



Reg Charity No 1013861 Company No 2723974

15, Village Gardens, Stafford, ST17 0LL

Planning Department
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffs, ST13 6HQ

Fao: Ben Hurst

31 May 2024

Dear Sir

SMD/2024/0167 and 0168

Installation of wrought iron balustrade railing around the internal perimeter of the existing Bandstand and creation of a new section of steps to connect the Parterre area of the garden to Mrs Bateman's Garden, Biddulph Grange.

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust (TGT) in its role as Statutory Consultee over the proposed railing around the Bandstand and the erection of a new flight of steps in Mrs Bateman's Garden, Biddulph Grange, a site included at grade I on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens. Staffordshire Gardens and Parks Trust (SGPT) is a member organisation of TGT and works in partnership with it concerning the protection and conservation of registered sites. SGPT is authorised to respond on behalf of both Trusts in respect of planning consultations.

Biddulph Grange park and gardens are a grade I registered historic landscape of mid 19th century date, within a designated conservation area. They are of international significance. The Grange itself is a grade II* listed building and the adjoining steps and terraces around the house, an important part of the architectural structure of the parkland, are either individually listed at grade II or are deemed to be listed within the curtilage of the principal listed buildings.

The gardens have been carefully restored in recent times by the National Trust and are now an important public attraction.

The “bandstand” is an integral part of the composition of terraces and walks around the mansion house and forms a low sided viewing platform overlooking both the lime avenue and tulip garden. The Trusts accept that although the low perimeter wall to the bandstand is an integral part of its historic design it does present a potential health and safety hazard today given the increased usage by visitors. While the introduction of a safety handrail will represent a departure from the historic design of this feature the benefit of allowing public access while minimising risk of accidents is considered to outweigh the minor degree of harm arising from the proposed change. The design and colour scheme of the proposed railings has evolved after extensive discussion with the Trusts and is considered sensitive to its setting.

Mrs Bateman’s Garden forms the frontispiece to the mansion house. The detailed research paper prepared by the applicants and included in their Heritage Statement demonstrates clearly that the layout of this part of the historic landscape has changed several times over the years and that the present layout introduced by the National Trust in the 1990, while reflecting the spirit of earlier designs, is an evolution and not a replication of any single earlier design. In the light of this evidence it is not considered the proposed works will cause harm to the significance of the RPG and that the proposed change will enable improved visitor circulation within the park.

In summary the Trusts have no objection to this application.

Yours faithfully

Alan Taylor - Chairman
SGPT

Cc: Historic England
Margie Hoffnung , Daniel Bowles, Alison Allighan TGT
Sarah Kay NT