



HERITAGE STATEMENT

Sir George Staunton Country Park

Visitor Reception Building

P12426

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Staunton Country Park is a listed Regency landscaped parkland and forest situated in Hampshire, England. It lies on the northern outskirts of Havant and is owned by Hampshire County Council. Within the Park can be found an ornamental lake, follies, maze, walled kitchen garden, glasshouses and a 'ferme ornee' or ornamental farm. Several buildings and structures located within the Park are included in Historic England's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

Situated in the south-east area of the Park and in the vicinity of the public car park is a former coach house and stables, accommodation which also incorporated a bothy and mushroom house. In 1992, this building was converted into the Park's visitor reception building which houses the farm's ticket office, shop and staff offices. The visitor reception building adjoins the Grade II Listed walled kitchen garden, which the visitor reception building partly encloses. Immediately to the south of the walled kitchen garden and visible from the visitor reception building is the Grade II Listed octagonal Gothic Library, which is the only surviving remnant of the original C18 Leigh Park House, the former residence of Sir George Staunton.

The visitor reception building suffers from dilapidated public toilets and decrepit external hand-washing facilities. To ensure that the visitor reception building maintains its important role in the operation of the Park, it is proposed to refurbish and rationalise the layouts of the toilets and relocate the external hand-washing facility to an external wall, sheltered by a new roof canopy.

As the listed boundary wall of the walled kitchen garden adjoins the visitor reception building's western elevation, the visitor reception building is deemed to be within the curtilage of a listed building or structure. In addition, as the visitor reception building and its proposed external alterations can be viewed simultaneously with the listed Gothic Library, the proposals constitute a change to the setting of a heritage asset. Consequently, a Listed Building Consent application for the proposed works is required and this Heritage Statement forms part of that application.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE

2.1 Background

Staunton Park is deemed to be of national importance, and is registered Grade II* on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, from which the following summary description is taken:

"A Regency landscaped garden, laid out in the 1820s and 1830s on the site of late C18 pleasure grounds and a walled garden, with a series of specialist gardens and follies by Sir George Staunton to accommodate his Chinese and botanical interests. The gardens are surrounded by a park of C18 origin, which was developed by Sir George in the early C19 and also incorporates late C19 alterations".

The Park contains some of the last remaining remnants of the ancient Forest of Bere containing diverse and valued habitats and species, and contains ten listed structures, including the walled kitchen garden and Gothic Library.

The walled kitchen garden, adjoining the visitor reception building and located in the south-east corner of the Park, is Grade II Listed and its Historic England Listing Entry Summary reads as follows:

"KITCHEN GARDEN: The roughly 60m x 60m brick-walled enclosure containing the kitchen garden, which has a serpentine 'crinkle-crackle' wall on its south side (walls listed grade II), stands in the South Gardens. A walled garden is shown on this site on an early C19 map of Leigh Park, although the present garden seems to have been built on the same site but to a different alignment, by Sir George Staunton by 1833 (Campbell 1988). It is quartered by paths and laid out to both fruit and vegetables and floral bedding and has a range of glass on the north wall which contains a vinery and hot houses; a former stove house has now gone but the octagonal Victoria Regina house with its heated pond to the south of a new stove house was restored in

1993. North of the garden are further C20 glasshouses, the remnants of pineapple and melon pits and the site of a cone house”.

Immediately to the south-east of the walled kitchen garden and visible from the visitor reception building is the Grade II Listed Gothic Library. The Historic England Listing Entry Summary reads as follows:

“PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS: Immediately south-east of the garden wall is the Gothick Library, a small, largely stuccoed octagon with crocketed pinnacles, built by the architect Lewis Vulliamy (1791-1871) in 1832 (listed grade II). It forms the only surviving part of an C18 house which stood on the south-west side of the Library. This was enlarged for William Garrett by John Kent of Southampton in 1802 and again by Sir George Staunton from 1819 before being demolished over a period of some years between 1863 and 1874 (Campbell 1988).....”

