



**Staunton Country Park - A Regency Landscape Revealed
Planning Supporting Statement**

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On behalf of:
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Above: Aerial photograph showing existing layout of the park and surrounding area.

1. Introduction

In January 2016, Hampshire County Council Countryside Services was awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for the project 'Staunton - A Regency Landscape Revealed.'

The overall project vision looks to see the Grade II* Registered landscape of Staunton Country Park restored to reflect its former glory and for it to be shared with the thousands of visitors who will understand the story of the unique Regency park. The hidden and underappreciated heritage of the park will be revealed through urgently needed landscape restoration works and conservation of the park's key buildings and historic features. Improved access combined with new interpretation and facilities will welcome visitors and users; encouraging them to explore, enjoy, understand and become involved with the park.

The project will connect local residents from the surrounding housing estate with their shared heritage of the Estate, placing the park at the centre of their community and providing a range of new activities and opportunities for them to become engaged and involved with Staunton, creating a park that will be as vibrant in the future as it was in the past.

This application relates to works that will conserve and repair existing historic buildings and landscape, improve visitor access and provide the essential facilities for the country park site to have a sustainable future as both a heritage visitor attraction and as a free entry public park.

This document supports the application for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the proposed works at Staunton Country Park. It sets down historical and contextual background information, identifies the need and brief and describes the design proposals in detail.

2. Background

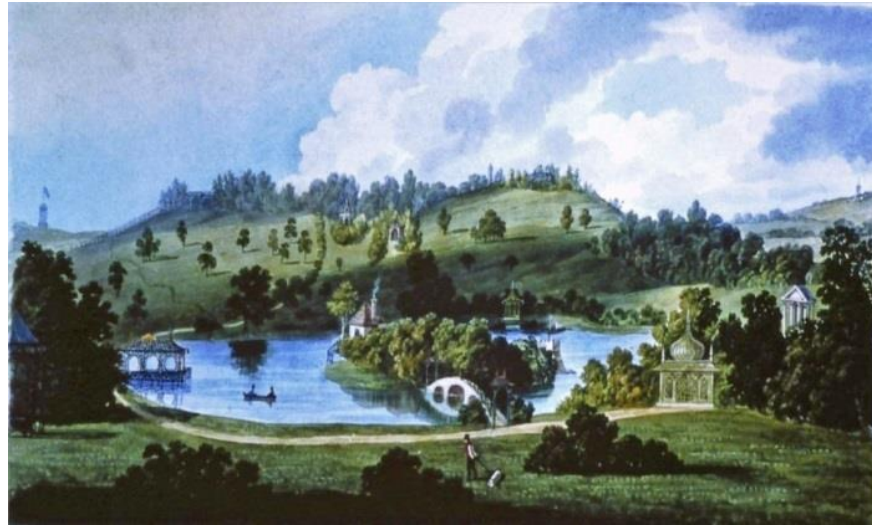
2.1 Site Description

Staunton Country Park covers 400 hectares of land and is divided in two by a road, Middle Park Way. It is a conservation area deemed to be of national importance, and is registered Grade II* in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Within the park there are ten listed structures (of Grade II and II*).

The area south of Middle Park Way is the paid farm attraction which includes an ornamental farm (Ferme Ornee), walled garden, glasshouses, Gothic Library and Regency farmhouse.

North of the road is the free to access parkland where the project will be focused. Much of the Regency heritage is found here, including the pleasure grounds, lake, follies and 100 hectare park (the project area occupies 67 hectares as outlined in red). It also contains the last remnants of the ancient Forest of Bere including diverse and valued habitats and species. An extensive network of paths meanders its way through the parkland and this was the venue for fashionable promenades of the Georgian period.

The park is located on the edge of Leigh Park housing estate, home to 27,000 residents. It is a wonderful resource for residents and for many a quiet oasis on their doorstep.



Left - Sir George Staunton. Right and below - Joseph Francis Gilbert paintings – Leigh Water aspects – c.1836



Left - photograph c.1870 of Stone's Leigh Park Mansion House.. Right - The terrace is the only remaining part of the mansion.

2.2 Historical Context

In 1819 the Estate was purchased by Sir George Staunton, with whom it has become chiefly associated. He added to the land and began the process of designing the Pleasure Grounds, remodelling the landscape on a grand scale. He renovated and extended the house, adding the Gothic Library to accommodate the many books and Chinese manuscripts collected on his travels.

The structure of the landscape is in the tradition of 18th century natural landscapes overlaid with a picturesque approach, which reflects the new aesthetic concepts which emerged in the early 19th century. Of particularly high quality is the lake and its adjoining landscape. The lake has retained its character of water, tree belts, woodland and undulating grassland, with the beauty of the grouping of its remarkable natural and man-made features unchanged. Over time, most of the follies have been lost, and only the Chinese Bridge, the Shell House, the Beacon, and the Island Fort survive today. Present proposals for the restoration of these will add significantly to the quality of the landscape, and raise it to a higher level.

Following the death of Sir George Staunton in 1859 the estate was purchased by William Stone. He demolished Staunton's Georgian mansion and built a new Gothic style mansion overlooking the lake, which in turn was demolished in 1959. However the terrace remains and occupies the most stunning location in the Pleasure Grounds. The handsome Victorian coach house also remains intact, and is a lasting reminder of the Stone period.

Stone sold the estate to Sir Frederick Fitzwygram in 1875. Fitzwygram's high standards ensured that the estate was very well maintained. Following Sir Frederick's death in 1904 the Estate remained within the Fitzwygram family until it was purchased by Portsmouth City Council in 1944. Prior to this the Estate had been requisitioned by the Admiralty Mines Department (1940 to 44). By this time most of the original range of glasshouses had disappeared and large tracts of estate land had already been sold to Portsmouth City Council for development (West Leigh and Leigh Park (1936)). By the 1950's the South Gardens were separated from the North Pleasure Grounds by the construction of Middle Park Way.

In 1987 Sir George Staunton Country Park was officially opened to the public. The Park was managed as a partnership between Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Havant Borough Council, Portsmouth Water Company and East Hampshire District Council. During this time a series of restoration projects were undertaken. These included the Terrace (1988); footpaths and gates (1990); the Coach House and some of the glasshouses (1992); Tea Rooms and the Regency Farmhouse (1994); and the Gothic Library roof (1995). In 2003 Portsmouth City Council withdrew from the partnership arrangement selling its freehold interest to Hampshire County Council. A grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2001 enabled the restoration of the South Gardens and the Ferme Ornee. The area of the park north of Middle Park Way was not included, and this is now the subject of the current application.

2.3 Landscape Relevance

Staunton Country Park, also known as Leigh Park, is a rare example of a Regency ornamental landscape. The Park is recorded in a series of watercolours by Joseph Francis Gilbert depicted in its heyday. Some of these paintings are included within this document for reference.

Sir George Staunton employed no professional landscape designers but his garden reflects his own interests and expertise. It is therefore the expression of one man, a gifted amateur. The park is a rare example of an early 19th Century landscape, with the structure of a traditional 18th Century natural landscape combined with the picturesque introduction of small specialist gardens and follies. It is this fusion of styles which guarantees Staunton Park its position of national importance.



Above - overview plan of proposals. Below - precedent images for restored aspects of Staunton Park.



