



Biddulph Grange Garden

Refurbishment and Alteration of Tea Room



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT including Heritage Statement

November 2016

Biddulph Grange Garden Design and Access Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement accompanies an application for listed building consent for the refurbishment of the National Trust Tea Room at Biddulph Grange Garden.
- 1.2 The tea room currently suffers with queuing backing up through the lobby as a result of limited till capacity and the layout of the servery. We aim to address this by reconfiguring the layout of the tea room by replacing the freestanding servery counter with a new one that will be further from the door and have space for a second till.
- 1.3 While the existing kitchen door would provide good access to the servery, the repositioning of the counter would make it much less suitable for accessing the tea room seating area. We therefore need to improve access to the kitchen and propose making a new door into the kitchen from the lobby to do this. This will improve the functioning of the space and allow dirty crockery to be returned for washing without passing through the servery.
- 1.4 Reconfiguration of services is required as part of the refurbishment. This will include making three small holes through the wall between the kitchen and tea room.
- 1.5 Some changes will also be required to the interior decoration of the tea room, including removal of a section of dado and insertion of a missing section of skirting. The dado and skirting both date from the 1989 conversion work to create the tea room.
- 1.6 The refurbishment includes alterations to a listed building comprising, creation of a new door, installation of services and changes to dado and skirting. The safety floor in the kitchen will be replaced and extended to cover the area behind the new servery.
- 1.7 Planning permission is not required as all the works are internal.

2. Context

- 2.1 Biddulph Grange is a grade II* listed house set in a grade I registered park and garden. The Grange is also within Biddulph Grange Conservation Area, designated in 1977.
- 2.2 Biddulph Grange Garden welcomes in the order of 100,000 visitors annually. We are open to visitors every day throughout the year other than Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We employ 8 full-time and between 10 and 15 part-time staff at Biddulph Grange, depending on the season, and our work here is supported by about 150 volunteers.
- 2.3 As well as being valued as part of a visit to Biddulph Grange, income from the tea room makes a significant contribution to meeting the costs of conserving the gardens and opening them to the public.

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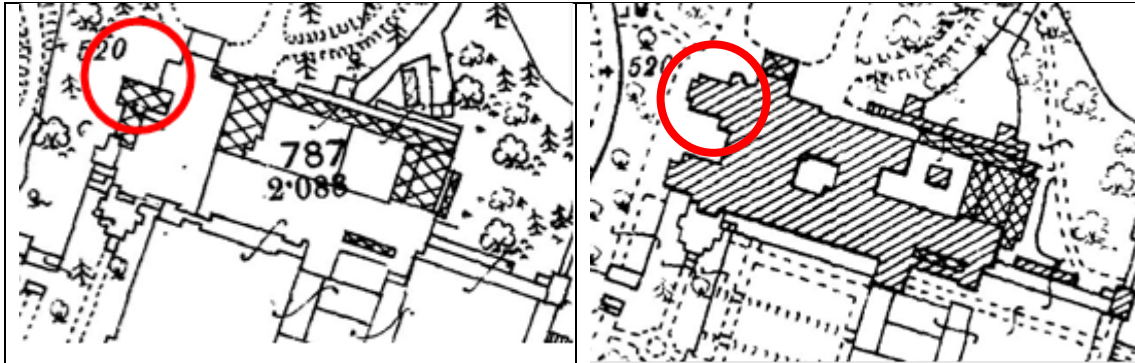
- 2.4 The Grange was originally built between 1848 and 1860, overlaying an earlier farmhouse, by James Bateman, who also created the gardens. The Grange was bought by Robert Heath in 1870. After a serious fire in 1896, the Grange was virtually rebuilt to a design by John Bower, with only the wings of the Bateman House surviving.
- 2.5 The building was first listed in 1974. The list entry (1037835) notes the splendid staircase and Mr Bateman's study as particular features of the interior.
- 2.6 Biddulph Grange became a hospital in 1924, with hospital wards built over the gardens nearest the house. In 1988, the Health Authority sold the hospital. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council took over the estate and formed Biddulph Grange Country Park. The National Trust purchased the garden and carried out its largest garden restoration project, opening the garden to the public in 1990.
- 2.7 Most of the Grange has been converted to residential apartments. The Trust only owns a few rooms in the Grange itself. Some are used for visitor facilities, some are opened for visitors and others are used to support the Trust's operations.

