National Trust

Biddulph Grange Garden

Car Park Improvements

Design and Access Statement including Heritage Impact Assessment and Green Belt Justification



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December 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 This statement accompanies a planning application for car park improvements at Biddulph Grange Garden. These relate to the overflow car park and its link with the main car park.

1.2 We want to make the overflow car park more usable all-year round. We would do this by replacing some of the grass surface with stone, creating a pedestrian path parallel to the vehicular access and by improving the layout. The improved layout would enable us to take an area out of parking use without reducing parking capacity. We would introduce a sustainable drainage system for the newly surfaced area.

2. Context

2.1 Biddulph Grange Garden is an amazing Victorian garden created by Darwin's contemporary James Bateman as an extension of his beliefs and scientific interests. His plant collection came from all over the world and a visit takes you on a global journey from an Italian terrace to an Egyptian pyramid, via a Himalayan glen and Chinese-inspired garden.

2.2 This delightful and extraordinary survival from the 19th century is owned, cared for and made accessible to the public by the National Trust. We welcome in the order of 100,000 visitors annually and are open to visitors every day throughout the year other than Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We employ 8 full-time staff 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 The importance of the garden is recognised in its designation as a grade I registered park and garden and through the designation, in 1977, of the Biddulph Grange Conservation Area.

2.4 The Grange, a grade II* listed building, was originally built between 1848 and 1860 by James Bateman, who also created the gardens. The property was bought by local industrialist and MP 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. In 1924, Biddulph Grange became a hospital, with wards built over the gardens nearest the house.

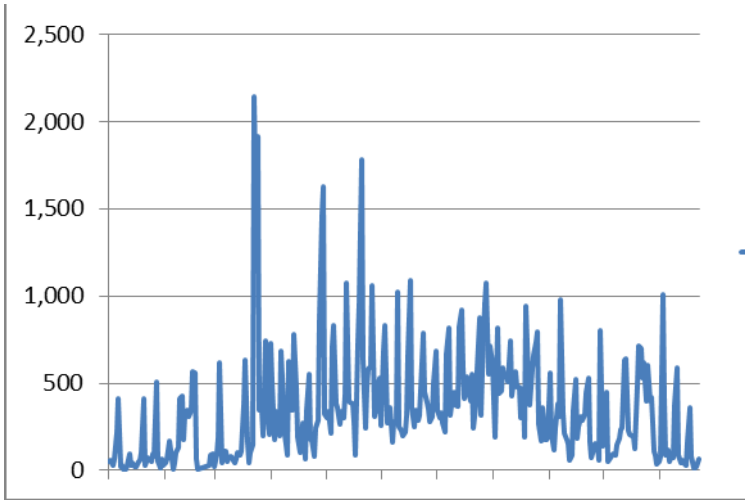
2.5 In 1988, the Health Authority sold the hospital. Most of the Grange was converted to residential apartments, as were the coach house and stables. New houses were built in the former kitchen garden. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council took over the estate and formed Biddulph Grange Country Park. The National Trust purchased the garden and carried out its largest garden restoration project, opening the garden to the public in 1990.

3. The car park

3.1 The application relates to the existing overflow car park for Biddulph Grange Garden. The planning permission for opening Biddulph Grange Garden to visitors (SMD/1988/1570) included a main tarmac car park close to Biddulph Grange with an area of overflow parking further to the west, accessed via a drive leading from the main car park.

3.2 In the overflow, parking is on grass with informal stone roadways serving the most heavily trafficked areas. The grass area is surrounded by trees and hedges. On the west side, there is a tree belt to Congleton Road, with a boundary hedge to the car park that varies between sections of holly and sections of hawthorn. To the south, the hedge separating the car park from the cemetery is a mix of yew, holly, beech and laurel. To the east and north is an area of trees surrounding the former sewage works.

3.3 We are now open throughout the year and have welcomed over 115,000 visitors this year. Year round opening means that the garden is more accessible to visitors but has the downside that the overflow car park is used more often. This includes more days when the ground is wet and more days in the colder half of the year when the grass is not growing, or only growing slowly, and damage becomes cumulative. Muddy patches have developed and the car park is gradually deteriorating.



Daily visitors Jan-Nov 2018

3.4 The condition of the walk between the overflow car park and the main car park is also deteriorating. In 1990, it was a grass verge alongside the drive leading to the overflow car park. The grass has become shaded out as trees have grown and the verge has become muddy, partly as a result of this and partly as a result of vehicles driving over it.

3.5 The muddiness of the car park and the walk from it lead to complaints from visitors, create difficulties for visitors with reduced mobility and can sometimes make it difficult to get vehicles off the car park.

4. Planning policy context

4.1 The development plan for the area comprises the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy with saved provisions of the 1998 Local Plan. The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2016-2031 was submitted for examination in June 2018 and the examination hearing sessions closed in October. National policy allows planning authorities to give weight to policies in emerging plans (NPPF2018, paragraph 48).

4.2 The proposals maps of the 1998 Local Plan remain in effect for some purposes. These show that Biddulph Grange Garden, including the car park, is in the green belt outside the development boundary for Biddulph. The maps show the conservation area. They also show Biddulph Grange Garden being within a Special Landscape Area. However, the Special Landscape Area designation was not carried through into the core strategy.

4.3 Relevant core strategy policies include:

- SS5b Biddulph Area Strategy
- SS6c Other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC1 design considerations
- DC2 historic environment
- DC3 landscape and setting

4.4 The proposals map for the submission 2016-2031 Local Plan also show the site as being in the green belt outside the development boundary for Biddulph.

4.5 Relevant policies of the draft local plan include

- SS1 Development Principles
- 1a Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- SS3 Future provision and distribution of development
- SS6 Biddulph Area Strategy
- SS10 Other rural areas strategy
- SD1 Sustainable use of resource
- SD4 Pollution and water quality
- SD5 Flood risk
- E4 Tourism and cultural development
- DC1 Design considerations
- DC2 The historic environment
- DC3 Landscape and settlement setting
- C1 Creating sustainable communities
- C2 Sport, recreation and open space
- NE1 Biodiversity and geological resources
- NE2 Trees, woodland and hedgerows
- T1 Development and sustainable transport

4.6 Appendix 8 of the draft local plan sets out guidance on minimum parking provision for various uses. It does not appear to contain a standard that could usefully be applied to the provision of parking for Biddulph Grange Garden.

5. National planning policy

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework, revised in July 2018, sets out the government's policies for planning. Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental with paragraph 9 noting that they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged.

5.2 Paragraph 11 states that for decision-taking the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas of assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

5.3 Chapter 15 sets out policies in relation to the natural environment. Paragraph 170 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. It sets out a number of ways in which the planning system should do this. These include by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites; recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from ecosystem services; minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure; and preventing new development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

5.4 Chapter 16 sets out policies in relation to the historic environment. Paragraph 184 states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. The framework requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and any harm should require clear and convincing justification, with less than substantial harm being weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. (NPPF paragraphs 189, 193, 194, 196).

