

# **Heritage Appraisal of Tennis Dome Proposal at St Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst College**



**January 2016**

**Heritage Appraisal & Statement for Tennis Dome Proposal**

**at St Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst College**

**Prepared for Stonyhurst College**

**by**

**The Architectural History Practice Ltd**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This options appraisal and heritage statement was commissioned from The Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP) in 2015 by Stonyhurst College, to advise on the impact of a proposed tennis dome on the heritage setting of St Mary's Hall and Stonyhurst College. The assessment was undertaken by Marion Barter BA MA IHBC, a Director of AHP. The report briefly summarises the history of St Mary's Hall and Stonyhurst College and describes the setting of the listed buildings and the registered historic landscape. The report considers five potential sites for a new tennis facility (see plan in Appendix 3), and the impact on the setting of the listed buildings and the registered garden, and assesses in more detail the impact of a tennis dome on the preferred site at the east end of Harry Meadow.

Section 1 provides a summary of the statutory context and refers to the local authority duty under the 1990 Planning (listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act to pay special regard to the protection of listed buildings and their settings. The report draws on advice and methodology published by Historic England (2011) for assessing the impact of development on setting, considering the contribution each site makes to the settings of the listed buildings, followed by an assessment of the potential impact of a tennis dome on each of the five sites.

Section 2 provides an overview of the history and development of Stonyhurst and St Mary's, and summarises the heritage assets on the site, with sections on the registered landscape and listed building settings. The heritage assets affected by the proposed tennis dome are the historic buildings of Stonyhurst College and St Mary's, which range from Grade II to Grade I, and the Registered Historic Park and Garden at Stonyhurst which is Grade II\*.

Five locations have been considered for the tennis dome; section 3 assesses the contribution each location makes to the setting of the listed buildings and registered landscape (for locations see plan in Appendix 3). The impact of a tennis dome at each location has been assessed. A structure on site option 5 is considered to have the least impact on setting and the registered park, and groups well with a recent multi-sports pitch which along with car parking has eroded the quality of this part of the landscape. A scheme for this site has been developed by the design team, and its impact considered in detail in section 3. This proposal is likely to have a medium level of impact and will cause some harm. Opportunities to reduce the impact of the proposal are fairly limited, but some tree planting is proposed to soften the appearance of the tennis courts from the drive. The harm can be balanced against the public benefit of education at St Mary's and Stonyhurst having long-term viability and as part of this, the provision of international standard sports facilities. There will also be some structured wider access such as for children's holiday camps, for tennis groups such as 'mums and friends' and for the immediate local community out of school use hours.

In conclusion, the proposed tennis dome will cause some harm to heritage assets but this is justified by the public benefits of providing the new tennis facility for the school, made possible by a private donation, to support the continuing viability of the boarding school and its long-term stewardship of the historic buildings and landscape at Stonyhurst. This benefit is considered to outweigh the harm.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Report

This report was commissioned from The Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP), in November 2015 by Roy Walsh on behalf of Stonyhurst College. The tennis dome proposal arises from the proposed offer of private funding for an all-season tennis facility, as part of the College's strategy to provide excellent sports facilities. This proposal should be considered in the context of the long-term use of the buildings and grounds at St Mary's and Stonyhurst for Catholic education, which is recognised as the optimum viable use for these fine historic buildings. Ensuring the sustainability of the historic buildings is a public benefit. To secure the long-term viability of Stonyhurst and its educational role, the school has to develop in response to evolving standards in education and residential accommodation and its position in a competitive global market, related to the expectations of parents and pupils. The tennis facility is primarily for younger pupils at St Mary's Hall (aged 3 to 13), but will also be available for the older pupils at Stonyhurst College. Traditionally a boys' school, half the pupils at St Mary's are now girls and the school needs to provide sports facilities that appeal to girls as well as boys. To enable the school to continue to flourish, investment in high quality facilities for all pupils is essential, hence the proposal for a tennis dome. This will contribute to the public benefit.

The proposal has been designed by Campbell Driver Partnership and this report should be read together with their plans and Design and Access Statement as well the Planning Support Statement of JWPC Ltd. The latter also includes a statement from St Mary's headmaster, Ian Murphy.

### 1.2 Planning law and heritage policy context

Listed buildings and their settings are protected under the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. The impact of development on the setting of a listed building is a material consideration that local planning authorities have a duty to consider. Section 66(1) states: 'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires the significance of heritage assets to be assessed when development is proposed, including any contribution made by their setting (para.128), and for this to be taken into account when considering the impact of any proposals (para.129). The NPPF and Historic England guidance defines setting as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve'<sup>1</sup>. Setting can make a varying contribution to an asset's significance; it may be positive, negative, or neutral. Historic England's guidance on assessing setting and the impact of proposed development is set out in *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> From Historic England guidance, *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2011, p4

### **1.3 Purpose and Structure of the Report**

The purpose of the report is twofold: firstly to assess five potential sites for a proposed tennis dome, in the context of the impact on the setting of Stonyhurst and St Mary's Hall, and secondly to consider in more detail the impact of a tennis dome on the client's preferred Harry Meadow site on affected heritage assets and setting, including the registered garden. This study is not a general landscape assessment, nor an archaeological desk-based assessment; section 2 provides an overview of the setting of the listed buildings and a summary of the historic landscape. Section 3 sets out the site options appraisal and section 4 provides the impact assessment for the preferred.

### **1.4 Copyright & acknowledgements**

This report has been written by Marion Barter, BA MA IHBC, a Director of the Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP). The report draws on previous research by AHP for the Stonyhurst College Conservation Plan, using historic maps and images from the College Archives. All photographs are by AHP unless credited.

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## **2.0. The Setting of Stonyhurst College and St Mary's Hall**

### **2.1. Overview of the setting: history and development of Stonyhurst**

A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was produced for Stonyhurst College by AHP in 2015, covering all core College buildings, St Mary's Hall, the historic landscape and the archaeology (report on the latter by Oxford Archaeology North forms Part 3 of the CMP). The setting of the historic buildings was considered as part of the CMP, which included a detailed historic landscape assessment undertaken by landscape architects Chris Burnett Associates; 13 distinct character areas were defined and the significance of each assessed. This work informs the overview set out here. The historic buildings and landscape at Stonyhurst have exceptional heritage significance, although the level and type of significance varies across the buildings and the site.

