

Patrons Sir Mark and Lady Lennox-Boyd : President Mr Robert Parker DL

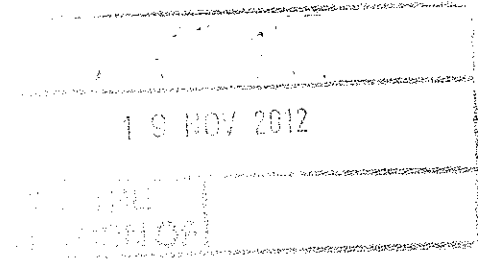


Lancashire Gardens Trust
Conservation & Planning Group

16 November 2012

Your ref: CONLGT/3/2012/0942

Director of Community Services
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
BB7 2RA



For the attention of Sarah Westwood

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Application No: 3/2012/0942 (Outline: All Matters Reserved)
Land at Higher Standen Farm and Part Littlemoor Farm Clitheroe

Thank you for your letter of 26 October inviting the Lancashire Gardens Trust (LGT) for comments on the above application for residential and associated development.

We have reviewed the application documentation and visited the site. However, the extent of site access has been limited to that visible from surrounding highways and public rights of way within the site. The LGT's concern is limited principally to impacts of the proposals on heritage landscapes adjacent to or close to the site. The LGT is not concerned with the wider planning policy and strategic matters, infrastructure or planning obligations which require to be considered in this application. The LGT recognises that the emerging Core Strategy identifies Standen as a Strategic Site, and takes a neutral stance on the merits of the principle of development on the site.

The LGT has the following observations and areas of concern in relation to this application, which include two objections. Firstly the refinement of the layout is required to accommodate an important view to Clitheroe Castle, and secondly the Cultural Heritage and Landscape and Visual Assessment chapters of the Environmental Statement do not adequately assess the setting of Standen Hall.

Clitheroe Castle - Scheduled Ancient Monument and Registered Park and Garden

Clitheroe Castle and its immediate surroundings represent the most significant cultural asset with statutory designation in the locality. Furthermore, the keep and its raised ramparts are a significant landmark in the local landscape context, dominating the entire Town and its neighbourhood.

The Application Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 1b Para 8.6.1 states that:

'...Given the wide separation between the site and the Castle, as well as the extent of existing development on this side of the town, it is considered that the proposals will not have a significant effect on the setting of the monument.'

The LGT considers that this statement whilst not untrue dismisses the issue of the Castle's influence and relationship with the local landscape context too quickly. From the Castle the development site is easily viewed, and the proposals will have an impact in changing the appearance of this edge of the town, with the application site visible in the middle distance, largely in front of the prominent wooded Standen Hall grounds, which form a distinctive feature in the mid horizon. The recent woodland planting adjacent to the application site to the north of Standen Hall will reinforce the prominence of this key feature in the middle distance. However, in views from the Castle further to the north, approaching Four Lane Ends, at the higher part of the application site, new development would be visible as an intermediate horizon of roofs. This visual impact will require to be handled sensitively in terms of the scale, uniformity and height of the built development. The present layout proposals provide little opportunity to extend the important mid horizon woodland of Standen Hall grounds within the application site. The LGT suggests that consideration should be given to further woodland planting on the applicant's other (blue) land to the east of Worston Old Road to address this matter.

Clitheroe Castle - View from Within the Site

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) describes the process by which the masterplan evolved and the retention of major features, e.g. the course of the Roman Road, existing hedges, trees and watercourses within the site which form significant green linkages and allow views to major features outside the site such as St James' Church tower.

Whilst these links are welcomed as far as they go, they do not retain an important view to the Castle from the higher parts of the development site, i.e. towards the Castle keep from Worston Old Road (from a point approx. 100m south of Four Lane Ends Cottage). This view is not indicated or recognised in the DAS p20, and would be lost in the current development proposals. The LGT objects to this omission and requests that the layout is amended to accommodate this key view, perhaps by widening the green corridor in a southward direction opposite Four Lane Ends Cottage, or by forming a new green corridor along the line of the view. This important line of sight crosses the Potential Primary School site, and the future school, (or any other) buildings eventually proposed will likewise need to accommodate this important visual connection between the Castle keep and its wider landscape setting.

Standen Hall

Standen Hall is a minor estate of at least some local significance, the core of which is formed by the Grade II* listed principal house, home farm, ornamental grounds, domestic offices, walled gardens, and impressive avenue approach. There are several listed buildings in association with the Hall which reinforce the heritage value of the locality. In particular, the Grade II listed Old Bothy is immediately adjacent to the application site. Currently the gardens and core of the estate around the Hall has no formal designation, however they do form part of the setting of the listed buildings.

