

# BROOKLANDS

## MOTOR RACING CIRCUIT AND AERODROME ROAD

AN OWNERS' GUIDE

Members' Banking, now within the Brooklands Museum (image courtesy of English Heritage)

Produced in partnership by:



# INTRODUCTION

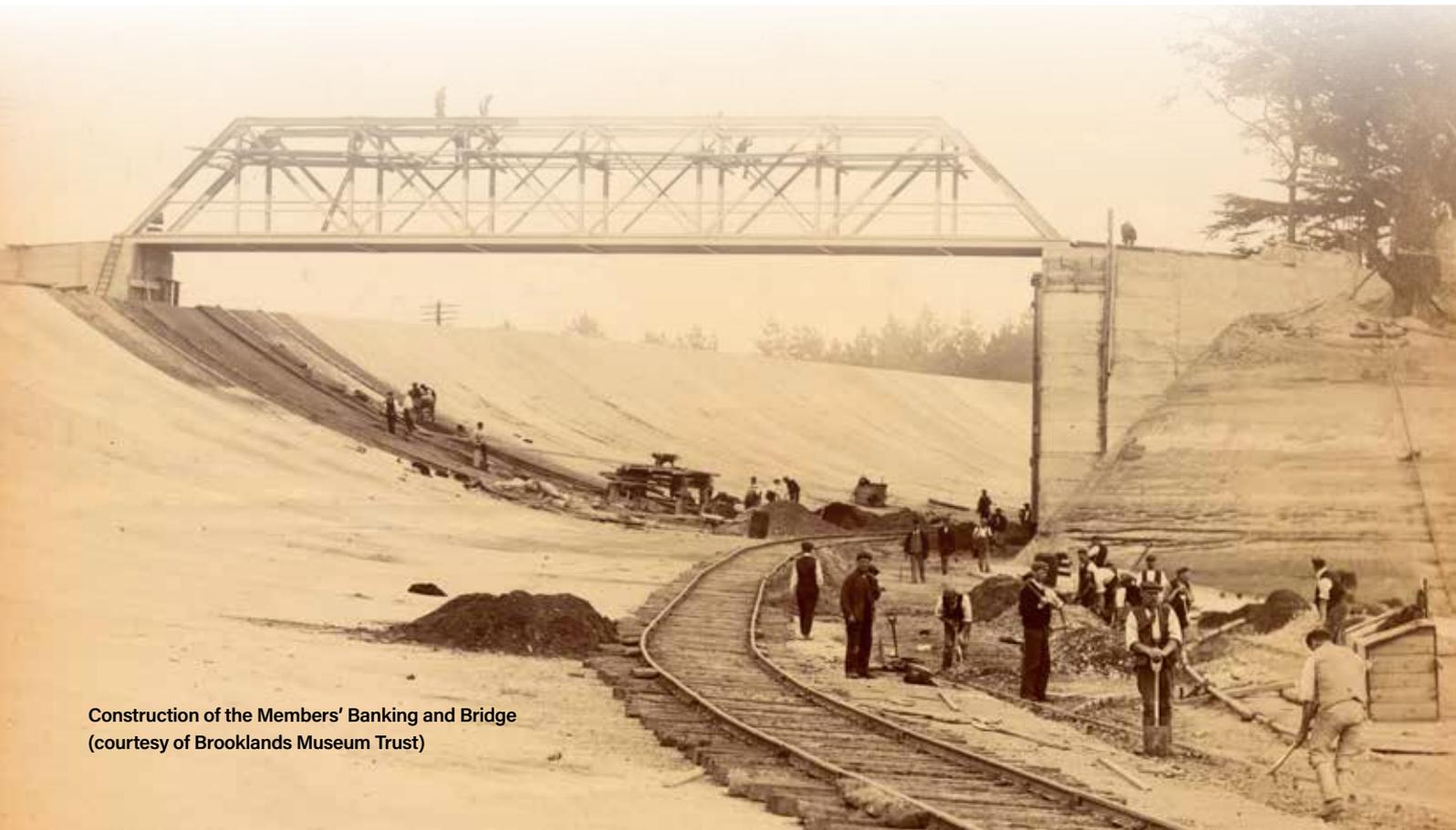
Brooklands motor racing and aeronautical history is recognised as being of local, national and international significance and the historic assets which remain are of similar importance. It was the site for many motoring and aviation firsts.

The importance of the site is recognised by the designation of the Brooklands Conservation Area and includes a number of Statutory and Locally Listed Buildings and the Scheduled Monument. However these are all irreplaceable resources which can become at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. They can be vulnerable to gradual change through lack of management and maintenance as well as more dramatic change from development pressures. This is exacerbated by the many different land ownerships and tenancies, a lack of accessible guidance and levels of awareness by the various owner/occupiers within Brooklands.

