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Biddulph Grange – Bandstand
Design Access Statement and Heritage
Statement



Job Title: Biddulph Grange – Bandstand

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Report Title: Heritage Statement

Date of First Issue 14-12-21

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by TACP Architects Ltd on behalf of the National Trust to support a Listed Building Consent application for the proposed installation of wrought iron balustrade around the internal perimeter of the existing Bandstand to prevent falling.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Government's 2010 Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation states, "A design and access statement is a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way." The guidance also states that Design and Access Statements should be proportionate to the complexity of the application and need not be long.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework requires applicants to provide sufficient information to enable planning authorities to assess impacts on heritage assets. The PPS5 Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide suggests that this information should be included in the design and access statement.

3. Planning Policy Context

a) National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- 3.2 National planning policies are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework published in 2021. This document states that local planning authorities consider the following points regarding proposals affecting heritage assets:
- 3.3 In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. (NPPF, Pg. 56)
- 3.4 Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary

expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. (NPPF, Pg. 56)

- 3.5 In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. (NPPF, Pg. 56)

b) West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

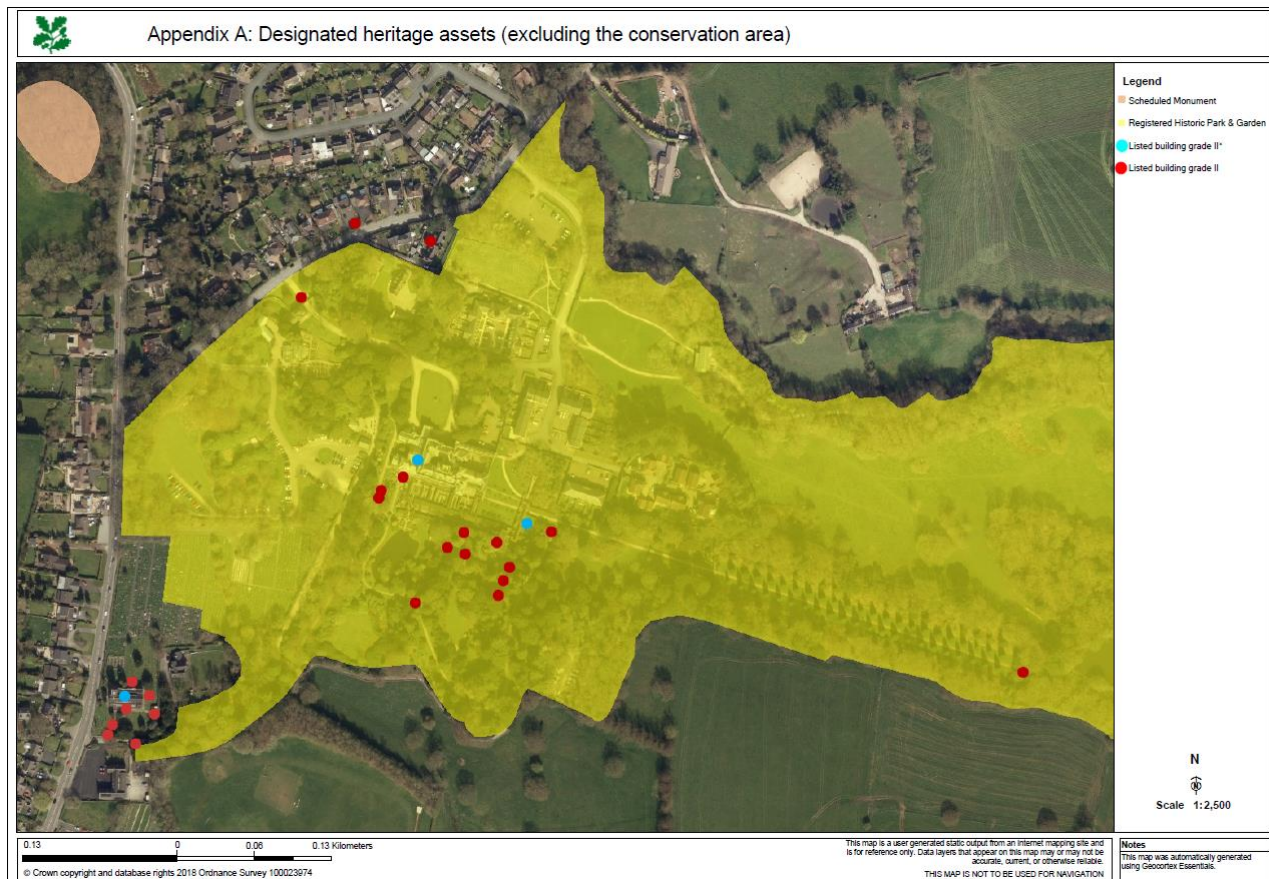
- 3.6 Policy QE1 urges Local authorities to protect and where possible enhance irreplaceable assets such as historic landscape features.
- 3.7 Policy QE5 seeks to protect, conserve, and enhance the Region's diverse historic environment and manage change in such a way that respects local character and distinctiveness.

c) Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan – Adopted September 2020

- 3.8 Policy S07 on support and enhance the tourism, cultural, recreation and leisure opportunities for the district's residents and visitors. (SMLP, Pg. 104)
- 3.9 Policy S08 on promoting local distinctiveness by means of good design and the conservation, protection, and enhancement of historic, environmental, and cultural assets throughout the district. (SMLP, Pg. 104)

4. Context & Historical Development

- 4.1 Biddulph Grange is a grade II* listed building set within a further grade I listed park and garden. The building itself was listed in 1974 (List Number: 1037835) whilst the park and garden was listed in 1984 (List Number: 1000115). The building, park and garden also lie within the boundaries of the Biddulph Grange conservation area and the Staffordshire Moorlands Special Landscape Area.



Designated Heritage Assets

a) Planning History

- 4.2 No planning applications or listed building consents have been previously applied for in this Bandstand location. Though previous discussions have been undertaken with Gillian Bayliss- Conservation Officer regarding this application.

b) Environmental Context

- 4.3 The bandstand is situated at the end of a terrace which runs adjacent to the West elevation of the main house and overlooks the gardens from an elevated position.



View from the bandstand along the terrace at the west elevation of the house



View from the bandstand across the gardens

- 4.4 The lawned areas either side of the terrace leading to the bandstand are utilised for external seating for visitors to the tearoom.

- 4.5 The areas adjacent the bandstand to the west and south are heavily planted with large evergreen shrubs and trees.



View from the bandstand to the lawned areas



View to the bandstand showing the dense planting to the south & west elevations of the Bandstand

- 4.6 Due to the raised level of the bandstand, there are considerable drops on the West, East and South elevations which range from 1.06 to 4.193 metres.



Views showing drops over bandstand perimeter walls

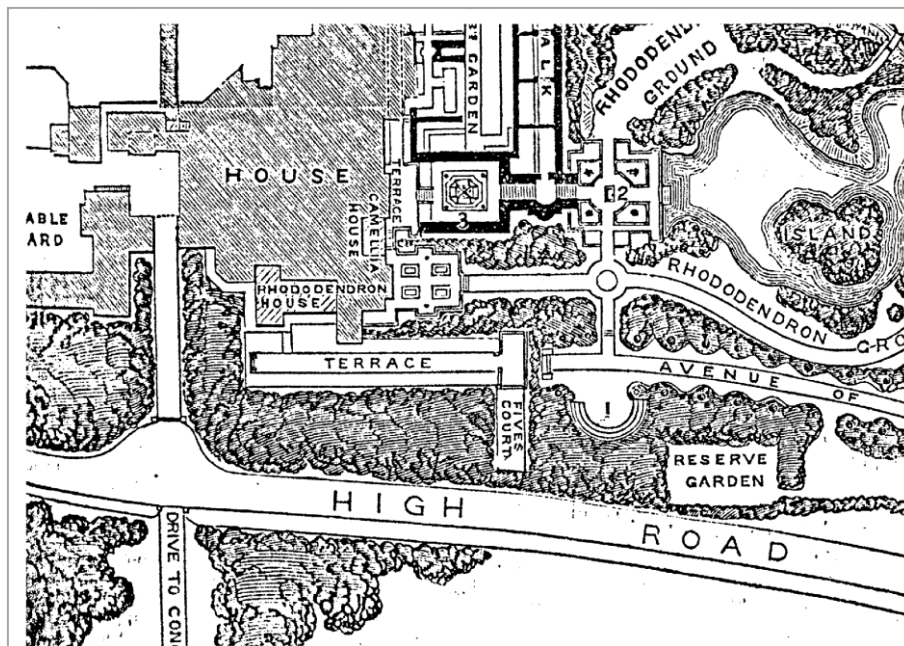
c) Heritage Assets – Biddulph Grange

- 4.7 Biddulph Grange is a grand Victorian country house (listed grade II*). The style of Biddulph Grange is a revised English Baroque. It mostly replaced an Italianate building of 1848-60 following a fire in 1897. This in turn overlays an earlier farmhouse.
- 4.8 The house has both historical and architectural interest due to it being the former home of James Bateman, the well-known horticulturalist who created the gardens in collaboration with Edward Cooke.