3. The tea room wing

- 3.1 The tea room is contained in a former billiard room, with a glass roof and terrazzo tiled floor. The walls have rectangular glazed tiles to a wooden dado at waist height with painted plaster above.
- 3.2 The tea room is accessed via a lobby, which has a door to the outside and also provides access to the visitor toilets. The lobby has a terrazzo tiled floor and plaster ceiling. The plaster walls feature an inset dado moulding.
- 3.3 The kitchen is accessed off the tea room via a single door set into what had been a large arched opening. It has safety flooring and the walls are plaster with tiled splashbacks .
- 3.4 The tea room entrance doors are a pair of polished panelled timber double doors, with three panels on each door giving a similar overall appearance to a 6-panel door. Polished 6-panelled timber doors are used elsewhere from the tea room lobby and elsewhere within the Grange.
- 3.5 The doorway to the toilets features an ornate door surround, which looks too substantial for its position, and the doorway is cased with timber through the thickness of the wall. The doorway into the tea room has a simpler surround and the doorway itself is also lined more simply, with plaster rather than a timber lining.
- 3.6 Historic Ordnance Survey mapping suggests that this wing was added by Heath, at some point between 1877 and 1899. A post-1870 date is also confirmed by differences between this room and the Billiard

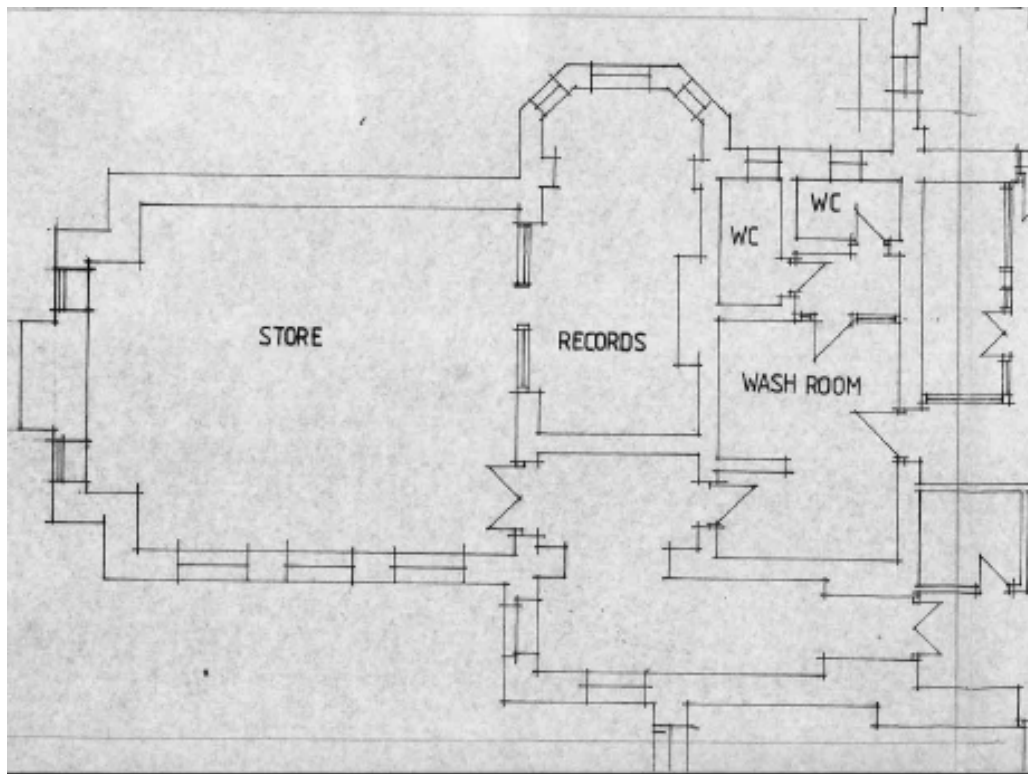
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Room described in the 1870 sales particulars, "A ceiling is of glass, supported on Corinthian Columns and elegant Cornice and Pan-Athenaic Frieze, with richly coloured and bordered Tiled Floor; the West Side is of Glass, and looks into the Fern House."



