

Our ref: 794-PLN-HER-02017

11 August 2026

Built Heritage Response

Hammond Ground, Read (Application ref: 3/2026/0356)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Built Heritage Response has been prepared by Tetra Tech on behalf of Applethwaite Ltd to respond to the consultation response submitted by Lancashire Gardens Trust (LGT) dated 6 July 2026 in relation to planning application ref. 3/2026/0356, and the Heritage Assessment Report prepared by FAS Heritage (July 2026).
- 1.1.2 The Heritage Assessment by FAS Heritage was prepared as a response to a planning application (Ref: 3/2026/0356), on behalf of Hammond Ground Community Group. The report also presents a review of the Built Heritage Statement prepared on behalf of the applicant by Tetra Tech RPS (now Tetra Tech).

2.0 Response

- 2.1.1 In review of these documents we offer the following response:

Hammond Ground is not demonstrated to be an integral part of the designed core of Read Park

- 2.1.2 The FAS report repeatedly presents Hammond Ground as though it formed part of the principal designed landscape of Read Hall. That position is not supported by the historic evidence. The key designed elements of Read Hall's setting are the Hall itself, its immediate gardens, drive, lodge, gate piers and associated pleasure grounds. Hammond Ground lies to the east and is separated from the Hall by topography, planting and later settlement. On the evidence presented, its relationship to the Hall is peripheral rather than integral.
- 2.1.3 The report places undue reliance on the fact that the land falls within the HER polygon for Read Park. However, HER polygons are working boundaries and do not in themselves demonstrate equal contribution across the whole extent of a historic landscape. Inclusion within a broad estate boundary

is not equivalent to inclusion within the designed core, nor does it establish that all parts of the wider polygon contribute materially to significance at the same level.

The cartographic evidence has been over-interpreted

- 2.1.4 The FAS report misinterprets the historic mapping evidence. Early mapping may show the area in an estate context, but that does not establish that Hammond Ground formed a fully developed designed parkland component. The 1848 OS map and later mapping show a landscape that evolved over time, including field boundaries, extraction and planting. Those features are consistent with a transitional or working estate landscape rather than a unified ornamental design.
- 2.1.5 The report places excessive weight on park hatching and labels shown on historic maps. Such conventions are broad and should not be treated as definitive evidence that each parcel carried equal designed value or function. The mapping does not demonstrate that Hammond Ground formed part of the Hall's principal composed setting.

Industrial and agricultural evidence demonstrates a mixed working character

- 2.1.6 The FAS report suggests that quarrying, coal pits and agricultural use do not diminish parkland significance. That is not accepted. The evidence shows that Hammond Ground had a mixed and practical character, including pasture, coal and sandstone extraction and later farm use. Those uses are materially different and would be inconsistent with the designed pleasure grounds immediately associated with, and designed to be seen from, Read Hall.
- 2.1.7 This is important because it demonstrates that Hammond Ground had a distinct historic trajectory and character. The presence of such activity is not incidental; on the contrary, it points to it being utilitarian working land rather than a material part of a refined designed landscape.

The setting of Read Hall has been overstated

- 2.1.8 The FAS report places too much emphasis on broad historical association between Hammond Ground and Read Hall and too little on the way Read Hall was designed to be, and is, experienced. The principal contributions made by the listed building's setting are derived from its immediate surroundings and designed approach. Hammond Ground is visually and experientially separated from the Hall by distance, planting, historic uses and landform. The FAS report itself accepts that intervisibility is limited, and that materially reduces any contribution to setting.
- 2.1.9 Historical ownership association alone does not establish a meaningful contribution to significance. The proper question is not whether Hammond Ground was once part of a wider estate, but what role it played within the estate, to what degree that character or role remains legible, and whether it presently contributes in a meaningful way to the significance of Read Hall. On the evidence presented, it does not beyond the limited degree described in the Tetra Tech Built Heritage Statement.