5.5 Chapter 13 sets out policy in relation to green belts. Paragraph 134 sets out the five purposes of green belt. These are:

- 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; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

5.6 Paragraph 141 states, "Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, 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."

5.7 Paragraph 143 states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

5.8 Paragraph 144 states that 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.

5.9 Paragraph 146 states that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These include engineering operations and local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.

6. Design Principles and Concepts

6.1 The Trust's design objective is to improve the existing overflow car park without creating adverse effects.

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

7.1 The application site has an area of 0.9ha and the proposals relate to the upgrading of about 110 car parking spaces and the roadways and path that serve them. Although spaces are not currently marked out, our experience is that we can currently park about 110 cars in this area, although this is reduced if people park badly.

7.2 The car park layout would be altered. The roadways would be realigned and hedges introduced. The hedges would help define lines of parking to support efficient use of the space and would visually break up the appearance of the car park as well as contributing to sustainable surface water management. The parking bays would be upgraded from grass to stone and demarcated using half-round timber posts pegged to the ground.

7.3 The improved layout would enable part of the overflow parking area to be reserved from parking use without reducing car parking capacity. This would create a buffer area to the tree belt near Congleton Road, which is a remnant of the 19th century layout of this area, and safeguard their roots from compaction.

7.4 A new path would be created from the overflow car park to the main car park. This would be broadly parallel to the drive used by cars but meandering through the trees near the drive. It would be of lightweight, no-dig construction with a stone base overlain with bark chippings.

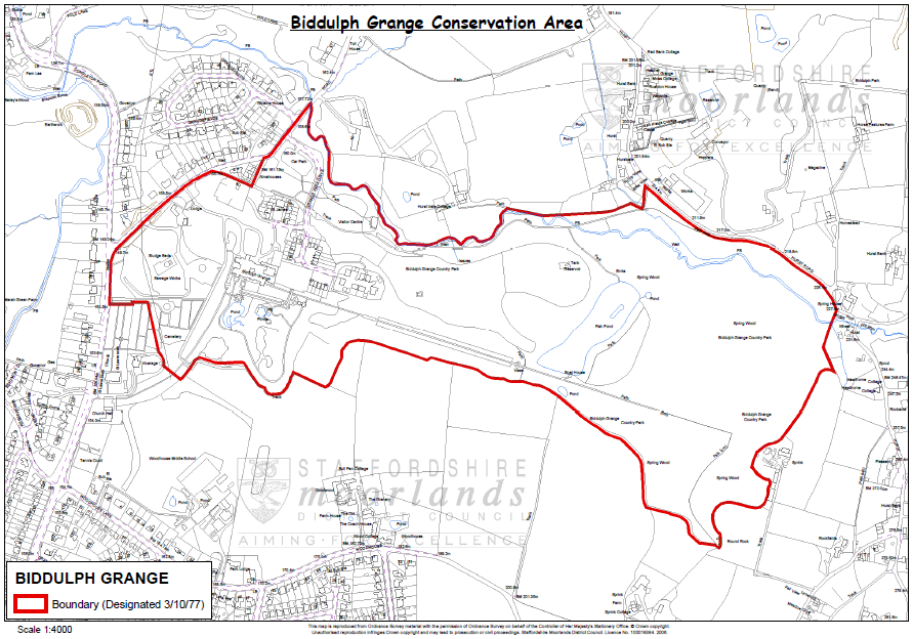
7.5 The overflow car park naturally drains into a hollow within the Trust's ownership. This area is a small valley which was closed off at its west end by the causeway formed in the creation of Grange Road in 1870.

8. Heritage Impact Assessment

8.1 This assessment follows the approach set out in Historic England good practice advice notes 2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment) and 3 (The Setting of Heritage Assets). It takes a stepped approach of identifying the relevant heritage assets; assessing their significance including the contribution made by their setting; and then assessing the impact of development on significance and our ability to appreciate significance. In assessing the significance of the application site and the contribution it makes to heritage assets, it has been necessary to research the historic development of the area. The findings of this are set out in Annex 1.

a) Designated heritage assets

8.2 The application site is within the Biddulph Grange Conservation Area.



8.3 The site is also within the area of the grade I registered historic park and garden of Biddulph Grange (national heritage list entry 1000115). The area of the historic park and garden is mapped in appendix A together with listed buildings and a scheduled monument near the site.

8.4 About 140m south of the site, on the far side of the cemetery, is the grade II* listed church of St Lawrence (1189902). Associated buildings, listed grade II, comprise:

- the early 19th century Genders Memorial (1374728),
- a chest tomb to Francis Gosling died 1823 (1190020),
- a weeping cross, possibly 15th century, restored in the 19th century (1190041),
- a late 17th or early 18th century chest tomb (1294003),
- the churchyard wall, entrance archways and gates, dated 1835 (1037844) and
- a 19th century coach house (1037845).

A mid-19th century garden gateway to Biddulph Grange, listed grade II (1037839) is about 70m south of the church. The proposed development potentially affects the setting of the church and the other buildings in this group.

8.5 The grade II* listed Biddulph Grange (1037835) and associated buildings are about 130m east of the overflow car park and 60-90m from the near end of the proposed path. The associated buildings nearest to the application site are all grade II listed and comprise:

- the alcove and approach steps at the north end of the Lime Avenue (1374761) dating from 1848-1860
- the stone seat and arbour in the Lime Walk (1037841) dating from 1860 and possibly intended as the position for viewing the layout of the gardens
- the formal steps and approach to Mr Bateman's Study (1374724) dating from 1848-1860

There are many more listed buildings within the formal garden but increasing distance and the lack of any specific relationship with the application site area mean that heritage impacts would be progressively less. The proposed development potentially affects the setting of the Grange and garden buildings.

8.6 The mid-19th century Overton Road entrance to Biddulph Grange, about 130m north east of the overflow car park is also grade II listed (1374725). This is not the entrance to the National Trust visitor car park, or to the country park, but provides access to the private apartments within Biddulph Grange. It is so isolated from the application site functionally and by distance, trees and buildings that the proposed development would not affect its setting.

8.7 About 100m north east of the Overton Road entrance is a grade II listed early-mid 19th century spring head basin, set in the boundary walls on the north side of Grange Road (1037816). Almost opposite this basin, but set back behind a pair of early 20th century houses, are the mid-19th century Bateman Almshouses: a terrace of five almshouses, which are listed grade II, along with their boundary walls and railings (1037836). These face the line of a former turnpike which runs to their east and is now a public footpath joining to Grange Road by a flight of steps. Although having historic associations with Biddulph Grange, these too are sufficiently isolated from the application site functionally and by distance, trees and buildings that the proposed development would not affect their settings.