3. Design Proposals

Staunton Country Park was once at the core of Sir George Staunton's Regency Estate, one of the country's most important 19th Century designed landscapes. Today it is becoming lost to time, nature and human influence, with few visitors aware of its significance and history. Left as it is, the heritage aspects of the landscape will deteriorate further with limited opportunities for people to explore and appreciate it. Investment in the park's heritage and improvements to the core facilities will save it from this gradual decline, ensuring it can be enjoyed and understood for the future.

As part of the Heritage Lottery Funded Project, HCC Countryside Services developed a brief for a series of capital works. These works will implement a range of urgently needed conservation works to the landscape, the follies and buildings to conserve and enhance the historic fabric and to bring about a radical improvement to the visitor experience.

An overarching aim is to implement the measures identified in the Conservation Plan within which specific recommendations are detailed. For the purposes of this planning statement the key principles of the brief and proposed design solutions can be summarised as follows (sections 3.1 to 3.11):

3.1 Conservation of Regency Landscape Design

Need: The Regency design is no longer visible as the parkland is overgrown, original planting features are lost, invasive species are present and large trees block views which were intended as an integral part of the Regency period design. It is vital that we conserve the built and natural landscape now, to ensure the remaining historic features are not lost and with it the heart of the parkland.

Brief: Following the completion of a full survey of all trees and other vegetation within the development area, assess what pruning and clearance work is required to enable the reinstatement of principle aspects of the Regency landscape design. This should include the reinstatement of key view corridors and planting features in line with the original design. Prepare an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and ensure that proposals improve rather than detract from the character of the park.

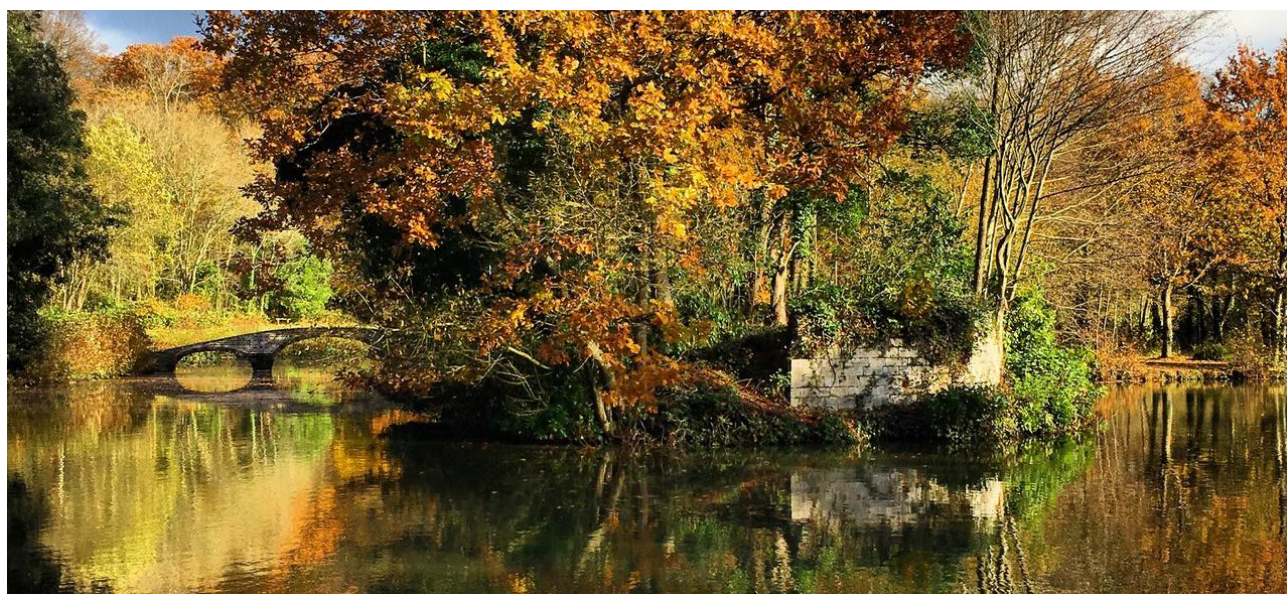
Design Response: Detailed landscape proposals have been developed showing entrances, paths, drainage, vegetation clearance, views and concept designs all following the planting and design principals of the Regency period in accordance with the Conservation Plan. The accompanying Landscape Report document explains in detail the aims and ambitions for each area within the park. The application drawings illustrate what will be achieved by this project, delivered by contractors, the horticulture team and volunteers from the local community. Longer term ambitions, beyond the scope of the project, have been identified within the Conservation Plan to provide a framework for future development in the Park.



Left - Gilbert's pairing of the Beacon 1832. Centre and Right - current condition and context of the Beacon



Left - Gilbert's pairing of the Shell house 1832. Centre - current condition. Right - artists impression of the reinstated crown roof



Above - 2016 condition of the Chinese Bridge and Island Fort . Below - Gilbert's paintings depicting their original appearance.



3.2 Conservation of the Follies

Need: At the height of its Regency glory there were 19 follies within Staunton's grounds. They were an integral part of the landscape and characteristic of the period. Most of the original follies have now gone. The remaining follies including the Beacon, the Shell House, the Island Fort and the Chinese Bridge are in various states of disrepair and they all lack some of their original features which hampers interpretation. Some have lost their original landscape settings and are difficult to access. Others are structurally unsound and not safe for public access until urgent repairs are made. The absence of conservation work now would allow further deterioration and loss of the historic fabric.

Brief: Following the completion of condition surveys and historical research, complete restoration works to the follies and historic structures within the park. Reinstall the missing features based upon research and visual records from the time in line with the recommendations provided by Historic England.

Design Response: The proposed works will ensure that these fascinating structures can be preserved and restored to their former glory for the park visitors to enjoy. The condition of each folly has been assessed and the history and design researched to identify what work is required and to ensure this is carried out appropriately.

The Beacon (Grade II) 1830:

Specialist repairs will be undertaken to corroded ironwork within the cupola and unsuitable modern concrete finishes will be replaced with stone in line with the original design. Handrails and a flag pole complete with a Union flag will be reinstated using the visual records of these lost elements.

The Shell House (Grade II) 1828:*

The exterior walls of the Shell House are largely intact with only localised repairs necessary to the structure and the decorative finishes. The original crown roof and parapet detailing is missing and has been replaced by a modern low profile asphalt roof. A new interpretation of the original crown roof will be provided to restore the character of the original folly which was originally visible across the landscape by virtue of the height of the crown roof. The missing interior decorative shell finishes will be reinstated using the imprints in remaining plasterwork as a guide to the patterns that were part of the original design. These newly added elements combined with new interpretation material will allow visitors to understand the richly decorated nature of this unique structure.

The Island Fort 1833:

Until recently, the fort was largely hidden by overgrown vegetation which was cleared as part of the investigation works by the project team. Extensive restoration work will be completed to the Purbeck stone walls and a flag pole complete with a Chinese Imperial flag will be reinstated using the written and visual records as a guide to the appearance of this lost feature.

The Chinese Bridge (Grade II) 1833:

The masonry structure of bridge is largely intact with only localised repairs necessary to the mortar and the path surfacing. The original balustrades and ornamental gateways are missing and this takes away from the intended character of the bridge. A new interpretation of these features will be provided using carved green oak based upon the historic written and visual records and in line with recommendations from Historic England.

Structural repairs are required to conserve the existing follies and buildings and these have been developed through careful investigation of the existing construction and ground conditions.

The story of the follies, both lost and still present, will be told in a Folly Walk incorporating play and exploration allowing people of all ages to discover this particularly British phenomenon.