2.2 Context

Staunton Country Park (also known as Leigh Park) lies on the northern outskirts of Havant, on the west side of the B2149 Petersfield Road. The 90ha registered area comprises circa 19 ha of kitchen and nursery gardens, pleasure grounds and paddocks associated with farm buildings; circa 30 ha of woodland; and circa 41 ha of parkland.

The eastern third of the site lies on level ground, which falls in gentle undulations towards the north-west boundary with the wooded ridges of the Forest of Bere beyond forming the distant view. The housing estates of Leigh Park border the site to the south, south-west and south-east although on the south-east boundary they lie beyond Petersfield Road, the northern half of which (Durrants Road) is fringed by detached houses interspersed with tree belts.

Middle Park Way, built in the 1950s, cuts from west to east across the southern third of the site, separating the area known as the South Gardens from the North or Leigh Park Gardens. To the north-west and north, the woodland and grassland of the park merges into wooded farmland.

Both North and South Gardens are entered from Middle Park Way, with the entrance to the public car park in South Gardens situated some 80m west of its junction with Petersfield Road. Pedestrians enter a few metres further west, at a pair of gateways with brick piers and iron gates which stand facing on opposite sides of the road and from which a gravelled broad walk lead northwards towards the lake and pleasure grounds and southwards towards the visitor reception building, walled kitchen garden, Gothic Library and ornamental farm. The broad walk follows the route of the main drive to Sir George Staunton's residence, Leigh Park House, which stood adjacent to the south-east corner of the kitchen garden.

2.3 Historic Development of the Park

- The 18th Century

The early landscape of Staunton Park was associated with pasturing of stock in Havant Thicket and the Forest of Bere, which was in the ownership of the Bishop of Winchester.

A new lease in 1775 'reserved to the Bishop the right of all the growing timber, the right to cut and cart it, and the right of hunting, chasing and taking deer, in The Thicket, part of the Manor'. Since the people of Havant were also entitled to cut timber 'from the town wastes, which included The Thicket', this caused disputes with local people such as Joseph Franklin. The lease was surrendered in 1784, and a new lease granted to Richard Newland, who began selling off parts of the manor of Havant.

The Thomas Milne Plan dated 1791 (Fig 1) shows the holding, which is named Ley, in the ownership of Harrison Esq. The outline of the holding is shown, of rectangular shape, with the boundary marked by fencing and a line of trees. It appears to extend north as far as mid way along Middle Thicket Lane, well beyond the fork off from the Havant to Rowlands Castle main road, and on a similar level to Wakefords Copse. The position of the house, walled garden and coach house, stables and bothy on the west side of the road is marked, as are the farm buildings and cottages on the east side of the road. In 1792 Harrison sold the holding covering approximately 20 acres to Admiral John Frederick.

