

STONYHURST

HERITAGE CENTRE & RETREAT

PROPOSED ACCESS ROAD
LANDSCAPE & VISUAL APPRAISAL
Draft 3 26/01/2017

Application 3/2015/0968 (PA) & 0969 (LBC)

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Introduction

1. The planning submission (3/2015/0968) for the conversion of the Corn Mill was made on the 9th of December 2015. The overall proposals have been prepared by a team lead by Cassidy & Ashton (Architects, Preston) on behalf of The Trustees of Stonyhurst College.

2. The original proposals to include a new access road off the public highway leading to the College were withdrawn from the original planning application and now form part of a separate planning application.

The general arrangement is shown in Appendix B, with the road heading southwards to enter the Fox Fall Wood at a point approximately 150m west of the Corn Mill. The route then turns eastwards and falls down a shallow valley of a minor stream to enter the existing courtyard of the Mill on its west side.

3. The road introduces a new feature into the classic view of the College as seen from the west. The quality of the historic landscape of Stonyhurst is summarised in the following extracts from the 'Stonyhurst College - Landscape Character Areas' document.

Reference to page 77 - "For historic values, Stonyhurst has exceptional significance as the seat of a recusant family who built a late 16th century house, and created a landscape setting on a grand scale using designers of national repute in the late 17th to early 18th century. The late 17th-early 18th century gardens and their structures are a remarkable survival of exceptional significance, for aesthetic and historic values. The survival of formal garden layouts from this period is now rare, most examples having been swept away and remodelled from the mid- 18th century onwards"

Reference to pages 84 -85 - "Historic, Aesthetic and Evidential: The formal gardens and landscape of canals and axial drive has the highest significance nationally for these values ... The formal landscape created by Sir Nicholas Shireburn is a very rare survival in the north of England. This is a direct result of the transfer to the College, the lack of funds to re-design the landscape when education was the priority, and the various Emancipation Acts which allowed the College to remain in England. There is therefore a direct relationship between the preservation of an early, formal landscape and the Catholic history of the site"

4. Concern has been raised as to the impact of the proposed access road on the historic landscape setting of the axial drive. The Principal Planning Officer (ref e-mail 29th July 2016) has noted that a visual impact assessment was not submitted with the Application

5. To address this matter BCA Landscape (Chartered Landscape Architects, Liverpool) have been appointed to analyse the proposals submitted for the access road, and to produce an appraisal of the landscape and visual effects. The field work for this appraisal was carried out August - November.

Review of Site

6. The site context is identified in Appendix D. It is contained within the elongated rectangular allee which leads from 'The Lady Statue' at the west end, contained by linear woodlands on the south and north sides and by the façade of Stonyhurst College at the east end.

7. Landform - 'The Lady Statue' is the highest point within the landscape context, at 118.9mAOD being some 10m higher than the level (108.2m AOD)

of the roadway as it reaches the entrance to Stonyhurst College 560m to the east. The transition in general terms is of an even gradient, but in detail it falls through a number of gentle undulations which at the lower points serve to conceal the actual threshold of the College gate.

8. The site is visually contained by the surrounding woodland, with a small extension to the north as the public road turns uphill towards Longridge Fell - looking south from this route (and a public footpath) views of the site are heavily filtered by the mature trees on the north side of the northern Canal. A further footpath leaves the road at the west end as it turns towards the College, heading northwards.

9. The zone of visibility (identified on the 'Zone of Visibility' plan) is thus limited. There are also few receptors to these views, being primarily users of the road, users of the College sports pitches, and walkers on the two footpaths noted.

10. The enclosure of the allee by the woodland is thus intact, other than at three locations where access tracks have been made to reach sports pitches on the outside of the enclosing woodland. There are also two rugby pitches within the grass area as contemporary introductions into the landscape context: a white painted post and bar fence marks the boundary of the College grounds, with the driveway leading through a central gateway and passing centrally between the two Canals.