Left - existing paths in poor condition. Right - HCC conservation team uncovering the Shell house Path for survey December 2016.



Above - Storey Gardens used as overflow parking (Easter 2017). Below - Ambition for restoration as a walled garden and orchard.



3.3 Conservation of Path Network

Need: Walking or promenading in order to experience a landscape had particular significance in Regency parks and gardens. Regrettably, the path network at Staunton, is in a poor state of repair. Many paths have been lost or are overgrown and damaged, including the Grade II Listed Shell House path. This restricts accessibility and limits the visitor experience.

Brief: Reinststate the lost paths that were present in Staunton's time and undertake repairs to the surfacing of the existing paths including specialist repairs to the Shell House Path. Introduce additional paths to improve accessibility around the park for all including those with a range of impairments.

Design Response: Where practical, the original Staunton paths will be restored and the original walks reintroduced. The extensive ground remodelling undertaken at the time when Stone's mansion was constructed, effectively buried areas of Staunton's original path layout and mature trees now inhabit the areas of raised ground. The reinstatement of original ground levels and was considered undesirable and of too great impact to the park with loss of trees etc. As a result the layout of the proposed new paths is a compromise to reflect the spirit of Staunton's design working with the current conditions rather than against them. The existing paths at Staunton Country Park have been constructed of a 'Hoggin' type self binding gravel and it is proposed to continue with the same construction for new and resurfaced paths using materials from a local quarry.

The Grade II listed Shell House Path has been carefully uncovered and the remaining construction surveyed. Due to the proximity of established trees and the overlay of Stone's landscape a full restoration would be impractical. Instead the exposed section of the path will be restored and interpretation will be provided to define the original extent of this feature.

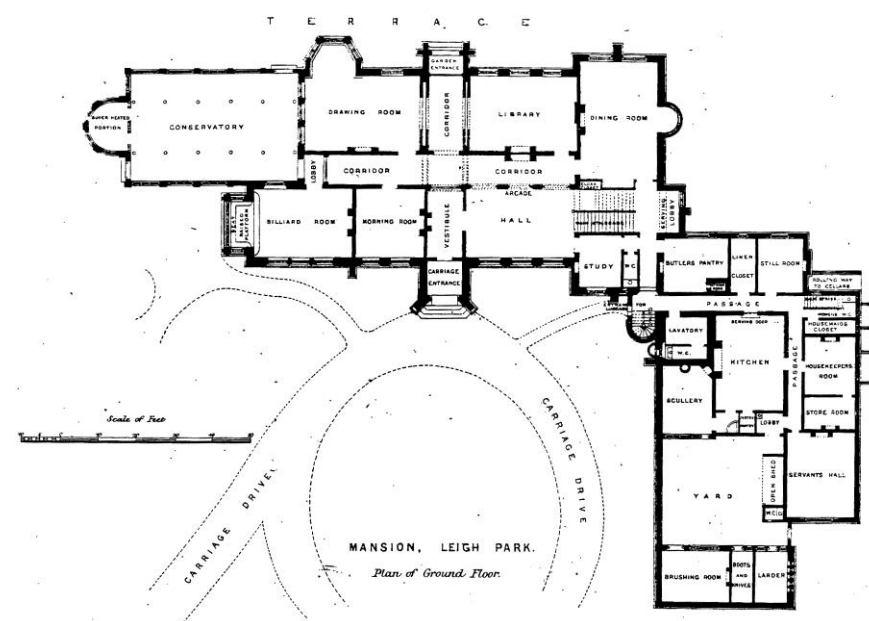
The paths will be supported by a range of interpretative activity, so that today's visitors can understand first hand how Staunton wanted people to explore his grounds.

3.4 Restoration of Storey Gardens

Need: The historic walled Storey Garden is currently being used as a temporary overflow car park and until recently as a paddock for livestock. This is not maximising its potential or effectively communicating the history of the walled garden to visitors.

Brief: Clear out the car parking and restrict livestock use within the walled garden. Utilise the community and volunteer groups to reinststate the historic use of this space as a kitchen garden and orchard. Improve access for visitors and create a good working environment for volunteers.

Design Response: The walled Storey Gardens will be developed to become the focal point for volunteers and students as they return it to growing fruit, vegetables and flowering plants which will be available for sale to members of the public at the new visitor hub. An orchard with traditional fruit varieties will be planted by the local community and the garden area will be accessible so the general public can view the working of the garden as per it's historic function. The growing areas will be established over time by volunteers and local students and it is envisaged that poly tunnels will be constructed to replace the loss of this facility on the Beacon nursery site which is to become the new car park.



Above - Original plan of Stone's Mansion



Above - Stable Block. Below - Victorian Coach House



3.5 Restoration of The Terrace

Need: The Grade II listed Terrace is all that remains of the William Stone's mansion and it commands wonderful views across the parkland. However due to its isolation and the lack of interpretation, it is not fully appreciated and it is at risk of further deterioration.

Brief: Use landscaping and creative interpretation to recreate the layout of the former mansion and undertake conservation repairs to the remaining terrace and steps.

Design Response: The terrace and steps have been the subject of previous restoration projects and the majority of the historic structure is in good condition. The conservation focus of this current proposal is to remove the modern concrete steps which are in poor condition and replace these with stone steps to reinstate the original materials in a sympathetic manner. Consultation has shown a great deal of interest in this part of the site and in response to the public's desire, the layout of the ground floor of Stone's mansion is to be delimited with stone. This is to be overlaid with interpretation to bring the history of this part of the site alive. In addition, consultation demonstrated a desire for more play in the park and the proposed tree house adjacent to the house outline will allow the newly revealed layout to be viewed from above, whilst also marking the approximate location of the 'Lookout' folly and adding a play feature.