8.8 About 200m north west of the overflow car park is the scheduled monument, Ring Work Castle in Bailey's Wood (1014690). The castle was abandoned during the 16th century and now comprises earthwork and below ground remains. The monument is so isolated from the application site by distance, trees, roads and houses that the development proposed would not affect its setting.

b) Heritage significance

8.9 **Biddulph Grange Garden** is of exceptional significance as a Victorian garden that was not at all typical but was very much of its time. The garden's inspired design was the vision of one man, James Bateman, who created the garden from 1841 to

1870, with the wealth he inherited from local family mining interests. He was assisted in this by Edward Cooke, a well-respected painter, who designed the buildings and rockwork. James' wife Maria was also influential and an active gardener; who had a particular interest in herbaceous plants, bulbs, Fuchsia's and Lilies. James Bateman was a distinguished botanist, plant collector and garden designer, but above all a horticulturist, with a great knowledge of plants and the conditions they require to grow in. He created a series of garden rooms, many based on individual countries and with unique features, each with their own character and micro-climate in which he grew an exceptionally wide range of plants which were being introduced from all over the world. The imaginative series of garden spaces are linked with considerable ingenuity and provide surprises at every turn. Each area has a different character and displays immense variety, variety being the hallmark of Victorian gardens, reflecting the eclecticism of Victorian architecture.

8.10 The garden room design here bridged the gap between 18th Century landscapes and the garden rooms of Hidcote and Sissinghurst of the 20th Century. As well as breaking new ground stylistically and horticulturally the garden incorporates features inspired by contemporary gardens and also influences from the Great Exhibition of 1851. A deeply religious man, Bateman's devotion to his faith drove the creation of the Geological Gallery, along with his and Cookes' great interest in Geology, challenging Darwin's new theory of evolution, which was the stormy debate at the time. The garden was little altered until the site became a hospital in the 1920s and the Trust has worked to restore it to Bateman's original design. A copy of the register entry is attached as Appendix D.

8.11 The **Biddulph Grange Conservation Area** was designated on 3rd October 1977 and covers an almost identical area to that which was included in the register of historic parks and gardens in 1984. There isn't an adopted Conservation Area appraisal although an undated draft was published for consultation several years ago. This included proposals for extending the conservation area to include the rest of the historic park and garden as well as the church, vicarage, church hall and remainder of the cemetery. The extension has not been taken forward by the Council. The draft appraisal was clear that the reason for designation of the conservation area was, "to preserve and enhance a unique Victorian Garden created by James and Maria Bateman."

8.12 **Biddulph Grange** was originally created from 1841 onwards by James and Maria Bateman as a lavishly appointed country house in the Italianate style. Most of the house was destroyed by fire in 1896 and was rebuilt in a baroque style by John Bower for Robert Heath. The house dominates views from the garden.

8.13 The **Church of St Laurence** has a 15th century core and was substantially rebuilt in 1833, by the architect Thomas Trubshaw, commissioned by John Bateman (James Bateman's father) who also presented stained glass windows. The church also has additions in 1873 including a memorial chapel and peal of 6 bells paid for by Robert Heath and slight alterations in 1894. The **Coach House** east of the Church date was built to house Bateman's Coach. The **churchyard wall, entrance and gates** south and west of the church are also thought to have been commissioned by John Bateman and are of a similar date to the work he commissioned on the church itself. Both pre-date the creation of Biddulph Grange and its gardens.

8.14 **The site itself** forms a small, distinct and largely self-contained part of the historic park and garden and the Conservation Area; being a remnant of a former park-like area west of the Grange. However, even at its fullest extent, this area was not considered worthy of more than a passing note in its heyday in 1862 (see Annex 1). It is not mentioned in register entry, the draft conservation area appraisal or the National Trust's statement of significance.

8.15 Unlike the formal garden and the main park east of the house, the park-like area was very short lived. It was added to the gardens between 1856 and 1862 but areas were progressively removed and re-purposed from the 1870s onwards. As illustrated in appendix B and C it has subsequently lost almost all trace of either its original Bateman layout of c.1860 or the 1870s Heath layout. The southern end of the park has been lost to the Vicarage and cemetery; the northern end was cut off by the creation of Grange Road and then lost to subsequent housing development. The middle section has been fundamentally altered with the creation of the sewage works followed by the National Trust car parks and access, together with dense tree and shrub planting in what would have been the open area of the park.

8.16 Having said this, there are remnants of the original tree screens on the west side of the overflow car park and in the area south east of Grange Lodge, with a few notable open grown trees near the National Trust access drive. Part of the hedge adjoining the tree belt may also date back to the original Bateman layout. These features make a small contribution to the significance of the historic park and garden, being contemporary with its main period of development and created by its designers.

8.17 The tree belt is a notable feature in the conservation area, particularly in views along Congleton Road and Grange Road. The open area used for parking makes less of a contribution to the character and appearance of the area. When in use, it is a detracting feature although boundary planting means that parked cars can only be clearly seen from within the car park or glimpsed from public viewpoints on the neighbouring roads and graveyards.

c) Contribution to setting

8.18 The application site provides a rural backdrop to the church, set within its churchyard and associated cemetery, including the experience of it when travelling along Congleton Road. Along with the trees, drive and gateway east of the church, the application site is a reminder of the historic associations between the church and Biddulph Grange, including the contributions that the Bateman family and Robert Heath made to both in the late 19th century. The trees on the Congleton Road frontage are the feature of the site that contributes most to the appreciation of the church both aesthetically and with regard to its connection with Biddulph Grange. The late 20th century tree and hedge planting separating the car park from the cemetery and in the vicinity of the sewage works contribute to the amenity of the setting but do not contribute to historic significance.

8.19 The overflow parking area is entirely screened from views of or from listed buildings other than the church and associated structures, where it is partly screened. While it should be regarded as part of the settings of listed buildings at the Grange (because it is part of the experience of the Grange and garden buildings for many

visitors and because of its historic associations with the Grange) its contribution to their significance is small.

d) Impacts of the proposed development

8.20 The proposed development would introduce new areas of hard surfacing and the visual sub-division of the area with hedges. The car park character of the area would be emphasised when not in use, through the formalisation of the layout. However, when in use, the proposed hedge planting would break up the appearance of parked vehicles more so than currently. In addition, the condition of the car park should be more in keeping with a grand Victorian garden than the degraded grass and rough stone trackways currently seen. The introduction of the buffer area to the tree belt would better protect the trees near Congleton Road. Given the limited contribution that the open area makes to the significance of the historic park and garden, it is considered that the significance of the historic park and garden would not be harmed by the proposed development.

8.21 The better screening of parked cars would be a slight enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the church. This would, however, be offset by the changes arising from the introduction of a more formalised car park layout and extended hard surfacing which would be more detracting when the car park is not in use. Overall the effects on the conservation area and the settings of the church are considered neutral.

8.22 The car park area makes a small contribution to the experience of the listed buildings at Biddulph Grange. The changes in this experience arising from the proposed development are not considered to affect the significance of the listed buildings at the Grange or the ability to appreciate that significance.

9. Green Belt Justification

9.1 Policy SS6c of the adopted core strategy states, “Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.” The same wording is used in Policy SS10 of the emerging local plan states.

9.2 National policy identifies that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These include engineering operations and local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location. (NPPF paragraph 146)

9.3 The car park improvements would not conflict with any of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as detailed in paragraph 134 of the NPPF. The whole of the National Trust’s ownership at Biddulph Grange is within the Stoke Green Belt. All of the current parking provision is in the green belt and there is no practical means of providing car parking for Biddulph Grange that is not in the green belt.

