

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL – PLANNING SERVICES

Environment & Heritage Team – Response to consultation by County Planning

ARCHAEOLOGY comments

To: - planning.applications@westsussex.gov.uk

FAO: - James Neave, County Planning

DATE: 10th February, 2020

Consultation date: 27th January 2020

REF.: WSCC/004/20

LOCATION: Evergreen Farm West Hoathly Road East Grinstead RH19 4NE

PROPOSAL: Restoration of the former Standen Landfill site with a woodland and pasture landfill cap system

RECOMMENDATIONS: No objection on heritage grounds, subject to mitigation measures (Registered Park/ Garden) which must include the removal of any new scheme-related road signage and traffic controls within and immediately adjoining the Standen Grade II Registered Park/ Garden, where and when made redundant by completion of the landfill cap operations; and reinstatement of the ground where they stood.

SUMMARY:

- To the south and south-west of the site are two designated heritage assets, the Standen House Grade I Listed Building and the Standen Grade II Registered Park/ Garden of Special Historic Interest.
- The westernmost 25 metres of the site egress onto West Hoathly Road lies within the Registered Park and coincides with part of the approach driveway to Standen House.
- By virtue of its distance from Evergreen Farm, intervening woodland and topography, the setting of Standen House should not be affected by scheme-related impacts (visual, noise).
- Any new scheme-related road signage or traffic controls within this section of the site egress would have impacts upon the setting of the Registered Park and Garden, but those impacts would be slight (in terms of scale and footprint).
- These impacts, and noise impact from lorry movements, are anticipated to constitute less than substantial harm to or loss of significance of the Registered Park/ Garden, by virtue of being small-scale and temporary, limited to the lifetime of the cap restoration works.
- The site also lies within a former Historic Parkscape, a non-designated heritage asset comprising land once parkland in the mid-19th century, surrounding Beechcroft House.

- The impact of the scheme upon the former Historic Parkscape will involve less than substantial harm or loss to its significance. Almost nothing of the parkland's original form now survives; much of the former parkland and any buried archaeological remains of former parkland features, have been buried below existing landfill and will not be affected by new earth moving.
- Overall, the scheme is expected to involve less than substantial harm to or loss of significance of known heritage assets.
- Mitigation measures (Registered Park/ Garden) must include the removal of any new road signage and traffic controls within and immediately adjoining the Registered Park/ Garden, where and when made redundant by completion of the landfill cap operations, and reinstatement of the ground where they stood.

COMMENTS:

The following comments address archaeological and built heritage considerations. The West Sussex Historic Environment Record (WSHER) database has been consulted (internal searches, 28/1/2020, 6/2/2020).

Heritage assets: built and historic landscape: designated heritage assets

The historic Arts and Crafts house named Standen House or simply Standen (Listed Building, Grade I), a designated heritage asset of the highest significance, is located 500 metres to the south of the application site. It was built in 1892-4, designed by the country house architect Philip Webb.

The house lies within a park or garden, also known as Standen, listed in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (Grade II) and also a designated heritage asset.

A small part (150 sqm approx.) of the Registered Park/ Garden falls within the red line boundary of the application site. This is a 25-metre length of the approach road to Standen, from its junction with West Hoathly Road, the public highway, on the north, to its junction with the branching access road to Evergreen Farm, to the south.

The Standen House approach road had originally been a lane leading to the farmhouse pre-dating and adjoining the house. Along with other features, the approach road was consciously incorporated by Webb into the designed landscape of the house to enhance its rural character, becoming the main drive to Standen (source: National Heritage List for England, List no. 1001695).

Heritage assets: built and historic landscape: non-designated heritage assets

Much of the application area lies within a "Historic Parkscape", a non-designated heritage asset denoting land that was at one time parkland to a house of major or minor gentry (source: West Sussex Historic Environment Record, Monument no. MWS150, parkscape at Beachcroft Towse [Beechcroft House]). Some Historic Parkscapes had been formally landscaped, others not at all, and may or may not still be used as parkland or preserve original parkland features.

In this case, the parkland belonged in the mid-19th century to "Frampost" (also known as "Framepost"), a house on a site now occupied by Beechcroft House (formerly known as Beachcroft Towse). The parkland, apparently not formally landscaped and comprising grassland with occasional trees, mostly remnants of former field hedgerows, was first shown on the 1872-4 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping. Much of the former parkland now underlies the present landfill site.

Just east of the parkland in 1963 (OS mapping) was the western half of a wood, now also below the landfilled area. In 1840 (East Grinstead Tithe Map) a chain of four ponds within the wood made up the headwaters of a stream which flowed north-eastwards in a shallow valley to join the River Medway.

Three of the ponds still existed in the early 1870s (1st edition OS mapping), but by c. 1900 (2nd edition OS mapping) there was only one large pond, made out of the northernmost two ponds, within the edge of the woodland. This pond, possibly originally ornamental or a fish pond, still existed in 1963 (OS mapping).

The former Victorian parkland of Beechcroft House is no longer used as parkland, and retains no known distinctive parkland features. Archaeological remains of former parkland features may survive below ground.