3.6 Improved Visitor Facilities

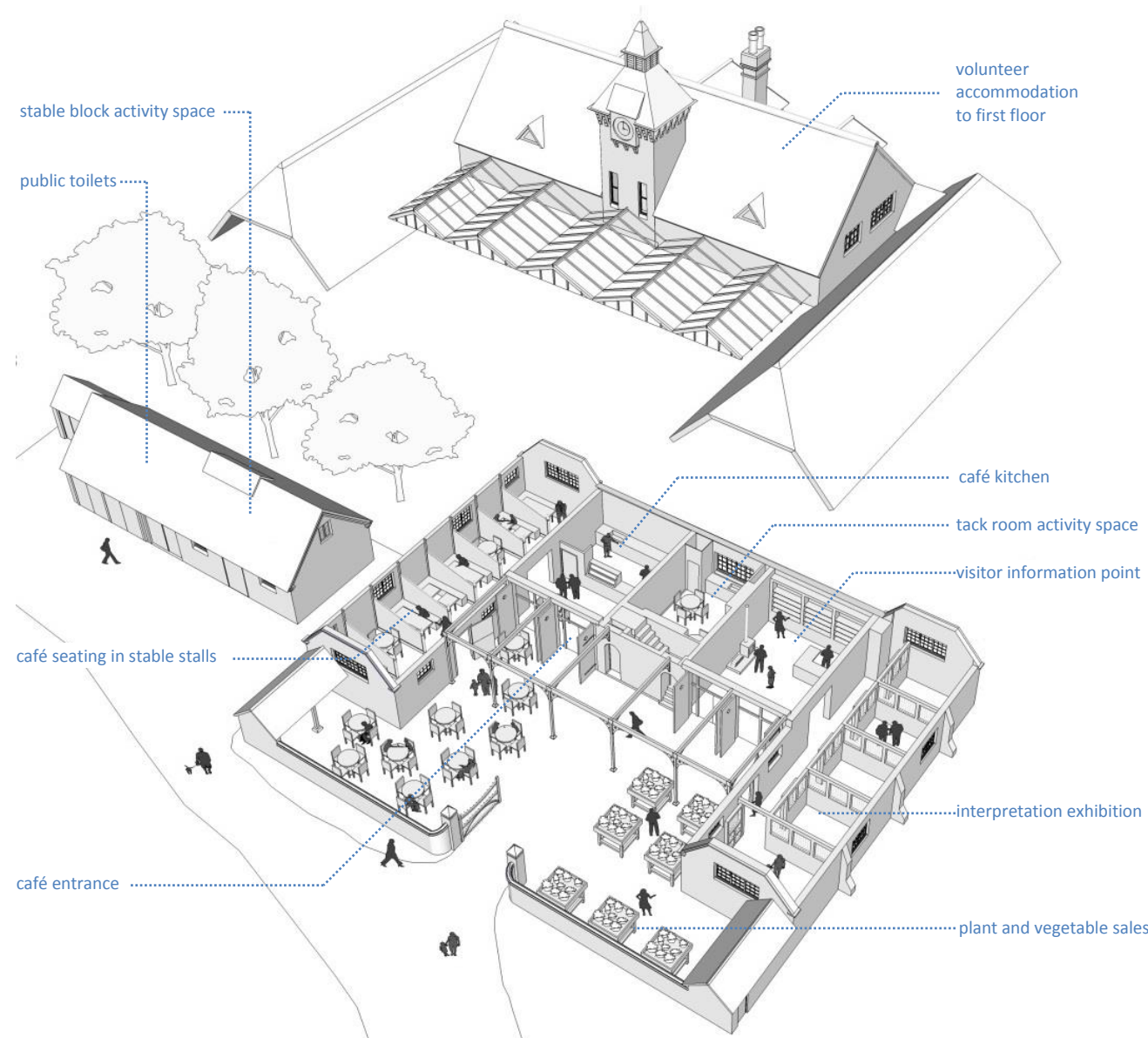
Need: Visitors have provided feedback criticising the lack of facilities in the parkland. The absence of café and toilet facilities is a major drawback which puts some people off visiting and shortens the desired visit time of others.

Brief: Develop a new visitor centre hub within the park complete with café, public toilets, visitor information point, activity spaces and ancillary accommodation. Utilise existing historic buildings to give these purpose and to ensure long term future maintenance.

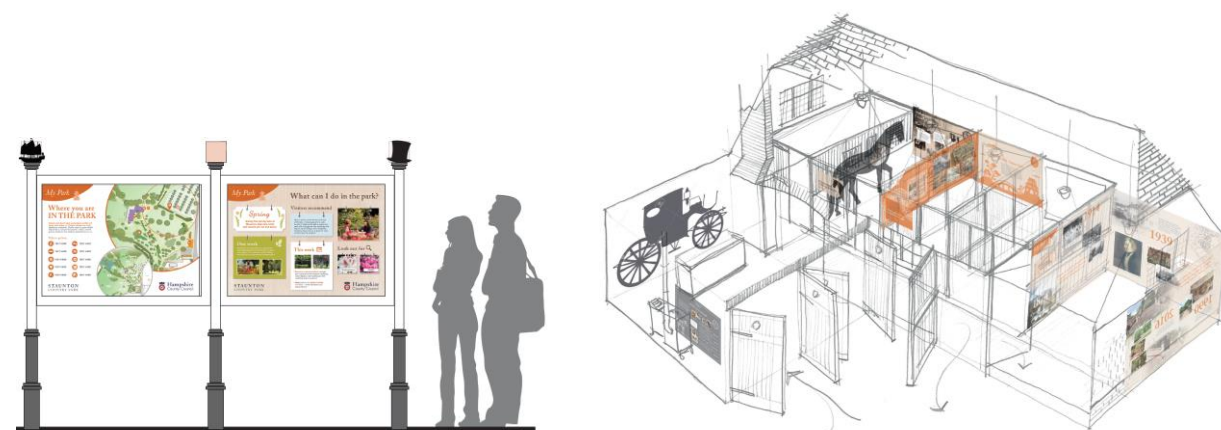
Design Response: Further to an options appraisal regarding the feasibility of reusing each of the existing buildings on the site and the alternative of constructing of a new facility, it was established that The Victorian Coach House and the adjacent Stable Block should be restored and transformed to become the park's visitor centre.

The Stable Block (c.1874), is much in need of conservation repair to the roof and some of the walls as overhanging trees and dereliction have led to a decline in condition. The Southern half of the building was previously used as an open plan office and this will be refurbished for use as activity room for community use. The Northern half will be fully converted into much needed public toilets with a new timber clad external wall replacing the existing modern gates and timber clad wall which is in poor condition.

The Victorian Coach House (Grade II), built for William Stone circa 1874 is a handsome brick building complete with many of its original internal fixtures, including the horse stalls, saddle racks, and clock mechanism, all of which will be retained and conserved. External alterations will be minimal, apart from conservation repair works, the only significant change will be the addition of glazed facades with weather tight and power assisted doors inside of the line of the existing carriage house doors which are to be retained. This will allow light to enter the building whilst maintaining thermal comfort and it will allow barrier free entry for all visitors.



Above - Cut-away view of proposed visitor centre hub. Below - concept design of interpretation hubs (left) and exhibition wing (right)



Manned by staff and volunteers, the information point will provide a hub where visitors can learn about the history of the park and find out about the range of activities and opportunities. This will encourage visitors to explore the whole park particularly those who previously would have only visited the farm. A new wood burning stove utilising the existing flue from the adjacent tack room fireplace (now disused) will provide warmth and welcome for visitors and it will be fuelled with sustainable seasoned wood grown within the park. The history of the building and the story of Sir George Staunton's estate will be told through interpretation in the loose box wing.

The central tack room will become an activity space for community use.

The North carriage house and adjacent stable wing will provide an atmospheric setting for the proposed new café. Visitors will enter via the Northern carriage house where the new café kitchen and servery counter will be located. Purpose built seating is proposed within the stalls to the North stable wing utilising the existing historic fabric and layout of the building.

Further café seating and a plant and vegetable sales area will be located in the external courtyard which benefits from an existing glazed canopy allowing some refuge in poor weather conditions.

The first floor accommodation which was a dwelling prior to becoming derelict some years ago is in need of conservation to refresh the finishes, kitchen and bathroom ready for reuse. The upstairs spaces will be set aside as office space and welfare facilities for the new park volunteers.

A full schedule of repairs to be undertaken to the building has been drawn up to address the effects of leaking roofs, blocked valley gutters, dampness and overflowing surface water drains. Internally the building will be redecorated throughout and where repairs are required they will be undertaken on a like for like basis.

To improve accessibility and circulation within the Grade II listed Coach House, minor internal alterations are proposed. In each instance careful consideration has been taken to minimise harm to the historical significance of the building whilst still achieving the aims set out within the brief. The impact of all proposed alterations has been assessed within the heritage statement accompanying this application. All new insertions and alterations are designed to be sympathetic to the historic setting whilst still being clearly identifiable as modern insertions.

