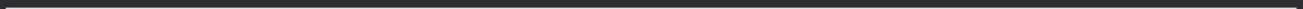
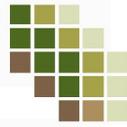




PLANNING STATEMENT

STANLEY HOUSE, MELLOR
MONTE BLACKBURN LTD





Rural Solutions

PLANNING STATEMENT

LOCATION

STANLEY HOUSE, MELLOR

PROPOSAL

NEW DEVELOPMENT (TO REPLACE CONSENTED BUT UNBUILT DEVELOPMENT) AT STANLEY HOUSE

APPLICANT

MONTE BLACKBURN LTD

ISSUE DATE

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SUMMARY

The proposed development at Stanley House is brought forward by a local employer Monte Blackburn Ltd which has acquired the hotel earlier this year.

The applicant's intentions are to sensitively enhance and extend the Grade II* listed building and hotel operation which requires investment. In enhancing the business this will in turn protect the heritage asset and allow its maintenance whilst delivering wide-ranging economic benefits.

The proposals have been brought forward to replace extensions and new buildings which were approved at the site back in 2009, but which were not completed.

The applicant has brought forward the application with the support of a multi-disciplinary team which includes the architects practice which sensitively restored Stanley House many years ago. The proposed development has been guided by a heritage consultant and pre-application engagement has taken place with Historic England which raises no objections and considers the proposals preferable to development that has been commenced and could yet be built out in full at the site.

The applicant has also engaged with Ribble Valley Borough Council to seek its views, as well as Lancashire County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership and regional tourism body which is supportive of the proposal.

It is clear from the application submission that the scheme will deliver wide-ranging economic benefits. Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy, of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides support for the development stating:

Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new attractions will be supported, in circumstances where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to local communities and employment opportunities.

At the time the Core Strategy was drafted to support economic development, the current pandemic and recession could not have been anticipated. The Chancellor's recent (November 2020) Autumn Statement noted that:

Our economic emergency has only just begun....And the economic damage is likely to be lasting.

The economic benefits of the development which include 30 new full-time jobs; construction benefits of in excess of £20m; net additional employment GVA in the accommodation, food and health and well-being sectors in Lancashire of c.£11.5 million at 2020 prices; and, increased demand for goods and services from local businesses leading to an aggregated net additional expenditure in the local economy

of £6.5 million, must therefore be given great weight in the application determination process.

In the design of the development great care has been taken to respect not only the built environment but also the natural environment.

Extensive new tree planting is proposed, including 1.4 hectares of native woodland planted within and around the site, 550m of native hedgerows, and numerous individual native trees which include species such as Lime, Oak, Alder and Birch. This will enhance the current appearance of the site in the landscape and help to assimilate new development. These new landscaping works will lead to an 835% biodiversity net gain at the site.

The proposals are assessed to include a clear betterment over unbuilt development that could be completed at the site and this is confirmed by Historic England also.

It is considered that proposed development complies with planning policy and planning practice and that there is no reason for planning consent to be withheld.

Together with the applicants we look forward to engaging with Ribble Valley Borough Council during the course of the application determination process.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1: This planning statement supports an application for planning and listed building consent at Stanley House, Mellor.

1.2: The application is made on behalf of Monte Blackburn Ltd a locally based tourism and leisure business.

1.3: The description of development as proposed is:

New development (to replace approved but unbuilt development from 2009 planning consent) including: New Spa and Leisure Complex, Banquet Hall, Extensions to Existing Hotel Entrance and Restaurant, New Bedroom Block, Extended Car Park, Amendment of Internal Access Road, Rerouting of Park of Public Right of Way and Enhancement of Existing Section of Right of Way, New Hard and Soft Landscaping and Tree Planting.

1.4: The application is brought forward following pre-application engagement with Ribble Valley Borough Council, Historic England and Lancashire County Council.

1.5: Section two of this statement includes details of the application site and its planning history which is directly relevant to the current proposals.

1.6: At section three, details of the applicant Monte Blackburn Ltd is provided.

1.7: At section four, details of the extensive pre-application engagement process undertaken are qualified.

1.8: Section five provides details of the proposed development.

1.9: Section six confirms the benefits that will arise from development in economic, environmental and social terms.

1.10: At section seven the conformity of the proposed development with the development plan for the area is confirmed.

1.11: At section eight of the statement, the conformity of proposed development with national planning policy is assessed.

1.12: Section nine includes a planning balance section which considers planning policy, the relevance of the 2009 consent and the benefits of development.

1.13: Attached to the statement as appendices are a pre-application support letter from Historic England, as well as pre-application support letters from the Local Enterprise Partnership and Marketing Lancashire.

1.14: There are a number of supporting documents that make up the planning application. These include:

- Economic Benefits Statement (Rural Solutions)
- Sustainability Statement (Campbell Drive Partnership)
- Design and Access Statement (Campbell Driver Partnership)
- Plans Package (Campbell Driver Partnership)
- Landscape Plans (DEP Landscape)
- Landscape Visual Appraisal (DEP Landscape)
- Tree Survey (DEP Landscape)
- Heritage Statement (Hinchliffe Heritage)
- Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (Rural Solutions)
- Biodiversity Enhancements Appraisal (Rural Solutions)
- Transport Assessment (Dynamic Transport Planning)
- Travel Plan (Dynamic Transport Planning)

1.15: These documents form a comprehensive suite of application documents, demonstrating the detail in which the proposals have been considered. The scope of documents provided is greater than those provided with an earlier approved application in 2009, which these proposals seek to replace.

2. SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY

STANLEY HOUSE

- 2.1: Stanley House is a Grade 2* listed building situated in extensive grounds to the south of the A677 some 3 miles to the north west of Blackburn.
- 2.2: The site is located with Mellor Parish and Ward.
- 2.3: The site is described at some length in supporting documents including the Landscape Visual Appraisal, Heritage Statement and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which accompany the application, as well as other documents.
- 2.4: Those documents should be consulted for relevant information however the following information is considered notable from a site perspective.

