



Lancashire Gardens Trust
Conservation & Planning Group

6 July 2026

Your ref: 3/2026/0356

Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

For the attention of Lyndsey Heyes
By email only to planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Application No: 3/2026/0356; Erection of 77No dwellings and creation of community parkland with vehicular access from Whalley Road and associated infrastructure parking and landscaping; Land at Hammond Ground, Whalley Road, Read, BB12 7RP.

The above application has been drawn to the attention of Lancashire Gardens Trust in view of the undesignated heritage asset comprising Read Park. We had hoped that as we responded on the previous (2016) application at this site, that we may have been consulted upon this occasion. It is accepted that Read Park does not have the status of a Registered Park and Garden on the Historic England list, and the statutory requirement for consultation to the Gardens Trust is not applicable. Lancashire Gardens Trust (LGT) therefore responds in this case.

The previous planning application in 2016 was refused on planning policy, housing supply and landscape grounds. LGT objected to that application. At a subsequent appeal, the inspector upheld the refusal on landscape grounds as well as other reasons. The current application is similar in that part of the Read Hall's historic parkland is proposed for development, to which our objection continues.

We understand Hammond Ground was sold by the Read Estate in 1975, but this does not undermine the value of Hammond Ground in being historically part of Read Park, and part of the historic designed landscape. LGT objects to residential development within the historic boundaries of Read Park, including Hammond Ground which would result in a loss of part of the historic designed landscape and which would be harmful to Read Park as a whole.

[REDACTED]

We have reviewed the application documentation, and are familiar with the site. Hammond Ground is an inseparable part of Read Hall Park, an undesignated heritage asset. Read Hall and Park are included in *A Local List of Lancashire's Unregistered Historic Designed Landscapes* (2013) produced in partnership by LGT, Lancashire County Council and Manchester Metropolitan University. This assessed the Read Park as category A2, ie of Regional and County significance. Although the 2013 report does not identify the boundaries of the Park, a number of historic maps show the estate with OS parkland notation shading extending across a considerable area. This includes Hammond Ground, which is named in uniform font and text along with other named areas within the Park, (Front Field, New Marls, Sagar Heys and Coppy). All are shown on the 1890s and 1914 OS maps. We place considerable weight on the graphic evidence in these maps demonstrating the thoroughness and understanding of the OS C19th surveyors.

The Categorisation of Read Park was reassessed as part of the review of undesignated heritage assets undertaken by Growth Lancashire (GL) in the period 2020-2024. GL were commissioned by Government through Historic England to coordinate the Lancashire Local List Project on behalf of most of the Lancashire local authorities. As a contributor and partner to this Project, LGT and the panel reassessed the categorisation of Read Park in the light of local significance criteria as Category 1. The connection with the architect George Webster early in his career is a strong point, as is the quality of the whole site as a local landmark.

We have found no evidence that Webster undertook work on the grounds, but this does not mean that this does not exist. There are a number of significant Lancashire unregistered parkland sites where the designer is not known, including Hornby, Knowlmer, Leighton, Wyresdale, as well as those with known designers including William Emes at Claughton, John Webb at Quernmore. In this case where the designer is unknown the quality of the landscape has to speak for itself. In those sites listed above, there is a recognisable designed landscape in the Picturesque style which is mostly intact and still serves the purpose for which it was intended. These landscapes have survived alterations in the geometric, formal style later imposed by Victorians. However, they have retained their idyllic, pastoral aspect which answers the requirement of Significance as outlined by Historic England.

The requirement of setting is important. Setting is the surround which allows us to enjoy a heritage asset. The Park surrounding Read Hall is the setting to a Grade II* mansion with Grade II* gateposts by a noted architect, and demonstrates the harmony of style between a building and its designed landscape. Also listed at Grade II are the Home Farm, icehouse and gatehouse, demonstrating that the whole designed landscape forms a significant entity. Looking to the future, LGT would welcome the opportunity to work with Historic England to secure the designation of the whole of Read Park (including Hammond Ground) as a Registered Park and Garden.

LGT has recently completed a specific Statement of Significance for Read Park (June 2026) and this is attached with this letter.

Submitted Built Heritage Statement

The applicant's approach to this statement is to make the case that Hammond Ground 'contributes only minimally to the Park's overall significance as a non-designated heritage asset' (executive summary). We challenge the claim that 'Hammond Ground

does not retain the spatial organisation, planting strategy or garden components that would demonstrate the survival of Read Hall's early nineteenth century designed landscape' (para 5.42). Whilst some of the features may now be diminished Hammond Ground has spatial organisation in terms of surviving parkland trees, a level of openness giving continuity with other Park areas, recognisable design approach and planting strategy in the peripheral planting to Clough Syke and Whalley Road, and at one time along the east boundary to George Lane.