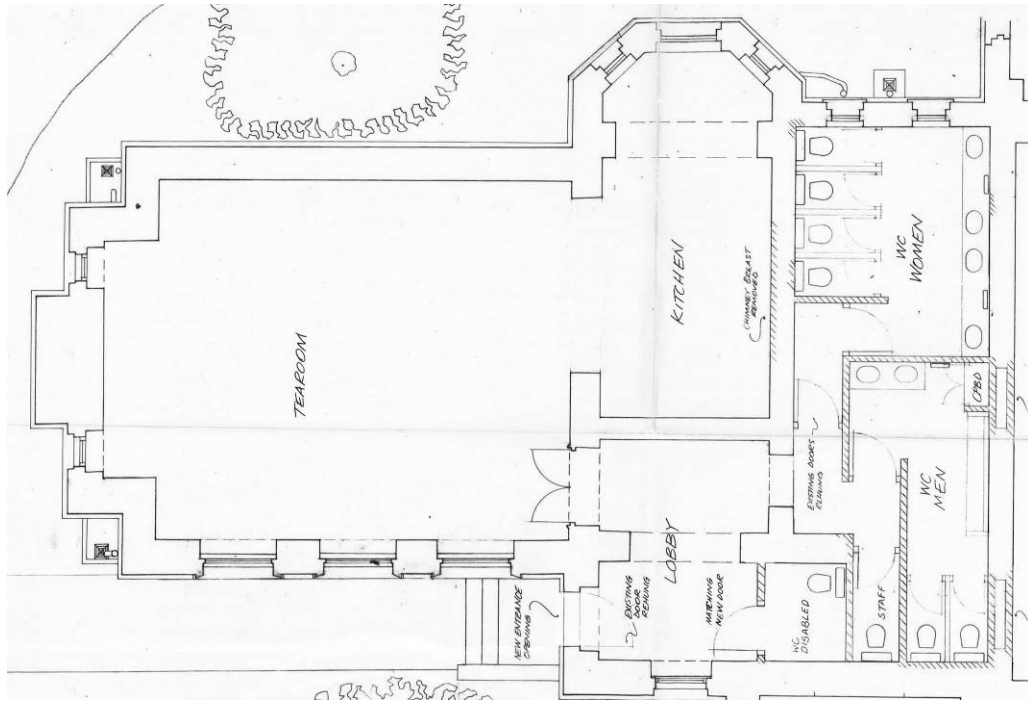
Biddulph Grange in 1877 and 1899, tea room wing circled

- 3.7 A 1984 Health Authority drawing shows the tea room seating area in use as a store with the kitchen used as a records room. It suggests that the archway between the two was partially filled by a glazed screen. It also shows that there was no outside door from the tea room lobby, this area instead being part of an internal corridor.



1984 Floor Plan, drawing by North Staffs Health Authority

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Floor plan proposed in 1988, Drawing by Anthony Blackley & Associates
(omits the wall in the archway between tea room and kitchen)

- 3.8 The tea room was formed in 1988-1990 as part of the National Trust's work to restore the gardens and open them to the public. The outside door was formed by altering a window. The hospital wash room and corridor were reconfigured to create visitor toilets. A chimney breast was removed from the kitchen and the door and wall between the kitchen and tea room altered. The terrazzo tiled floors, wall tiles, dado, skirting and internal decoration of the tea room, kitchen and lobby all date from this period. As do the kitchen, tea room and toilet doors.
- 3.9 The door surround leading to the toilets is similar to door surrounds in the main entrance hall of the Grange. This surround is likely to be part of the Robert Heath work to the Grange but may have been repositioned. Although modern, the tea room and toilet doors match the style of doors in the main part of the Grange.

4. National planning policy

a) General approach

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's policies for planning. Paragraph 6 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 sets out the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 4.2 Paragraph 14 states that for decision-taking the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

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- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

4.3 Paragraph 17 sets out twelve core planning principles.

b) Heritage assets

4.4 Chapter 12 of the NPPF sets out the government's objectives and planning policies for the historic environment.

4.5 Paragraph 128 requires applicants to provide a description of the significance of heritage assets affected by the proposals and the contribution of their setting to that significance. This should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset.