3.7 New Interpretation

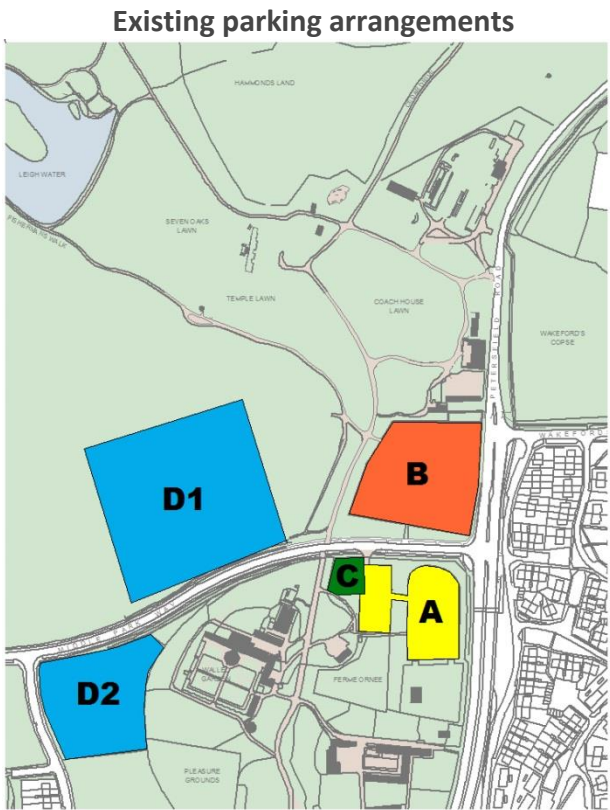
Need: Poor interpretation throughout the parkland means visitors are unaware of the importance of the landscape, its history, biodiversity and unique features. This also discourages exploration and can lead to difficulties in wayfinding and orientation.

Brief: Provide new interpretation and signage that is imaginative, engaging, multifaceted and accessible to all. Themes relating to the park's history as well as its biodiversity are to be delivered across the parkland and the farm as a coherent story for visitors.

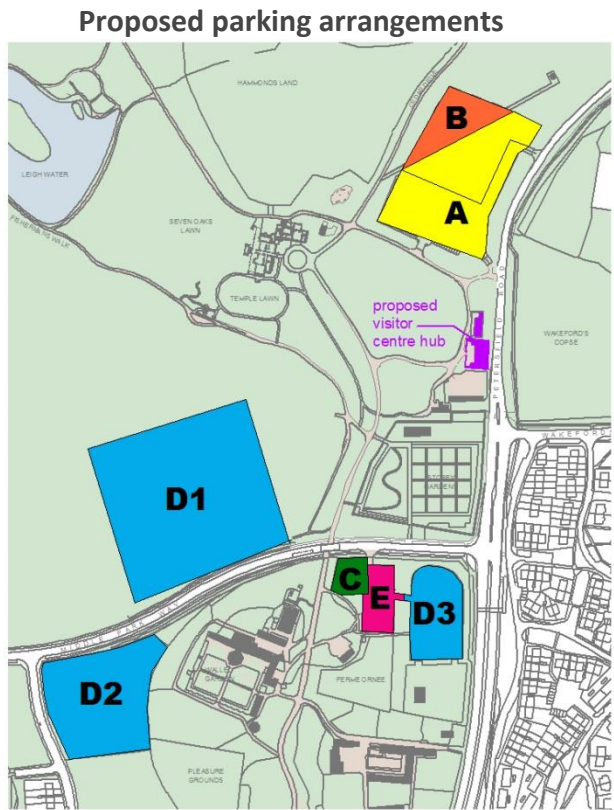
Design Response: Orientation hubs in strategic locations where visitors enter the park will provide a range of information and introduce interpretation themes which will be used throughout the park to tell its story and reveal its history. Directional signage and markers for landscape features will be supplemented with new visitor guides both in paper and digital formats. The interpretation exhibition within the stabling area in the Victorian Coach House will offer an engaging walk-through experience where visitors can see the history of Staunton and the park all under one roof.



Left: Existing visitor car park regularly full causing congestion. Right - 2017 photograph of Beacon Nursery site with abandoned waste and scrub.



A	Main visitors' car park South of Middle Park Way (including accessible bays in brackets)	200 (3)
B	Overflow car park in Storey Gardens	200
C	Coach Park South of Middle Park Way	5
D1	High Lawn - special event overflow parking	400
D2	American Grounds - special event overflow parking	200
Total formal car parking spaces (A+B)		400
Total including special event overflow car parking spaces		1000



A	Main visitors' car park on former Beacon nursery site (including accessible bays in brackets)	383 (10)
B	Overflow car park on Beacon Lawn	113
C	Coach Park South of Middle Park Way	5
D1	High Lawn - special event overflow parking	400
D2	American Grounds - special event overflow parking	200
D3	Special event overflow car park South of Middle Park Way	150
E	Staff/volunteer parking South of Middle Park Way Accessible parking bays (for Farm visitors)	47 3
Total formal car parking spaces (A+B+E)		546
Total including special event overflow car parking spaces		1296

3.8 Expansion of Car Parking

Need: The existing visitor car park to the south of Middle Park Way no longer meets the capacity requirement and the overflow car park in Storey Gardens is regularly used at busy times. Other grassed areas of open land within the park are occasionally used as additional car parking for special events but these are not suitable for regular use. The improved facilities that will be delivered by this project are expected to result in a marked increase in park visitor numbers. Therefore, it is recognised that additional parking will be essential in order to meet this increased need and to avoid antisocial parking behaviours outside of the site boundary which might otherwise occur.

Brief: Construct a new car park to serve both the park and the farm attraction ensuring there will be sufficient parking on peak days.

Design Response: A series of options has been considered and the optimum solution of constructing a new purpose built main car park for visitors is proposed as part of this development. The determining factors arriving at this solution include the following:

Why not expand the existing main visitor car park? There is no room to expand the existing car park without adversely affecting the ornamental farm setting of the listed country park. This car park only caters for about 40-50% of the required peak capacity even before growth in visitor numbers is factored in.

Why not formalise the use of Storey Gardens as a second zone of permanent parking? The existing overflow facility in Storey Gardens only benefits from a time limited planning permission and this is not considered to be suitable as a long term parking solution. This is a prime area within the country park and the temporary parking arrangement is compromising the ability to use this part of the site for grazing, horticulture or part of the heritage visitor attraction. This proposal seeks to restore this walled garden to its former historic horticultural use in line with the principle restoration and conservation goals detailed in the conservation plan (see section 3.4).

Why is the former Beacon Nursery site the best location for a new car park? The Beacon Nursery site is currently out of bounds to visitors and a large part of this site is in a poor state with unsightly dumped materials remaining from former uses. The supported volunteers of the Beacon Community Partnership have set up gardens around the West and North parts of this site but the facilities are very limited and this arrangement is not optimal for those working the land. It is proposed that the Beacon Community Partnership and other community groups will establish new nursery gardens, orchards and vegetable patches within Storey Gardens and which is adjacent to the proposed volunteer accommodation in the Sawmills and Stable Cottage.

This area is large enough for multiple parking zones to be set up ranging from permanent year round parking through to seasonal peak demand overflow spaces. Entrance to all of these zones can be gained from the same highway access which improves on the current situation with multiple entrances and uncertainty for drivers.

The new car park will bring visitors into the heart of the Country Park with immediate access to the proposed new visitor centre, public toilets and interpretation material.