Listing Description

- 2.5: The description of the listed building is as follows:

MELLOR SD 62 NW 8/26 Stanley House 24-8-1952 - II* House, said to have been dated 1640 (Pevsner). Sandstone rubble. Left-hand bay pebbledashed with slate roof. Other bays, now unoccupied, have stone slates now partly missing. 3 storeys, with 2 bays to left of 3-storey porch and one bay to right. Stone cornice. Windows mullioned, with outer chamfer on ground and 1st floors, and with hoods. 1st and 2nd bays have 6-light groundfloor windows and ones of 5 lights on the 1st floor. The right-hand bay has 6 lights to both the ground and 1st floors. The 2nd floor windows are of 3 lights. The porch has 3-light windows, the upper one stepped. Below the 1st floor window is a blank panel with moulded border. The porch doorway has a cambered head and moulded jambs. Chimneys on gables (with projecting stacks) and in line with porch. Inside, the door opens against the side of the hall fireplace, which has a moulded bressumer and jambs. The doorway from the lobby into the right-hand room has been bricked up and a new doorway cut through at the rear of the stack. At the rear of the hall is a stair projection, now without its original stair. The left-hand wall of the hall, dividing it from the occupied part of the house, is a later replacement in brick. The right-hand room has heavy roll-moulded beams and a large blocked fireplace with moulded jambs. On the 1st floor there are said to be 2 fireplaces with cambered bressumers and moulded surrounds. RCHM report December 1977.

- 2.6: The remainder of the buildings at the site are considered by the heritage advisor to be curtilage listed, although some of the buildings are clearly of recent construction.

2.7: To the south of the site, Woodford Park is a designed landscape centred on Woodford Hall. Both the landscape and the hall are designated grade II (as a registered park and garden and a listed building respectively).

Designations

2.8: The site is not the subject of any site-specific designations in terms of landscape, ecology or another designations.

2.9: There are some protected trees at the site which would not be impacted by the proposals.

2.10: The site is within Flood Zone 1 (the lowest land classification for flood risk).

2.11: The site is within designated Green Belt. Green Belt is a planning rather than environmental designation and the implications for the proposal as considered later in this statement.

Access

2.12: The site is served by a well-established access off the A677.

2.13: There is a public right of way which runs in a south westerly directly from the A677, up the route of the former main road access (now closed to vehicular traffic) to Stanley House. The PRoW then runs along the access drive before then travelling westwards towards out of the site.

2.14: Bus stops are located on the A677 (both sides of the road) in proximity to where the public right of way meets the A-road.



Fig.1 Public rights of way at Stanley House

Existing Site Condition and Opportunities for Site Enhancement as Part of New Development

- 2.15: Stanley House was acquired by Monte Hospitality in 2019. The listed building was restored by the previous owners and is a credit to their endeavour in taking a ruinous listed building and bringing it back up to its former standard. New development that has been added to the site is of high quality.
- 2.16: However, there are considered to be a number of opportunities to enhance the existing site condition and these are noted below (see also Fig.2)
- The existing former historic access route to Stanley House is overgrown and in poor condition with a corrugated field gate set between stone gate piers.
 - Back of house areas are untidy with storage containers and portacabins.
 - When viewed from Mires Ash Brow at the opposite side of the valley the new bedroom block is prominent in view. There is a clear opportunity for a new landscaping scheme to better integrate this existing development into the landscape.
 - The existing highways access drive which runs from the A677 up to Stanley House is currently visible in the landscape. There is the opportunity to integrate this road into the landscape through new landscaping and earth movements.



Fig. 2: Opportunities exist for (clockwise from top left): enhancement of public right of way/historic drive; removal of back of house ancillary structures by providing new kitchen space; adding new woodland in front of the bedroom block to set it within the landscape and adding new trees and hedges next to the existing access drive to better screen it within the landscape



PLANNING HISTORY

2.17: Planning and listed building consent was granted in 2009 for a major set of extensions and free-standing buildings at the site.

2.18: These extensions are shown within the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application.

2.19: Whilst the applications were determined under different local and national policy the following key points from committee reports recommending approval are considered relevant:

- Substantial regard was given to the comments of Historic England and its support for the scheme.
- In terms of Visual Impact, the committee report notes that:

I am of the opinion that the proposal has been designed to minimise both the impact the development would have on the listed building and the local environment. As already indicated the alterations and extensions are sited in areas that have limited views and a topography that helps screen the bulk of the buildings.

- In terms of Green Belt Issues the report states that:

I accept that the scheme will impinge on the openness of the Green Belt but a balance needs to be made against other material considerations which in this instance I consider make the scheme acceptable.

- In terms of 'Other material considerations' this states:

The applicant in a supporting statement believes that special justification exists as an exception to Green Belt policy by virtue of the Listed Building issues and the regional and tourism and economic development objectives that would be met from the development.

and

In assessing the economic objectives and the safeguarding of rural employment these are important issues that could be seen as factors that may allow the development to be seen as an objection. The applicant has indicated that currently the enterprise employs 40 permanent staff with 40 temporary staff occasionally used and that this scheme would add an additional 60 permanent staff with a possible 50 temporary staff.

I am of the opinion that approval of such a scheme would introduce a tourism facility that would be of a high quality and potentially be of a regional significance. This view is endorsed by Lancashire and Blackpool tourist board.

2.20: As will be confirmed in this statement a number of these points are equally applicable to the current scheme, including:

- The support of Historic England, formerly English Heritage.
- The broad location of the extensions in areas where views will be minimised.
- That material considerations are brought forward, including an economic justification case.
- The support of the local tourism board (Marketing Lancashire), as well as in this case, the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Job creation and support benefits.

2.21: However, in 2020 two different circumstances are for consideration:

1. The principle of a major extension of the existing facility exists, whereas this was not the case in 2009;
2. The impacts of COVID-19 and the current recession on the economy are widely predicted to be unparalleled in living memory.