In summary, the buildings at Stonyhurst College are the result of over 200 years of continuous occupation and development by the Jesuits, at a pre-existing gentry house. Sir Richard Shireburn commenced an ambitious courtyard house in 1592 with a gate tower, close to the site of an earlier medieval house that may have been associated with a moated site in an area east of the core buildings, known historically as 'Back Ponds'. Sir Nicholas Shireburn created the fine formal landscape setting between c1690 and c1710 which included the walled gardens to the south of his house, and the canals and Avenue to the west. The deer park was a pre-existing medieval feature. The Shireburns and their descendants were a notable recusant Catholic family. Mary, the daughter of Sir Nicholas married the 8th Duke of Norfolk, and inherited the estate in 1732, but hardly lived here and the house was largely unoccupied during the rest of the 18th century. Stonyhurst therefore remained little changed until the Jesuits arrived in 1794.

The history of Catholic education and development at Stonyhurst began in 1794 when members of the Society of Jesus fled persecution and came to Stonyhurst from a temporary school in Liège, at the invitation of Thomas Weld, the Shireburns' descendant. The Jesuits first building was Shirk, but they also altered and adapted others. In 1809, Weld gave Stonyhurst to the Jesuits, and it became the centre for the Society of Jesus in England. The buildings at Stonyhurst were adapted and expanded during the 19th century, with a fine chapel built in the 1830s and the ambitious South Front and Boys Chapel designed by Dunn and Hansom, built in the 1870s and 1880s. This range overlooks the formal gardens laid out by Sir Nicholas. The north-east side of the college has long been the location for service functions, such as stables, boiler house, workshops and laundry, some of which are still in this area. During the 20th century buildings for teaching, accommodation and ancillary uses spread north and north-east, encroaching onto a former plantation that historically enclosed the north side of the buildings (see Fig.1). Since the late 20th century, this area has been the preferred location for new development, including new Wing (1965), a swimming pool (1987), various maintenance workshops and offices and the recent refectory (2012).



Fig.1: Stonyhurst in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century prior to 1980s expansion to the north-east (Stonyhurst Archive)

The landscape setting of Stonyhurst is recognised as an outstanding historic landscape of national importance. It comprises layers of landscape designed in different phases; the formal gardens, canals and avenue laid out by Sir Nicholas Shireburn from c1690 overlie a medieval deer park, with woodland belts sheltering the north edge of the park and grounds. The 'half moat', known as Back Ponds, east of the core buildings remained as a landscape feature until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century; it was later in-filled and this area is still open. Small fields used for grazing are interspersed with the woodland north of the buildings; Harry Meadow north of the College has been an open landscape feature since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Woodland and trees are an important part of the historic landscape, providing shelter and privacy and also acting as visual landscape features such as the avenue trees and clumps in the park. There is an important woodland belt around the north edge of the grounds, bounding the south side of the public lane. Wooded areas were expanded with new plantations by the Jesuits in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, adding to an existing wedge of woodland shown on the 1778 and 1827 maps to create a deep woodland belt west and north of St Mary's, known as Seminary Woods.

The Jesuits adapted part of the formal south gardens for a Playground, with tennis courts, a bowling green and field sports facilities in the wider historic landscape during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, largely accommodated by the scale of the landscape. Some of these historic sports facilities have heritage significance in their own right, such as the hand ball walls. Tenanted farmland lies to the south of the College gardens (Hall Barn Farm), and part of the deer park is now a golf course.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some invasive changes to the setting of Stonyhurst have been caused by vehicular access and car parking, which has gradually affected the

quality of the designed landscape. Piecemeal changes of sometimes mediocre quality have eroded some important parts of the setting, such as parking on tarmac close to the South Front, the access drive cut through the south-west brick garden wall and the visual impact of parking in front of the west gatehouse. In the rear service area to the north and north-east (south of Harry Meadow), the setting is less sensitive as this is hidden from key views and away from the most significant buildings frontages; various changes here have not been harmful to the historic setting.

## 2.2 History and development of St Mary's

A seminary to train Jesuit priests was founded in a new building east of Stonyhurst, built on fields in c1830 and provided with spacious landscaped grounds. Named St Mary's Hall, the seminary closed in 1926; it became a prep school in 1946 which it remains today. The St Mary's Hall building was extended in the 1880s, with extensions added to either end of the 1830 building. A tennis court was built to the rear, with a hand ball wall at its north-west end, since altered to form a gym. New buildings such as the Theatre (1994) were built to the rear (north side) in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. As with the College buildings, St Mary's is serviced from the north; its most important elevation faces south from a terrace across lawned gardens (Fig.2).



Fig.2: St Mary's Hall and the terrace in c1900 (Stonyhurst Archive)

The deciduous plantation known as Seminary Woods was laid out as part of the pleasure grounds for the seminary in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, creating a belt of trees between the drive and St Mary's. This added to an earlier wedge of woodland shown on the 1827 map, but the distinct south edge of this earlier woodland remained, bounded by a wide path connecting St Mary's with Stonyhurst (Fig.3). Another straight path ran through the wood to the north. This woodland provides important visual separation between the College from St Mary's Hall, although its quality and definition is deteriorating due to lack of management. The lawned gardens around St Mary's Hall were created in the 1830s after the seminary was built, laid over former fields (shown on the estate map of 1827 - Fig.17) and edged with a hedge and shrubs to provide separation from the fields to the south (Fig.5). An observatory

was built in the south-west corner of the garden in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, later demolished (Fig.5). The drive with a lodge at the entrance, running east-west north of St Mary's was also created in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (first shown on the 1847 OS map), although the lodge building was rebuilt in c1900.



Fig.4: Historic view of St Mary's Hall from the west, with Back Ponds in the foreground and Seminary Woods to the left (1894, from Gerard)



Fig.5: St Mary's from the south-west in c1900 (Stonyhurst Archive)

Today, several changes in the landscape have affected the setting of St Mary's Hall. The expansion of buildings, roads, footpaths and car parks into the woodland belt south of the drive and Harry Meadow has reduced the environmental value of this woodland and threatens the viability of the remaining trees. North of the drive the built environment has extended into the east part of Harry Meadow with an all-weather pitch built in 2000, with associated lighting, fencing, coach and car parking. Tennis courts were laid out south-east of St Mary's Hall, on former lawned areas in 1959; the lower level of the courts in relation to the terrace reduces their impact.

### 2.3. The Registered Historic Garden

The Stonyhurst landscape was designated as a Grade II\* Registered Historic Park and Garden in 1986, a designation that is statutory. Stonyhurst is one of only 5 historic landscapes in the North West that is graded at Grade I or II\* out of a total of 133 on the national register in the North West, and nationally, it is within the top 600 registered landscapes in England, of a total of 1650. The local authority must consult Historic England and the Garden History Society on development proposals affecting this landscape.

The key features of the Stonyhurst landscape are described in the Historic England Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The boundary of the registered area encompasses about 75 hectares, and is shown in Appendix 1. The larger part of this area is covered by the former deer park and Avenue to the west of the College buildings, along with the formal gardens to the south; Harry Meadow and a woodland belt to the north of the College also included, which have a more informal naturalistic character. The gardens around St Mary's Hall are not part of the registered landscape, although the lodge, the drive and drive entrance are included.