What about the increased walking distance to the ornamental farm? The new car park will be approximately 10 minutes walk from the Ornamental Farm and the route through a variety of attractive landscaped grounds will connect with the visitor centre, interpretation installations, volunteer plant sales and children's play prompts. It is intended that this walk will be a positive part of the visitor experience allowing people to discover the range of activities and interesting places on offer. Whilst visitors will have to walk further to the farm, the free attraction of the improved country park will be less remote from the visitor parking. The option of introducing a horse and cart or similar vehicle as a historically resonant method of linking the farm to the car park is being considered for peak times.

What will happen to the existing car park? The existing car park will be retained for use by visitors with accessibility needs, coach parties, staff and volunteers.



Above - supported volunteer work. Below - volunteer grown produce for sale at Staunton



3.9 Enhanced Volunteer Accommodation

Need: There is a well established presence of volunteer and community groups that are integral to the successful operation of the park. However, the accommodation used by these groups to date is not ideally suited to their needs and as part of the HLF funded project, there is a planned expansion of volunteer numbers which will exceed the capacity of the existing accommodation.

Brief: Reorganise and refurbish the existing buildings on site to provide fit for purpose accommodation for the various volunteer and community groups conveniently co-located with the new visitor centre hub and the reinstated Storey Gardens. Remove the temporary demountable accommodation from Beacon Nursery site to facilitate the proposed development.

Design Response: Further to an options appraisal exercise, it was agreed that the best location for the supported volunteer accommodation would be within the Sawmills building which was formerly used by park rangers as office, workshop and welfare space. This building is perfectly located between the Coach House, which will include some general volunteer accommodation (see 3.6) and Stable Cottage, which is the other accommodation used by the supported volunteers. It is also close by to Storey Gardens which will be a key venue for the users' activities and it has an existing highway access which is of use for volunteers typically arriving in taxis and mini-busses. The existing layout of the building will be maintained and it will have internal refurbishment and conservation repairs to provide updated accommodation for the supported volunteers.

3.10 Materials

Use of materials in conservation works will be restricted to traditional materials including stone, lime mortar, green oak and ironwork. The works will be undertaken by conservation specialists using traditional techniques. New insertions and interpretation features will use high quality materials and will be clearly identifiable as modern additions. The crown roof on top of the Shell House is proposed to be constructed from glass reinforced concrete and the flag poles to the Island Fort and the Beacon will be of fibreglass or aluminium construction depending on design development. Landscaping hard surfaced materials are a mixture of stone, brick pavior and hoggan paving with limited quantities of asphalt macadam in the highest use areas of the proposed visitors car park. Boundary treatment will feature timber fences, stock fencing, estate railings and hedgerow planting to maintain the intended character of the park setting.

3.11 Design Proposals Summary

Throughout the design process the significant historical setting of the park has been the overriding consideration. As part of this project a Conservation Plan has been written, with a series of guiding principles and policies and the proposals outlined in the application have been designed in line with these policies. The condition surveys, which are appendixes to the Conservation Plan, include schedules of recommended repairs which will all be undertaken as part of this project.

4. Accessibility

One of the key project goals has been to improve accessibility within the park and the project team has benefited from continued guidance from Hampshire County Council's Access Officer through the design process. A site workshop was held in October 2016 with The Gosport and Fareham Access Group to examine the detail of the proposed works on the ground and in the buildings. The feedback from this workshop went on to inform the development of the proposals which are now submitted for planning approval. A detailed access appraisal has been completed and this is included within Appendix A. It is intended that all recommendations made in the access appraisal will be implemented as part of this project

5. Highways

The proposed development includes an improved pedestrian crossing on Middle Park Way and the construction of a new visitor car park on Petersfield Road.

The highway improvements in the location of the existing road crossing on Middle Park Way are proposed to improve safety and convenience for visitors. The measures, which are detailed in the Transport Statement, will make it quicker, easier and safer to cross the road which will be of significant benefit to families with young children.

Car parking proposals are described in section 3.8 above and the proposed works also include the provision of cycle parking stands in key locations and improvements to the pedestrian connections with surrounding footpaths to encourage visitors to make sustainable transport choices.

A detailed technical appraisal of the highways matters relating to these works is included within the Transport Assessment document submitted with this planning application.

6. Environmental Protection and Sustainability

The park features a wonderfully diverse range of ecological habitats and the environment is home to many difference plants and animals including several protected species. The presence of bats has long been known to the site team and a comprehensive ecological consultation was commissioned at the start of this project to ensure that the ecology within the park will be protected and enhanced where possible. Evidence of bats, badgers, and several species of reptiles has been identified by the survey team and there is a good understanding of the measures that are necessary to ensure the development is properly undertaken with due regard to the wildlife that inhabits this site. The Ecology Survey Report submitted with this application explains in detail the range of surveys that have been undertaken to assess the site and the mitigation that is proposed along with details of ongoing plans for further survey works.

Green waste management, which is currently ad-hoc and in remote locations around the site, will be consolidated and improved in Storey Gardens. Reorganising this waste management to one location will lead to an increase in composting and recycling of green waste for reuse in the park.

Drainage works have been designed to offer a sustainable approach taking advantage of the historic drainage ditches which are maintained to this day. Refer to the Flood Risk Assessment - Drainage Strategy document for full details.

The mechanical and electrical services have been designed to meet the future needs of the site without detracting from the valued heritage or burdening the site with high maintenance or running costs. New lighting will utilise LED based technology with smart controls where appropriate and new heating appliances will be A rated gas fired boilers to replace the current inefficient electric based heating systems. Insulation will be provided to the Stable Block to reduce the energy used by this building.

7. Community Safety and Security

The park will be well signed and already has a regular public presence of staff, volunteers and members of the community which combines to help create a safe space for all to enjoy.

Vandalism occurs occasionally and this risk has been a factor in developing the proposed works. In particular, the selection of materials and the height of vulnerable features have been influenced by this consideration. The team intends to fully engage all groups within the local community with events, activities, collective construction and planting and other activities which will all help to establish pride and engender a sense of shared ownership of 'their park'.

Existing buildings that are to become the visitors hub already benefit from inherent security features such as solid stable doors and additional protection offered through grilles to the windows. Locks to windows, doors and outbuildings etc. will be improved to enhance security and the provision of CCTV and time controlled lighting will be considered as part of the fit-out.

Site safety and security will be continue to be managed by the country park team which already has community safety and security procedures in place that are implemented by staff based on site daily. The park is accessible by foot and bicycle 24 hours a day, whilst access for vehicles within the park is limited to staff only. The proposed car park will have controlled hours of operation and will close at night to prevent misuse.

8. Consultations

A broad ranging series of consultation exercises have been held to engage many stakeholders and statutory consultees. The consultations undertaken can be summarised as follows:

Stakeholders:

- A series of stakeholder workshops was held in the summer of 2016 with local interest groups and local schools to test the brief for the project.
- Regular meetings and engagement with the team of Country Park Staff and Volunteers has informed the development of design proposals.
- Formal public consultation events were held in November 2016 on site and at a local community centre to share work in progress design proposals for the project. These were attended by members of the project team to address questions from the public in person and comments were also invited and received in writing. On the whole, the comments received were positive with much excitement about the investment in the park and by connection the local area. Some members of the public queried the relocation of the car park and the case for making this strategic relocation was presented. Please refer to section 3.8 which expands upon the queries raised regarding this matter. Other feedback gained at these events has helped to inform developments in the proposals such as the enhancement to the marking out of Stone's mansion, improvements to the play offer, the provision of storage for local groups and organisational matters relating to the food and drink offer within the proposed café.