This guidance document has been produced by the Brooklands Heritage Partnership in response to growing concerns regarding the condition of some sections of the former racing circuit.

This informal partnership includes representatives from Elmbridge Borough Council, Historic England, Brooklands Museum Trust, and Surrey County Council. It is intended to improve understanding and awareness and provide general guidance for owners, occupiers and everyone with responsibilities or an interest in the care and management of the Brooklands circuit. A detailed history of this fascinating site can be found in the Brooklands Aerodrome and Motor Racing Circuit Conservation Management Plan document. This will shortly be available on the Brooklands Museum Trust website.

Sharing knowledge and good practice between all the stakeholders will assist in ensuring the Brooklands legacy is understood and protected for future generations to enjoy.



Construction of the Members' Banking and Bridge  
(courtesy of Brooklands Museum Trust)

# BROOKLANDS - A BRIEF HISTORY

The idea and subsequent actions of Hugh Locke King in 1906 were to change forever an area of marshy farmland straddling the River Wey between Byfleet and Weybridge – putting it on the world map for the early development of both the motor car and the aeroplane.

When completed and opened to the public on 17th June 1907, Brooklands was the world's first purpose-built motor circuit holding its first race on 6th July 1907. As a result of the technological advancements achieved and the pioneering use of concrete for the construction and finish of the track surface, it was described as one of the seven wonders of the modern world. It hosted the first ever British Grand Prix in 1926. Brooklands remained Britain's sole permanent motor racing circuit until 1933 when Donington was built.

In 1937, and in response to the changing tastes of motor racing, the new Campbell Circuit was opened. This new road circuit crossed the Finishing Straight just south of the Paddock and included a new climbing road section cut into the south side of Members' Hill.

Motor racing continued until the outbreak of war in 1939, with many world records for both endurance and land speed being set and broken up to this time – one of the most iconic being in 1935, when John Cobb set the fastest ever lap record for the Outer Circuit in the Napier Railton with an average speed of 143.44 mph.

“ Brooklands was the world's first purpose built motor racing circuit, holding its first race on 6th July 1907.



Start of the British First Grand Prix Brooklands 1926 (courtesy of Brooklands Museum Trust)

# CONSERVING BROOKLANDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

We are very fortunate that significant features of the former motor racing circuit and aerodrome survive today, although now disjointed by later phases of development. Since the 1980s the site has been divided between numerous different landowners, giving many the rare opportunity to own a unique piece of history as well as the responsibilities for preserving and maintaining these assets for future generations.

The motor racing circuit includes the earliest parts of the 1907 track with the remaining sections of the Members' Banking, the Finishing Straight, the Railway Straight, section of the Byfleet Banking, as well as elements of the later 1937 Campbell Circuit. Surviving buildings associated with motor racing include the Campbell Circuit Pits. The aviation assets include the Aero Clubhouse, three bridges linking the motoring village and Vickers factory to the aerodrome and sections of Aerodrome Road. WWII features include an anti-aircraft gun tower, pillbox, air raid shelters and marks left by now demolished structures and the attempts to camouflage the track and factories.

## Track protection and maintenance

At the time of its original construction, concrete had not regularly been used in road building so this pioneering use remained untested. Its early lightweight construction, often poor quality and typically without reinforcement over a base with variable stability, frequently broke up as a result of vehicular use.

This led to the track being routinely repaired on an annual basis between 1907 and 1939 resulting in a patchy appearance and varying qualities of finish. These are also of significance and value as they illustrate how the track evolved and was maintained. The Brooklands Aerodrome and Motor Racing Circuit Conservation Management Plan has information about the different qualities of the surface, the stability of the supporting earthworks and the repairs and mixes used in various areas. The margins and boundary treatments are also of importance, these include metal railings and different kerbs such as safety barriers made from railway sleepers faced with metal sheeting and cast concrete with drainage gullies.



*Left: Detail of surviving track edging (courtesy of the Radley House Partnership), Right: Track section having lost its supporting banking (courtesy of Historic England)*

## Monitoring

Generally it is recommended that:

*Owners and stakeholders carry out a simple visual inspection and recording, using photographs, of their section of track on a 6 monthly basis to monitor its condition and identify areas of concern. A series of photographs can be a useful resource to compare and assess change over time retained in a monitoring & maintenance log.*

## Management & maintenance

The build-up of self-seeded vegetation and plant matter can accelerate the degradation of the concrete surfaces. Most importantly tree and shrub seedlings can establish on worn or damaged parts of the track and in the expansion joints between the concrete sections. **Therefore the track should be kept clear of vegetation.** New and existing vegetation adjacent to the track can cause structural damage. This can lead to undermining and structural collapse of the historic track or other important features.