### 2.4. Listed Buildings and their settings

Listed buildings potentially affected by the proposal for a tennis dome include St Mary's Hall listed grade II, and the core buildings at Stonyhurst which comprise five separate listings:

Old Quadrangle (includes West Front)	Grade I
Church of St Peter	Grade I
School Buildings (South Front, Boys Chapel and Shirk)	Grade II*
Former Infirmary and passage	Grade II
Shireburn Quadrangle, Ambulacrum and former labs	Grade II

*Also listed are:*

Garden pavilions	Grade I
Garden statuary, gate piers, walls, observatory (12 listings)	Grade II
The Mill	Grade II

The site also includes some non-designated heritage assets, which are not listed nor statutorily protected, such as lodges and gate piers including the lodge north of St Mary's Hall. Some of the archaeology is considered by OAN to have high potential, including the probable infilled moated site in Back Ponds and water management systems installed for the gardens, added to by the Jesuits for their mill and the college.

### 2.4.1. The setting of St Mary's

The history of St Mary's and its setting has been described in section 2.2, above. St Mary's has high heritage significance as a good example of a purpose-built seminary, built in two phases in the 1830s and 1880s, in an austere Georgian architectural style. St Mary's Hall was deliberately built on an elevated, terraced site on the south-east facing slope of the hill, with views over the valley to the north-east and south-east. There are fine views of the front of the building across the south lawns and along the terrace in both directions, which provides a formal landscape setting for the main frontage. At the east end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century building, a less formal grassed area slopes down to the east away from the building, in the space between the building and the public lane. This is also a significant part of the setting, enabling the building to be glimpsed from the road. To the north, the setting of St Mary's begins with the entrance from the road at the lodge to the north, with a pair of early 19<sup>th</sup> century panelled stone gate piers at the head of the original drive leading southwards to the building (Fig.6). The rusticated gate piers on the main drive next to the lodge appear to be 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the steel gates and stone signs are modern. Although this is the main entrance to St Mary's it also serves as a rear entrance to Stonyhurst and the plethora of signs and gates makes this a slightly confusing entrance, visually.



Fig.6: the lodge, boundary walls, drive and original gate piers (in foreground) provide part of the setting of St Mary's

The historic woodland belt that runs between the north side St Mary's and south of the main drive has been eroded by development for parking and access, as has been noted above. The remaining trees are important in the landscape, but are suffering from damage caused by compacted roots and it is recommended that a strategy for this area is developed that makes better use of the available space for parking and access, improves safety and ensures that the trees are protected, so that the viability of this wooded belt is maintained.

North of the drive, the coach park, car park and multi-sports pitch have altered the character of the east end of Harry Meadow, although the overall openness of this area has been

maintained, and views across the former meadow to the tree belt along its north side are still extant. At night, the floodlighting for the pitch is prominent (Fig.7). This area is visually separated from St Mary's by the woodland belt south of the drive.



Fig.7: floodlighting around multi-sports pitch from the drive to the east (Campbell Driver)

The immediate rear area to the north side of the St Mary's building contains the theatre building towards the east, and also acts as the main vehicular and service entrance into the school. Due to this function, and the level of alterations, the setting at the rear contributes less to the significance of St Mary's than the areas outlined above.

#### **2.4.2 The setting of Stonyhurst**

The history and significance of Stonyhurst is summarised above in section 2.1. The setting encompasses a very wide area of landscape due to the scale of the buildings, the extent of the designed historic landscape and the local topography which allows the buildings to be seen from the main road (B6243) south of the college. The most prominent frontages – the West Front and the South Front – command views over important designed landscapes and farm land, with a contrast between the long axial vista of the west avenue and the canals and the more enclosed intimate character of the formal gardens and playground to the south. The former deer park on the rising ground to the north and north-west is also a key part of the historic setting, an area without field boundaries since the medieval period, and which provides oblique views of the West Front from the lane. These three aspects of the setting contribute most strongly to the significance of the listed buildings, and all are within the registered landscape. Any change to these parts of the setting would have a harmful impact on the significance of Stonyhurst.

In a secondary category, the setting to the north and north-east also contributes to the significance of Stonyhurst but less strongly. This is partly because the north and north-east buildings and frontages of the college had a lower status in the hierarchy and were less important architecturally, reflecting the service and ancillary functions of this side of the complex. The former woodland plantation that ran south of Harry Meadow below the east-

west drive has more or less been lost by recent development, and this part of the setting does not contribute positively to the significance of the listed buildings. Harry Meadow and the woodland belt to the north have a naturalistic character, and have been largely retained as landscape features, despite some changes. The western part of Harry Meadow is glimpsed from the north side of the West Front, and is currently used for grazing sheep which complements its character. Some car parking has been approved here in the past. Harry Meadow and the woodland belt are features of at least 18<sup>th</sup> century date and are also within the registered landscape, so a strong case needs to be made for any development here. The east end of Harry Meadow has been developed for parking and sports, as noted above, but largely remains an open space, visually. This eastern area contributes less to the setting of Stonyhurst than the west end of Harry Meadow, due to its location further away from the most significant frontages or buildings of the complex and recent changes.

Outside the registered landscape, and associated mainly with the development of St Mary's as a seminary in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the woodland belt between the college and St Mary's also contributes to the setting of Stonyhurst. It defines the eastern limit of the open space around the college, screens views to and from the core college buildings from St Mary's, and screens most of Stonyhurst from the drive and north-east entrance. However, the quality of the woodland is now deteriorating; the edges have been encroached upon for parking and access and there is scope for enhancement.

### 3.0 Options Appraisal

#### 3.1. Introduction

The sections below consider the option of constructing a tennis dome with floodlighting on each of five separate sites, in turn. The locations of the sites are numbered on the plan in Appendix 3. Each section summarises the contribution that each site makes to the setting and significance of the heritage assets of St Mary's and/or Stonyhurst, and reviews the potential impact that a tennis dome would have on this aspect of the setting.

#### 3.2. Site 1: Grassed area to north-east of St Mary's Hall

The site is outside the registered landscape of the historic park and garden. The grassed open space makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Grade II listed St Mary's Hall. To the east of the listed building, the ground slopes down towards the public lane which is edged by a mixed hedge and mature trees. The grassed area is used for informal sport. On the south edge of the area is a pair of tennis courts, first laid out in the 1950s (see site 2).