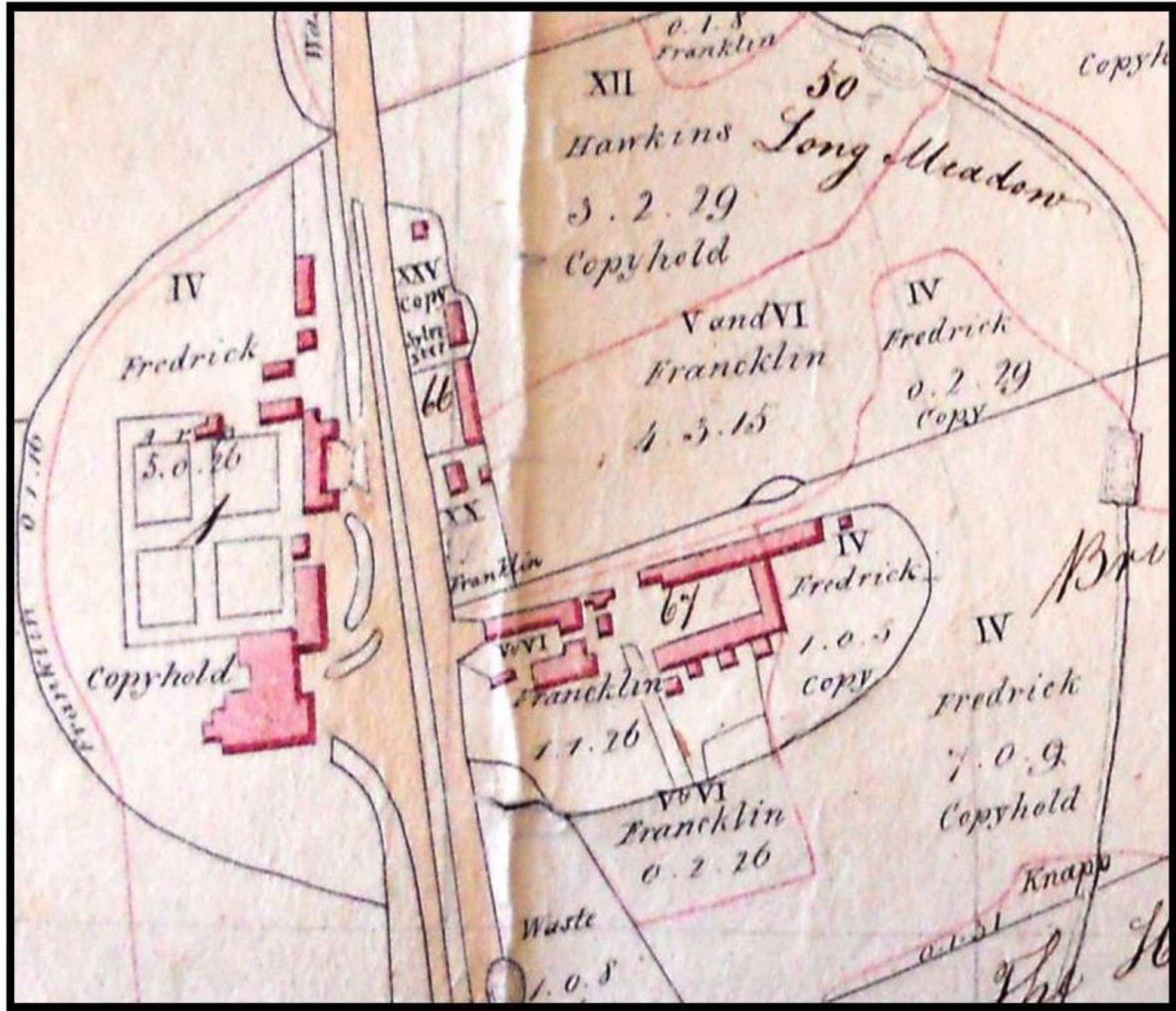


Fig 1. Map of Leigh Estate, 1792-1800, showing the Havant to Rowlands Castle main road running north-south, with the Walled Kitchen Garden, Coach House, Stables & Bothy and Leigh House to the west and to the east the complex of buildings comprising the 'Ferme Ornee', or ornamental farm.

- The 19th Century

In 1800 Frederick's widow, Ann, sold the house with nine acres of land to William Garrett, a man of local influence. In the same year Richard Newland conveyed the manor of Havant, with its rights, members and appurtenances to Garrett.

A contemporary description provides an account of the house and estate; 'The House at Leigh, previous to its occupation by Mr. Garrett, was very small, and the land attached to it quite

inconsiderable'. Around 1802 Garrett enlarged and almost rebuilt the house, using the Southampton architect, Kent, who had built other residences in the neighbourhood. At the same time, he acquired the 220 acres of land belonging to Franklin and with further land purchases of contiguous land, Garrett enlarged the estate into one of the largest in the district and enclosed a park of some 420 acres (170 ha). Garrett named the estate Leigh Park, built a small pond for the watering of cattle on the edge of Havant Thicket and laid out '*productive gardens.....shrubberies....and the whole of the lands [as] a perfect ferme ornee*' (Sale catalogue, 1819).

The estate was bought in 1820 by Sir George Staunton, a great authority on China and friend of the explorer and botanist, Sir Joseph Banks. Sir George greatly extended the house and developed and planted the gardens surrounding it, incorporating many new plant introductions from China. He also created new pleasure grounds to the north, which he embellished with an ornamental lake, follies and garden buildings.