EXTANT PLANNING CONSENT AS FALL-BACK POSITION

2.22: The 2009 approval included some 7,360m² of new footprint at Stanley House. Part of this development (the bedroom block) was built out.

2.23: The remaining areas including new spa and leisure buildings and dining areas were not built out but remain extant as the 2009 consent was commenced.

2.24: The unimplemented parts of the 2009 consent on the site clearly represent the applicant's fall-back position for delivering new development at Stanley House

2.25: The weight to be attached to a landowner's fall-back position has been confirmed in a number of legal cases.

2.26: For example, in *Coln Park LLP v SSCLG* [2011] EWHC 2282 (Admin) it was recorded that:

It is common ground that the correct test to be applied in considering a fall-back argument is whether there is a reasonable possibility that if planning permission were to be refused, use of land, or a development

which has been permitted, would take place, and such use or development would be less desirable than that for which planning permission is sought." (emphasis added)

2.27: In *P F Ahern v SSE* [1998] Env. L.R. 189 the correct approach was held to be as follows:

The requirement to have regard to the consideration imports a requirement on the decision-maker to have before it sufficient material so that the consideration can be assessed. In the context of fall-back cases this all reduces to the need to ask and answer the question: is the proposed development in its implications for impact on the environment, or other relevant planning factors, likely to have implications worse than, or broadly similar to, any use to which the site would or might be put if the proposed development were refused? (at p.196) (emphasis added)

2.28: First, there is a 'reasonable possibility' that the fall-back scheme would be delivered if the current scheme was not accepted. The consented but unimplemented extensions do deliver a quantum of accommodation which would increase the offer of Stanley House, even though this accommodation does not relate well to the needs of the current market or operator.

2.29: There is a need for new accommodation as the hotel operation has been loss making at a smaller scale for many years.

2.30: There is more than a reasonable possibility that the buildings which constitute the fall-back position would be delivered.

2.31: Historic England confirmed the existence of this fallback position in its pre-application response, noting that:

This pre-application follows a previously consented scheme to extend the business operation on the site, granted permission in 2008 under references 3/2008/0547 and 3/2008/0548. It has therefore been accepted that a hotel use is an appropriate one for the site, and that some expansion of the built form will be necessary to secure this use. As this has been partially implemented it forms applicant's 'fall-back position' in the event of the currently proposed scheme not being granted consent, and is therefore a material consideration. (emphasis added)

3. THE APPLICANT

- 3.1: The applicant for development is Monte Blackburn Ltd (Monte).
- 3.2: Monte acquired the hotel in July 2020, the acquisition from the previous owners having been agreed prior to the pandemic lockdown and completed during the resulting temporary closure of the hotel and associated function venue.
- 3.3: Monte intends to develop the hotel into a 'best in class' boutique / lifestyle country hotel and spa, introducing new function space, adding a new bedroom block and a second and new spa & wellness facility.
- 3.4: The company has recently reopened the hotel.
- 3.5: As well as the Stanley House, Monte owns Frontier Park Blackburn where it is due to develop a new 112 bedroom hotel in association with Hampton by Hilton.
- 3.6: Monte and its parent company Euro Garages Ltd is a leading employer in the area and a major contributor to the economy of the North West. It employs a significant number of people at its Blackburn headquarters and more across the region. Based in Blackburn, Euro Garages was founded in 2001 by brothers Mohsin and Zuber Issa with the acquisition of a single petrol filling station in Bury, Greater Manchester.
- 3.7: Since then, Euro Garages has established itself as one of the UK's fastest growing and most recognisable forecourt operators, with an expanding portfolio of around 4500 sites across the UK, mainland Europe, the USA and Australia. The company employs over 8,000 people in the UK.
- 3.8: Given the ownership's close proximity to this site, it is clearly a very important project for them. This creates the potential to work with the Borough Council and other stakeholders such as Historic England to create a development of the highest quality.

4. PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

4.1: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports pre-application liaison with local authorities (and communities) by applicants and states that:

39. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

4.2: Paragraph 40 is also critical as in this case it goes onto state that:

Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they do offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their applications. (*our emphasis*).

4.3: The applicants have undertaken a very substantial level of pre-application engagement with both the local planning authority and key consultees as outlined below.

ENGAGEMENT WITH RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

4.4: The applicants considered it beneficial to engage with Ribble Valley Borough Council at a very early stage in the process.

4.5: Following the purchase of the site the owner of Monte Hospitality met with senior officers of the council, together with his development partner, to explain his intentions for the site.

4.6: An initial pre-application presentation meeting between representatives of the applicant, their architect and other members of the project team and senior officers of the council took place on August 10th 2020.

4.7: At the meeting the intentions of the applicant and the need to progress promptly with a planning application and development was confirmed.

4.8: Pre-application documents were then promptly prepared and submitted on September 10th 2020.

4.9: A second meeting date was sought but was not forthcoming and therefore due to the pressing need to advance the development, an application is made before the end of 2020.

4.10: Informal verbal feedback was received from Officers however and this related to two matters. Firstly, that consideration should be given to including more contemporary design influences and secondly that two new parking areas sited directly to the west of the proposed access road into the site should be reconsidered or removed.

ENGAGEMENT WITH HISTORIC ENGLAND

4.11: A pre-application meeting took place between Historic England the applicant, the applicant's agent, heritage advisor and architect on the 11th August 2020.

4.12: The formal pre-application response dated 25th September from Historic England is attached at Appendix I.

4.13: The summary of the document states that:

Stanley House is an attractive example of a higher status house of seventeenth century construction, which is typical of the yeoman and gentry houses found in the north-west. The building is of high architectural and historic interest, and represents an important example of regional vernacular distinctiveness.

The applicant states that the proposed revised masterplan has been designed in order to create a more economically viable overall hospitality offer for the site. The associated alterations to the previously approved scheme would increase the footprint of the built on the site. However, it would also reduce its intensity, and would allow the principal elevation of the listed building to be viewed without physical accretions to either side. The proposals are cumulatively considered to be more sensitive to the significance of the listed building than the previously approved masterplan

Historic England would therefore conclude that we would have no objection if the revised proposals were brought forward at application stage, subject to the proposals being supported by a robust suite of documents, building on those presented to support this pre-application submission.