Fig.8: view from terrace towards grassed area (option 1)



Fig.9: view from south towards option 1 site

*Impact:* Due to the size of the proposed tennis dome it would not fit on this site without projecting in front of the front building line of St Mary's Hall, which would be visually intrusive. The mass and scale of the dome, together with the floodlighting, would intrude into views of the east end of the building from the public road, and from the gardens to the south, harming its setting.

### **3.3. Site 2: Existing tennis courts**

This area is outside the registered landscape. The tennis courts to the east of St Mary's were laid out in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, and since upgraded. They are on a lower level than the terraced site of the listed building, accessed by a flight of steps. This area is shown on historic mapping as an area of former lawns with curving pathways.



Fig.10: tennis courts (option 2)

*Impact:* Like Option 1, a tennis dome on this site would be in front of the front building line of St Mary's Hall, and together with the floodlighting, would therefore intrude into views along the south front of St Mary's from the west and south, harming its setting. The tennis dome would also be visible from outside the site, due to its massing and scale; from the public lane it would be intrusive in the setting of St Mary's.

#### **3.4. Site 3: Back Ponds**

This area is outside the registered landscape. The 1733 survey plan marks 'Back Ponds' between the formal south Gardens and the Plantation with a water body in the form of a half-moat. Oxford Archaeology interpret this feature as a moated site, which may have related to an earlier medieval house, and it is considered to have high archaeological potential. Since the pond was in-filled in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this area has remained open, and now comprises a level area of rough, overgrown grass prone to waterlogging. In current landscape terms, the site is of low significance due to its current poor condition, but it forms part of the setting for both St Mary's and Stonyhurst College and can be seen from the South Front. This site is separated by an area of trees on a low bank that bounds the south-west corner of the gardens of St Mary's



Fig.11: South Front and south edge of the Seminary Wood from Back Ponds (Option 3)

*Impact:* Building a tennis dome would necessitate the draining of this damp area and some disturbance to below-ground archaeology. Archaeological evaluation would be essential. Visually, a tennis dome on this site would affect the setting of the South Front of Stonyhurst, and the structure would intrude into views from the south-west across the formal gardens. A structure here would therefore cause harm to the setting of Stonyhurst and the registered landscape. A tennis dome with floodlighting would also intrude into the setting of St Mary's, as it would be visible above the canopy of the tree belt that shelters the south-west corner of the gardens.

#### **3.5. Site 4: Seminary Woods**

This area is outside the registered landscape. Seminary Woods originated as a wedge of woodland that existed here from at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Jesuits extended the woodland to the north and north-east with a new plantation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, to provide part of the pleasure grounds that wrap around the northern and western side of St Mary's Hall, providing privacy and shelter to the buildings. The mature trees around St Mary's are typical of pleasure ground planting with Oak, Beech, Lime and Sycamore, but have not been managed in recent years and there has been some die-back in the crowns, evidence of root severance and compaction. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the woods to the north were intersected by car parks and access roads, as this is the main access for visitors, pupils, staff and servicing to the school. Historic pathway routes through the woods between Stonyhurst and St Mary's Hall have been maintained, with new surfaces and lighting.

The woodland provides an important physical and visual screen between Stonyhurst College and St Mary's Hall and makes a positive contribution to the settings of both listed buildings. There is scope to enhance the woodland by sensitive management (refer to the conservation plan). The principle of development in the south-east part of the wood facing Stonyhurst has recently been accepted in relation to a new boarding house, although this is not currently being progressed.



Fig.12: path through the woods to St Mary's Hall (Option 4)

*Impact:* A site for a tennis dome has been considered roughly in the potential location of the 100-bed boarding house, recently discussed. This is an area of lower density trees and is open to the west facing the Stonyhurst buildings. A tennis dome here would be visible from the east side of the Stonyhurst College buildings. There would be little opportunity to disguise the distinctively unconventional form, materials and scale of the dome and it would intrude into the setting of the Stonyhurst listed buildings. Maintenance and security concerns are also issues with this site.

### **3.6. Site 5: East end of Harry Meadow (coach park area)**

Harry Meadow is within the Registered landscape. This has been an area of open grassland since at least the survey of 1733. The current drive approximately follows the historical boundary between a former woodland plantation (developed with buildings and parking towards the west) and Harry Meadow. The western half of Harry Meadow is under grass

with a group of fine mature trees and retains its agricultural character; it is visible from the West Front and important to the setting of Stonyhurst. The fields are bounded by perimeter woodland along the north side, which returns along the west and east ends. The eastern half contains an all-weather, elevated, fenced and flood-lit multi-sports pitch, with coach and car parking between the sports pitch and the Lodge. The aesthetic significance of this eastern area of Harry Meadow has been substantially reduced by these features. Although the modern features are intrusive in the landscape, they are not seen in principal views of the listed buildings from the south and west, and their impact on setting is therefore limited. The principal of sports development in this area was accepted by the granting of permission for the sports pitch.

Non-designated assets affected by the proposal include the Lodge and entrance gate piers. The drive entrance from the road allows for oblique, framed views into the site, with the car park partly hidden behind the lodge.



Fig.13: site of option 5 from the coach park, from the south-east

*Impact:* From the drive, the Lodge and drive entrance, the tennis dome will be visible. The dome will partly fill a currently open space between the sports pitch and the lodge; this will change the character of historic Harry Meadow which to date has been kept as an open space, albeit with sports and parking uses. The tennis dome here would relate well to the existing sports facility and car park, reducing the need for further servicing and parking elsewhere in the landscape. The impact on the setting of listed buildings will be low, as the site is screened by trees from St Mary's and from the east side of Stonyhurst, a less significant part of the complex (the north-east parts of the college buildings are not listed).

The options for mitigation and enhancement largely relate to landscaping and maintenance of existing woodland, including the boundary tree belt along the public lane. Additional tree planting could help to screen the dome from the drive although its scale and mass is difficult to disguise.

## **4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL SITE**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Local authorities are required to consider the impact of a proposal on heritage assets and their settings, to fulfil their duties under the 1990 Planning Act. In doing so, the NPPF advises local authorities to take account of assessments of significance and setting provided by the applicant, to enable an understanding of the potential impact of affected assets (NPPF paragraphs 128 and 129). A key principle within the NPPF is that any harm to heritage assets should be weighed against the public benefits (paragraphs 133 and 134). The justification for the tennis dome and its benefits is set out in other supporting documents relating to the proposal; in summary, the tennis dome is required to provide all-weather tennis facilities to support the competitive standing of Stonyhurst and St Mary's.

### **4.2 Summary of the proposal**

A scheme for two new Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) standard tennis courts covered with a de-mountable dome has been prepared by Campbell Driver architects. This report should be read in conjunction with the latest drawings. The site location was chosen after an appraisal process referred to in section 3 above. The preferred site is next to an existing multi-sports pitch installed in 2000, partly on an existing coach parking area and partly on a grassed area. As part of the scheme, the coach parking would be relocated into lay-bys next to the tennis dome and the drive. The pair of tennis courts will be aligned parallel to the sports pitch, leaving a triangular area for an access ramp and landscaping between the edge of the drive and the south side of the courts.

