concerned used to walk in a park).

## **The conditions**

An important consideration of any memorial it is proposed to agree in principle will be the form it takes. For instance, a traditional statue or monument may not be the most appropriate design for the location in question and sponsors should be prepared to consider alternative solutions like, for example, the Memorial Gates at the top of Constitution Hill, or the Diana Memorial in Hyde Park.

In order to justify a place in such a prominent setting, any such memorial would have to be constructed to the highest possible aesthetic and technical standards, using the best materials. The memorial's sponsors will have to agree the form of the memorial with TRP before submitting it to the local authority for planning permission.

Sponsors frequently underestimate the cost of designing and building their memorial, leaving the projects compromised and causing additional expenditure for The Royal Parks. Agreement in principle will therefore only be granted once the sponsor has agreed to

- meet the full cost of designing and constructing the memorial, and of landscaping or reinstating surrounding areas that may be necessary as a result of building the memorial.
- provide detailed and costed plans for building the memorial;
- provide evidence that they have adequate funding available to pay for the work, (including sufficient funds to set up an endowment to pay for future maintenance of the memorial);
- indemnify TRP (e.g. by an appropriate insurance policy) against any costs arising from any failure on their part to complete the project, for whatever reason.

Agreement will not be given for work to commence until The Royal Parks is satisfied with the arrangements for carrying out the project.

## Commemorative Plaques

Given the minimal impact they have on the landscape and amenity space, in some circumstances TRP will consider installing discrete commemorative plaques or engravings either to mark a key historical event or where an individual or organisation has made a significant donation towards improving the infrastructure, landscape or understanding of the estate. The plaques/engravings will be maintained by TRP for a period of up to 10 years. After that time TRP retains the right to remove it. TRP will not accept donations from individuals or organisations or agree to the installation of a plaque, where it is likely to give rise to controversy or undermine the reputation of TRP. The wording on the plaque must be approved by TRP. TRP does not permit plaques on or adjacent to trees or other living structures.

### **Alternative locations outside the Royal Parks**

The demand for memorials, particularly in central London, is unlikely to diminish and the Royal Parks will continue to be requested as locations for many of them, Westminster City Council is the local authority that covers most of the central London Royal Parks and also many of the other desirable central London locations for monuments and memorials. The Royal Parks are working closely with Westminster on a shared approach for handling requests for monuments and memorials. Although there is not the same demand for memorials in the other Royal Parks, we will work with the relevant local boroughs to draw up similar arrangements with them.

If you have any enquiries regarding monuments or memorials in the Royal Parks, please contact The Royal Parks, The Old Police House, Hyde Park, London W2 2UH; Tel 020 7298 2000 or [hq@royalparks.gov.uk](mailto:hq@royalparks.gov.uk).