4.6 Paragraph 131 states that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significant of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

4.7 Paragraph 132 states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed through alteration of an asset or development within its setting. As assets are irreplaceable, any harm should require clear and convincing justification.

4.8 Paragraph 134 states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

4.9 Paragraph 137 advises local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

5. English Heritage guidance

5.1 The Trust has had regard to general Historic England guidance, such as its Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) and Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015). Good Practice Note 2 suggests a six-step approach:

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- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;
- Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

6. Design Principles and Concepts

- 6.1 The Trust's design objectives are to improve the functioning of the tea room while conserving the significance of Biddulph Grange.

7. The amount, layout, scale and appearance of development

- 7.1 The application is for refurbishment and alteration of the tea room including the formation of a new door between the kitchen and lobby, installation of services through the wall between the kitchen and tea room, removal of a section of dado and installation of a section of skirting.
- 7.2 The new door is proposed as a "hidden door" that blends in with the wall rather than taking a lead from the late-Victorian styling of the existing doors. For operational reasons, the door cannot be locked while the tea room is open but we don't want visitors to use it. While signage could have some deterrent effect, we believe that using a "hidden door" would significantly reduce the tendency for visitors to go through the wrong door, particularly as it will not have a handle on the lobby side.
- 7.3 The door needs to be flush with the frame, and the door is to follow the wall detailing with the skirting and also dado banding. To also mitigate the impression of a door we have allowed for a mortice key hole only on the lobby side with a thumbturn and door closer internally (the thumbturn and closer are required as a fire door). This will need to be a 60 mins fire door off the kitchen so will have intumescent seals with brushes.
- 7.4 The new doorway would require the removal of a section of wall. This appears to be a solid masonry wall dating from between 1877 and 1899.
- 7.5 Reconfiguration of the services would require drilling three 50mm holes through the wall between the tea room and kitchen. They will

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pass through a section of wall built as part of the 1988-90 alterations to the Grange.

- 7.6 The existing safety flooring in the kitchen would be replaced and extended to the servery area, on top of the existing terrazzo tiles, which were installed in part of the 1988-90 alterations.
- 7.7 A section of dado behind the new back counter will be removed. This dates from the 1989 conversion. A missing section of skirting behind the existing counter will be installed. This will match the skirting installed throughout the rest of the tea room in 1989.

8. Heritage statement

- 8.1 The proposed works involve alterations to the grade II* listed Biddulph Grange. As internal works they would have no impact on the historic gardens, the conservation area, the setting of any other listed building or any below ground archaeology.
- 8.2 Biddulph Grange has aesthetic value through the quality of its design and construction as well as its relationship with Biddulph Grange Garden. It has historic value through its associations with the horticulturalist James Bateman and the geological gallery (elsewhere in the Grange) is particularly significant in its demonstration of his support for theories that combined contemporary geological finds with the Christian story of creation. These are considered to be the primary significances of the building. A secondary degree of historic value derives from associations with Robert Heath and John Bower and the use of the Grange as a hospital from 1924-1988. The hospital use and subsequent public use enabled by the National Trust have created communal value. There is also evidential value relating to the various phases of construction, use and adaptation of the building, some of which can be linked to documentary evidence.
- 8.3 The proposed works would take place in an area that post-dates James Bateman's occupation and which makes only a modest contribution to the aesthetic value of the Grange. Many of the internal features, such as joinery, floors and wall finishes, date from 1988-90; presumably wiping away earlier alterations relating to the hospital use. A few features, along with the general layout and structure, date to between 1877 and 1899.
- 8.4 The location of the proposed door while dictated to some extent by operational requirements has had regard to how it would appear in the layout of the lobby. The design of the door has sought to minimise changes in the character of the lobby. The alternative of a conventional door, matching other doors in this part of the Grange, was rejected because it could encourage visitors to try to access the kitchen.
- 8.5 The alterations of services have been designed to avoid heritage impact. The new holes required will be positioned through modern

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walling. Likewise the section of dado to be removed has no historic significance and its absence will be hidden by the splash-back of the back-bar of the counter. The installation of a section of skirting covers over a gap behind the existing counter that would, if left, become obvious as part of the rearrangement of the tea room. This gap was left in the 1989 conversion, to accommodate a sideboard, and has no heritage significance.