The level of the proposed courts is about 1.1 metre below the level of the adjoining sports pitch; as the site slopes gently up to the north it will require some cut and fill. Surplus material will be used to form a low bund on the north side of the structure, planted with trees to supplement the screening provide by the boundary tree belt to the road. The level of the courts will be set below the level of the adjacent elevated sports pitch, and above the road. The courts will be enclosed by green plastic chain-link fencing 2.75 m high. The overall size on plan is 37.8m long by 36.3m.

The seasonal dome will be covered in a transparent polythene material, inflated to maintain stability. The covering material allows daylight and floodlighting to illuminate the courts, and can be easily de-mounted in the summer season. The polythene of the dome will have a pale grey appearance. The top of the dome is approximately 9 metres above the surface of the courts. The courts will be lit by external floodlighting on six poles each 12 metres high. For comparison, the floodlights to the adjacent sports pitch are on poles 15 m high.



Fig.14: view of the proposal site from the south-east, at the entrance to St Mary's Hall

The mature tree belt along the north-east side of the field will be retained, with additional tree planting (birch and mountain ash) on the south, north and east sides of the tennis court and between the car park and the drive.

The existing car park adjacent to the lodge will be re-orientated with a landscape strip between its south edge and the drive, to help improve screening.



Fig.15: existing car and coach park, from the west

### 4.3. Impact on the significance of heritage assets

During the periods that it is erected, the tennis dome will form a large distinctive structure that will occupy part of the east end of Harry Meadow. It will be clearly visible from the drive and glimpsed in views into the site from the entrance next to the Lodge from the public lane. During the winter months the dome and floodlighting will also be glimpsed through the screen of deciduous trees that form a belt on the east side of the public road, but during the summer months when the trees are in leaf the structures will be mostly obscured. In warm dry weather the dome can be removed. Its visual impact from outside the site is therefore likely to be greatest during the winter, when the lack of leaf cover combines with the season when the dome will be most of value because of the weather conditions. The floodlighting and infrastructure associated with the tennis dome will relate strongly to the multi-sports pitch adjacent; this area has already been altered for the latter facility.

The views of the dome from outside and within the site will affect perceptions of the registered historic landscape, within which the dome will be located. This part of Harry Meadow was historically a field laid to grass used for grazing or hay-making. In recent years its use has changed to provide parking and a flood-lit sports facility; the quality and character of the meadow has changed substantially since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This erosion of quality has reduced its significance to the extent that this east end of the character area is not of high significance for aesthetic value, although it possesses some historic value. The significance of the site is considered to be at no more than a medium level and it is questionable whether this area still merits inclusion within the boundary of the registered park. It makes a relatively low contribution to the significance of the registered landscape. Due to this lowered significance, the impact of the dome is proportionally lessened, and the impact on this part of the registered park is considered to be low (less than substantial).

When the dome is demounted in dry, warm weather the impact of the tennis facility will be limited to the new hard surface, the perimeter fencing, access and associated landscaping, the floodlighting and a small shed for the dome apparatus; infrastructure similar to that associated with the adjoining multi-sports pitch. The impact on the landscape when the dome is down will be relatively slight.

The area of Harry Meadow is important to the setting of both St Mary's and Stonyhurst as it forms part of the eastern approach to the listed buildings, via a drive marked by a lodge and gate piers. This is the main entrance for St Mary's and a secondary entrance for Stonyhurst. The tree belt on the south side of the drive and the open area of the former meadow to the north provide a green setting on the edge of the grounds and a buffer between the school buildings and the public realm of the lane. Approaching the tennis dome from Stonyhurst and from the west, the perimeter fencing, floodlighting and dome will be visible beyond the sports pitch. This will have an impact on the wider setting of the listed buildings of Stonyhurst, but the most significant aspects of the Stonyhurst setting and listed buildings (to the west and south) will be unaffected. As this area is already substantially altered and is at a distance from the core buildings, the impact is considered to be medium, not high. Without the dome, the tennis courts will have a relatively low impact, partly as they are proposed to be 1.1 metre below the level of the sports pitch and will be perceived as part of this sports facility.

In terms of the setting of St Mary's there will be little intervisibility between the dome and the listed school building due to the screening effect of the trees south of the drive. The

tennis facility will not affect key views of the main frontage of the building from the south and south-east; the impact on the setting of the listed school building will be low.

Some landscaping and screening by tree planting is proposed for the north, east and south sides of the tennis courts. This will soften the visual impact of the facility on the landscape and on views from the drive, but will not screen the dome structure due to its height and massing. It is not possible to effectively screen a structure of this size, massing and form.

The impact of the proposal on the heritage assets within the rest of the site varies according to the asset's own significance, proximity and relationship visually to the proposal site and the extent to which the proposal site in its present form contributes to the significance and setting of the assets. Table 1 below summarises these issues, in relation to the tennis dome. When the dome is not erected the impacts of the tennis courts alone are likely to be less than the levels set out below.

<b><i>Affected heritage asset</i></b>	<b><i>Significance level of asset</i></b>	<b><i>Contribution of site to setting or significance of asset</i></b>	<b><i>Impact of proposal on setting or asset</i></b>
<b>Registered park (Grade II*)</b>	Exceptional	Low	low
<b>St Mary's Hall (Grade II)</b>	High	Low	low
<b>Stonyhurst College (grade I, II* and II)</b>	Exceptional and high	Medium	medium
<b>Lodge and gate piers (unlisted)</b>	Medium	Medium	medium

Table 1: impact of proposed tennis dome on the heritage assets

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

This study has described the registered park and the settings of St Mary's Hall and Stonyhurst, and explained which aspects of these are most important to the significance of the heritage assets. Five potential locations for the proposed tennis courts and dome have been considered. Of these, the location that seems likely to result in least harm to the settings of listed buildings and the registered park is Option 5, when compared with the four other sites. No other sites are considered suitable.

The site is within Harry Meadow, an historic open area of grassland within the Grade II\* registered park, and so the impact on the historic landscape has to be carefully considered. However, this area has been altered and its significance has been reduced by the development of a flood-lit sports pitch and parking. The impact on the registered landscape as a whole is low.

This location is fairly remote and well-screened from the core listed buildings (Grades II, II\* and I) of Stonyhurst and the most significant parts of its designed setting; it is unlikely to impact on its setting, visually, although it is within the wider historic landscape. The impact on Stonyhurst's setting is medium.