Standen Hall grounds and estate has received specialist attention in past surveys. Preliminary survey work undertaken in 1980 is included in *Historic Designed*

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Landscapes of Lancashire (Bennis & Dyke, 1998) produced on behalf of English Heritage and Lancashire CC. This report can be seen in the Lancashire Record Office. More recently, the LGT undertook a preliminary validation exercise for Standen Hall garden in 2009 which did not include a detailed site inspection. A more complete evaluation of the significance of Standen Hall garden is proposed to be undertaken by the LGT but this is not expected to be available for the present application.

The LGT notes the Cultural and Heritage studies which have been undertaken as part of this application. However, it appears that no evaluation has been undertaken as part of the planning application on the significance of the grounds and estate core itself. It is noted from the historic mapping documentation provided that the application site appears to comprise pasture land and associated farm buildings, in particular those at Higher Standen Farm. The Standen Hall gardens are described in the ES as outside the application boundary, and appear to be self-contained, separate from and screened from the proposed development. However this is not explained fully in the ES, and there is no understanding of how potential views from Standen Hall and gardens relate to the application site or vice versa.

Although the Standen Hall grounds are outside the application boundary, they comprise the setting of the listed buildings, and the impact of the proposed development needs to be explained and understood. There is the brief mention of the impact on the listed Old Bothy, and the statement that '... development would not have a significant effect on their (Standen Hall and Old Bothy) setting' in the ES Cultural Heritage para 8.6.1. However, there is no detailed evaluation or justification for this conclusion. The application as currently presented therefore is not consistent with the requirements of PPS5 and NPPF.

The Landscape and Visual Assessment section of the ES defines a Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) which is illustrated in Figure 9.1. The ZVI includes a small part of the Standen Hall grounds near Viewpoint No 6. This is part of the setting of Standen Hall. In paragraph 9.7.1 page 173, viewpoint 6 is recorded as experiencing a significant long term effect (Table 9.7).

The LGT, from its own limited site visits questions the validity of the ZVI in certain locations, but acknowledges that it is difficult to confirm the limits of the ZVI without access to private land beyond public rights of way and highways. There is particular concern that the client has excluded certain areas in their ownership from the scope of the Landscape and Visual Assessment viz: the statement on page 173 '... Higher Standen Farm will have a similar level of impact but has not been considered in this study as it is part of the Standen Estate who are proposing the development'. If this is so then the validity of the Landscape and Visual Assessment is potentially compromised in relation to Standen Hall and its surroundings.

In the light of these concerns, the LGT considers that the landscape setting of the listed buildings could be adversely affected by the development proposals, the degree to which has not been adequately assessed in the submitted ES and its Appendices. The LGT therefore objects to the application until these matters are considered through a more comprehensive treatment in the ES as described above. It may then be necessary to review the masterplan in order to address any conclusions drawn and achieve the necessary mitigation.

On a separate point, various features such as gate posts and other enclosure features

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on the application site are described in the Environmental Statement. However, a more comprehensive character study of the Hall grounds would have been welcomed. In addition, to the features mentioned, and whilst outside the application site, there are ha-ha, and iron kissing gates, for example which should be used as additional prompts for the design and detailing the proposed public realm and enclosure within the proposed development.

Little Moor Buildings Group

This group of listed buildings form a very distinct and coherent group with their own small scale character at the western edge of the application site. It is noted that the proposed secondary access will be located immediately to the south. This could adversely impact on the Little Moor Group by the imposition of conventional highway geometry, detailing and materials, and the impact of sight lines. A bespoke solution is required here to avoid an over dominant treatment, by careful detailing and choice of materials. This approach would be in addition to the mitigation described in Table 8.3, and should be dealt with by appropriate conditions.

Conclusion

The LGT has made two objections to this application. The first requesting that a key view to the Castle keep from Worston Old Road is retained within the development. This will require amendment to the illustrative Masterplan. Secondly the impacts on the setting of the listed buildings at Standen Hall require to be fully explained and understood.

The LGT recognises that as the DAS and application stands, much detail remains to be resolved at or preferably before the Reserved Matters Stage. Assuming this application is approved, specific conditions are required in order to ensure that the other points made above in the consultation response are addressed, so that the aspirations indicated in the DAS are delivered. This would be a minimum, and the earliest resolution of Design Codes would give the necessary level of certainty and clarity to this development in this very sensitive location.

In this instance, the LGT does not envisage making a request to speak at the Committee Meeting. However we would ask to be kept informed of progress of the application and included in the process of addressing the matters raised in this response.

If any matter within the consultation response above requires clarification please contact Stephen Robson on 01772 795602 or Stephen.e.robson@btinternet.com in the first instance.

Please note that this response has been emailed to Jane Tucker as well as being sent as hard copy by post.

Yours faithfully

Elaine Taylor

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