9.4 The car parking improvements would have a minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposals do not extend the existing parking area currently occupied by car parking; instead the scheme seeks to make better use of the existing space. Whilst the overall car parking area would not increase, the year-

round usability would increase. Potential impacts on the openness of the Green Belt are also reduced by the site being largely screened from the surrounding area and the way in which the new planting is incorporated in the design. The design also seeks to ensure better protection of the historic tree belt to Congleton Road. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt is negligible and would not change its open character.

9.5 The increase in year-round useable spaces would support recreational access to Green Belt in the gardens at Biddulph Grange. It would also provide income to support the conservation and enhancement of historic buildings and landscapes.

9.6 The Trust considers that any harm to the Green Belt would be outweighed by the wider benefits of the proposed development and as such is in line with Government policy and can be successfully accommodated.

10. Access

10.1 The National Trust is committed to enabling increased access to its historic built and countryside environments, and to developing and promoting inclusive access solutions that are creative and sensitive to the surroundings.

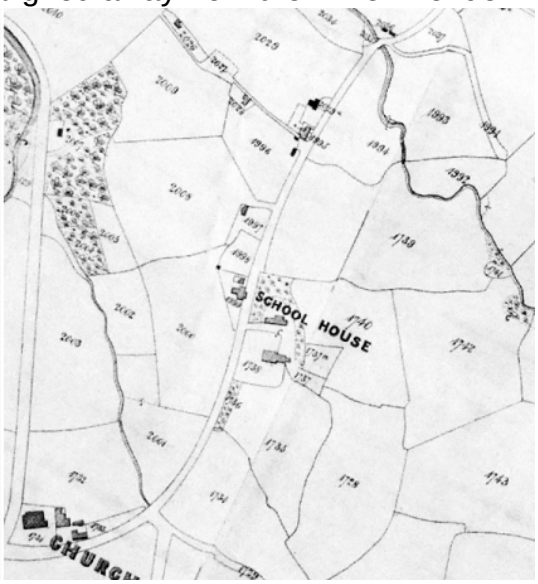
10.2 The main car park includes an area of disabled parking which is not affected by these proposals. While the area in which the improvements are proposed does not contain disabled parking, the improvements would aid its use by everyone, including people using wheelchairs or walking sticks or pushing buggies.

Annex 1. Historic development of the area

1. Prior to the creation of Biddulph Grange, the site was a farmstead belonging to James Bateman's father, who lived at Knypersley Hall about 2 miles to the south. The house on the site prior to construction of the Grange is referred to as a farmhouse in the list description (1037835) and as the former vicarage house in the register entry for the park and garden (1000115).

2. James Bateman created Biddulph Grange and Biddulph Grange Garden from 1840 onwards. At that time, the Grange was on the east frontage of the Tunstall and Bosley Turnpike (created in 1770, Staffordshire HER MST22388) to the north of its junction with the New Biddulph Turnpike (created in 1819, Staffs HER MST22370) which had by then become the more important road. The draft conservation area appraisal reports that James' father John Bateman helped to finance this road. Kemp's 1862 article in the Gardeners' Chronicle refers to the Lime Avenue as being, "an avenue of old Limes… which was formerly the high road."

3. The 1837 OS drawing of Macclesfield, annotates the building on the site of the Grange as "vicarage". A school is shown opposite and a stream is shown flowing southeast to northwest across the area between the turnpikes leading to an area of woodland near the New Biddulph Turnpike. The 1840 Tithe map shows show the sub-division of this land into small fields and shows that the Bosley-Tunstall turnpike had already been realigned away from the Lime Avenue.



Extract from the 1840 tithe map

4. The 1840 tithe survey confirms ownership of the farmstead by the Bateman family. It also shows that the land and buildings immediately west of the Tunstall to Bosley turnpike, including the application site, were not owned by the Bateman family at that time.

5. In 1856, Edward Kemp described Biddulph Grange Garden in a serialised article in the Gardeners Chronicle (p679, 695, 711, 727-8, 774-5, 807-8). His article notes:

   "Situated on the northern border of Staffordshire, in an undulated and comparatively cultivated district, with some hills of moderate height in its vicinity, and, in the nearer

neighbourhood Biddulph Church tower, the spire of Knypersly Church and the ruins of Biddulph Hall, with a small stream flowing down an adjoining valley, there is nothing in the position or surrounding accessories of this place which would at all take it out of the range of an ordinary country gentleman's residence. Biddulph is a quiet little village, about three miles from Congleton on the high road from this town to the Potteries. Biddulph Grange lies on a branch road, a short distance from the church, which is a handsome old structure, pleasingly situated, and well supported by Yews, Deodars &c. Mr. Bateman's grounds are at present bounded on the west side by this branch road, which it is intended to divert, so as to put the gardens in the midst of a small park, with a suitable approach from the main or turnpike road."

"The property has been in Mr. Bateman's possession about 14 years; and when he entered upon it the house was merely a farm residence, and the grounds, for the most part, a swampy field."

While describing the garden in detail, the article contains no description of the land west of the Tunstall-Bosley turnpike.

6. Kemp wrote again about Biddulph Grange in 1862 (Gardeners Chronicle, 1862, pp 478-480, 527-8, 575-6, 670-2, 719-20):

"It is now nearly six years since a lengthened description of the gardens at Biddulph Grange appeared in these columns; and since that time a very large amount of additional ground had been enclosed and arranged, including many novel and striking features. The death of Mr. Bateman, sen., has enabled his son to dismantle the old hall at Knypersley, which had become spoiled, as a place of residence by the proximity of large iron works and coal pits, and to remove numbers of its architectural and other ornaments to Biddulph Grange, though the kitchen gardens and fruit houses at Knypersley are still retained, and still continue to supply the family at the Grange. The acquisition of additional land, too, has in some instances, led to other alterations."

"Not to travel again over ground so fully described in 1856, the present notice will be almost entirely confined to changes made subsequently to that period. And the first point that naturally occurs is the new approach which has been made from the Congleton road. Congleton being the nearest and most important railway station accessible from the place, the readiest and most convenient mode of getting to it became an obvious desideratum. Formerly, it was necessary to pass round a very considerable angle, by the church, in order to get to the house, which last, as have been apparent from the plan, stands close to a high road. Now, however, the property is entered from a point much nearer Congleton, and the drive, avoiding the long detour by the church, crosses the high road close to the house, and enters at once into the house court. Advantage is taken of a peculiar turn in the main road, at the entrance, to give the drive the appearance of being the principal and most natural route; thus making the outer road look the subordinate one; and this is always a happy circumstance in the arrangement of an approach. Opposite the lodge (which was designed by Mr. Cooke), and on the further side of the high road, a large recess has been arranged, and in the shadow of some trees an ornamental stone wall with seats and a granite drinking fountain has been considerately placed, and conveys at once a kindly and hospitable impression. From a bank near the