Access Road - Proposal

11. The proposed access road leaves the central roadway southwards towards Fox Fall Wood. The initial idea was to have the junction immediately outside the College gate (in the interest of retaining symmetry in the allee) ; however, Lancashire County Highways (LCC Highways) objected to this on the grounds that it created a crossroads (e-mail of 20th January 2016), and asked that the junction be offset some 32m to the west. This location is shown on the plan contained in Appendix E : it was reviewed as part of the landscape appraisal and considered unsatisfactory for the following reasons -

- The asymmetrical arrangement of the road system would be visually intrusive in an area where the character is dominated by the parallel lines of the enclosing trees, the simplicity of the existing T junction, and the clear boundary of the post and rail fence.

- The proposal defines a narrow strip of grass between the proposed road alignment and the post and rail fence, creating a small scale, fragmented element at odds with the overall sweep of green along the allee.

- The alignment required the removal of two prominent trees on entry to Fox Fall Wood
The associated tree impact drawing is included as Appendix F.

12. The revised proposal now submitted is included as Appendix A. It returns the alignment to that originally considered, with the centreline of the junction by the College gate, and includes a refined kerb detail to address the traffic control measures required by LCC Highways. The alignment initially follows the line of the post and rail fence, then curves eastwards so that by the time it enters Fox Fall Wood it is 3m from the fence line and has a reduced impact on the existing trees (see Appendix C). It thus follows a similar line

to the route northwards away from the entrance, retaining the symmetrical arrangement considered desirable to reduce the visual impact. The width is noted as 5.5m in accordance with LCC Highways suggestion. At the time of this assessment the detail has not been fully resolved, but it is assumed it will be 'blacktop' with flush kerbs. No details of road markings or signage have been provided, thus the impact of these is not considered.

Impact on Trees

13. A tree survey has been carried out by Treecheck Ltd (Leyland), with an associated impact assessment prepared on the basis of the road alignment submitted with the Application (Cassidy & Ashton drawing 8642/Sk01B).

14. This assessment has been used for the production of the photo-montages attached to this Report

Visual Impact

15. The route of the road was set out on site on 31st August, using high visibility posts to mark the location even at the most distant viewpoints. Photographs were then taken from the viewpoints noted on the 'Photography Location Plan', then used as the basis for the photo-montages. The trees lost have been digitally removed in Photoshop, and the 'before' and 'after' effect highlighted on the image.

16. The key concern was whether the alignment of the route would open up a gap in the enclosing tree canopy. As shown, the photo-montages demonstrate this is not the case: the difference between the two is considered a minor effect, arising from the removal of Tree 296 (Oak) which creates a lowering of the canopy of the foreground trees but with the containment continued by those retained to the south.

17. The impact of removing trees on the easement through the wood will be negligible as the route is on falling ground and the canopy line on both sides will be retained.

Conclusion

18. There will be a negligible effect in the removal of the trees, caused by the localised lowering of the canopy. The effect will be short term, and will be mitigated by the existing stock of naturally regenerating trees (including lime, beech and birch) which can be managed to create replacement canopy trees.