Furthermore, Hammond Ground lies immediately south of an area of gardens and woodland named 'Stanleys' on many of the OS and estate maps included in the Statement. This area has a network of paths and trackways linking to the more formal rectilinear arrangement of paths closer to Read Hall and forms a promenade among the trees having the character of a 'wild walk' or picturesque walk. Features within Stanleys which would form attractions to garden users, including the 'Grotto' (on 1840s map) and the Fish Ponds north of Clough Syke, show that this part of the grounds of Read Hall were designed for enjoyment of visitors to the gardens rather than simply as access tracks to woodland or farmland. Some of the paths within Stanleys also gave direct access to Hammond Ground. These detailed features do not appear or are unclear on Figures 7 and 8 which are scans of poor resolution and lacking the detail which is available in the mapping on Lancashire County Council's MARIO application. From the elevated land at Stanleys, a prospect over Hammond Ground could be enjoyed demonstrating a Picturesque landscape with a contrast between light and shade. This map evidence shows Hammond Ground to be an integral part of the design and appreciation of Read Park, and its landscape setting, which is not recognised or analysed in the Statement.

Therefore, Hammond Ground is not solely land in agricultural use but part of a designed landscape. The 1840s OS map and later maps show peripheral woodland belts to the east along George Lane and partly to the south, with an extension eastwards from Clough Syke. These woodlands are designed features, with a partially open southern boundary allowing views through from the prospect at Stanleys, with the woodland belts on the east and west framing this view. The parkland within Hammond Ground is open pasture without hedgerows, the field boundaries being removed to create a Picturesque landscape.

Reference has already been made above of the poor resolution of the OS maps comprising Figures 7 and 8 where the parkland dense dotted shading is not evident. The MARIO maps show the shading in high quality. This OS notation is used to indicate 'Parks and Ornamental Ground' as described in the OS Characteristic Sheet for Six Inch Engraved Maps. This shading is shown on OS maps of 1890s, and also 1912 and 1932, (although these latter two are not included in the Statement Appendix). The title of Figure 8 is of added concern as this is a completely different edition and shows lesser detail to that for 1890s available on MARIO. Perhaps Figure 8 is a later edition and is mistitled? A considerably more legible image using this 1890s base map is available at Figure 5 in the Geophysical Survey Report.

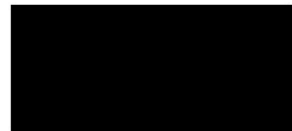
It is worth noting that in Figure 6 the Hennet Map is reproduced which shows Read Park coloured green. The 'approximate' position of the red site outline is incorrectly shown located to the east of its true position, so that it partly lies outside the green area. By studying the alignment of nearby lanes it is clear that the green area includes Hammond Ground, and the red polygon requires correcting to align with the green area.



Our brief assessment above should give the heritage importance of Hammond Ground a far greater weight than that described in the Built Heritage Statement and any loss of this land to development should be resisted. For the above reasons LGT objects to the proposed development within Hammond Ground which is harmful to the wider Read Park as a whole.

If there are any matters arising from this letter please contact me, email conservation@lancsgt.org.uk

Yours faithfully



Chair, Conservation & Planning Group
Lancashire Gardens Trust

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

NAME Read Hall

ADDRESS Whalley Road, Read, near Burnley Lancashire. BB12 7PB. SD757348

A country estate comprising land for agricultural and sporting purposes and a designed landscape surrounding the hall.

RARITY

One of a few mansions built by George Webster in the county, and one of his earliest; each one has a distinctive designed landscape in the Picturesque style.

GROUP VALUE The hall Grade II* forms a group with its gateposts II*, its lodge II, its ice-house II and its garden and parkland (undesigned).

LANDMARK The parkland is the chief ornament of the district between Whalley and Read.

EVIDENTIAL within the parkland the northern boundary is the old Roman road from Ribchester eastwards towards Skipton [lancsmap2018.jpg \(839x825\)](#) [Lancashire's Roman Roads - A Lidar Update](#)

HISTORIC INTEREST

The original building was a three-storey manor built round three sides of a courtyard by Roger Nowell, who acquired the estate in the C16 after the Dissolution of Whalley Abbey 1537. Nowell was an English theologian, born in Read Hall during the reign of queen Elizabeth I; a popular story names him as the inventor of bottled beer, as told by Izaak Walton in *The Complete Angler*. A later Roger Nowell was Sheriff of Lancashire in 1610 and sent women to Lancaster for trial as Lancashire witches. His grandson Roger raised an army during the Civil War at his own expense to help defend Lathom House for the Royalists. However a skirmish known as the Battle of Read Bridge near the hall ended in a decisive victory for the Parliamentary forces. On the death of Alexander Nowell in 1772 the estate passed out of the family.