Fig 2. Map of the Leigh Park Estate, based on the 1843 Tithe Map. Note the added Coach House on the north end of the range of Harrison's stable and Coach House block.

Following Staunton's death in 1861, the estate was bought by William Stone, who built a mansion overlooking the lake and over a period of fourteen years demolished Sir George's house, leaving only the octagonal Gothic Library. Some alterations were also made to the grounds, including the creation of the Upper Lake and a new entrance drive from the north.

The estate was sold in 1874 to Major General Sir Frederick Wellington Fitzwygram.

- The 20th Century

No significant changes occurred during the ownership of the Fitzwygrams, but by the 1930's the expense of upkeep and changes in social conditions made the running of the estate extremely onerous. The original range of glasshouses had mostly disappeared by this time and in 1936 Angela Fitzwygram sold 1,265 acres of land in West Leigh and Leigh Park to Portsmouth City Council. In 1940, the estate was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence and the Victorian mansion was taken over by the Royal Navy. Huts and structures were erected to service the naval occupation, and mines were tested in the lake.

The Fitzwygram family remained owners until the end of World War II. In 1944, Angela Fitzwygram sold the estate in its entirety to Portsmouth City Council. The council, together with a private consortium, bought the estate in order to build a major housing scheme on the land, the Leigh Park housing estates. John Studley, Director of Parks and Recreation, was responsible for the remaining estate, comprising the present gardens and parkland, which were designated as public open space. He gradually brought the pleasure grounds and walled kitchen gardens under the control of the council's parks department and began rectifying the years of damage and neglect. The walled garden became used as a display space for allotment gardening, demonstrating different horticultural techniques. However, by 1959, William Stone's mansion had become too expensive to maintain and it was demolished.

In the early 1950s, the South Gardens were separated from the North Pleasure Grounds by the construction of Middle Park way and the original east boundary wall of Storeys Gardens was demolished when the Petersfield Road was widened in the 1960s.

Considerable new planting was carried out during the 1960s and early 1970s and in 1978, most of the park was designated as a Conservation Area. In 1987, the present Staunton Country Park was established and control of the historic estate and surrounding lands passed to a joint Management Committee which represented eight partner bodies. Thereafter work began on repairs and restoration of the Estate.

2.4 Historic Development of the Coach House, Stables and Bothy

Approximately 50m to the north-east of the site of the original Sir George Staunton house is the former coach house, stables, bothy and mushroom house, now used as the Country Park's visitor reception building.

It was built by Samuel Harrison, sometime between 1783-1792 [see Fig 1. Map of Leigh Estate, 1792-1800] and was later used by both William Garrett and Sir George Staunton. Staunton added an additional coach house and tower onto the end of the earlier range of buildings, creating an almost enclosed courtyard, but this no longer survives [see Fig 2. Map of the Leigh Park Estate, c1843].

Following years of neglect, the building underwent significant transformation in the early 1990s, when it was restored and converted into its current function as a visitor reception building [see Figs 3 & 4. The Coach House, Stables and Bothy viewed from north-east]. The former coach house and stable became the reception and retail area, the bothy became offices and the former mushroom house and

ground floor store were converted into a secondary entrance, lobby and visitor toilets. Externally, these renovations significantly changed the south and east elevations, where modern brickwork and new windows and doors infilled former wall openings. Also, an external timber-framed staircase providing access to the store above the mushroom house was demolished.



Fig 3. The Coach House, Stables and Bothy viewed from north-east, prior to its conversion into the Visitor Reception Building in 1992 (photo 1981). Two storey Bothy and lean-to greenhouse shown in the foreground, with red doors beyond providing access to Coach House and Stables.

In the C21, further internal and external alterations were undertaken. In 2013, the store above the visitor toilets was converted into offices, with access provided by an external timber staircase. At the same time, the external door to the female visitor toilets was removed and a new wall constructed, so providing a sheltered recess in the external wall for an outside hand-washing facility.