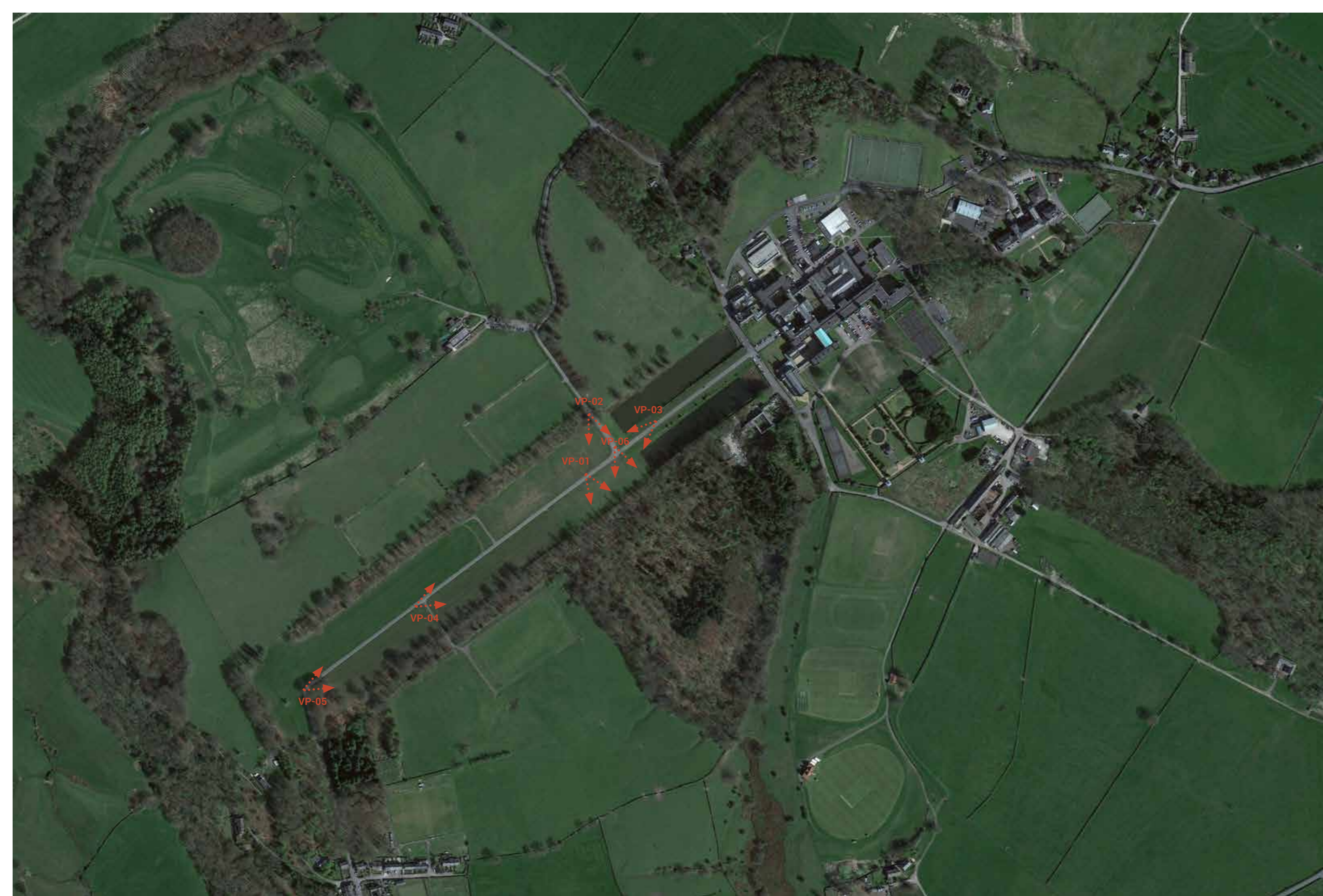
19. The oblique nature of the prime views eastwards along the allee also conceals the nature of the entrance into Fox Fall Wood.

20. The photo-montages also show that the line of the access road across the grass has no impact : the route will be set slightly into the turf (in the manner of the existing roadway along the allee), and is slightly concealed by the gentle undulation of the landform noted in paragraph 7 above.