- 4.9 The house is set at an elevated level. The west end of the house is covered by late 20th century rendering and is a mixture of the earlier Italianate house and 1897 rebuilt sections. The original house had a large greenhouse on this side elevation. Although the west elevation is not the most grandiose part of the building it provides an imposing backdrop to the Bandstand.
- 4.10 Biddulph Grange Garden was bought by the Trust in 1988 and opened to the public in 1991. Since then, it has welcomed between 57,000 and 100,000 visitors per year. Opening days and times vary throughout the year. We are open 7 days per week from February to November and from Fridays to Mondays in November and December.
- 4.11 Most of the Grange has now been converted to apartments, which are in private ownership. The Trust uses part of the building as a café, tearoom, exhibition space and offices.

d) Heritage Assets – Biddulph Grange Garden

- 4.12 The registered area of Biddulph Grange Garden (grade I) is some 42ha, including the park and grounds. The garden's inspired design was the vision of one man, James Bateman, who created the garden from 1841 to 1868. He was assisted in this by Edward Cooke, a well-respected, marine 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, fuchsias, and lilies.
- 4.13 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 was also a part of the horticultural world, and being a fellow of the Royal Society, he would have had numerous contacts and influences. 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.
- 4.14 The imaginative series of garden spaces are linked with considerable ingenuity and provide surprises at every turn. Terracing, hedging, stumps, roots, rockwork, and earth mounding create a unified layout ingeniously separating these spaces. To retain a natural feel to the garden native Ivy, Yew and Holly have been used to screen each area and provide shelter, the contemporary critic Kemp said, "They alone contribute very largely to impart a natural and furnished appearance to the place."
- 4.15 The drive eastwards past the reception / shop building is a former toll road shown as "High Road" in Kemp's 1862 plan of the garden (see below). The road/drive marked the historic western boundary between the gardens and the grounds. The area west of the road, was not part of the formal gardens. It is also an area that has been heavily modified when the Grange was a hospital and afterwards with the creation of the car park and installation of a sewage works.



Edward Kemp – 1862 Plan of the gardens

e) Biddulph Grange Conservation Area

- 4.16 The Conservation Area Appraisal published by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council shows that the conservation interest is focused on Biddulph Grange, its garden, pleasure grounds and related buildings.

f) Other Heritage Assets

- 4.17 The proposal will only result in limited ground disturbance within the area of the bandstand. The Trust's archaeologist has advised that nothing of interest is likely to be affected by the proposal.
- 4.18 Biddulph Grange Garden contains numerous listed buildings but other than the bandstand structure no others will be affected by the proposed works.

g) Nature conservation

- 4.19 Ponds near Biddulph Grange Garden are known to support populations of Great Crested Newts. The proposed works are unlikely to have any effect on the newt population or any other nature conservation interest.

h) Landscape

- 4.20 Biddulph Grange Garden lies entirely within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. The Garden also falls within a Special Landscape Area defined in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. The site is visually self-contained from the surrounding landscape by heavy foliage with only the north & east elevations being visible from the south terrace of the house and the garden areas to the east of the site.

5. Planning policy context

- 5.1 The development plan for the area comprises the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and saved policies of the Structure Plan and Local Plan. National planning policy is also an important consideration.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Numerous guarding systems have been considered, this included a post supported glass balustrades, however, it was felt that this option would be visually intrusive in the environment and not fit within the character of the garden. The favoured option a “a wrought iron handrail” is felt to be the most unobtrusive option available to the adjacent structures and landscape. Gillian Bayliss the Council’s Conservation Officer and Historic England gave useful comments based on some initial design concepts via email with discounting the frameless glass option and stating “there will be no solution other than simple, vertical metal railings but they need to look as ‘invisible’ as possible in distant views. So, probably solid railings, simple top handrail and minimise corner posts where possible.” And “In our view traditional cast iron vertical railings would be less reflective, and potentially more in keeping with the Victorian vernacular of the house and garden.”