4.14: The response goes onto make a notable design suggestion as follows:

To the west of the site, the applicant seeks to create a more formal area of garden between one of the barns and the proposed new banqueting building. This is not inherently objectionable, and it is understood how this area would support the functioning of the banqueting building. However, care should be taken to ensure that the building and formal garden read as a modern creation, and do not create a historically inauthentic suggestion that the site previously had a walled garden or a more formal landscaped setting. This could be achieved by ensuring that

the new banqueting building is of a high quality but modern design, and possibly through the introduction of small plaque on the banqueting building noting the date of construction of the building and garden.

- 4.15: This advice has been taken and more contemporary design elements are included. It is proposed that a condition be applied to the grant of consent requiring that the suggested plaque be attached to the banqueting building as recommended.

ENGAGEMENT WITH LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (HIGHWAYS)

- 4.16: As part of the pre-application process, the applicant's transport advisors have engaged with Lancashire County Council Highways Team via a pre-application process.
- 4.17: No objections to the proposals were raised and parking numbers provided reflect discussions with Highway Officers.
- 4.18: No objection was raised by relevant Officers in the Highways Team to the minor diversion of the Public Right of Way that is proposed.

CONCLUSIONS ON PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 4.19: It can be concluded that the applicants have taken all reasonable steps to engage positively with relevant stakeholders to the application process, during the plan preparation process, in order to facilitate the prompt submission of an application which meets the operational needs of the (currently loss-making) hotel.

5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1: The proposed development at site is

New development (to replace approved but unbuilt development from 2009 planning consent) including: New Spa and Leisure Complex, Banquet Hall, Extensions to Existing Hotel Entrance and Restaurant, New Bedroom Block, Extended Car Park, Amendment of Internal Access Road, Rerouting of Park of Public Right of Way and Enhancement of Existing Section of Right of Way, New Hard and Soft Landscaping and Tree Planting.

5.2: The description of development clearly states what is proposed at the site on an area basis.

5.3: More details of the proposed development are set out in the Design and Access Statement and other documents accompanying this application. However, the following is noted.

5.4: The development overall has been designed to replicate consented but unbuilt development at the site.

5.5: It is intended to create a 'once in a generation' investment in the site to meet the requirements of the hotel operation. The hotel operation is a loss-making one and additional accommodation is required in order to ensure that it can become profit making and trade at a level that delivers a greater level of economic benefits, allowing continued investment in the principal historic building and delivering greater benefits to the region. Further information is provided in the accompanying Economic Benefits Statement.

5.6: The level of investment in upgrading the complex and its subsequent operation will deliver important benefits for the region.

5.7: In terms of the design approach taken to the proposed development the operational layout of the proposals is set out in the Design and Access Statement and Economic Benefits Statement.

5.8: However, in terms of broad design principles the intention has been to:

- Respect the historic listed building (unlike with the 2009 consent there is no link corridor provided from the new development to the listed building). Views to the listed building have been preserved and enhanced where possible.
- To avoid two storey development across all areas of new development in proximity to the listed building. As shown in Fig. 3, single storey. Grass flat-roof development is sited in close proximity to the listed building. Taking this approach increases the spread of development in comparison

to the theoretical (and consented) alternative of providing two storey development in close proximity to the listed building.

- In addition to the grass roofs, a contemporary design approach has been taken to ensure that new building works appear as of their time, whilst stone and slate is also used extensively in order to ensure that the new buildings relate well to the listed building and the local vernacular.



Fig.3. Architect's perspective of new development

Car Parking and Access

- 5.9: New car parking is required at the site to serve the new development. A total no. of 400 spaces will be available following development.
- 5.10: The location of the new parking has been carefully considered in terms of landscape and operational issues.
- 5.11: An existing 'back of house' car park at the northern end of the site will be extended to accommodate 70 car parking spaces. Parking in this location is required to meet the operational needs of the spa. Creation of the new parking will be accompanied by strategic landscaping around the northern edge of the site which will help to better accommodate proposed development in the landscape, whilst at the same time ensuring that existing development has a better setting in the landscape.
- 5.12: The majority of the new parking provided is to the south of the site. The applicant's land ownership provides a clear opportunity to accommodate new car parking between an existing well-treed boundary to the southern perimeter of the current site and an area of dense woodland slight further south.

- 5.13: 108 new car parking spaces will be overflow spaces with grasscrete or a similar surfacing material used. This will create a more natural edge to the extended car park compared to the surfacing of all of the new car park with tarmac. Clearly the overflow parking will only be used at busy times so activity to the outer edges of the site will be reduced.
- 5.14: A significant amount of new woodland planting will be provided as part of the proposed development.
- 5.15: As noted in section four, advice received from the Borough Council was to delete proposed areas of new parking to the western edge of the access road and this advice has been complied with.
- 5.16: In addition to the new parking the existing access road internal to the site will be rerouted and moved slightly further westwards (this was also approved on the 2009 consent). Moving the access road allows the proposed development to be incorporated without development taking place intensively, in proximity to the main listed building.
- 5.17: The public right of way is also proposed to be moved westwards at the same time. The minor diversion of the route is not considered to impact upon the experience of users of the right of way.
- 5.18: As part of the rerouting of the access drive and public right of way new landscaping is proposed. This will help to assimilate the development into the landscape and will create a stronger landscaped boundary to the site than currently exists.