The designation of Brooklands as a Conservation Area means a 6 week period of notice must be made to the local council before any works can be undertaken to trees with a stem diameter of 75mm or above. Further information can be found on Elmbridge Borough Council's website.

Generally it is recommended that:

- Works involve gently brushing moss and weeds from the track, using only hand tools, cutting down or cutting back encroaching vegetation and chemical treatment to prevent re-growth or re-establishment. Most roots and stumps should be killed off "in situ" rather than removed manually to reduce potential damage to the track and advice sought from Historic England.
- Professional advice must be sought before any tree surgery work and/or herbicide applications are considered. The Brooklands Museum Trust can provide advice if required.
- Historic England should be contacted to advise on areas of concern and any potential repairs discussed and agreed with them. The preferred option is to leave the track surface "as found". If it is agreed that repairs should be undertaken it is essential that appropriate techniques, workmanship and materials are used once formal consent has been given. (See next page for more information regarding consent.)
- Vehicle movement and parking can cause damage to fragile areas of the track so advice should be sought from Historic England to avoid any further degradation.



*Left: Trees growing through the track, Right: Fencing damaged by fallen tree (both images courtesy of Historic England)*

# FURTHER INFORMATION

The Brooklands Aerodrome and Motor Racing Circuit Conservation Management Plan contains more detailed information about the historical development of Brooklands, the characterisation of various sub-areas, the history and significance of the different assets and the associated risks and opportunities plus recommendations. The Gazetteer, published with the Conservation Management Plan is a useful resource. It can sometimes be an advantage for owners/ stakeholders to consider joining together to investigate, plan and undertake restoration and maintenance works to avoid a piecemeal approach.

**Scheduled Monuments** are recognised nationally important archaeological remains and monuments, and Listed Buildings are of special architectural or historic interest. They all have legal protection to ensure that any works to or affecting them are properly considered and would not cause undue harm. More details of what these protections mean can be found via the link below:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/>

Therefore, any works or repairs to the Scheduled Monument, or development proposals which affect any part of it or any of the Listed Buildings may require statutory consent before putting works in hand. These are referred to as Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) or Listed Building

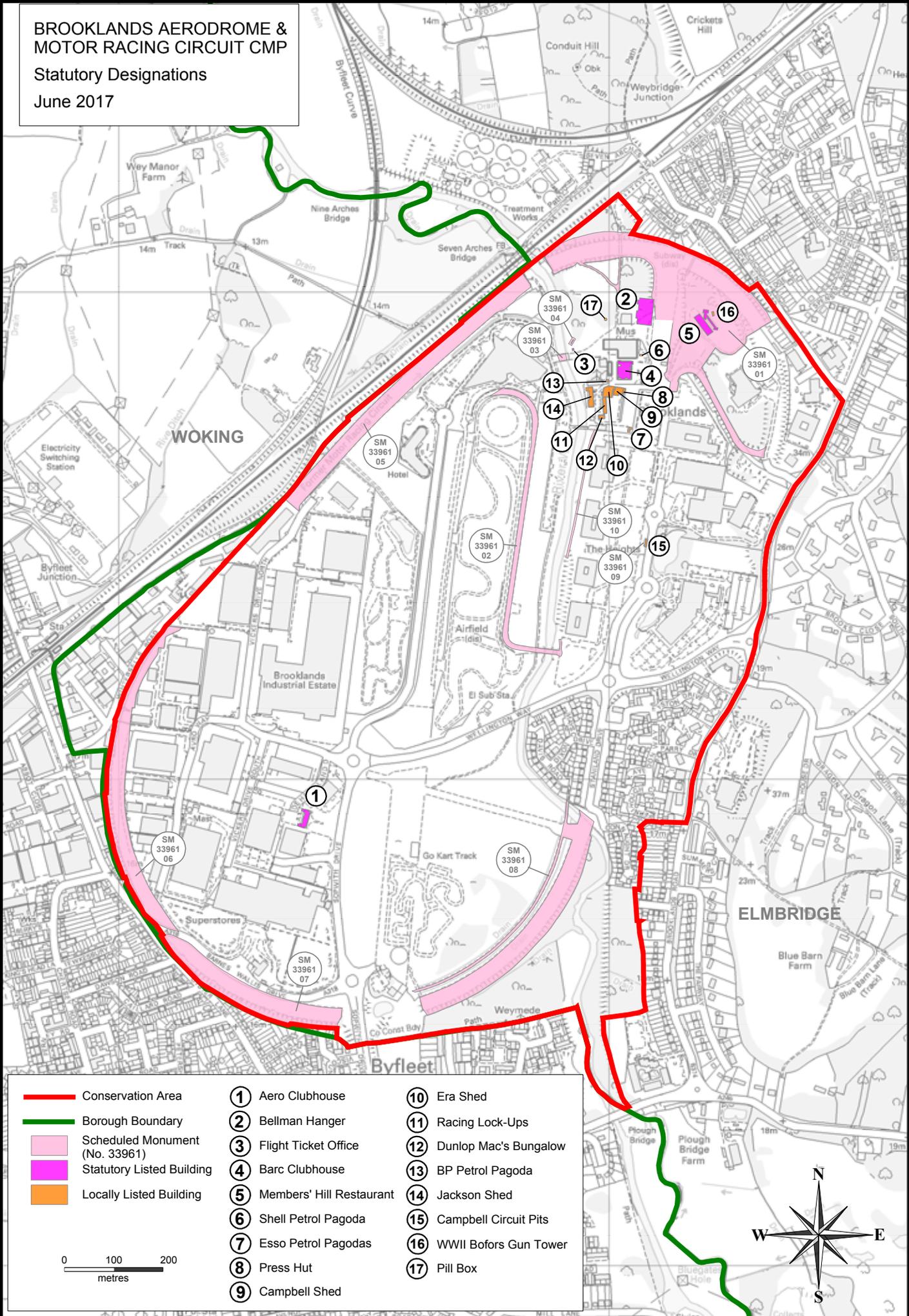
Consent (LBC). An Owners' Guide to Scheduled Monuments can be found via the link below:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/scheduled-monuments-guide-for-owners-and-occupiers/>