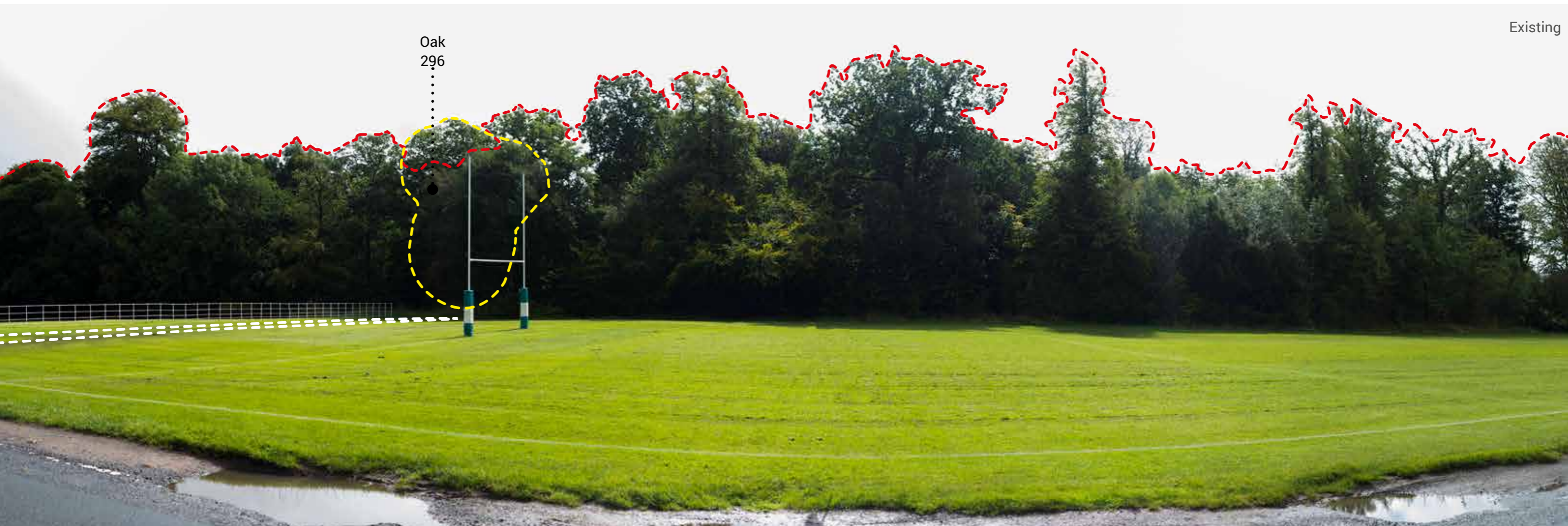
21. The exercise demonstrates there will be no adverse effect on the historic landscape setting.



Zone of Visibility



Oak
296



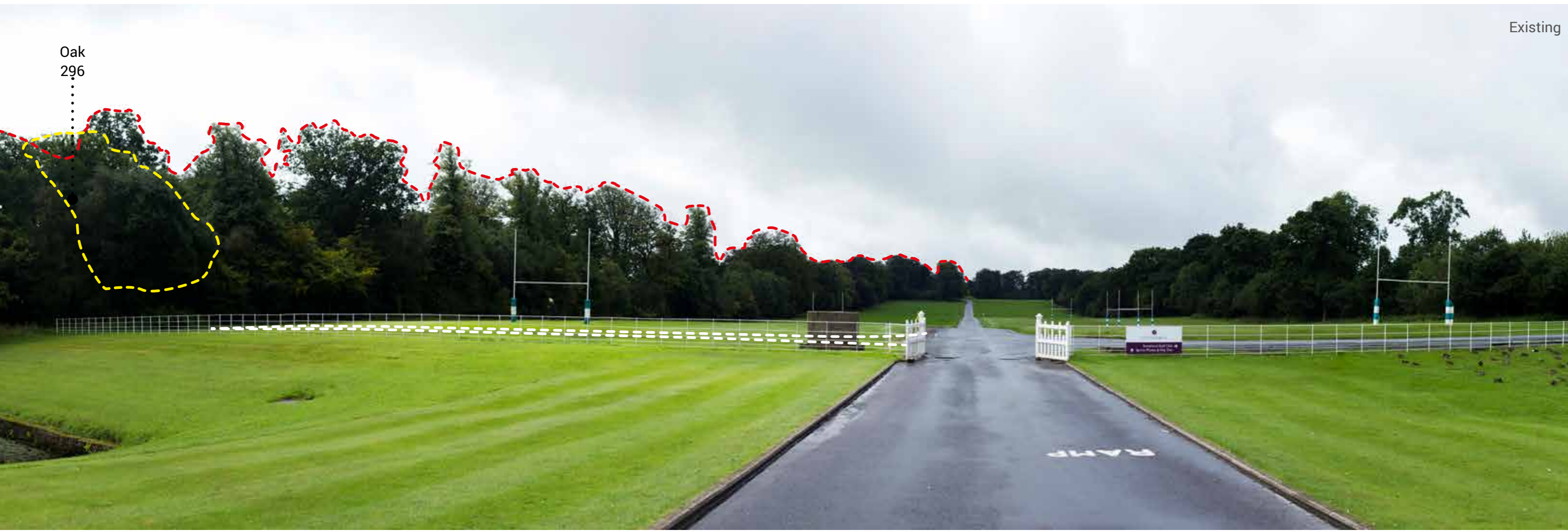
- - - Canopy line after tree removal
- - - Trees to be removed
- - - Proposed road (White dash on image)

