



STONYHURST

1 October 2012

Mr J Macholc
Head of Planning and Development Services
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE BB7 2RA

320120964P

Dear Mr Macholc

Proposed Development of Land at Hurst Green

Stonyhurst College, along with our Estates and Planning Consultants, Carter Jonas LLP, has been in extensive discussions with officers at Ribble Valley Borough Council for a number of years regarding the maintenance and upkeep of the College and Campus.

More recently this has included the potential development of land fronting Whalley Road for residential uses. Proposals have been the subject of pre-application consultation and discussions with the residents and community at Hurst Green, our tenants and neighbours who may be directly or indirectly affected by these proposals. The land is now the subject of a planning application. I am writing to you to set out why Stonyhurst College is seeking permission for this development.

Stonyhurst College is the oldest Jesuit College in the English-speaking world and has existed for more than four hundred years. Hurst Green in the Ribble Valley has been its home since 1794. Since September 2009, Stonyhurst, whilst remaining a school in the Jesuit tradition, has operated as a registered charity with complete responsibility for the maintenance of the buildings and the grounds including the historic park. This means that since 2009, Stonyhurst took ownership of all the land and buildings that form the estate by means of an asset transfer negotiated with the Jesuits. With that ownership comes the responsibility for the future maintenance of all the buildings.

The College is housed in the largest group of Grade 1 Listed buildings in the North West; therefore, it is a significant heritage asset. Currently there is a population of 675 day and boarding pupils in the Preparatory School of St Mary's Hall and in the College itself. We have some three hundred full and part-time employees many of whom themselves live in Hurst Green and the wider areas of the Ribble Valley.

By any measure Stonyhurst is a major employer in the Ribble Valley. As a heritage asset with the Listed buildings and parkland it is also a significant tourist attraction. In the summer months particularly, large numbers of visitors visit the school to either walk in the grounds or the historic park and/or go on one of the guided tours of the buildings.

Independent schools throughout the country are facing significant challenges in maintaining their pupil numbers and conserving and upgrading both the facilities of their schools and the buildings in which the pupils and staff live and work. Stonyhurst is no exception to this, indeed because the need to maintain and protect the architectural and historically important Grade I buildings is paramount, the costs of their upkeep and improvement are much higher than they would be if the schools operated from modern – and probably undistinguished - buildings.

We are therefore constantly seeking, as a requirement of being a Charity, to maximise our assets. Any trading surpluses that we have go back into the two schools either in enhancing education facilities or maintaining, repairing and renewing the fabric of the buildings themselves. The following are examples of major projects which we have completed in the last three years:-

Weld House - a forty-bed roomed facility for our Higher Line (6th Form) pupils. Opened in September 2010.

New changing rooms and showers for the children in our Preparatory School, St Mary's Hall. Opened in 2011.

New refectory and kitchens in a new building which will be completed next month and operational in January 2013.

In addition, works of adaptation, repair and re-modelling have been identified as essential, needing to be carried out over the next twelve months including substantial window and roof repairs to the three historic libraries which house the Stonyhurst Collections which are of national and international significance.

The 1960's building, 'New Wing', and the Shireburn buildings (circa 1830's/1840's) have also been earmarked for major refurbishment as funds become available.

It is important for me that you are aware of the fact that the proceeds from any disposal of this site, if planning consent is granted, will be utilised within the Stonyhurst community in the areas that I have mentioned above and, in other works to the fabric of the buildings that might be identified in the short term future.

We have always been anxious to operate the schools as good neighbours in the community of Hurst Green. A good number of residents of Hurst Green use our leisure facilities and there has been a long tradition for residents to attend,

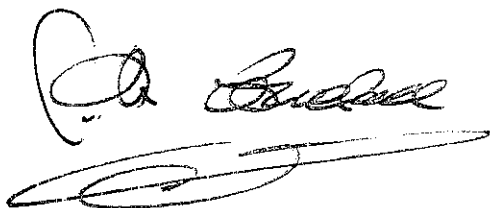
without charge, many of our musical and drama events in the College. We held an information day in the Shireburn Hotel in the village and leafleted all the residents.

Our Consultants have reflected many of the responses to that consultation in the planning application itself. For example, the scheme has been down-sized from forty units to thirty; a small number of bungalows suitable for retired persons have been included as have a number of social housing units. We are also mindful of working with and helping to facilitate the needs of the Catholic primary school in the village.

Whilst the planning application is submitted and justified (and should be determined) on the basis of its planning merits, it is important to understand the underlying purpose of the proposals to sustain the College and maintain the historic buildings which form the bulk of the Campus.

We very much hope that the Council will look favourably on our application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Cowdall', with a long, horizontal flourish extending from the end of the signature.

John Cowdall
Chairman