Scale of Development

- 5.19: As noted in section two, the 2009 approval included some 7,360m² of new footprint at Stanley House. Part of this development (the bedroom block) was built out. There is a remaining 4,658m² of new development which could be completed as part of the extant consent.
- 5.20: The proposed development totals 5,588m² (remodelled entrance: 54.5m²; extended restaurant: 81.9m²; new bedroom wing: 1,326.6m²; new banquet hall: 1,223.6m²).
- 5.21: This reflects a 19.9% increase in the built footprint proposed over and above the extant development that could be delivered at the site.
- 5.22: However, as noted the existing built and consented but unbuilt footprint of the site (the applicant's fall-back position) would be 7,360m².
- 5.23: If approved, the current proposals would increase the total site development from 7,360m² which could result if the previous consent was completed to 8,293m² with this replacement application. This represents an increase in the

total footprint at the site of just **12.6%**. This is considered the most salient figure, given that this represents the actual increase over the fall-back position.

- 5.24: The operational requirements for the level of floorspace increase are as set out in the accompanying Economic Benefits Statement and Design and Access Statement.

6. BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1: It is clear that there are numerous benefits that the proposed development would deliver in economic, social and environmental terms.
- 6.2: These benefits are set out below as benefits arising from development.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.3: The following economic benefits of development exist (see also Economic Benefits Statement for the source of these benefits):

Quantifiable Economic Benefits

EC1 - Construction benefits – net additional construction related GVA in Lancashire of £14.9 million together with a further £8 million GVA across the North West region (see Economic Benefits Statement).

EC2 - The creation of 30 net additional permanent full-time equivalent jobs in the local economy together with the equivalent of 152 years of construction related employment in Lancashire together with a further 77 years of construction sector employment across the North West region (see EBS).

EC3 - Net additional employment GVA in the accommodation, food and health and well-being sector in Lancashire of c. £11.5 million at 2020 prices (see EBS).

EC4 - Increased demand for goods and services from local businesses leading to an aggregated net additional expenditure in the local economy of £6.5 million (see EBS).

EC5 – A notable business rates to Ribble Valley Borough Council helping to promote the continued provision of public services.

Qualitative Economic Benefits

EC6 - Improved quality and contribution to the Ribble Valley, Blackburn with Darwen, Preston and Lancashire offer from the enhancement of existing visitor and function accommodation and the creation of a new spa.

EC7 - Increased activity from tourism and business users.

EC8 - Opportunities to generate improved skills and 'on the job' learning across construction, grounds maintenance, health and well-being and visitor economy sectors.

EC9 - Enhancements to vitality in the local area and communities.

6.4: These economic benefits are notable and must weigh heavily in the planning balance during the unprecedented economic situation caused by Covid-19.

6.5: In his Autumn Statement, published 25 November 2020, the Chancellor noted that:

Our economic emergency has only just begun....And the economic damage is likely to be lasting.

6.6: The economic benefits are of amplified importance as they would be delivered on the edge of the East Lancashire conurbation. It is widely anticipated by some leaders in the north that the impacts of the recession will be far greater in the north of England.

Environmental Benefits

6.7: In addition to economic benefits a number of environmental benefits arise from the development. These environmental benefits exist in terms of the built environment (heritage) and the natural environment. These are listed below:

ENVI - Generation of income (turning a loss-making business into a profit making one) ensuring a viable use of the site, in turn paying for ongoing maintenance of the heritage asset. This benefit was confirmed in the pre-application response of Historic England, who noted that:

The revised proposed scheme seeks to remodel the built provision on the site, to provide it with a viable long-term use. In principle this is supported by Historic England, as a viable use will also secure the long-term maintenance and protection of the listed building.

ENV2 - Demolition of some unsightly "back of house" buildings thereby enhancing the setting of Stanley House and the barns.

ENV3 - The enhancement of the appearance and condition of the existing public footpath and gateway as a historic route to Stanley House.

Natural Environment

ENV4 - Sensitive landscaping reinforcing key views of the development and reinforcing a parkland setting, whilst reducing views of more modern development (recent bedroom block and tarmac access drive) from Mire Brow.

ENV5 – 1.4ha of new woodland and 550 of new hedgerow will deliver landscape and carbon sequestration benefits (1.96 tonnes of carbon per year¹).

¹ Forestry Commission publication 'Mitigation: Planting more trees' confirms woodland sequesters 1.4 tonnes of carbon per year. In this case 1.4 ha of woodland is proposed sequestering 1.96 tonnes of carbon.

ENV6 – A biodiversity net gain of 835% in the condition of the site arising from new landscaping, as confirmed in the Biodiversity Enhancement Appraisal accompanying the application.

Social Benefits

SBI - It is clear that the benefits that will arise from the proposed development are predominately economic and environmental (built heritage and natural environment).

Nevertheless, it is apparent that many of those benefits are also societal benefits. The protection and enhancement of employment at the site, with training opportunities and apprenticeships are clear social benefits.

At the same time investment in and enhancement of the historic environment further contributes to society.

7. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

7.1: Previous proposals for the extension of the hotel were considered to be planning policy compliant in 2009. Local and national policy has nevertheless changed since that time and relevant policy is appraised in this section (local policy) and the following section (national policy).

7.2: THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

7.3: The development plan is made up of the adopted policies of the Core Strategy (2008-2028) and Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document (2008-2028).

7.4: The following objectives and key statements from the Core Strategy are of principal relevance.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY	POLICY AND COMMENTARY
Core Strategy Strategic Objectives	<p><i>“Improve the competitiveness and productivity of local businesses by safeguarding and promoting local employment opportunities.”</i></p> <p><i>“Co-ordinate, innovate and diversify sustainable tourism, building on our strengths and developing new initiatives.”</i></p> <p>The proposed development will safeguard and promote local employment and help to turn a loss-making operation into a profit-making operation, as confirmed in the supporting economic benefits statement.</p>
KEY STATEMENT ENI: GREEN BELT	<p><i>“The overall extent of the green belt will be maintained to safeguard the surrounding countryside from inappropriate encroachment. The development of new buildings will be limited to the purposes of agriculture, forestry, essential outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of the designation.”</i></p> <p>New development will have a greater impact upon the Green Belt (19%) than approved but unbuilt extensions. This additional development is required to ensure a sustainable future for the upgraded hotel facility as confirmed in supporting documents.</p> <p>The proposed development is well-related to existing building and in part redevelops existing buildings.</p>