Oak
296



- - - Canopy line after tree removal
 - - - Trees to be removed
 - - - Proposed road (White dash on image)

Oak
296



--- Canopy line after tree removal
 --- Trees to be removed
 --- Proposed road (White dash on image)

Existing



Proposed



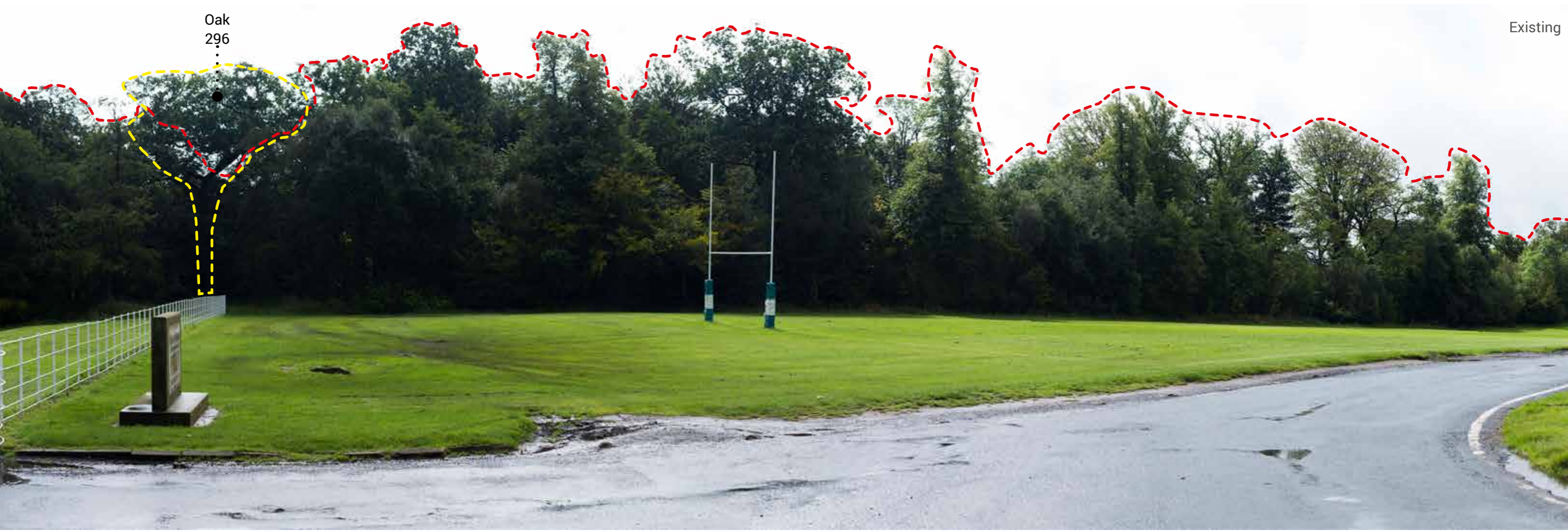
Oak
296



- - - Canopy line after tree removal
- - - Trees to be removed
- - - Proposed road (White dash on image)