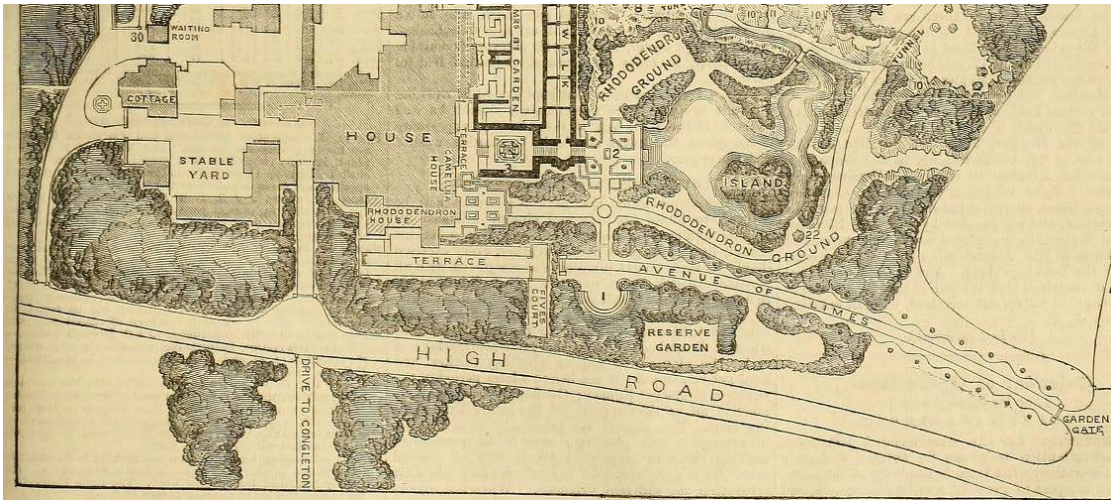
lodge, too, the little stream which supplies the other fountain gurgles from amidst a mass of trees and evergreens into a stone basin, from which it is again continually trickling away; thus refreshing the visitor with its coolness and music the moment the gates are passed."

"Partly from the necessities of the case, and partly by contrivance to screen off the public road and other unpleasing objects, the carriage drive passes between sloping banks, of varied outline, planted with great numbers of large Hollies, Yews, and various forest trees; with occasional openings to park-like ground and to distant landscape. Practically speaking, the road is in a cutting, though with a very natural and by no means cramped appearance, throughout. Near the entrance, and in the shadow of some older trees Cryptomerias have been liberally planted; and numerous Pines and Firs are scattered along the banks. As the road brings us within sight of the house, varied mounds of earth, evergreens of considerable size, and an admixture of tall trees, all of which have been planted here lately, and did not exists in this part before, completely shut out the cross road and the village and leave only the higher part of the house, with a Belvedere and other towers visible; so that the road runs so near the house is traversed with a suddenness and an unexpectedness which renders it scarcely visible."

"In the village adjoining Biddulph Grange great improvements have lately been made. A little to the north of the house the road has been very much widened out; and in a large recess on the east side, an immense Araucaria, removed from Knypersly, has been planted, and is happily growing. At the back of this there is a public drinking fountain (designed by Mr. Cooke) and an ornamental wall liberally furnished with stone benches; and there is a covered seat on the opposite side of the road. A very compact and complete poultry yard has been fitted up, and the pigeon-house has been placed at the top of a gable-roofed tower, which forms a conspicuous object in the landscape. Many cottages have been renovated; some pretty almshouses erected by subscription to the memory of the late Mr. Bateman; and everything wears an appearance of thoughtful kindness and careful neatness."

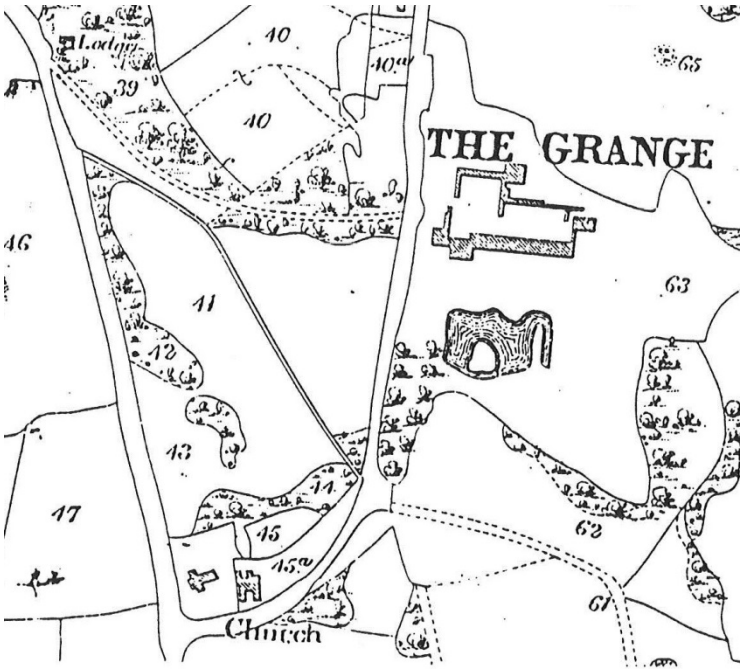
Again, while describing the gardens in great detail, including the large park north-east of the Grange, nothing more is said about the small park to the west.

7. Kemp's plan of Biddulph Grange Garden, published in the 1862 Gardeners Chronicle article, shows the end of the Congleton drive closest to the Grange, along with the high road it crosses. Other than some planting around the crossing it shows no detail of the land west of the High Road (the Bosley-Tunstall turnpike).



extract from 1862 Gardeners Chronicle plan, north is to the left

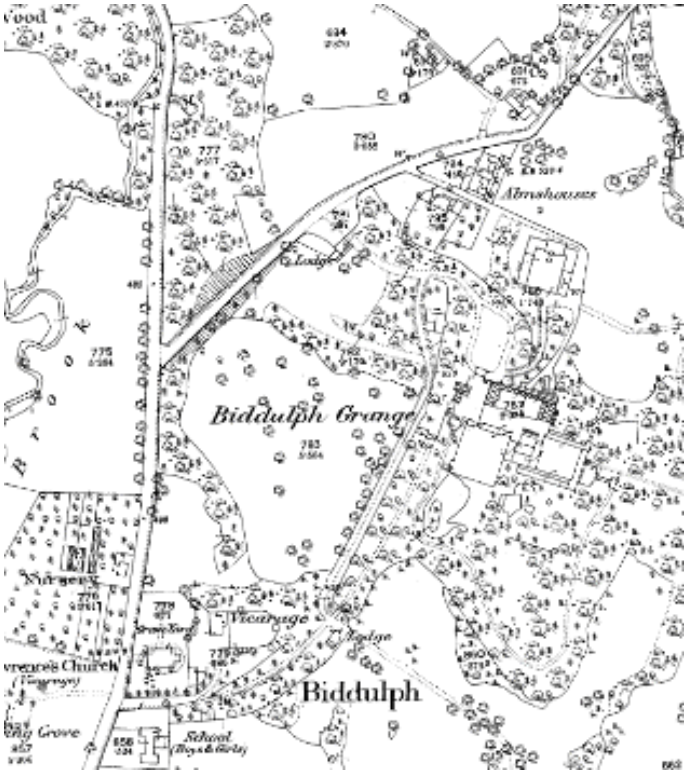
8. A more extensive, though less detailed, plan was contained in the 1871 auction particulars. The route and broad landscaping of the drive are consistent with Kemp's 1862 description. The layout shown for the area south of the drive suggests a parkland feel and this must be the "park-like ground" that Kemp mentions. The meandering stream previously mapped is replaced by a straighter feature bisecting the park. This could be a fenced path or a canalised stream.