Plan and elevation drawings from 1992, showing the layout of the building prior to its conversion into its current form, are shown in Appendix B.



Fig 4. The courtyard viewed from north-east, after its conversion into the Visitor Reception Building in 1992. Note the demolished timber-framed staircase has not been replaced, new entrance doors to reception and retail area and external door to visitor toilets on east elevation.



Fig 5. Current view of courtyard. Note installation of new external timber-framed staircase, circa 2013.



Fig 6. Current view of Visitor Reception Building from the south-east, showing building's south entrance (c 1992) and modern roof canopy (c 2013) and concrete ramp leading to wall opening on east elevation, where external hand-washing facility is situated (c 2013).



Fig 7. Current view of east elevation of the south-east wing of the Visitor Reception Building, showing modern concrete ramp, central wall opening with fanlight, hand-washing facilities in wall recess and modern repairs to brickwork. Note the segmental brick detail to the arched opening and the lesene brick details to the wall elevation.

3.0 Statement of Significance

- Visitor Reception Building

The visitor reception building was built in the late C17 as a coach house and stables for Leigh Park House and incorporated a bothy for the residential use of estate workers and a mushroom house.



Fig 8. Current view of Visitor Reception Building with courtyard, viewed from north-east. The two-storey former Bothy is to the right (now Park offices) with new entrance doors and brickwork infilling in the centre, where the Coach House and Stable doors were located. Visitor toilets with Park offices above (accessed via external timber staircase) are accommodated in the south-east wing to the left.

In summary, it is an L-shaped, two-storey building with a pitched roof and hipped gables. The walls are constructed from a mellow-coloured yellow stock brick, which was very popular towards the end of the C18 and the roof is finished in Welsh slate with cast-iron rainwater goods. All windows are timber framed, with openable windows being sash windows. Smaller window and door openings have head details of curved, segmental brick arches and larger door and wall openings having fanlights with round, segmental brick arched head details. First floor windows are wall gable windows with gable roofs. On the north elevation of the south-east wing, brick corbel details are below first floor windows and external door openings.

The east elevation of the south-east wing is the building's only symmetrical elevation, with a large central wall opening incorporating a fanlight and round, segmental brick arch head details, which match details to the other large wall openings. The north-east and south-east corners have recessed corner lesene brick details. The west elevation of the building, which forms part of the east wall of the walled kitchen garden, is constructed from red brick which matches the colour of brickwork to the remainder of the walled garden.

- Walled Kitchen Garden

Situated immediately to the west of the visitor reception building and north-west of the former mansion, Leigh Park House, a brick wall encloses a rectangular area of former kitchen garden. The garden wall, gate piers and grotto to the kitchen garden are early C19 and were listed Grade II in 1984. There are massive brick piers at the south corners and lesser piers to the gateways. The southern boundary comprises a lower crinkle-crankle serpentine wall, with a central gateway. The red brickwork is constructed in Flemish Garden Wall bond (some sections with blue headers), with brick capping to the walls and stone caps to the piers. The north-east corner has a brick-walled enclosure, which retains in its lower part the rustic hollow cement form of a grotto, now much reduced and without its former glazed cover.



Fig 9. The 'crinkle-crankle' serpentine wall forming the southern boundary to the Walled Kitchen Garden (photo 2019)

As the western elevation of the visitor reception building adjoins the boundary wall of the kitchen garden, the Visitor Reception Building is deemed to be within the curtilage of a listed building or structure.

- Gothic Library

The Gothic Library, Grade II Listed in 1984, is situated adjacent to the south-east corner of the walled kitchen garden and in the vicinity of the Visitor Reception Building. It was built in 1832 to designs by Lewis Vulliamy and is now the shell of a building originally attached by way of a corridor as a wing to Sir George Staunton's Regency mansion, Leigh Park House, since demolished.



Fig 10. The Gothic Library and corridor viewed from the south-east, with Leigh Park House to the left, c1832-36.