It is close to the Grade II listed St Mary's Hall but well-screened by trees and hidden from the most important south elevation; the impact on this building is considered to be low. It is also close to the unlisted lodge and gate piers which are non-designated assets but part of the whole estate; the impact here is medium.

Although the visual impact varies depending on which asset is considered (and whether the dome is erected or not), the overall impact of a tennis dome on the east end of Harry Meadow is at a medium level, and it will cause some harm to heritage assets. Under the NPPF, this level of harm has to be balanced against the public benefits; any level of harm requires careful scrutiny by the local authority and Historic England. In this case, the college has made a strong case for all-weather tennis facilities of national and international standard, as part of its continuing need to be competitive in a global market, to protect the long-term viability of the educational use of the fine historic buildings at Stonyhurst. Ensuring the sustainability of the historic buildings for educational use, the optimum viable use, is a public benefit.

In conclusion, the tennis dome will cause some harm to heritage assets but this is justified by the public benefits of providing the new tennis facility for the school, made possible by a private donation, to support the continuing viability of St Mary's and Stonyhurst as boarding schools and their long-term guardianship of the historic buildings and landscape at Stonyhurst.

## SOURCES

AHP, Chris Burnett and OAN, *Conservation Management Plan, Stonyhurst College*, 2015

Department for Communities & Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework*, March 2012

J.Gerard, *Stonyhurst Centenary Record*, 1894

Historic England, *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2011

Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, 2008

Historic England, *Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*, 2015

Clare Hartwell & Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, North Lancashire*, 2009

T. Muir, *Stonyhurst*, revised edition, 2006

Martin Stancliffe Architects, *Stonyhurst Conservation Plan*, 1999

Photographs in Stonyhurst archive

### Historic Maps and Plans

Edward Weld survey 1774 (copy in Stonyhurst archive)

1827 plan of Stonyhurst (Stonyhurst archive)

1847 OS map (1:10560) surveyed 1844-45

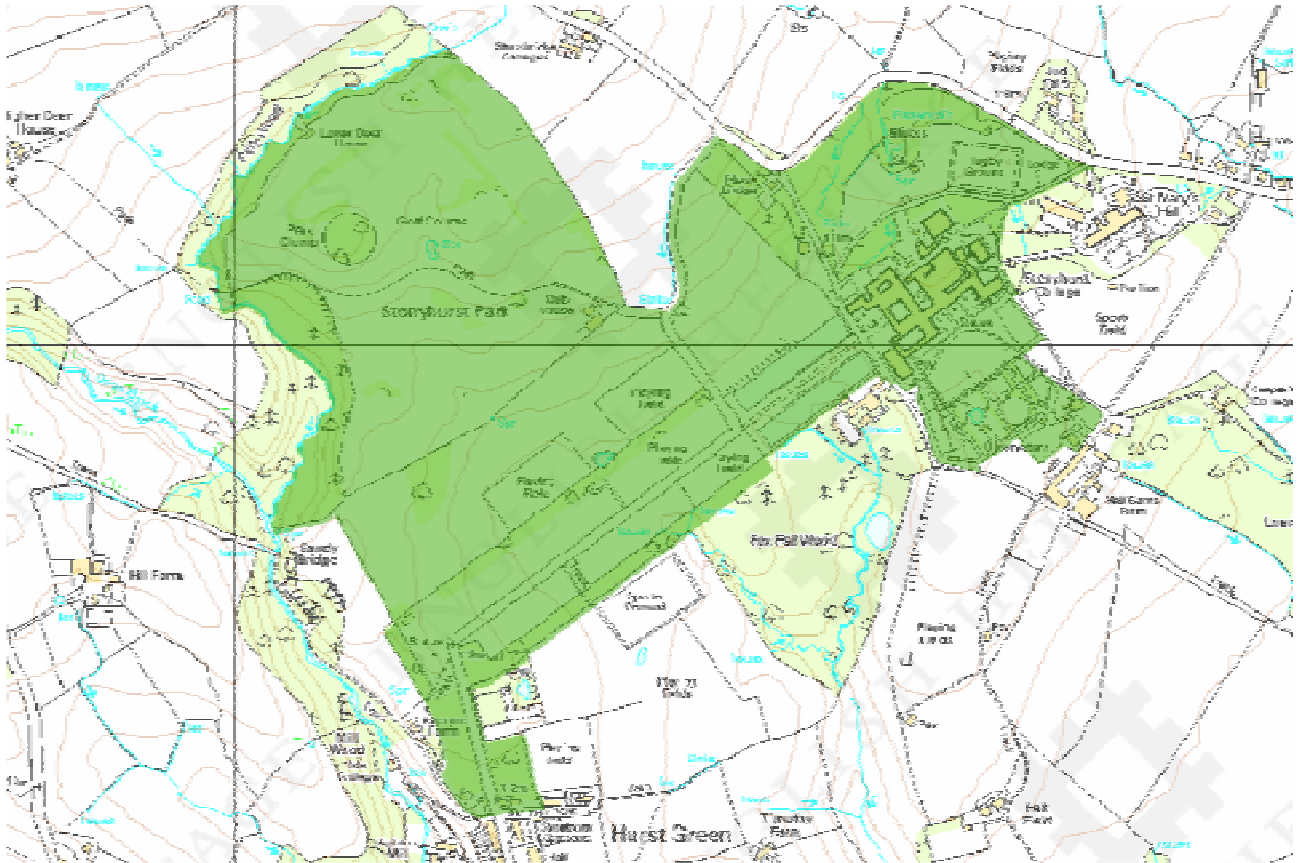
1892 OS map (1:2500)

1912 OS map, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (1:10,560)

1932 OS map (1:2500)

## APPENDIX 1: Designations

### Registered Garden



Mapping - Historic England

## List Entry for St Mary's Hall

SD 63 NE

AIGHTON, BAILEY & STONYHURST

CHAIGLEY

St. Mary's Hall

8/34

II

Preparatory school, built as seminary in 1830 and extended in 1880. Sandstone ashlar with slate roof. 3 storeys with attics. The central 11 bays, their middle 3 bays projecting, form the earliest part of the building. They have chamfered quoins, sill bands and a hipped roof with moulded cornice. The windows are sashed with glazing bars and plain stone surrounds. The door has a plain stone surround with semi-circular head, attached Tuscan columns, plain frieze and moulded cornice. The additions of 1880 comprise 7 bays on each side of the central block, detailed to match the original building. At the rear is a chapel with semi-circular apse. Inside it has a barrel-vaulted ceiling, Diocletian windows, paired Corinthian pilasters flanking the apse, and mosaic decoration.