7. Justification for the Proposed Works

- 7.1 The proposed works are for the installation of guarding to prevent falls from a considerable height which could cause serious injury or death to individuals should they fall over the low stone wall around the perimeter of the bandstand. The average height of this wall is 429mm. This is very low and offers little protection from falling over the wall should a person lose their balance, trip, or fall whilst looking over the wall.
- 7.2 Presently the bandstand is closed off to visitors to prevent any falls occurring.
- 7.3 Opening all areas of the garden to visitors provides a valuable opportunity for public appreciation of the heritage asset and contributes to outdoor recreation.
- 7.4 Visitors provide much of the income needed to support the maintenance of the heritage asset and it is anticipated this area will become a firm favourite for visitors to view the vista over the gardens.
- 7.5 The impact of the guarding in the immediate environment has been mitigated by utilising a wrought iron balustrade system which is proposed so as to tie into the historic fabric of the existing house and gardens.
- 7.6 Biddulph Grange Garden is an important tourist attraction and heritage asset and contributes to the local economy, employing some 13 permanent staff and 26 seasonal staff. This proposal will ensure the safety of all staff and visitors and improve the visitors experience of the gardens and landscape.

8. Design Objectives

8.1 The Trust's design objectives have been:

- The making safe of the bandstand area for visitors to use and view the gardens.
- Improve external facilities in the gardens.
- Provide a safe viewing area for able bodied and wheelchair users.
- Safeguard the special qualities of the heritage assets.
- Ensure good environmental performance.
- Keeping the cost of construction, proportionate to the contribution to our charitable purpose.

9. The amount, layout, scale, landscaping, and appearance of proposal

- 9.1 The proposal consists of a wrought iron balustrade with concealed fixings below ground. A reinforced concrete raft slab across the bandstand area will be provided below ground to enable the structure to be securely fixed in place (see Engineer's drawing 116691-01).
- 9.2 The balustrade will be provided to any areas of wall with an extensive drop below, this includes the west, east and south elevations as shown on drawing 20078-05 BGG-TACP-X-SP-D-A-0101. The differences in ground height range from 1.060 metres to 4.193 metres with an average drop of 3.00 metres.
- 9.3 The proposed wrought iron balustrade would be a minimum 1100mm in height.
- 9.4 The average height of the existing stone wall is 429mm, with the highest section being 470mm (west elevation) and the lowest section being 385mm (east elevation). This helps with any visual impact of the guarding as the most visible elevation from the house and gardens would be the West elevation. Which will have the least amount of guarding visible above the existing stone with approximately 630mm of the proposed balustrade being visible above the wall.
- 9.5 The total length of the wrought iron balustrade will be approximately 16.25 metres.
- 9.6 A new permeable Breedon gravel ground finish will be provided to the area.
- 9.7 From a distance across the gardens the proposal will be unobtrusive to its surroundings painting in the Biddulph site green paint (RAL 6012) yet still provide maximum safety standards for this area.
- 9.8 Before any guarding is installed the existing stone wall would be fully re-pointed with a lime mortar mix to match the existing in both colour and texture.

10. Heritage statement

- 10.1 The proposed works involve the installation of wrought iron balustrade system which we perceive to be the least invasive option available in the external environment but still provides protection against falling.
- 10.2 The proposed works are as minimal as possible and should blend in with the existing structures and landscaping seamlessly to have the least impact on the historic gardens, the conservation area, the setting of any other listed building / structure or any below ground archaeology.
- 10.3 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 buildings and gardens. 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.
- 10.4 We consider that the proposal would not harm the heritage significance of Biddulph Grange or the gardens. If any harm was considered to arise, we consider that it would be outweighed by the vast improvement to visitor & staff safety.

11. Access statement

- 11.1 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. Our approach to enabling inclusive access is set out in our Disability Access Position Statement 2005. We also publish a regularly updated book of information for visitors with disabilities.
- 11.2 The proposal will enable a currently closed off area to be re-opened and used by wheelchair users to give an unrivalled view over the gardens. This would be facilitated by the provision of a removable ramped access into this area as and when required (to be managed by staff).
- 11.3 The proposed development would improve the current facilities for those with disabilities and enhance the welcome that the Trust is able to give them.