



CHICHESTER TERRACE FORECOURT WORKS – HERITAGE BRIEFING FOR RESIDENTS

Why We're Doing This

Chichester Terrace forms part of the **Grade I listed Kemp Town Estate** and the **Grade II registered Kemp Town Enclosures** — one of Britain's most significant surviving Regency landscapes.

The forecourts were originally designed as *open lawns* framed by low railings, offering uninterrupted views of the terraces and the sea. Over time, dense shrub planting was introduced to deter dog walkers. While understandable, this later change has **obscured the architecture, blocked sea views, and weakened the historic character** that defines the Estate.

What's Happening Now

Our garden team has:

- **Coppiced** (cut back) large, overgrown shrubs

What is Going to Happen?

- **Reducing height** and reshaping remaining plants
- **Reopening key sightlines** between the terrace and the sea

This is **planned conservation work**, not destruction. The shrubs will regrow in a lower, more structured form that restores the open, orderly character appropriate to this Regency setting.

When Chichester Terrace was initially planted, it was on the condition that it be kept at a **low height**.

Why This Matters

According to **Historic England's Setting of Heritage Assets** guidance, overgrown vegetation that blocks views or alters a designed relationship between architecture and landscape causes **harm** to heritage significance.

By carefully reducing the planting, we are reversing that harm and protecting the long-term integrity of the Estate.

This work:

- Reveals the architectural rhythm of the Grade I façades
- Restores designed sea views
- Re-establishes the calm, elegant proportions intended by Thomas Read Kemp
- Improves both plant health and ease of maintenance

Looking Ahead

This work represents the **first step** toward reinstating the historic openness of Chichester Terrace. As we look to the future, it may be worth considering the **possibility of gradually returning the area to lawn**, reflecting the original Regency design and enhancing its historic openness. This is something that should be **openly discussed between residents, Kemp Town Enclosures, and conservation professionals**.

It's important to recognise that while well-intentioned, the decision to introduce dense shrub planting in the past has **inadvertently harmed the historic setting**, obscured key views and altered the designed relationship between architecture and landscape. Restoring a simpler, more open layout would strengthen the authenticity and harmony of the Terrace as originally conceived.

This approach would not only honour the heritage value of the site but also help preserve its unique qualities for future generations.

Please Support the Garden Team

The Head Gardener and team are following expert horticultural and heritage guidance to protect the integrity of this unique environment. Your patience and understanding are appreciated while the work continues.

Short-term change brings lasting benefit for the entire community. Please send any feedback to management@jonathonrolls.com rather than approaching the garden team directly.

Quick FAQs

“Are we losing the garden?”

No. The planting is being rejuvenated, not removed. It will regrow naturally in a lower, healthier form.

“Why can’t we leave it alone?”

Because neglect and overgrowth have caused real problems, the area had become **impenetrable, untidy, and used as a dumping ground for litter and waste**, which undermines both the appearance and safety of the space.

Overgrown vegetation was also **blocking sea views, hiding the terraces, and damaging the estate’s historic setting**. The current works are necessary to recover order, visibility, and pride in this shared environment.

“Will there still be greenery?”

Yes. The shrubs will regenerate, and any new planting will be low, structured, and in keeping with the Regency style.

“Is this allowed?”

Yes. The works comply with guidance from **Historic England, The Gardens Trust**, and the **National Planning Policy Framework (2023)**, all of which support conservation-led management of historic gardens.

“What about wildlife?”

This section of the terrace sits immediately beside **Marine Parade**, a busy main road with constant traffic, light and noise. Such exposure makes it unsuitable for nesting birds or sensitive species.

No mature trees or key habitats are being lost. The shrubs will regrow quickly, and the wider Enclosures provide far better conditions for wildlife. According to **Natural England’s urban greenspace guidance**, maintaining open, well-structured planting and reducing dense cover can even *enhance* biodiversity by improving airflow, light and plant variety.

In short, these works do **not harm wildlife** and may help create a healthier, more balanced environment overall.

In summary:

The Chichester Terrace works are a *heritage-led intervention* that will restore views, improve safety and cleanliness, and recover the Estate’s intended Regency character. This is not loss — it is **responsible stewardship** of one of Britain’s most beautiful historic landscapes.

Kemp Town Enclosures Board & Garden Team
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