The present hall was built between 1818 and 1825 for Richard Fort, a partner in a Manchester-based calico printing firm; he commissioned the Kendal architect George Webster, then only 21. The Fort menfolk took on roles as High Sheriff of Lancashire and MP for Clitheroe.

George Webster (1797-1864) designed the home farm contemporary with the hall, and the lodge 10 years later. He came from a family of builders who later became architects; George spent time in Italy and then joined his father's business as a partner, specialising in the Grecian Revival style for domestic work. His clients were chiefly within easy reach of their practice in Kendal, some occurring in west Yorkshire, and only 5 in Lancashire. Read Hall was one of his earliest commissions. A connection may have been in Preston, where John Horrocks, founder of the cotton spinning and weaving empire, used Webster to build Penwortham Priory (1832) (demolished).

Landscape design: it is thought that Webster admired the work of landscape gardener Humphry Repton, who from 1794 to 1816 published several books outlining his theories and methods for creating landscape parks in the Picturesque style.

ARTISTIC INTEREST

The grounds were landscaped at the same time as Webster built the hall and its park buildings, following a layout seen in other sites by him.

The park outline is a loose square shape with the hall lying in the upper part; the extent shown on the OS map (1844/48) includes land to the south of the Whalley road reaching down to the river Calder. The western boundary is the Sabden Brook, the northern boundary is the Old Roman Road, and the eastern boundary is Whins Lane and George Lane. This, the designed landscape, or parkland, is only a part of the wider estate which is in use for agricultural purposes and sporting pursuits.

The park is laid out in Picturesque style; from the lodge surrounded by a copse the drive follows a winding route across the open park then into the shade of a copse before arriving in front of the hall, in the layout known as 'conceal and reveal'. Here, in the pleasure ground, are loosely arranged shrubberies, paths and flower borders which are all placed behind the hall, leaving open the typical Picturesque approach to the front facade. Stretching southwards from the pleasure ground down to the Whalley road is a clough, tree-filled, with a large pond at its centre. This is not labelled 'coal pit' as other hollows are, and its identity is a quarry. The turnpike from Bury to Whalley, Haslingden Branch, was built in 1789 to become Whalley Road, cutting through the park and probably using stone from here. The lodge, home farm and ice-house are all shown on OS 1844/48.

Features shown on the OS 1890/93 are clearer; Coppy Plantation, a long narrow corridor of trees, swings to the northwest corner of the park to Read Old Bridge, more belts of trees follow Sabden Brook, curve around the lodge, and line the avenues beside Whins Lane and George Lane. Island copses are scattered across the open parkland, in the manner of Capability Brown's 'clumps', and specimen trees are dotted across all the parkland in a typical Picturesque arrangement. A large Fish Pond to the east of the pleasure ground may serve both as beauty and utility, *in utile dulce*, where fish are caught and where walkers can cross a path between separate ponds. Land adjacent to the farm is divided into walled compartments, a kitchen garden with glasshouses being shown.

A closer examination of the OS 1929/32 displays the workings of the estate's farm and kitchen gardens; glasshouses are indicated by cross hatching, paths by double dotted lines, an orchard by regular tree symbols, and shrubberies by small and large tree symbols. The Fish-Pond has ornamental paths around it, one of which is raised on an embankment, to create a 'naturalistic' scene.

There is a great change on the south front of the hall; instead of the open turf there is now an arrangement of symmetrical lawns, a circular fountain and a central path, signalling the fashion for more formality near the house. This was certainly the fashion in late Victorian gardens, and may well have been implemented at Read in time for the 1892 survey but not well-drawn.

The aerial view taken in the 1960s shows the layout largely unchanged, except for the absence of some formal features in front of the house.

The current aerial view again is largely unchanged except for houses along Hammond Drive, showing that the English Landscape Park popularised by 'Capability' Brown, Humphry Repton and their acolytes, is a long-term legacy which still ornaments the wider landscape today.

READ HALL Park

IMAGES TO ACCOMPANY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1 OS 1 st ed 6in pub 1848 (nls)	2 OS 2 nd ed 6in pub 1895 (nls)
	
3 OS 1929-32 25in (nls)	4 Read Hall (British-listed-buildings)
	
5 Read lodge (Historic England)	6 Read home farm (Historic England)
	

READ HALL Park (continued)

7 Ice house (Historic England)	8 Fishponds, stream, wooded valley in centre of park; ornamental parkland bounded by 3 roads and Sabden Brook
	

9 Aerial view, recent