Plan from the 1871 auction particulars

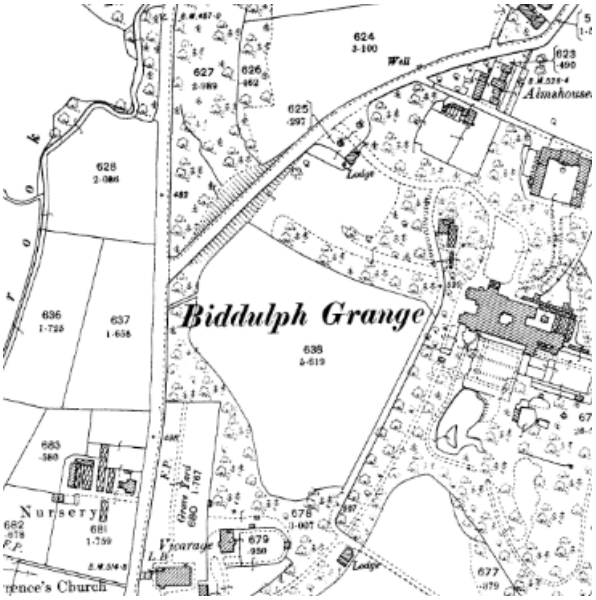
9. The section of the Tunstall to Bosley turnpike near the Grange was closed down by Robert Heath in 1874 when he took up residence at the Grange. He created Grange Road and Grange Lodge at the same time (Staffordshire HER 51778). Sections of the turnpike survive as a drive to and through the grounds of Biddulph Grange and as a short green lane in front of the Bateman Almshouses, with the steps down to Grange Road showing the difference in levels between the older and newer roads at this point.

10. Heath's changes are seen on the 1877 OS plan, which shows the small area of park west of Biddulph Grange. Bateman's Congleton drive has been severed by Grange Lane with only part of its line still evident near the Grange. The bisecting feature across the park has gone and a new vicarage has been built north east of the church, along with a school south of the church. The Overton Road entrance (1374725) is shown as it the spring head basin on Overton Road (1037816). A service drive runs from opposite this basin to the rear of the stable block, passing south of the almshouses.



Extract from 1877 OS plan

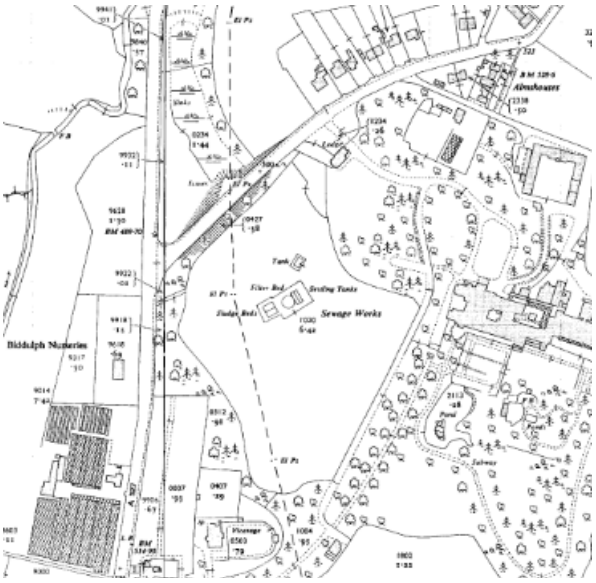
11. Between 1877 and 1899, the graveyard was extended northwards. The 1899 OS plan doesn't shown individual trees in the park area but this may be a change in cartographical approach rather than reflecting tree removal.



Extract from 1899 OS plan

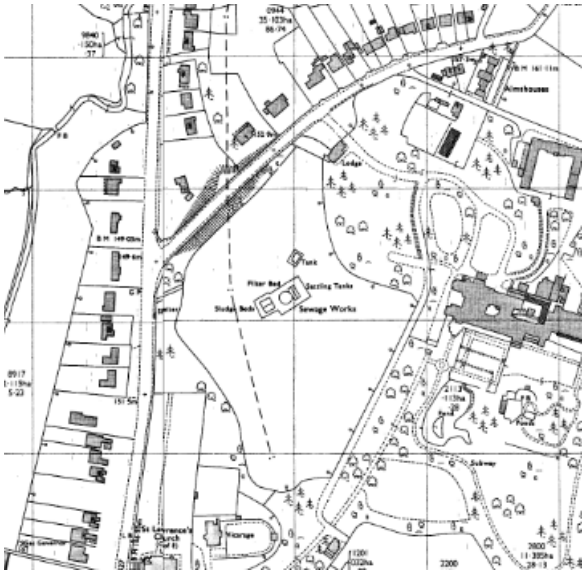
12. In 1924, the Grange became a hospital, having been given for this purpose by the Heath Family. Grange Lodge was rebuilt shortly afterwards with a second floor added (Staffs HER 51778).

13. Prior to 1955, an overhead power line and a sewage works for the hospital were installed within the small park-like area west of the Grange. The graveyard was extended eastwards on land near the vicarage. Housing was built along part of Grange Road.



Extract from 1955 OS plan

14. By 1972, housing development on Grange Road and Congleton Road surrounded the park. Houses had also been built on the area of park that had been cut off by the creation of Grange Road.



Extract from 1972 OS plan

15. In the 1980s, the cemetery was extended eastwards with a new access formed onto Congleton Road (planning application SMD/1980/0518).

16. In 1988, following closure of the hospital, Biddulph Grange Garden was acquired by the National Trust. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council acquired the large park north east of the Grange as a country park. Most of the Grange, the stables and the kitchen garden were sold for development.

17. Following initial restoration, the gardens were opened to the public in 1990. Planning permission for opening the garden (SMD/1988/1570) included the creation of the main and overflow car parks in the area west of the Grange, served by a new access from Grange Road. The Overton Road access (created by Robert Heath) was retained to serve the apartments created in the Grange (SMD/1988/1570). Grange Park Drive was created to serve the housing in the kitchen garden and vehicle access to the country park. Grange Lodge became the National Trust's head gardener's house with garden service buildings constructed nearby. Substantial tree and shrub planting took place around the sewage works.

18. Appendix B is a summary of the historical development of the small park and the surrounding area. Appendix C is an overlay of the 1877 OS plan with present day mapping to illustrate change to this part of Biddulph Grange's grounds and surroundings over that period.

Appendix A: Registered historic park and garden, scheduled monument and listed buildings , Biddulph Grange



Legend

- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Historic Park & Garden
- Listed building grade II*
- Listed building grade II

N

Scale 1:2,500

0.13 0 0.06 0.13 Kilometers

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THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

Notes

This map was automatically generated using Geocortex Essentials.