	<p>The policy wording relates to the 'overall extent' of the Green Belt. 'Overall' suggests a degree of flexibility in strategic terms and the Green Belt will not be negatively impacted to any notable degree. Further Green Belt assessment is made in the national policy section.</p>
<p>KEY STATEMENT EN3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE</p>	<p>A Sustainability Statement is submitted with the application which confirms the consideration given to solar gain and maximising the thermal envelope of the building. Electric car charging points are also proposed.</p> <p>In the surrounding environment, new woodland planting of 1.4ha is proposed on the site. This is highly sustainable and will sequester 1.96 tonnes of carbon per year from the atmosphere.</p>
<p>KEY STATEMENT EN4: BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY</p>	<p>A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal has been undertaken and following this a Biodiversity Enhancement Appraisal submitted with the application this confirms that the biodiversity interest of the site will increase by 835% based on the submitted landscape plan.</p>
<p>KEY STATEMENT EN5: HERITAGE ASSETS</p>	<p>Of critical reference, the statement supports:</p> <p><i>“Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.”</i></p> <p>This is key to the proposals as presented.</p> <p>The statement also supports:</p> <p><i>“Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.”</i></p> <p>The planning application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement which lists at paragraph 8.5.3.3 12 heritage benefits associated with the proposal before noting that:</p> <p><i>“These heritage and environmental benefits far outweigh any harm”.</i></p> <p>The clear support of Historic England for the proposals as presented to them at the pre-application stage also points to this policy being complied with.</p>

<p>KEY STATEMENT EC1: BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>The policy states:</p> <p><i>“Employment development will be directed towards the main settlement of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge as the preferred locations to accommodate employment growth together with land at Barrow Enterprise Site, the Lancashire Enterprise Zone at Samlesbury and locations well related to the A59 corridor.”</i></p> <p>Stanley House is well related to the A59 corridor and its continued and enhanced operation is clearly complementary to the nearby Lancashire Enterprise Zone.</p> <p><i>“In considering the development of land for economic development and in determining where this land will be located, priority will be given to the use of appropriate Brownfield sites to deliver employment-generating uses including a preference for the re-use of existing employment sites before alternatives are considered.”</i></p> <p>Stanley House and its immediate setting where development will take place can be considered a brownfield site.</p>
<p>KEY STATEMENT EC3: VISITOR ECONOMY</p>	<p><i>“Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new attractions will be supported, in circumstances where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to local communities and employment opportunities.”</i></p> <p>The development is in strong compliance with this policy statement as confirmed in the submitted Economic Benefits Study.</p>

7.5: For the reasons set out above, the proposed development can be considered to be in conformity with the development plan for the area.

8. THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING GUIDANCE

8.1: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states (paragraph 8) that there are three dimensions to sustainable development:

- An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

8.2: The proposal will deliver a number of benefits from an economic, social and environmental perspective in accordance with Framework guidance as qualified in section six.

8.3: The following national policy references from the National Planning Policy Framework are considered of key relevance to the proposals.

NPPF PARA.	COMMENTARY
39-41	<p>The paragraphs extol the benefits of the pre-application advice process. The applicant has sought pre-application advice from Historic England and Ribble Valley Borough Council.</p> <p>Historic England's feedback has been received and has been taken into account in the final application proposals.</p> <p>No pre-application response was received from Ribble Valley Borough Council however some informal feedback regarding an area of new parking on the pre-application proposals has led to it being deleted.</p>
80	<p><i>"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development."</i></p> <p>The proposals clearly receive support from this policy guidance with reference to the benefits confirmed in section six of this statement and the accompanying Economic Benefits Statement.</p>
124	<p><i>'The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'</i></p> <p>New development is brought forward by an architect practice which has delivered award-winning heritage led development at this site in the past. The design is guided by both heritage, landscape and ecological input, as well as sustainability considerations, with heritage and environmental benefits arising as a result. The pre-application feedback of Historic England confirms these benefits and points to the quality of the design proposed.</p>
141 / 143 / 144 / 145 c) and g)	<p>These policies relating to Green Belt are assessed later in this section.</p>
170	<p><i>170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</i></p> <p><i>a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner</i></p>

	<p><i>commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and,</i></p> <p><i>d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.</i></p> <p>The environmental benefits of development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the landscape around the Stanley house through new landscaping and woodland planting helping to assimilate the existing site better into the landscape. • Providing an 835% biodiversity net gain increase for the site.
192	<p><i>Local Planning Authorities should have regard to:</i></p> <p><i>'a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;</i></p> <p><i>b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and</i></p> <p><i>c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'</i></p> <p>This advice to Core Strategy Statement EN5 which supports:</p> <p><i>"(Recognising that) the best way of ensuring the long term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use"</i></p> <p>The proposals conform to this national and local policy. By helping to deliver a viable use for a loss-making facility it will help to deliver ongoing investment in the heritage asset that is Stanley House and some of its surrounding buildings. The ongoing conservation of the heritage asses in a viable use will contribute to the economic vitality of the surrounding area.</p>
193	<p><i>"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."</i></p>

	<p>Great weight is being given by the applicants and project and design team, as guided by a heritage consultant, to the heritage asset. A number of key heritage benefits are being delivered as confirmed in the accompanying heritage statement. These are listed at paragraph 8.5.3.3 of the statement, with the author then noting that:</p> <p><i>“These heritage and environmental benefits far outweigh any harm”.</i></p> <p>Acknowledging the significance of the heritage asset, pre-application liaison has been undertaken with Historic England on the proposed development</p>
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NPPF GREEN BELT POLICY

OPENNESS AND PERMANENCE

8.4: Paragraph 133 confirms the importance of Green Belt openness:

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

8.5: The existing site contains development and car parking and includes large open areas around the perimeter. The proposed development will slightly extend these perimeters (to reroute the access road) but in general terms, the development is accommodated within the existing perimeters of the site.