It is octagonal in shape and designed to the plan of a Gothic Chapter House. It has Stucco on the walls once exposed to view, with brick on the two remaining faces. The roof is pyramidal, with slate tiles. The angled wall junctions have crocketed pinnacles above stepped buttresses. Between the pinnacles, the roof parapets have a moulded canopy and a dripstone band, enclosing 6 diamond cusped panels (to four faces only); a hood-mould to the pointed 2-light window, which has tracery in its upper part and cusped ogees below a transom: a moulded (dripstone) base. 4 sides have windows of the full height, one with the doorway formed below the transom; the other windows have cills at transom level. At the 'rear' where the linking corridor was situated, two faces have brickwork, and

there is an octagonal buttress, rising above the parapet as a crenellated turret (which is the flue from the fireplace). Within the building, the roof frame is late C20 and the original stained-glass windows representing warrior ancestors of the Staunton family have been lost, but there are fragments of plasterwork with cusped quatrefoils. The fireplace is situated opposite the doorway. There are prints, which show the original appearance, with shelving up to the higher cill levels.

As the visitor reception building and its proposed external alterations are visible from the listed Gothic Library, the proposed external alterations to the visitor reception building constitute a change to the setting of a heritage asset.



Fig 11. Current view of the Gothic Library from the Visitor Reception Building south entrance, with walled garden to right.

The former coach house, stables and bothy, walled kitchen garden and Gothic Library sit wholly within a conservation area. (Refer to Appendix A)

Evidential Value

Evidential value derives from the physical remains that have been inherited from past activity on the site.

- Significant proportions of original brickwork are evident on the east elevation of the south-east wing of the visitor reception building.

- The original round, segmental brick arch head detail is evident to the central wall opening on the east elevation of the south-east wing of the visitor reception building.
- The central wall opening in the east elevation of the south-east wing, together with the north-east and south-east corners, have original lesene brick details.

Historical Value

The historical value of the former coach house, stables, bothy and mushroom house is based on its relationship to the rest of the Staunton Park site. It is one of the original buildings in the Park, constructed by Harrison in the 18th Century and as such, is of considerable local historical value.

Aesthetic Value

The east elevation of the south-east wing of the visitor reception building has high aesthetic value. It is the building's only symmetrical elevation and the traditional brickwork detailing has high aesthetic value and contributes greatly to the character of the building. The elevation comprises a significant proportion of its original fabric and is in good condition.

Communal Value

As a country park in the ownership of Hampshire County Council, Staunton Country Park plays a major role in the community of Havant and Hampshire. The Park has numerous attractions and hosts numerous events throughout the year and the facilities provided by the visitor reception are instrumental to its continued success.

Summary of significance

The former coach house, stables and bothy, together with the walled kitchen garden and Gothic Library, represent some of the earliest buildings on the estate still in existence. The values outlined above come together to form buildings of moderate local significance within the community.

4.0 Assessment of Impact

4.1 The Proposals to the Visitor Reception Building

The proposals are as indicated on drawings P12426-201, 211, 221, 301 & 302 and can be summarised as follows:

1. Removal of modern pedestrian concrete ramp, concrete landing and steel handrail which currently provides access to external hand-washing facilities located in the wall recess on the east elevation of the south-east wing.
2. Infilling of wall opening (1240mm wide x 2400mm high) in the centre of the east elevation of the south-east wing with facing brickwork to match the existing. Demolish modern timber stud wall between public toilets and external hand-washing facility. Re-locate external hand-washing facility from within wall recess to a new projecting wall panel in front of proposed masonry wall infilling. Panel faced with glazed wall tiles to match colour of brickwork as a durable wall finish for a hand-washing facility. This alteration will provide a larger footprint and more efficient layout for the public toilets which will improve their accessibility. The new location for the hand-washing facility will improve the amenity's visibility.
3. Removal of non-matching red brickwork on the east elevation of the south-east wing and replace with brickwork matching the existing.
4. Removal of 3 no. modern ventilation grilles on the north elevation of the south-east wing and infilling of same with brickwork matching the existing.
5. Removal of 1 no. modern ventilation grille on the south elevation of the south-east wing and infilling of same with brickwork matching the existing.
6. Installation of 1 no. ventilation grille on the north elevation of the south-east wing.
7. Installation of roof canopy on the east elevation of the south-east wing, above re-located external hand-washing facility. The new canopy is designed to be in keeping with the heritage of the building and will provide weather protection to users of the external hand-washing facility.