The significance of Read Park has been overstated in both the FAS report and the LGT response

- 2.1.10 Both the FAS report and the LGT response proceed on the basis that Read Park is of national significance and that Hammond Ground makes a significant contribution to that significance. That position is not, in the opinion of Tetra Tech, securely evidenced.
- 2.1.11 Firstly, Read Park is not statutorily designated. The FAS report places too much weight on the Lancashire Gardens Trust material and does not provide a robust basis for concluding that Read Park is nationally significant. The position is in fact mixed and unresolved: the 1998 Historic Designed Landscapes of Lancashire study suggested that Read Hall and Gardens merited national significance and recommended inclusion on the Register, but the report itself acknowledges that no formal assessment was ever completed. The 2013 local list then assessed Read Park as Category 2, i.e., Regional/County significance; and the more recent LGT Statement of Significance, while cited as supporting Category 1 status, remains an interest-group document rather than a formal designation or independently adopted assessment. Taken together, these sources do not establish that Read Park has been formally or conclusively demonstrated to be nationally significant.
- 2.1.12 Secondly, even if the site contributes to the wider estate, that contribution is limited. The proposed development affects only part of Hammond Ground, with a substantial western buffer retained as open space. That materially reduces any effect on the remaining historic character of the wider landscape. Hammond Park represents but a portion of the wider parkland.

The footpath evidence does not establish integral parkland status

- 2.1.13 The FAS report places undue weight on the reference to a footpath shown on the 1893 25-inch Ordnance Survey mapping. While it is accepted that, by the late 19th century, a single path may have provided nominal access into Hammond Ground from the Stanleys area to the north, this does not demonstrate that Hammond Ground formed part of a formal designed pleasure ground. The mapping does not show a coherent looped route through Stanleys or Clough Syke, nor does it evidence any planned route network, axial composition or integral ornamental circulation within Hammond Ground itself. At most, the path indicates limited functional access to the area but it does not establish that Hammond Ground was experienced as part of the principal pleasure grounds, which remained focused to the west around Read Hall and its immediate designed landscape. Accordingly, this feature should be treated as a minor and secondary relationship, not as evidence of integral parkland status.
- 2.1.14 In addition, development has since taken place on the former site of Stanleys, meaning that any historic relationship between Hammond Ground and the parkland to the north is no longer legible on the ground and is now materially weakened. The former route relationship is therefore fragmented by later change and cannot now be relied upon to demonstrate a coherent designed connection.

The impact has been overstated

- 2.1.15 The FAS assessment asserts that the proposed development as causing substantial harm to the non-designated parkland and moderate harm less than substantial harm to Read Hall. That is not a balanced assessment. Given Hammond Ground's peripheral role, the limited intervisibility, the retained buffer and the established separation from the Hall's immediate designed setting, any effect on Read Hall's significance is properly regarded as, at most, falling at the lower end of less than substantial harm.
- 2.1.16 For the non-designated parkland, the correct conclusion is that Hammond Ground contributes only modestly to its significance, and the proposed change would not result in substantial harm to the asset as a whole. The wider parkland, including its most significant components, would remain unchanged. The principal of '*substantial harm*' is one of egregious loss to a key element of a heritage asset's significance (PPG Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723). The High Court has interpreted it to mean a degree harm which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced (**Bedford Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government** [2013] EWHC 2847 (Admin) – this is clearly not the case at Read Park).

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1.1 For the reasons set out above, the FAS Heritage assessment and the LGT response do not provide a robust evidential basis for the conclusions advanced. The evidence does not demonstrate that Hammond Ground forms part of the integral designed core of Read Park, nor does it show that the land makes more than a limited and peripheral contribution to the significance of Read Hall. The reliance placed on broad estate mapping, a single late-19th-century path, and later interest-group categorisations is insufficient to elevate Hammond Ground to the status of national significance claimed.
- 3.1.2 The historic record instead indicates a landscape of mixed and evolving character, in which Hammond Ground retained a distinct working and peripheral identity, with agricultural and extractive uses alongside only a limited relationship to the designed landscape around Read Hall. The later development of housing on the former Stanleys area further weakens any suggestion that a coherent historic relationship between Hammond Ground and the parkland to the north remains legible on the ground.
- 3.1.3 On that basis, the proposed development should not be characterised as causing substantial harm to a nationally significant designed landscape. Any heritage effect arising from the scheme should properly be assessed as limited and at the lower end of less than substantial harm, with the non-designated parkland significance of Read Park remaining acknowledged but not overstated.