Appendix B: Summary of the historical development of the park west of Biddulph Grange and its surroundings



Legend

- after 1955
- 1899-1955
- 1877-1899
- c1874, Heath
- 1819 turnpike
- line of 1770 turnpike closed in 1874
- line of Bateman's drive c.1860-74
- line of bissecting feature shown on 1871 plan
- Approx extent of Bateman's small park in 1871, including tree belts

N

Scale 1:2,000

0.10 0 0.05 0.10 Kilometers

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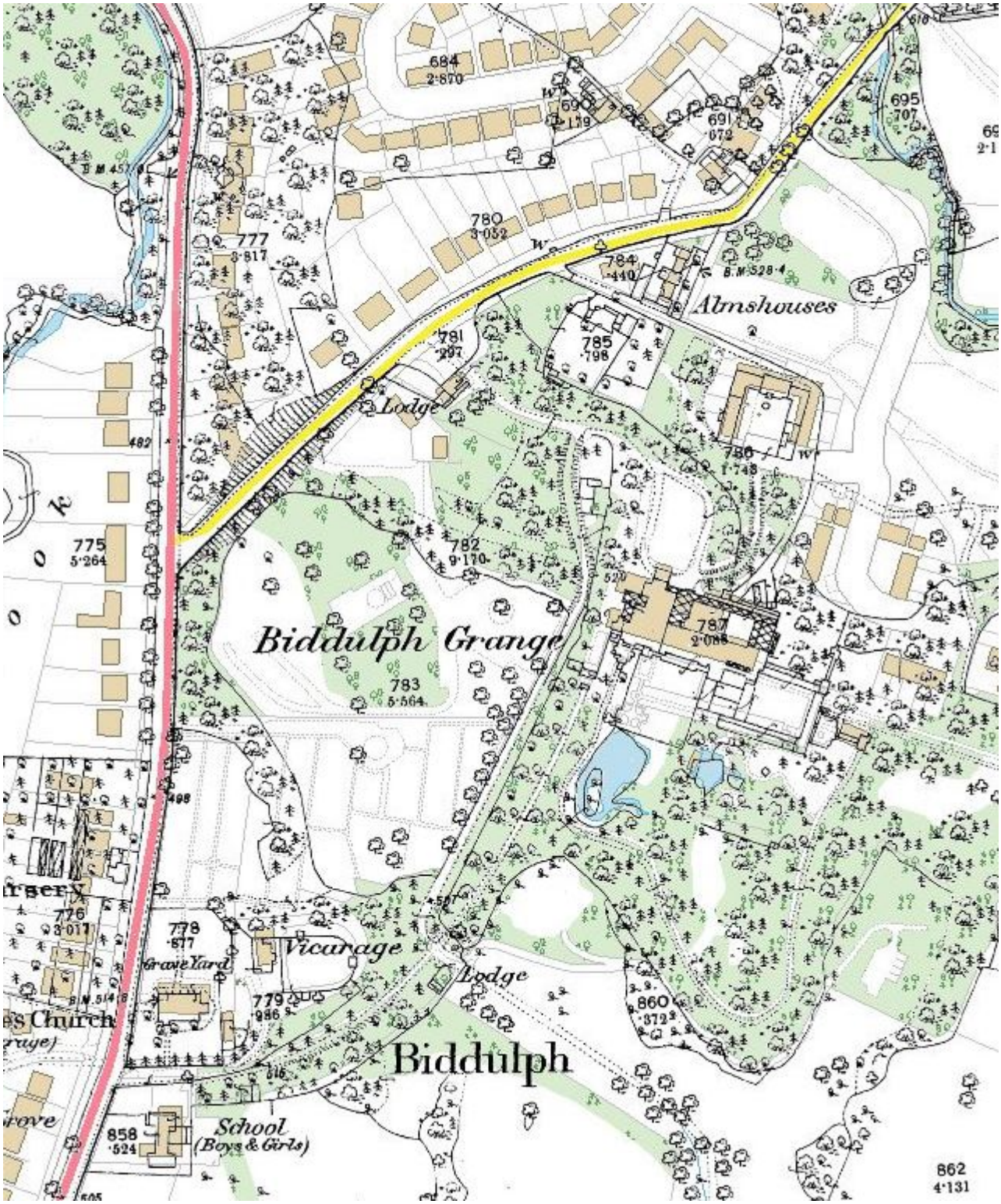
Notes

This map was automatically generated using Geocortex Essentials.

Appendix C: Overlay of 1877 and 2018 mapping



1877 OS plan (black and white) overlain with present day OS mapping (colour)

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Appendix D – Register Entry for Biddulph Grange Garden

Overview

Heritage Category: Park and Garden.

Grade: I.

List Entry Number: 1000115.

Date first listed: 01-Dec-1984.

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority..

County: Staffordshire.

District: Staffordshire Moorlands (District Authority).

Parish: Biddulph.

National Grid Reference: SJ 89646 59145.

Summary

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details. .

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details..

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details..

Details

Gardens and pleasure grounds of 1840s-60s, with discrete 'world gardens' including China and Egypt, associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Biddulph Grange became the main house of James (1811-97) and Maria Bateman in 1840, the year after their marriage. Until then it had been Biddulph's vicarage house, and occupied the site of a medieval grange of Hulton Abbey. Previously James had lived with his parents John, a successful ironmaster and merchant, and Elizabeth Bateman at Knypersley Hall (Staffs).

From the time he was a child James Bateman was fascinated by orchids, and after he began to publish on the subject in the later 1830s he was recognised as an expert. His wife was also deeply interested in plants, her family, the Egerton-Warburtons, being well known for their gardening interests. After their arrival at Biddulph the house was extended, conservatories added, and an ambitious garden created. After 1849 the garden's development was a collaborative venture between the Batemans and Edward Cooke (1811-80), a painter, botanical engraver, and enthusiastic amateur gardener.

By the late 1860s the cost of maintaining the Biddulph gardens was proving beyond the Batemans' resources; in 1868 the house was passed to their son, who sold it three years later to Robert Heath, a leading Staffordshire industrialist. Gardens and house were maintained to a high standard and further altered, but in 1896 after the property had passed to Heath's son the house was largely destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt, in 1923 becoming a hospital in which use it remained until the 1980s. Alterations to house and gardens took place during that phase of the site's history, and there was increasing neglect and vandalism in the 1960s, but in 1988 when the National Trust acquired the gardens their basic form and structure still remained. By the mid 1990s an extensive restoration was largely complete.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Biddulph Grange stands north of Biddulph, which itself lies roughly equidistant from Stoke-on-Trent, Leek and Congleton, the last-mentioned c 5km to the north-west. The park and grounds are partly defined to the west (the A527) and north by roads, while to the east the park boundary follows that of Spring Wood. Here the ground is rising onto Biddulph Moor, on the west side of what to the north becomes the High Peak. The area here registered is c 42ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The north side of the house is approached by a short, curving drive from the north-west. At the entrance are flanking walls and railings (listed grade II), with a C20 lodge to the south. The Lime Avenue (see below) was the main approach from the south.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING It seems that when James Bateman moved to Biddulph in 1840 he retained the existing vicarage house, which was altered and extended to create a large yellow-brick Italianate mansion. Its rooms included a Geological Gallery. That house was rebuilt after a serious fire in 1896 as a sandstone ashlar mansion in the English Baroque style. The garden front, overlooking the gardens to the south, is of three main storeys and ten bays. Extending east of the house is the earlier C20 hospital building.

