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Our ref: PA01117145

25 September 2020

Dear Mr Ellis

### Pre-application Advice

#### STANLEY HOUSE HOTEL, MELLOR, LANCASHIRE

Following on from your email of the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020, please see below Historic England's comments on the proposals set out within the attached documents. We hope that these comments will be beneficial to you in developing the proposed scheme. We apologise that restrictions on movement have meant that a site visit has not been possible.

### Summary

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 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.



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW

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## Historic England Advice

### **Significance**

Stanley House is a handsome building of seventeenth century origin, constructed in sandstone with a slate roof. The building exhibits considerable architectural interest, not least in its imposing asymmetrical principal elevation. This is given visual interest by a projecting porch and narrow casement windows, which sequentially diminish in size from ground floor to second, and which have attractive decorative hood-moulds.

This architectural interest has been partially diminished by the long-standing neglect of the building's maintenance. This has resulted in a considerable loss of fabric internally, and necessitated a considerable amount of intervention during in the building's twenty-first century restoration. However, its external form remains relatively unaltered, and its historic plan form is still legible.

The building, being of a tripartite plan form and initially one bay deep, is characteristic of the yeomen and lower gentry houses of the area in the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. It therefore also has considerable historic significance as an easily legible example of regional vernacular architecture, particularly when considered as part of a wider, regionally significant, group.

The plan form of the building, which represents a progression from the hall and cross-wing plan typical of earlier medieval higher status buildings, is also historically significant in its own right. This is because it provides a good example of the movement from more open, colder and less segregated nature of medieval houses, to the more consolidated, subdivided and private nature of later residential buildings.

Adjacent to the Hall are a number of outbuildings of eighteenth century construction. These provide important evidence for the historic character and functioning of the site, and form an significant element of Stanley House's immediate setting. They have, however, been considerably altered, and are therefore considered to be of low significance in their own right.

Similarly the wider setting of Stanley House has been considerable altered by the later development of the site, and therefore makes a lessened contribution to the significance of the listed building. It does, however, preserve the isolated nature of the complex centred on Stanley House, and provide the wider agricultural setting in which to understand the historic use of the site.

Stanley House is identified to be of exceptional significance, and is accordingly listed grade II\*. 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). The proposed works are not considered to affect the significance of either of these assets, or any designated





and non-designated assets within them.

### **Impact**

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.

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. This support is, however, dependent on the applicant demonstrating that it is a sensitive viable use, and that any alterations to the building or the wider site respect the significance of the listed building.

### **Viability**

The applicant has set out in their supporting documents that they believe that the revised site layout would result in a more viable overall masterplan for the site. We would not offer comment on the specific calculations which underlie this conclusion. However, we would comment that there would be some heritage benefit identified, if it is concluded by the local authority that the current iteration would secure the long term future of the listed building in a way which the previous iteration would not. This would of course need to be weighed in the wider planning balance, alongside any other benefits or harm which the revised scheme is identified to create.

### **Revised Site Plan**

The revised scheme proposes an increase in the footprint of the built form, as well as a noticeable increase in the extent of the site which would be developed. However, it would also result in the proposed new built form being less intensive in nature, and being located in less sensitive areas of the site. In particular it is noted that the revised proposals would not physically adjoin the listed building, and would therefore create a clear sense of separation between Stanley House and the other built form on the site. The proposed development would therefore have a greater impact on the wider environment in which the listed building is experienced, but would have a better impact on its immediate setting, and on the building itself.

As the significance of the listed building is considered to derive primarily from its physical fabric and the ability to appreciate its exceptional architectural interest from shorter views within the site, the movement of built form away from the listed building is considered to have a strong positive impact.





Conversely, the wider setting of the listed building is identified to make a low contribution to its significance, as it has already been fundamentally altered by the existing and additional permitted built form on the site. The greater proliferation of the built form across the site is, however, considered to have a minor negative impact, as it will cumulatively add to the existing separation of the hall from its historic wider setting, and add to the dominant nature of the new built form in approaches to the hall

Considered cumulatively it is considered that the benefits derived for the revised configuration of the buildings on the site would outweigh any additional harm caused. The revised plans would therefore respond better to the significance of the listed building.

#### Revised Landscape Masterplan

The revised proposals have also given consideration to the wider hard and soft landscaping masterplan for the site, most notably in relation to the parking provision. While this would still be a large and intrusive element of the site plan, it is noted the revised layout does break it up to a greater extent than the previously approved scheme. This is positive, as the unbroken nature of the currently approved configuration will exaggerate its size, and create the sense of an encircling mass. It is also positive to note that the applicant proposes to use alternative surface finishes in some areas of the car parking provision, in order to create a softer visual appearance.

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.

#### **Next Steps**

Historic England would not raise any objections to the proposed revised scheme for the Stanley House Hotel, and would conclude the scheme would cumulatively result in a development that would better preserve the significance of the listed building.

As we would not raise any concerns, we would not suggest that further pre-application consultation would be necessary, and would recommend that the applicant progresses the proposals to application stage.



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The applicant has already commissioned a robust suite of documents, and we would expect to see these submitted to support any application. We would, however, expect to see further details submitted in relation to the elevational treatments of the proposed new buildings, as well as more specific details of the proposed material palette.

We are aware that the current economic climate has adversely affected the hospitality industry. We would therefore also expect any surveys, particularly economic based surveys, to have been commissioned or updated to offer an accurate reflection of the current financial context of the site.

Yours sincerely

Richard Broadhead  
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas  
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cc: John Malcholc and Nichola Hopkins, Ribble Valley Borough Council

**STANLEY HOUSE HOTEL, MELLOR, LANCASHIRE**  
**Pre-application Advice**

**List of information on which the above advice is based**

Monte Stanley House Design Document  
Monte Stanley House Economic Benefits Study  
Monte Stanley House Initial Pre- Application Heritage Statement  
Monte Stanley House Landscaping Strategy Document  
Monte Stanley House Pre-Application Letter



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