Listing NGR: SD6935239181

1. **Article Reference** - *Title:* Part 25 Lancashire - *Journal Title:* Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England

Appendix 2: Historic maps



Fig.16: detail from Edward Weld survey 1774



Fig.17: detail from 1827 plan of Stonyhurst, before the building of St Mary's (arrowed)



Fig.18: 1847 OS map

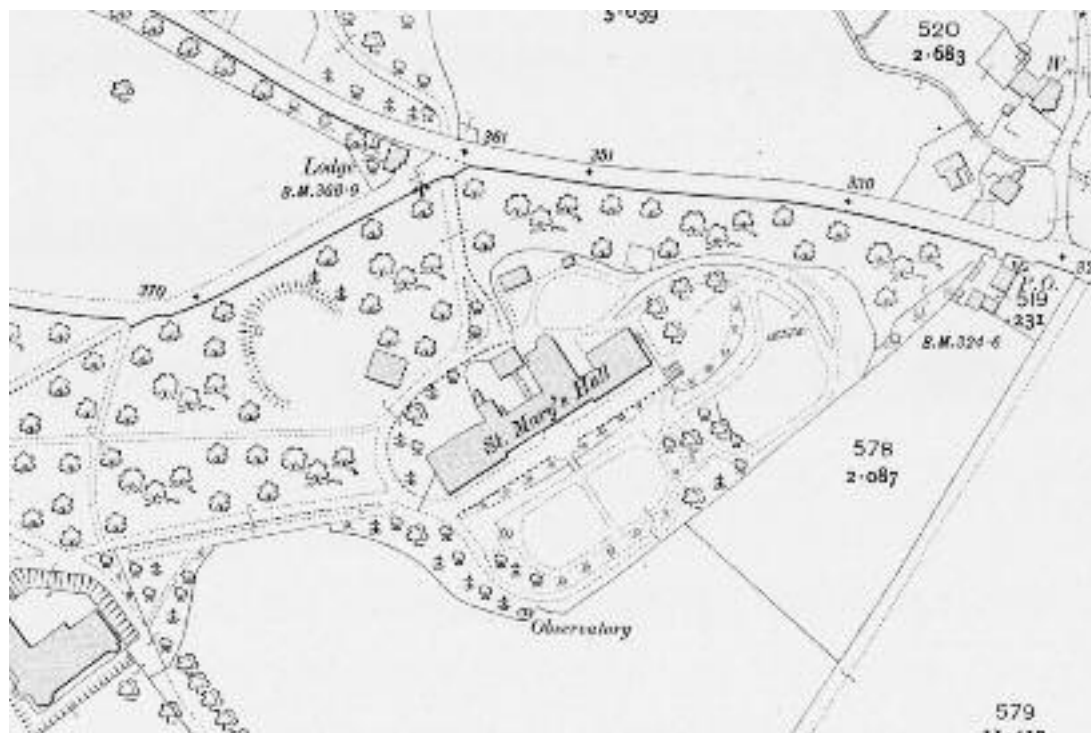


Fig.19: 1912 OS map

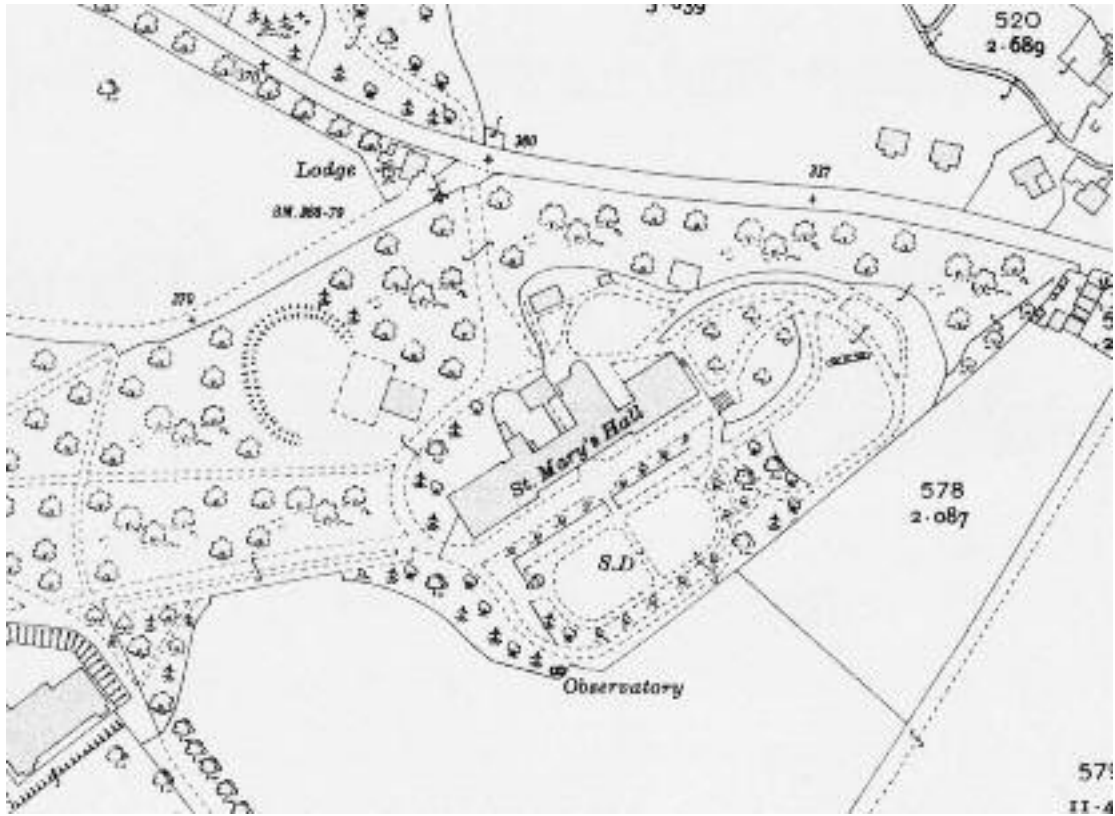


Fig.20: 1932 OS map

