

Report on the outcomes of a Short-Term Scientific Mission¹

Action number: CA23128

Grantee name: Daniela-loana Guju

Details of the STSM

Title: STSM Topic WG2b: What topics and problems are present in research on landscape architecture history studies carried out in Western Europe?

Start and end date: 14/07/2025 to 28/07/2025

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

Description of the activities carried out during the STSM. Any deviations from the initial working plan shall also be described in this section. (max. 500 words)

The Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) was carried out over a two-week period at the British Library in London and the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) in Reading. The mission directly addressed the topic of WG2b: "What topics and problems are present in research on landscape architecture history studies carried out in Western Europe?" and followed the objectives, tasks, and expected outcomes described in the call.

The goal of the mission was to provide an overview of European landscape architecture history studies in Western Europe, mapping the ways in which landscape archives are used in academic research, conservation practice, and design. To meet this goal, I combined bibliographic survey, archival review, and case study analysis.

At the British Library, one of the world's largest libraries, I systematically investigated both online and offline resources relevant to the history of gardens, parks, and designed landscapes. The methodological approach was clear: identify publications (monographs, edited volumes, exhibition catalogues, professional reports, conference proceedings), record them in a structured format, and analyse their use of landscape archives. Each day I requested the maximum number of items permitted, but encountered practical challenges: delays in retrieval, temporary unavailability due to the recent cyber-attack, and the fact that not all requests were fulfilled. Despite these limitations, I consulted a substantial number of works, compiled a comprehensive bibliography (see annex 1), and identified further titles to pursue in future research. This activity fulfilled the task of mapping topics of published articles, books, and related resources created with the use of landscape archives.

The second stage took place at MERL, where I focused on conservation-related materials such as restoration reports, technical drawings, and management plans. These documents, connected to

¹ This report is submitted by the grantee to the Action MC for approval and for claiming payment of the awarded grant. The Grant Awarding Coordinator coordinates the evaluation of this report on behalf of the Action MC and instructs the GH for payment of the Grant.

emblematic sites such as Hampton Court and Chiswick House, demonstrated how archival materials are mobilised in practical restoration and long-term management. This complemented the bibliographic work at the British Library and addressed the task of providing case studies where archives are used differently in the academic and professional discourse.

Based on the material collected, I selected over thirty case studies from more than five European countries, in line with the requirements of the call. Each case study was described in a structured fiche, including bibliographic details, type of resource, archives consulted, and evaluation of how the archival material was used, whether for reconstructing historical layouts and planting schemes, for demonstrating authenticity in conservation, or as inspiration for contemporary design. This directly fulfilled the expected outcome of producing a list of publications with reviews and a brief report (see annex 2), on case studies.

Throughout the mission, my methodology was guided by the structure provided in the STSM application and the call. The combination of bibliographic research at the British Library and archival investigation at MERL allowed me to capture both the scholarly and practical dimensions of landscape archives. The final outputs, provide a solid foundation for further comparative work within COST Action ConnectLAA and contribute to understanding the diversity of archival practices in European landscape architecture history.

Description of the STSM main achievements and planned follow-up activities

Description and assessment of whether the STSM achieved its planned goals and expected outcomes, including specific contribution to Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the STSM. Agreed plans for future follow-up collaborations shall also be described in this section. (max. 500 words)

Looking back at the two weeks spent in London and Reading, I can say with confidence that the STSM achieved the goals set out in the call and in my application. The mission allowed me to engage directly with major repositories of knowledge and to test, in practice, the methodological approach I had outlined: mapping the use of landscape archives in publications on the history of landscape architecture, selecting case studies, and analysing their contribution to research and practice.

One of the main achievements is the structured bibliography I was able to compile, which is annexed to this report. Preparing this bibliography under strict time and access constraints was a demanding task, but also an invaluable exercise. It gave me a clear overview of the scope of research on landscape architecture history in Western Europe and provided a resource that I believe will be useful for colleagues in the network.

Equally important was the preparation of more than thirty case studies, covering at least five different European countries. These case studies illustrate the diversity of ways in which landscape archives are mobilised. Working through these examples made me reflect on national differences: in some contexts, strong institutional frameworks exist (for instance in the UK and France), while in others, private or municipal archives play a central role. This comparative dimension is, I believe, one of the main contributions of the STSM to the objectives of ConnectLAA.

As for follow-up activities, the results of this STSM will be presented at the COST ConnectLAA General Meeting in Nitra (September 5–6). This will be an opportunity to share my findings with colleagues, receive feedback, and discuss possible refinements. I expect that the results will be adjusted and expanded after the meeting, integrating suggestions from the network. The materials compiled will also serve as a starting point for future collaborative projects within ConnectLAA, possibly through joint publications or comparative research initiatives.

In conclusion, the STSM not only achieved its intended goals, but also created a platform for further research and collaboration. It provided me with a robust set of resources and reflections that I will continue to develop, while also opening pathways for dialogue and joint work within the wider network.