North of the house is a stables and coach house range.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS On the north side of the house is a grass turning circle with shrubbery and specimen trees on rising ground beyond.

The main gardens and pleasure grounds lie south of the house, where terraces overlook a lake and the well-wooded gardens which surround it on three sides. South of the east end of the terraces is the series of garden tableaux which together create what has been called a world image garden, in which plants from other countries are evoked amid an extraordinary collection of garden buildings and microclimates. While the main framework of the whole garden, including the terraces to the south of the house, was laid out by the Batemans before 1849, and although James Bateman was responsible for most of the planting, its architectural features were probably all designed by Edward Cooke.

The west terrace projects south of the house, ending in a bastion (listed grade II) looking east across the south terrace and Dahlia Walk, and south across the pool which forms the centrepiece of the garden and down the Lime Avenue.

The terraces south of the house are divided up into several distinct formal compartments of varying design. At the west end is the Italian Garden, a narrow stepped terrace with borders which links the house and Heath's study (steps thereto listed grade II) with the main path through the garden. Running along the south front of the house are (from west to east) the Italian Garden, Mosaic Parterre, three compartments of Mr Bateman's Garden, Mrs Bateman's Garden (Upper), the Lower, Rose and Verbena Parterres, and the Cherry Orchard. South-east of the Italian Garden, and overlooking the pool, is the Araucaria Parterre. Running from east to west and slightly below all but the last of these compartments is the Dahlia Walk, yew-hedged and with yew piers dividing up the beds. At the east end of the Walk is the Shelter House, a two-storey, flat-roofed, Moorish or early Italian structure rebuilt in the 1980s after demolition of the original in the 1930s.

The upper storey of the Shelter House gives on to The Stumpery, a sunken path bordered by stumpwork , which leads south to China, and (via a tight turn northward) to the eastern terrace. The terrace gives views over and along the terraced gardens south of the house, and gives access eastwards to Egypt. The last occupies a roughly square, lawned compartment, surrounded by tall yew and beech hedges. Either side of the axial path up the garden are yew obelisks with a base of golden yew. Flanking these are pairs of stone sphinxes (with temple portal listed grade II). The path leads to a stone temple portal, above which rises a pyramid of clipped yews. From the doorway a dark passage progresses to a dim chamber containing the Ape of Thoth, a stone idol probably sculpted by Waterhouse Hawkins, creator of the Crystal Palace (qv) dinosaurs. A passage from this chamber leads south, out of the structure (sometimes known as the Tea House; listed grade II), the facade of which (dated 1856) forms the Cheshire Cottage.

China, reached via The Stumpery, lies south of the Dahlia Walk. It is hidden from the rest of the garden by high banks, trees, and the tall, stone, Wall of China (listed grade II) which runs around its north, south, and east sides. The Prospect Tower (listed grade II) forms the northern end of the Wall. Within China a wooden Chinese Temple (listed grade II) looks across a pool (The Chinese Water), which is crossed by a wooden footbridge (listed grade II), to an ornamental landscape of rocks and exotic plants, many of the latter collected in the Far East by the plant collector Robert Fortune (1813-80). Perched high above the south-east end of the garden is the Joss House (listed grade II), a small pavilion or shelter painted vibrantly, like all the Chinese structures, in red, green and yellow (1997). The north side of

China comprises a semicircular space entered via two stone Chinese arches or doorways, all overlooked by a gilded water buffalo idol sculpted by Waterhouse Hawkins which leans over the stone wall around the north side of the space. Within, two dragons are cut parterre fashion in the lawn.

From the Chinese Temple a grotto and tunnel leads south to The Glen, a quarry-like garden crossed by a stream. About 1990 replanting of Sikkim and Bhutan rhododendrons was undertaken, reflecting Bateman's original scheme.

A wider pleasure ground extends around and beyond the 'world gardens'. A path from the south end of the Italian Garden runs down the west side of the pool and into the Rhododendron Ground, an extensive area of shrubs and lawns set about with massive pieces of Chatsworth gritstone constructed into 'outcrops'. After running around the south end of the pool the path enters a rocky tunnel (listed grade II), re-emerging as a hollow-way looping south-east and then north through the Pinetum, loosely modelled on that at Chatsworth and Derby Arboretum. Bateman's was one of the richest collections of conifers assembled in mid Victorian Britain, the trees here being planted on mounds to emphasise their silhouettes against the sky. The path ends at the Cheshire Cottage; stone pine-cone finials on the approach wall restate the Pinetum theme.

The west side of the garden is bounded by the curving Lime Avenue, which is set slightly below it. The Avenue predates the Batemans' arrival at Biddulph; before 1840 it ran parallel to the Biddulph to Congleton highway which linked Biddulph church and vicarage. A walk leads down the Avenue, from a stone alcove seat (listed grade II) at its north end to ornamental iron gates (listed grade II), probably designed by Edward Cooke, surmounted by gold spheres, at the south end. From the gates a drive led on to the Batemans' other home, Knypersley Hall.

The axial path eastwards through the terraced gardens south of the house is continued for 100m beyond the East Terrace as a yew-hedged walk. This ends at the west end of the 250m long Wellingtonia Avenue, felled (when it was only planted with Deodars) and replanted in 1995-6, in which Wellingtonias alternate with Deodar Cedars. The Avenue runs slightly uphill away from the house, terminating at a massive tazza (listed grade II) set in a clipped yew-hedged square. Rampart-like terraces, replanted in the 1990s with ranks of Red Chestnuts and Austrian Pines, run up either side of the Avenue.

South of the walk to the Avenue is the Arboretum, planted for autumn colour.

PARK A small park extended east of Biddulph Grange, principally embracing Spring Wood. A fishpond lies within the western part of the wood. From a wrought-iron screen and gates at the end of the Wellingtonia Avenue the Obelisk Walk runs 450m east through the park. The Obelisk Walk took its name from the optical illusion the steeply rising path created, when seen from the west, of a stone obelisk against a dark sky. A cave surmounted the top of the obelisk.

KITCHEN GARDEN Two kitchen gardens were constructed at Biddulph Grange in the later C19. Building was planned on one of them in the late 1990s.

REFERENCES B Elliot, Victorian Gardens (1986), pp 102-6 P Hayden, Biddulph Grange (1989) M Batey and D Lambert, The English Garden Tour (1990), pp 286-90 Biddulph Grange Garden, guidebook, (National Trust 1996)

Description written: 1997 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: September 1999.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system..

Legacy System number: 1010.

Legacy System: Parks and Gardens.

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest..

End of official listing.