Heritage:

- A site meeting was held in November 2016 with Historic England to review the proposed works. They were supportive of the proposals and the feedback from this meeting was very valuable in helping the team to develop an appropriate response to the interpretative reinstatement of missing elements of the follies.
- A site meeting was held in November 2016 with Havant Borough Council's Conservation Officer and Landscape Officer, both of whom are in support of the planned works to the historic landscape, follies and buildings.
- Hampshire County Council's County Archaeologist has been consulted regarding the proposals. There is a good level of familiarity with archaeology on this site through previous investigations organised by Hampshire County Council including the excavation of slit trenches across parts of the footprint of Stone's mansion.

Access:

- Ongoing consultations with Hampshire County Council's Access Officer and a site workshop with The Gosport and Fareham Access Group have informed the development of the proposed design (refer section 4 above).

Statutory:

- Pre-app consultation meetings have been held in 2016 and 2017 with Hampshire County Council Planning Officers to ensure that works will be in line with relevant policies.
- Meetings have been held with a Hampshire County Council Highway Development Control Officer in 2016 and 2017 to review the proposals for the car park and improvements to the pedestrian crossing on Middle Park Way.
- A review of the proposals including the planned works to the Victorian Coach House has been held with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services to ensure compliance and fire safety.

In summary, the proposed works draw on visitor feedback, consultation with key stakeholders in workshops, observation of visitor behaviour, as well as the experience and ideas drawn from visiting similar heritage attractions. Consultation will continue through the formation of a Community Forum early in the delivery phase of the project and this engagement will be an ongoing feature of the operation of the park. .

9. Impact on Historic Fabric

A full impact assessment and mitigation strategy is contained within the heritage statement accompanying this submission. None of the alterations have been identified as having high impact on the significance of the heritage.

A Conservation Plan has been written for the site that will inform all current and future proposals for the care and development of the landscape (and structures within) to minimise harm either to the fabric or it's character. A set of policies has been written that will be adopted by all relevant parties and act as a basis for decision-making for the future.

Full topographical, measured building, and condition surveys of the development site and all structures within it have been undertaken by conservation specialists to establish a complete understanding of the context and potential impact of the works.



Staunton Country Park - Access Appraisal

Inclusive design places people at the heart of the design process and acknowledges human diversity and difference. It offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate everyone's needs and provides for flexibility in use. Above all inclusive design is about the provision of buildings and environments that are safe, convenient, equitable and enjoyable to use by everyone, regardless of their age, ability or gender.

When we are designing a building, who are we designing it for? Are we designing it for the Client – the person or organisation who has instructed us or is paying the bill? Or are we ultimately designing it for the end user, the people using the building? As designers are we actually designing for people as we really are? When designing there are 5 anchor points that we should always refer back to, and we should be asking ourselves how the building work does for people who have: a lack of sight; a lack of hearing; a lack of power/dexterity; a lack of comprehension and; a lack of mobility, and if we consider all of these people and do all we can to meet the needs of all these people then we truly have designed an accessible building.

Property: Staunton Country Park
Project Architect: Tom Hetherington
Access Officer: Shona Forsyth
Date issued: 10.02.17

Project description: Staunton Country Park is situated in the Borough of Havant, just north of Portsmouth and to the east of the A3.

The Country Park is bounded by residential housing, private farmland, forestry commission land, the B2149 and Middle Park Way.

The Country Park generally consists of an ancient woodland, a landscape parkland, a lake, a series of heritage buildings and structures, a visitors farm, a series of connecting walkways / footpaths, a playground, a series of gardens for growing plants and food and car parking facilities. This appraisal deals with the accessibility for disabled people to the existing country park and provides a proposal to increase the accessibility for disabled visitors to the area of the country park which will include new refreshment facilities, toilets, interpretation and improved access routes. An access workshop was held in November 2017 with members of the Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum which involved looking around the existing historic buildings and landscape. The feedback gathered during this exercise has been used to develop the project proposals and it informs the commentary below.

Legal position: The Equality Act 2010 brings together, harmonises and in some respects extends the current equality law. It aims to make it more consistent, clearer and easier to follow in order to make society fairer. The Equality Act replaces the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA). The changes include new provisions on direct discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, harassment and indirect discrimination. The Equalities Act 2010 and the duties of the owner and service provider will take into account of factors such as the nature of the site, its historic status, and what is 'reasonable' in terms of a fixed budget.

The Building Regulations (2010) Approved Documents M (2013) & K (2013) are the minimum standards of construction that should be achieved in terms of accessibility as part of this project, BS8300: Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, offers some alternative and higher standard design solutions which may also be referred to.

	Item	Existing Situation	Recommendation
1	Approach, vehicular & pedestrian access	Visitors travelling by vehicle approach from middle park way. There are a number of brown 'attractions' signs that lead visitor by car from the A3 and B2149. The railway station is approximately 1.2 miles away. There are bus links that drop people off on the B2149 and on Middle park way.	Improve and renew signage so it is clear that there are two separate sites and where the new car park is located. Publicise new parking arrangements.
2	Parking & drop-off facilities	The main car park is located on the opposite side of the main road by Staunton farm. There are 3 accessible parking spaces available on a tarmac area within a loose grave car park. There is a considerable distance to travel, including the main road to cross, in order to get to the country park. Visitors could be dropped off at the entrance gates to the country park or at an off the B2149	As part of the new proposals the car park is to be relocated from the farm site to the country park site. Accessible bays and coach drop off will remain on the farm site and accessible bays will be provided in the new car park located as close as practical to the new visitor centre. The surface of the accessible bays will be tarmac and will have dropped kerbs leading to a level pedestrian route that leads you to the entrance of the park. The pedestrian route between the two sites will be resurfaced, levelled and widened. The main road will be narrowed to a single lane with a raised platform so that visitors have a shorter route across the road to travel. There will be blister tactile paving to alert visually impaired and blind people that they approaching a road crossing. The raised platform will create an easier level route for wheelchair users and pushchairs. There will be speed bumps to slow vehicles when approaching this area from this either side.
	Pedestrian access within site	Access routes once within the site are generally loose gravel, which is potholed, uneven and overgrown. Path widths throughout the site vary from 600mm to 1800mm.	Existing paths are to be enhanced by levelling and resurfacing with self binding gravel. New paths will also be created and increase accessibility to areas of the site that are difficult for disabled people to negotiate. Clear guidance on the levels of difficulty for the trails around the park will be essential both in the physical guidance provided and by word of mouth from the visitors centre staff/volunteers.