8.6: The site is in an isolated location and there is no prospect of it merging into other development. Therefore, the minor extension of the site’s perimeter (as also approved in 2009) will have no strategic impact on the openness of this part of the Green Belt.

8.7: In addition to the extent of the site, new development within the site can also impact upon openness, including by restricting views through development.

8.8: As confirmed in fig. 4 below, consented development in 2009 took the approach of intensively accommodating new two-storey development in close proximity to the listed building.

8.9: The approach taken in 2020 is to less intensively develop in proximity to the listed building. This is supported by Historic England. This slightly extends the spread of development however, by including single storey grass roof elements there is a trade-off in openness terms between the greater spread of development and its height and built form.

8.10: The two different approaches to form and massing have an equivalent impact on openness, but the 2020 approach has beneficial impacts upon the historic building.



Fig. 4 Consented development (above) was tightly drawn around the listed building and included double storey roofs throughout. Proposed development includes a greater spread of development whilst introducing single storey green roof elements.



8.11: This application does promote a greater level of development than the 2009 consent and the permitted building. As noted earlier in this statement, there would be a 12.6% increase in built development at the site based upon the amount of development that would result at site when the applicant's fall-back position and the amount of development that would result following approval of the current proposals is accounted for.

An increase in built development in the Green Belt does not necessarily impact on openness.

8.12: We know from a 2016 court of appeal decision², validating the High Court's earlier view, that impact on openness must not be limited to an assessment of the volume or scale of the development and that visual impact is a legitimate consideration in assessing openness.

8.13: The court's decision in that instance stated that:

14. The concept of "openness of the Green Belt" is not narrowly limited to the volumetric approach suggested by Mr Rudd. The word "openness" is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case. Prominent among these will be factors relevant to how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up it would be if redevelopment occurs (in the context of which, volumetric matters may be a material concern, but are by no means the only one) and factors relevant to the visual impact on the aspect of openness which the Green Belt presents.

15 **The question of visual impact is implicitly part of the concept of "openness of the Green Belt" as a matter of the natural meaning of the language used in para. 89 of the NPPF. I consider that this interpretation is also reinforced by the general guidance in paras. 79-81 of the NPPF, which introduce section 9 on the protection of Green Belt Land.** There is an important visual dimension to checking "the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas" and the merging of neighbouring towns, as indeed the name "Green Belt" itself implies. **Greenness is a visual quality: part of the idea of the Green Belt is that the eye and the spirit should be relieved from the prospect of unrelenting urban sprawl. Openness of aspect is a characteristic quality of the countryside, and "safeguarding the countryside from encroachment" includes preservation of that quality of openness.** The preservation of "the setting ... of historic towns" obviously refers in a material way to their visual setting, for instance when seen from a distance across open fields. Again, the reference in para. 81 to planning positively "to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity" in the Green Belt makes it clear that the visual dimension of the Green Belt is an important part of the point of designating land as Green Belt.

(emphasis added)

8.14: In this case the development proposed is well related to existing built development at Stanley House and its visual impact will be substantially reduced by the characteristics of the site and the surrounding area.

² Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2016] EWCA Civ 466

8.15: As noted in section two of this statement, the committee report recommending approval of the extant application at site noted on visual impact.

I am of the opinion that the proposal has been designed to minimise both the impact the development would have on the listed building and the local environment. As already indicated the alterations and extensions are sited in areas that have limited views and a topography that helps screen the bulk of the buildings.

8.16: Although no Landscape Visual Appraisal was submitted with the extant application, an LVA has been prepared and is submitted with this application.

8.17: The LVA also compares the proposed development with extant but unbuilt development.

8.18: The LVA confirms that the location and characteristics of the site mean that it can absorb development visually without significant adverse impact.

8.19: It also highlights that:

- Landscaping put in place as part of the current development will help to reduce the visual impact of existing development on the Green Belt
- There will be no greater visual impact arising from the proposed development when compared to the fall-back position (unbuilt development).

8.20: Based upon the characteristics of the site and the design of development it can be concluded that development cannot automatically be considered to have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt (than the applicant's fall-back position).

8.21: The proposed development will not have any strategic impact on the permanence of the Green Belt in this location. New landscaping, including extensive areas of woodland planting will help to provide more permanent boundaries to the Stanley House site moving forward.

GREEN BELT PURPOSES

8.22: In terms of Green Belt policy in the NPPF, paragraph 134 states that Green Belt serves five purposes:

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

- 8.23: In so far as the fifth purpose and assisting urban regeneration, as there is an extant consent for the extension of Stanley House, the role of the Green Belt in this regard would not be diminished by the proposals.
- 8.24: Given the scale and extent of the extensions proposed, particularly when compared to the extant consent, and their location and relationship with existing built development at the site, the proposals cannot be considered to impact Green Belt purposes relating to preventing unrestricted sprawl, towns from merging into one another and to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.
- 8.25: In terms of preventing the countryside from encroachment, the development will be located across a similar area to consented development and within the clear confines created by existing planting to the south and north-east of the site. Strategic new landscaping would serve to create strong boundaries to the site.
- 8.26: The impact of the proposed extensions, when considering the site and with regard to the fall-back position, on the Green Belt purpose relating to encroachment would be at most, minimal.
- 8.27: The proposals when considered with regard to the fall-back position would realistically have zero to minimal impact on Green Belt purposes.

ENHANCING THE BENEFICIAL USE OF GREEN BELT

- 8.28: Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states:

Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to **enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt**, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and **enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity**; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

- 8.29: The strategic planting proposed as part of the current scheme will enhance the current boundaries of the site and the visibility of existing development within it. It will lead to an 835% increase in biodiversity as a result of strategic planting which is clearly in accordance with paragraph 141.

PROPOSALS AFFECTING THE GREEN BELT

- 8.30: Paragraph 145g states that:

145. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

(irrelevant bullet points deleted)

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

8.31: As noted in section five of this statement, there is an extant consent which could deliver major new buildings at the site. The proposed development will extend the spread of development across the site (over and above the fall-back consent) by 12.6%. The increase between unbuilt and proposed extensions is 19.9%.