Existing

Oak
296
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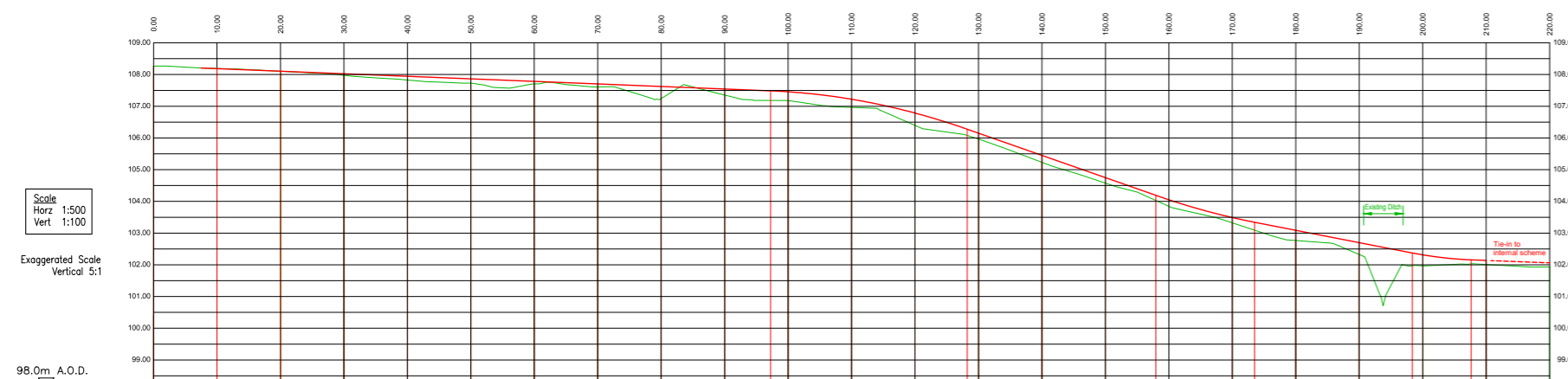
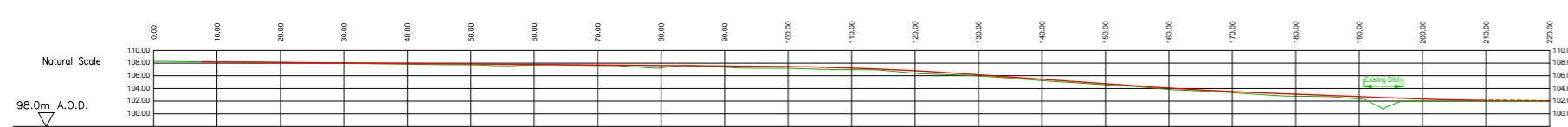