- 8.6 The works proposed would result in the loss of a small area of historic masonry wall and the insertion of a new door. Some 20th century floor tiles would be covered over, three holes formed through a section of 20th century walling, a section of 20th century dado would be removed and a section of skirting installed.
- 8.7 The layout and appearance of the tea room, lobby and kitchen would all change but each space would retain its existing character and continue to reflect the historic character of the rooms as much as they currently do.
- 8.8 We consider that these proposals would not harm the heritage significance of Biddulph Grange. If any harm was considered to arise, we consider that it would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal in supporting better operation of the National Trust tea room and the contribution it makes to local employment and the conservation and presentation of Biddulph Grange Garden.

9. Access

- 9.1 The proposed door is intended for use by National Trust catering staff. It will have a level threshold and, with a clear opening width of over 800mm, be wide enough to take a standard wheelchair.

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Land Use Planning Adviser**

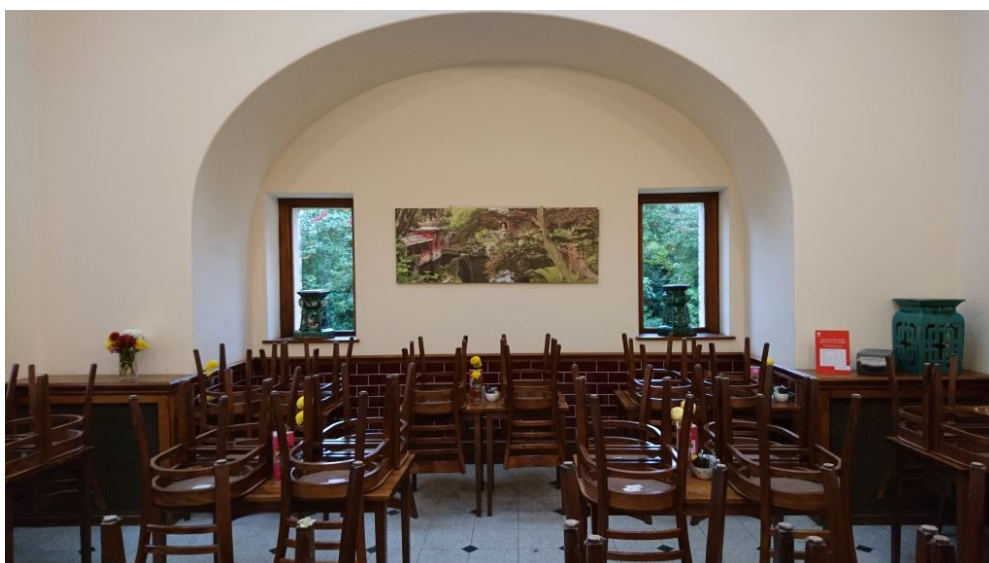
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Schedule of photos



The tea room looking east, towards the entrance door (right), counter and door to kitchen (left).

The new counter would be installed on the left hand side in this view.



The tea room looking west. Unlike the 1870 billiard room, the west side is not glass

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The kitchen looking towards the wall between the kitchen and lobby. The proposed door would be formed in the wall straight ahead.

The arch on the right was filled with a wall in the 1989 conversion, having previously been partly filled with a glazed screen.



The tea room lobby looking towards the wall between the lobby and the kitchen.

The tea room door is just seen on the left. The doorway leading to the toilets is out of shot to the right.

The proposed door would be formed in the wall straight ahead and would be styled as a hidden door with a flush frame, the inset dado scribed across, skirting reinstated across the frame and door, and all painted to match the walls.

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The tea room door, looking from the lobby. Because the counter is so close to the door, queues rapidly back up through this door.



The doorway leading to the toilets, looking from the lobby. This door surround is thought to date from the 1897 rebuild but may have been relocated from elsewhere in the Grange.