### Appendix 3: St Mary's option appraisal location plan

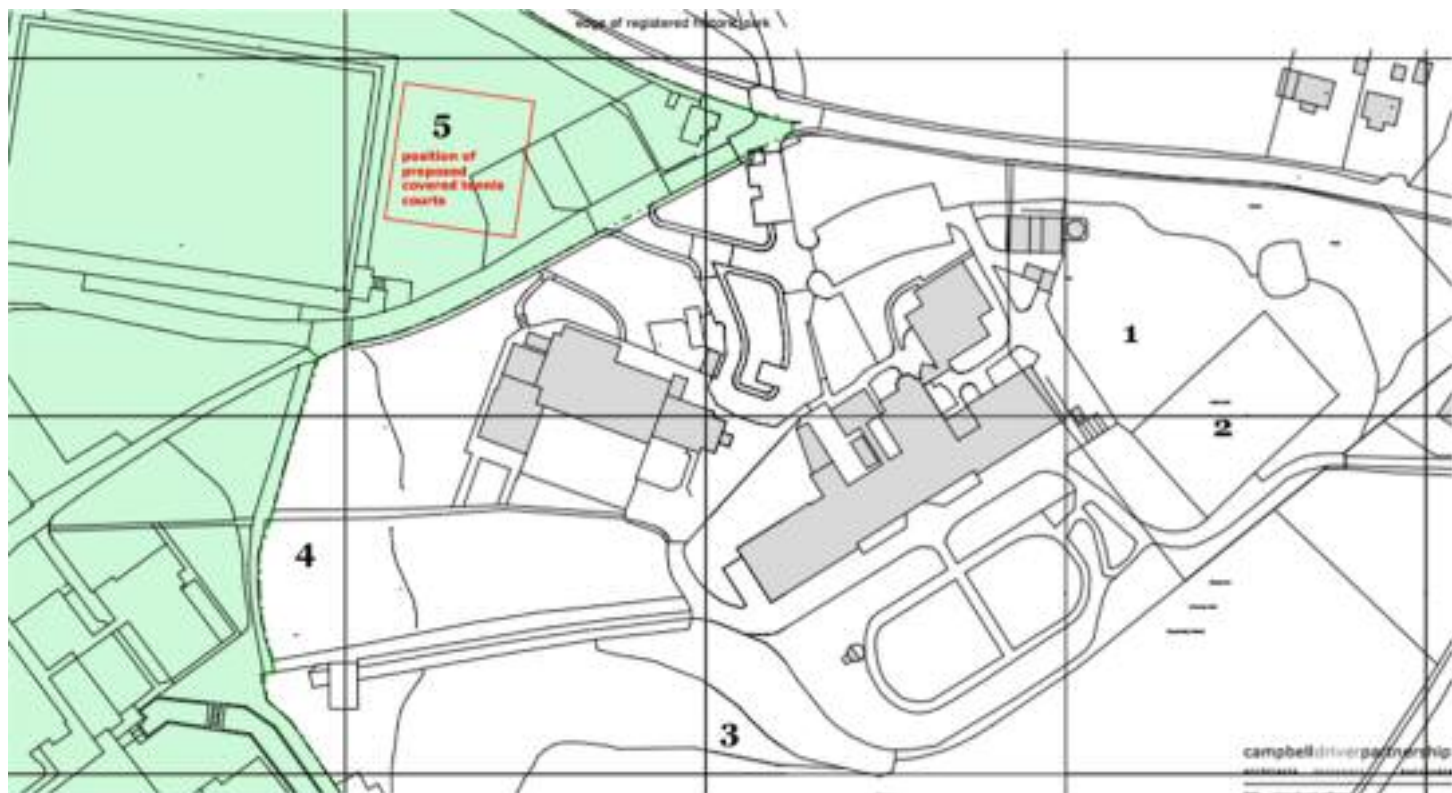
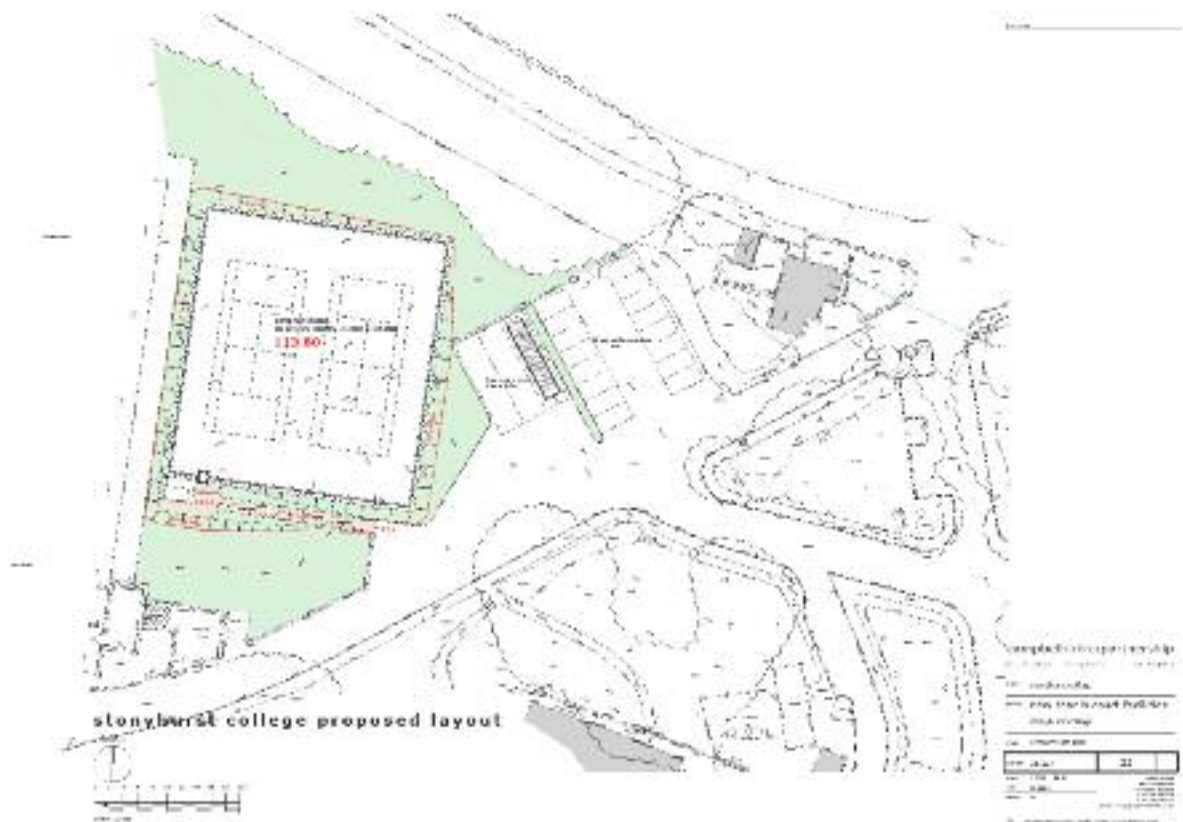


Fig.21: Tennis dome site option locations

Numbers refer to sites considered during options appraisal, referred to in section 3

Registered historic park shaded green area (Campbell Driver)

**Appendix 4: Proposal location plan (Campbell Drive)**





The Architectural History Practice Ltd

70 Cowcross Street

London

WC1M 6EJ

[www.architecturalhistory.co.uk](http://www.architecturalhistory.co.uk)