3	Coach House	<p>The pedestrian approach to the coach house is through a large gate which has a raised brick threshold. This presents as a trip hazard for any person walking and a barrier to wheelchair users. The gate leads into a walled courtyard with a glazed canopy that extends across the front of the building with supporting pillars.</p> <p>The coach house is split into 5 areas with 2 carriage houses, 2 stable wings and a tack room. All these areas are accessed directly off the courtyard. This building is currently occupied by the beacon community partnership, who use it for refreshments, meetings and storage.</p>	<p>Within the new proposals the coach house will accommodate the new visitor centre, café, exhibition space and volunteer accommodation. Tables and chairs will be available to visitors to rest/eat within the courtyard area. The raised brick threshold will be removed or the levels adjusted so there is level access into the courtyard.</p> <p>The beacon community partnership will relocated to new rented accommodation in stable cottage and the proposed newly refurbished saw mills.</p>
3.1	Carriage Houses	<p>These 2 areas are identical and are mirrored either side of the tack room.</p> <p>Both have 2 sets of very large doors that would have originally accommodated the horse drawn coaches.</p> <p>There are no windows and a paved brick floor which is uneven and worn in places. The internal space is dark.</p>	<p>The carriage house adjacent to the open stalls stable is to be renovated into the café area. The floor is to be lifted and repaired to create a more even surface.</p> <p>Lighting levels will be improved with curtain walling to the front elevation. The two sets of double doors will remain but be held open to reveal the curtain walling. Manifestation to the glazing should be considered. The entrance door should give a clear opening of 1000mm through a single leaf or should be powered open. If doors are not powered then they should have an opening force of 20 Newtons or less. The door and door surround should be made obvious so the door opening can easily be seen when open or closed. Loose seating and tables will provided in this area.</p> <p>Consider the furniture used, self service counter height, till/pay point and the provision of an induction loop. Ensure that some chairs have arm rests.</p> <p>The second carriage house will be renovated into the visitor centre and will have the same detail of curtain walling and front entrance door as the renovated café area. The new reception desk should have a section for wheelchair users/seated users no higher than 760mm with a 700mm high knee recess and a fitted induction loop. All staff and volunteers working in this area should be trained to use and test/check the induction loop.</p>

			<p>The provision of seating would be beneficial to people who are unable to stand for long periods of time.</p> <p>Consider information provided in the visitor centre and café (menus and blackboards. Leaflets in large print etc..)</p>
3.2	Stables	<p>There are 2 stables on either end of the building. One has open stalls and the other has closed stalls. There is an open drain channel which would restrict wheelchair users from accessing areas within the stalls.</p>	<p>Within the new proposals the stable block with open stalls will provide a seating area with a new opening from the proposed café/server area. The open drain channel will be filled in with profiled hardwood to provide level access. Fixed seating will be provided within six of the stalls, with two stalls that have loose furniture and greater space for wheelchair users and pushchairs.</p> <p>The closed stalls will become the interpretation and activity wing. An opening will be formed so that there is direct access from the visitor centre. The open drain channel will also be filled in and the stall doors held open to create 4 interpretation areas and an activity space. As these spaces are quite small consideration will apply to layouts in these areas to ensure that wheelchair users and push chairs can easily manoeuvre within the space.</p>
3.3	Tack room	<p>The entrance to the tack room has a small step with a narrow door. It is not possible to widen this door without altering the historic relevance of the building. There is a narrow lobby that has a small WC and an entrance door with raised threshold to the track room.</p>	<p>Where small level changes cannot be overcome, it is important to highlight them to prevent visitors from tripping. Door thresholds should be removed if possible. It is proposed that this area will be used as an activity room. This space will not be accessible for those who use a wheelchair however there are two other areas that will be proposed as activity spaces. Ensure that there is a procedure in place that addresses any access requirements when a member of the public books onto an activity.</p>
3.4	1st Floor	<p>This was previously a private residential let and is currently unoccupied.</p> <p>The entrance has 4 steps with no handrail. There is flight of stairs with a handrail on one side leading to the first floor.</p>	<p>It is proposed that this first floor area will be redecorated and be used as office and storage space for volunteer and office staff. Ensure that there are other areas available on the ground floor for volunteers or members of staff who cannot manage stairs.</p>
3.5	Toilets	<p>There is one toilet located off the lobby area to the tack room. This is</p>	<p>The accessible portaloos should be removed and an accessible toilet should be included in the</p>

		very small and has poor visual contrast. There is an accessible portaloo style toilet located outside the courtyard which has been clad with wood. This has level access. Visual contrast is poor.	proposed new toilet block. See 4.0
4	Stable block	This is currently used as an office and work shop and has no public access.	It is proposed that this building will accommodate the main toilet area and will be refurbished to meet current standards including an accessible WC. This building will also have a community room. The ground outside will be reworked to provide level access into all areas of this building.
5	Saw mills	This is currently used as office and workshop space. This building has one undersized accessible toilet.	This area is to be redecorated with a new kitchen and a larger accessible toilet that meets current standards. This area will be not open to the general public and will largely be occupied by the beacon community group.
6	Visual contrast	There is minimal visual contrast throughout the existing buildings.	Ensure there is good visual contrast throughout the café areas, visitor centre, saw mills and toilet areas.
7	Shell house	The shell house is located off one of the main pedestrian routes leading to the lake. The path adjacent to the shell house has a listed cobble decorative feature which is uneven and could be difficult for some people to walk on. There is an alternative path, however this quite narrow and overgrown. The path leading to the shell house is down two steps. There is no level access to this area.	The surface and width of the alternative path is to be improved. Disabled visitors can still view the decorative feature. A ramped path to the shell house is to be created the existing steps improved.
8	Beacon	There is no formal footpath to the beacon. There is a steep slope leading onto the field where the beacon is located. This field is currently used for grazing. This has caused the ground to become uneven and lumpy and would be very difficult for wheelchair users and those with ambulant disabilities to negotiate. The beacon has a narrow set of nine steps with no handrail.	It is proposed that the field that the beacon is located in will remain as grazed land. Therefore any new path will need to be fairly robust. It is proposed that an alternative route is provided that avoids the steep slope. It is proposed that the alternative path is to be accessed from the car park. Consideration on how the gate can easily be managed by wheelchair users whilst keeping any grazed animal contained. The beacon itself cannot be made accessible for wheelchair users but it can be viewed from ground level with the addition of a circular path surrounding the beacon. The surfaces of the

			steps are to be improved and a handrail fixed either side.
9	Terrace	There is circular path that surrounds the coach house lawn that has two routes leading to the terrace. One route stops short on the area where the house once occupied. This is a grassed area with uneven ground. The other route leads directly to the terrace but it is longer route. The terrace itself has a railing along its length which acts as guarding as there is a significant drop. There are two flights of stone steps that lead onto the lawn. These are in need of repair and have no handrail. There is a second flight of steps located near to the main pedestrian route which also has no handrail. There is limited access to this area for wheelchair users or those who cannot manage steps without having to return the main access route.	Within the new proposals the paths to this area are much improved. The area named temple lawn is to be reinstated creating another route to the lawn and links to the shell house reducing walking distances greatly. The stone steps that lead from the terrace are to be repaired. The addition of handrails should be considered.
10	Chinese bridge	The Chinese bridge is fairly narrow with no barrier protection either side. There is a brick upstand either side which is overgrown with weeds.	The surface of the bridge is to be improved and a new balustrade will provide a barrier protection either side.
11	Interpretation and signage	There is very little signage around the site currently. Most of signage is arrows on low level wooden bollards indicating local walks. There is some interpretation around the park but is faded and difficult to read.	Under the new proposals there will be new directional signage. Ensure that any directional signage can be easily seen in a clear font. Interpretation graphic panels are to be placed in areas of interest. Much of the interpretation will be focused in the visitor centre. Graphic panels should be non fussy with easy to read font. When redesigning the interpretation and displays consider how people with sensory and learning disabilities will access the exhibits. Interpretation should be provided in a variety of formats, to meet the needs of as many visitors as possible. Scale models of the follies should be considered and tactile maps. Consider adding subtitles or BSL, to any DVDs that may be shown. Guided tours for people who are blind or visually impaired should be offered.