Heritage assets: assessment of scheme impact

Standen House (Grade I Listed Building)

The proposals would not involve any direct impact upon the Grade I listed Standen House. The potential impact of the proposals upon the setting of the Grade I house has been assessed in the supporting Planning & Transport Statement (para. 2.20), which states reasonably (confirmed by site visits by West Sussex County Council's Principal Planner): "The house and 12-acre garden are separated by fields and woodland that prevents any visual sight lines between the house"; and "The separation distance between the two sites is such that the operation will not affect the setting of the Listed Building".

In terms of noise impact upon the setting of the Listed Building and its setting, the supporting Noise Impact Assessment states, in relation to sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the site, including Standen House (3.2.1): "Standen House lies approximately 430 m to the south. Given the nature of the proposed works and the substantial distance between these receptors and the site, adverse noise effects arising from the works are anticipated to be negligible and, as such, have been scoped out of this assessment".

Standen Registered Park/ Garden of Special Historic Interest (Grade II)

Possible direct impacts of the proposals upon the Grade II Registered Park/ Garden and its setting are expected to be confined to emplacement and any new necessary signage and traffic control arrangements along the 25-metre section of the Standen main drive located within the Park/ Garden, coinciding with part of the proposed lorry egress.

There would be an indirect visual impact upon the setting of the Grade II Registered Park/ Garden from any new signage at the site egress, extending approximately 60 metres southwards from the Evergreen Farm access along the Standen approach driveway. Much of the approach driveway to the south-east of the Evergreen Farm access is a sunken lane, with trees on either side. The light within this part of the lane is dappled or dim, so that signage would not be likely to stand out at any distance.

From the site sections, aerial photography and views taken from the western part of the main access to Standen, lorry traffic along the concrete track to the site egress should be screened by existing trees, hedges and topography.

Provided that the signage and traffic control arrangements are temporary, in place only during the life of the site restoration and removed on its completion, their emplacement and impact would not constitute substantial harm to or loss of significance of the Registered Park/ Garden or to its setting (refer NPPF para. 194 (b)).

The supporting Noise Assessment contour plan does not extend as far as the end of the site's intended lorry egress within the Registered Park/ Garden. Some new and expectedly more frequent noise impact upon the setting of this part of the Registered Park/ Garden must be expected from lorry traffic, over and above that of the existing vehicular traffic visiting Standen House.

Given that such a new noise impact would also be temporary, in place only during the life of the site restoration, this impact also would not constitute substantial harm to or loss of significance of the Registered Park/ Garden.

Beachcroft Towse (Beechcroft House) Historic Parkscape (non-designated heritage asset)

The ponds of 1840 within the Historic Parkscape are now buried beneath an estimated (from 1963 and more recent OS contours) 6+ metres depth of landfill, at the foot of the slope of the present landfilled area.

Landfill operations are understood to have continued on the site until 1993 (from 1991 aerial photography showing the unvegetated landfill and from 1993 notes of the dates of planning officers' site monitoring visits).

Ground investigation indicates that all that part of the Historic Parkscape within the planning application red line (except for access routes) lies below existing landfill deposits. Any once visible or below-ground former Historic Parkscape or other (presently unknown) archaeological remains lie below the landfill, and will not be affected by the surface-level earth moving proposed as part of this planning application.

Summary and Conclusions: scheme impacts (archaeological/ built/ historic landscape heritage)

- The proposals would have no direct or indirect (visual & noise) impacts upon the Grade I listed Standen House, a designated heritage asset of the highest significance, or its setting.
- It is expected that the scheme may have a temporary direct impact upon the north-westernmost part of the Grade II Standen Registered Park/ Garden of Special Historic Interest, a designated heritage asset, confined to temporary road signage and traffic controls for the lorry egress during the lifetime of the site restoration.
- The scheme would also have temporary indirect visual/ noise impacts upon this part of the Park/ Garden, with the same reservations and duration.
- All that part of the former parkland of the Beachcroft Towse (Beechcroft House) Victorian Historic Parkscape non-designated heritage asset, situated within the application area, is presently buried below existing landfill; the proposals will have no direct or indirect impact upon it.
- In view of the changed nature of the former Historic Parkscape outside the red line area (no remaining known distinctive Victorian parkland features), the proposals should have no significant impact upon the setting of the remnant of the former Parkscape not covered by landfill.

In conclusion, the proposals are not expected to involve any permanent adverse impact upon designated or non-designated heritage assets.

A temporary (during the lifetime of the restoration) adverse impact upon the setting of the Standen Grade II Registered Park/ Garden is expected from the noise of lorry movements at the site egress.

Mitigation measures

It will be important to ensure that:

- the visual impacts of any new road signage and traffic controls at the site egress, and within and inside the visual envelope of the Registered Park/ Garden are kept to a minimum by avoiding new installation not necessary for the purposes of road safety;
- all new road signage and traffic controls in this location, where and when left redundant at the end of the lifetime of the landfill cap operations, are removed at that time and the ground reinstated.

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