8.32: As part of the applicant's fall-back position which is currently unbuilt (and not existing), the current proposals accord with paragraph 145g but (only) in the strategic sense of what Green Belt planning policy is seeking to achieve. Either of the increase thresholds set out in 8.21 would, at a less than 20% increase, be considered to fit within the scope of what can be considered not materially larger than the fall-back position and not to have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 145d and g.

VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

8.33: Preceding paragraph 145, the concept of very special circumstances is introduced in paragraph 144:

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

8.34: An established benchmark in case law (an Inspectorate decision and ratified by the Secretary of State) in determining whether very special circumstances exist, includes the following commentary

Very special circumstances do not have to be rare or uncommon to be relied upon, though if the circumstances are unique then that can carry extra weight. If the balance of factors in favour of the development clearly outweighs the presumed harm to the Green Belt and other factors against, then very special circumstances will exist. (IR 2.136, APP/X4725/V/11/2144563)

8.35: Should Ribble Valley Borough Council consider that the proposed development amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to outweigh the potential (policy wording) or presumed (case law reference) harm to the Green Belt.

- 8.36: An extensive list of economic, environmental and social benefits of development is presented within section six of this statement.
- 8.37: If Ribble Valley Borough Council considers that the development is not inappropriate or that very special circumstances exist in its favour, then it must necessarily be considered that the development accords with national planning policy.
- 8.38: Our assessment of the fall-back position and how this relates to the current proposals and relevant planning policy is set out in the following section of this report.

9. PLANNING BALANCE

- 9.1: As set out in section two of this statement there is an extant consent which would deliver a sizeable amount of new development at the site if completed.
- 9.2: That section confirms that case law indicates there must be a 'reasonable possibility' that the fall-back position will be developed if an alternative scheme is not approved.
- 9.3: For reasons set out in section two there is clearly much more than a reasonable possibility that the fall-back position would be developed (potentially with design amendments realised outside of the full application process).
- 9.4: On that basis consideration must be given to the legal tests of whether the consented development "*would be less desirable than that for which planning permission is sought.*"³, together with the question of "*is the proposed development in its implications for impact on the environment, or other relevant planning factors, likely to have implications worse than, or broadly similar to, any use to which the site would or might be put if the proposed development were refused?*"⁴
- 9.5: In this case it is considered clear that the fall-back position would be less desirable than the proposed development in the following terms:
- 9.6: In **economic terms** the delivery of the consented scheme would be notably worse than delivery of the current scheme in terms of economic benefits and impact. The consented scheme was designed to meet the needs of a different leisure and tourism market back in 2009. 12 years later the market has changed and the current proposals have been designed in order to reflect that.
- 9.7: The consented scheme was also designed for a different operator. The current scheme has been designed to respond to not only a changed market but also the experiences and service offer of Monte Hospitality.
- 9.8: The economic benefits in terms of job creation and wider benefits to the tourism sector and supply chain business would be substantively reduced by the delivery of the extant scheme rather than the proposals currently before the council.
- 9.9: In **heritage terms** the extant scheme would not deliver many of the heritage benefits of the scheme current scheme, which seek to enhance the setting of the listed building. The extant scheme includes a number of heritage disbenefits for example it included a link building directly to Stanley House and included relatively 'crowded' built development in close proximity to the listed heritage asset.

³ Coln Park LLP v SSCLG [2011] EWHC 2282 (Admin)

⁴ P F Ahern v SSE [1998] Env. L.R. 189

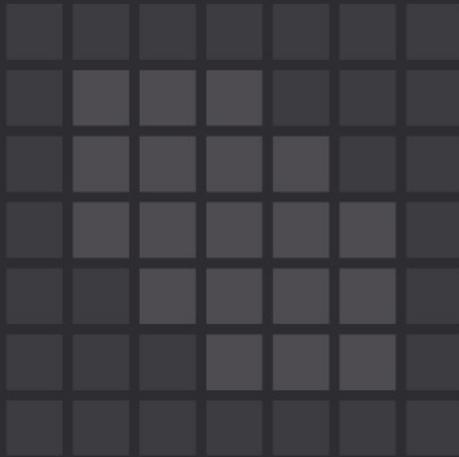
- 9.10: The current proposals include no such link building and would ensure that Stanley House itself remains a detached building with the location and roofscapes of new buildings designed to ensure that they remain subservient to Stanley House.
- 9.11: That the development as consented is less desirable than that which has been proposed is clearly confirmed by the response of Historic England.
- 9.12: In **natural environment** terms the proposals will provide new landscaping which helps to reduce the visibility of the access road into the site in the landscape; helps to assimilate existing development into the landscape, reinforcing its parkland setting; delivers extensive new planting including more than 0.5ha of new woodland planting with carbon sequestration and with biodiversity net gain benefits which will deliver an 835% increase in the ecological value of the site.
- 9.13: Turning to the impacts of the proposed development as confirmed in section eight there will be a slight increase in built form at the site when compared to the fall-back consent but this will not have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, when it is considered that visibility of the development will not increase as a result of the site characteristics, design of development and landscaping.
- 9.14: Should Ribble Valley Borough Council consider that very special circumstances are required to be demonstrated, these are extensively set out across this document (section six), its appendices including support from economic and heritage groups, and in the Economic Benefits Statement accompanying the application.
- 9.15: The benefits (potential very special circumstances) are wide ranging and significant. The economic benefits of development are clearly amplified at the start of an 'economic emergency'⁵ a recession that is predicted to be deep and long lasting, in a sector that has been extremely hard hit by the pandemic and in an area of the country where its impacts are anticipated to be felt most greatly.
- 9.16: Balancing all planning matters, in accordance with case law and planning policy, there is no reason for the much-needed development that is proposed to be resisted. The proposal accords with planning policy and there are no material considerations which indicate that the application should not proceed.

⁵ Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2020

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