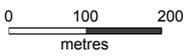
Historic England and the local planning authorities can provide further guidance and advise on how to go about making these applications and the kind of information that will be required. Below is a link to guidance and applications forms for Scheduled Monument Consent: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/consents/smc/>

Historic England and the local authority Conservation Officers can also advise on particular conservation and/or planning issues which might affect the heritage assets within and around the Conservation Area – as well as the Conservation Area itself.

**BROOKLANDS AERODROME & MOTOR RACING CIRCUIT CMP**  
**Statutory Designations**  
 June 2017



- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  Conservation Area              |  Aero Clubhouse           |  Era Shed              |
|  Borough Boundary               |  Bellman Hanger           |  Racing Lock-Ups       |
|  Scheduled Monument (No. 33961) |  Flight Ticket Office     |  Dunlop Mac's Bungalow |
|  Statutory Listed Building      |  Barc Clubhouse           |  BP Petrol Pagoda      |
|  Locally Listed Building        |  Members' Hill Restaurant |  Jackson Shed          |
|  |  Shell Petrol Pagoda      |  Campbell Circuit Pits |
|  |  Esso Petrol Pagodas      |  WWII Bofors Gun Tower |
|  |  Press Hut                |  Pill Box              |
|  |  Campbell Shed            |   |



# EXAMPLE MONITORING & MAINTENANCE LOG

Task	Responsibility	Frequency	Cost £	Dates of action	Observations & actions
Inspect track surface including all edges		Every 6 months or after stormy weather			
Record observations with photographs		Every 6 months or after stormy weather			
Save photographs, with a note of the date taken & update this log		Every 6 months or after stormy weather			
Remove all vegetation and rubbish		Every 6 months or after stormy weather			
Apply vegetation inhibitor		As necessary			
<b>Notes</b>					
Before visiting track look at previous notes and photographs to refresh the memory and identify any particular areas to view.					
Before undertaking any works to trees consider if prior approval needed from Elmbridge Borough Council.					
Do not undertake any repairs or other works to the track or banking without prior written consent from Historic England.					

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Planning Services [for LBC]  
Elmbridge Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
High Street  
Esher  
Surrey  
KT10 9SD  
Tel 01372 474474  
**[www.elmbridge.gov.uk](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk)**

Inspector of Ancient Monuments [for SMC]  
Historic England – South East Office  
Eastgate Court  
195-205 High Street  
Guildford  
GU1 3EH  
Tel 01483 252020  
**[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)**

Estates and Heritage Manager  
Brooklands Museum Trust Ltd  
Brooklands Road  
Weybridge  
Surrey  
KT13 0QN  
Tel 01932 857381  
**[www.brooklandsmuseum.com](http://www.brooklandsmuseum.com)**

Woking Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Gloucester Square  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 6YL  
Tel 01483 755855  
**[www.woking.gov.uk](http://www.woking.gov.uk)**

Surrey County Council  
Archaeology and Conservation Team  
County Hall  
Penrhyn Road  
Kingston-Upon-Thames  
Surrey  
KT1 2DN  
Tel 03456 009009  
**[www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)**