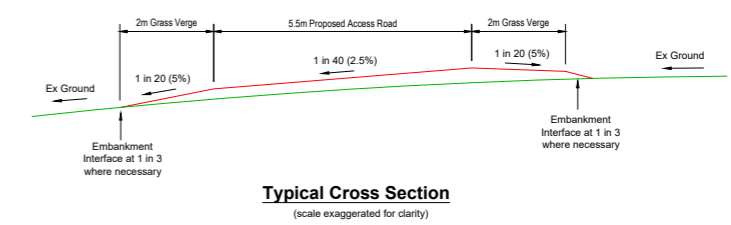
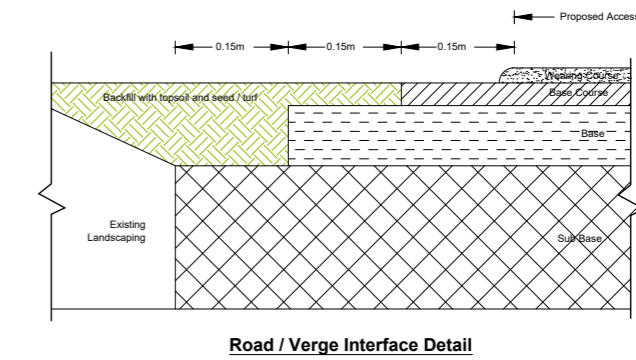
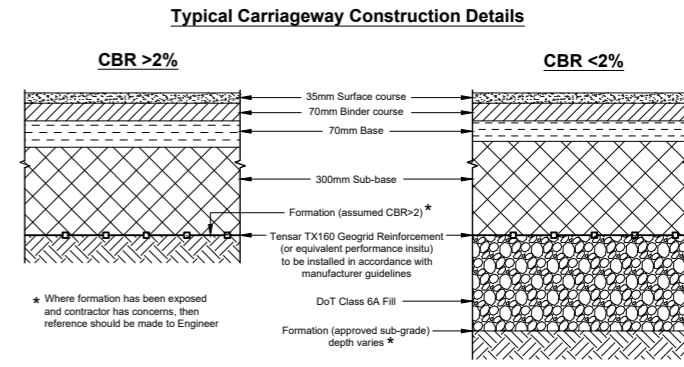
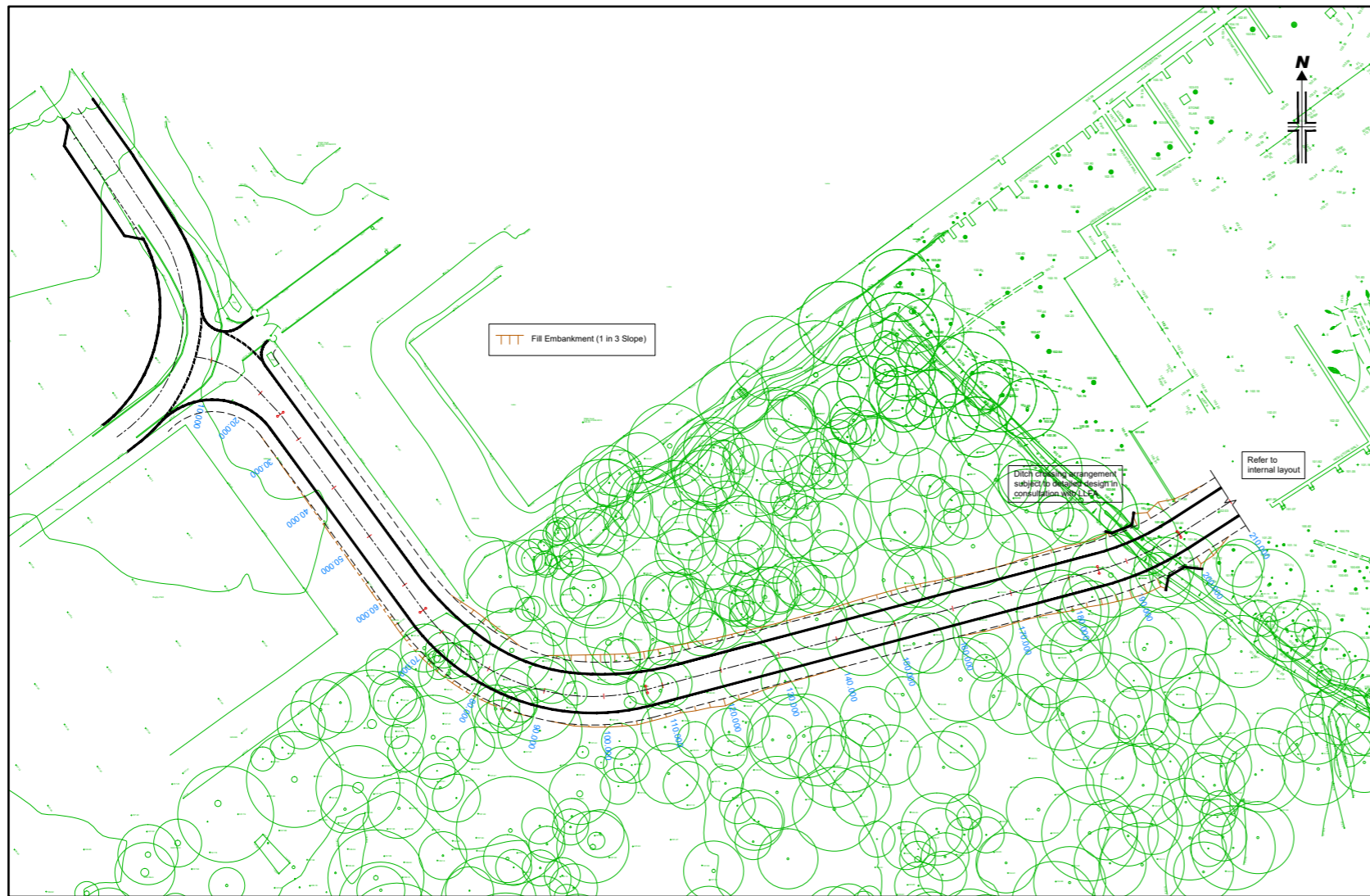