4.2 Statement of Impact

1. Removal of pedestrian concrete ramp, concrete landing and steel handrail:

The ramp is a modern addition to the building and is not part of its historic fabric. Its removal will be a benefit to the elevation.

This element of the works is considered to have a negligible heritage impact on the building and other heritage assets in its vicinity.

2. Infilling of wall opening to south elevation of south-east wing and relocation of external hand-washing facility:

In consequence of renovation work undertaken in 1992, modern brickwork matching the existing is evident on the south elevation where the former store doors were located and on the east elevation where the former coach house doors were located (see Figs 3, 6 & 8 & Appendix A). There is therefore precedence for external alterations to the building using modern brickwork matching the existing. The new brickwork panel will be recessed 100mm, so providing brick reveals to the surrounding brickwork. This will indicate that historically there was a wall opening in this location and so retain the visual character of the elevation. It will also be in keeping with other large door openings on the east elevation, which have fanlights and round, segmental brick arch head details. This elevation of the visitor reception building can be viewed simultaneously with the listed crinkle-crankle wall of the walled kitchen garden and the listed Gothic Library.

This element of the works is considered to have a low to moderate heritage impact on the building and other heritage assets in its vicinity.

3. Removal of non-matching red brickwork:

The non-matching brickwork is a modern wall repair and is not part of the historic fabric of the building. The proposed works will be a benefit to the elevation.

This element of the works is considered to have a negligible heritage impact on the building and other heritage assets in its vicinity.

4. Removal of 3 no. modern ventilation grilles on the north elevation of the south-east wing:

These are a modern addition to the building and are not part of the historic fabric of the building.

This element of the works is considered to have a negligible heritage impact on the building and other heritage assets in its vicinity.

5. Removal of 1 no. modern ventilation grille on the south elevation:

This is a modern addition to the building and is not part of the historic fabric of the building.

This element of the works is considered to have a negligible heritage impact on the building and other heritage assets in its vicinity.

6. Installation of 1 no. ventilation grille on the north elevation of the south-east wing:

This is a small ventilation grille (approx. 250 x 250mm) and will be coloured to match the surrounding brickwork. This elevation of the visitor reception building and the listed walled kitchen garden cannot be viewed from the same vantage point. Neither can this elevation of the visitor reception building and the listed Gothic Library be seen simultaneously from the same vantage point.

This element of the works is considered to have low heritage impact on the building and other heritage assets in its vicinity.

7. Installation of new roof canopy:

The proposed new canopy will have a traditional form and architectural detailing and be constructed from materials sympathetic to and in keeping with, the heritage of the building. The proposed canopy can be viewed simultaneously with the listed walled kitchen garden and the listed Gothic Library. The C21 glazed roof canopy above the south entrance doors gives precedence for the addition of roof canopies to the building.

This element of the works is considered to have moderate heritage impact on the building and other heritage assets in its vicinity.

4.3 Justification and Mitigation

The external alterations to the visitor reception building have been designed to sit sympathetically within their context, ensuring they do not detrimentally impact on the character of the building or the setting of the Grade II Listed walled kitchen garden and Gothic Library.

The alterations to the visitor reception building, noted in Section 3 above, are essential in ensuring its successful functioning in the future. Many customers are currently deterred by the dilapidated condition of the public toilets and external hand washing facilities and the proposed renovations will considerably improve visitor's experience when visiting the Country Park.

The visitor reception building provides a significant amenity within the Park and its retail and customer service functions are vital for the financial viability and continued sustainability of the Park as a whole.

5.0 Bibliography

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6.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Historic England Conservation Area Plan

Appendix B – City of Portsmouth, Architect’s Drawings (1992) showing the layout of the building prior to its conversion into its current form