Proposed



--- Canopy line after tree removal
 --- Trees to be removed
 --- Proposed road (White dash on image)

Appendices



Chainage	0+00	10+00	20+00	20+43	30+00	40+00	50+00	60+00	70+00	80+00	90+00	90+24	97+23	100+00	110+00	120+00	128+23	130+00	140+00	150+00	154+75	159+00	164+19	167+46	170+00	173+51	180+00	185+10	190+00	198+83	200+00	210+00	220+00	220+00				
Ex. Level	108.26	108.18	108.20	108.10	108.10	107.83	107.73	107.78	107.71	107.51	107.24	107.35	107.49	107.46	107.22	106.86	110.00	106.28	106.18	105.97	105.45	105.23	104.65	104.75	104.57	104.19	103.85	103.34	103.09	102.77	102.33	102.37	102.32	101.97	101.6	101.14	101.01	101.53
Pr. Level		108.18	108.20	108.10	108.10	107.83	107.73	107.78	107.71	107.51	107.24	107.35	107.49	107.46	107.22	106.86	110.00	106.28	106.18	105.97	105.45	105.23	104.65	104.75	104.57	104.19	103.85	103.34	103.09	102.77	102.33	102.37	102.32	101.97	101.6	101.14	101.01	101.53
Vert Element			1 in 125.00 L=97.23										Vert Curv L=31.00 R=500m												Vert Curv L=9.27 R=300m						1 in 125.00 L=14.86							
Horz Element	Str. L=29.434				LH curve Radius=50.000 L=60.803										Str. L=94.866												LH curve Radius=47.250 L=14.736				Str. L=22.473							

Long Section - Road Centre-line
Horiz. 1:500 Vert. 1:100

Scheme subject to detailed design

Cassidy & Ashton		
Stonyhurst College		Scale As Shown @ A1
Proposed Access Plan & Long Section		
Drawn GS	Checked DW	Approved DW
Drwg No. T2299-H-01	Date 29 Nov 2016	
Revision A - 29 Nov 2016 Alignment altered around main entrance		
PSA Design The Old Bank House Preston, PR3 3JA Tel. 01772 786066 Fax. 01772 786265		

PROJECT: STONYHURST COLLEGE, RETREAT CENTRE	DRAWING NUMBER: 8642
DRAWING TITLE: PROPOSED SITE PLAN	P 03
CLIENT: THE TRUSTEES OF STONYHURST CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CENTRE TRUST	REVISION:
 www.cassidyashton.co.uk	DRAWN BY: LM
	SCALE @ A1: 1:250
	DATE: 12-2016

ARCHITECTURE BUILDING SURVEYING TOWN PLANNING
 Preston Office: 7 East Cliff, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 3JE T: 01772 258356
 Chester Office: Cassidy House, Station Road, Chester, CH1 3DW T: 01244 402900
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