

WALDING ASSOCIATES LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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30th July 2008

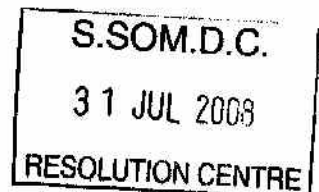
Our Ref: 272/007/SW

Andrew Gunn
Planning Team Leader
South Somerset District Council
Brympton Way
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 2HT

Dear Mr Gunn

Cricket St Thomas, London Lodge Farm Holiday Lodges Proposal
Planning Application No ~~272/007/SW~~
Garden History Society Consultation Response and Objection

Rebuttal on behalf of the Applicants: Cricket St Thomas Estate



I refer to the consultation response letter from the Garden History Society in which they comment on and indicate grounds for objection to the above proposal and would respond as follows.

The Garden History Society consultation response stated that the proposals would cause considerable harm to the historic landscape and would adversely visually impact on the Grade II* historic landscape. However, although they are critical of the Warner Leisure developments by Cricket House suggesting that they severely compromise the landscape they note that much of the design and landscape can still be appreciated, particularly along the drive towards the house and from the house towards London Lodge.

As indicated on Waling Associates Drawing No. 272.04: Historic Map Regression and accompanying Landscape Considerations Document, the decline in the character of the north east area of the park has been a particular characteristic through much of the 20th century. This is very much an issue of loss of parkland trees and development of less appropriate new shelterbelt plantings which have diminished the parkland composition. By comparison the parkland surrounding Cricket House, although suffering a reduction in the number of parkland trees, still maintains a strong parkland tree presence, together with modifications and extensions to existing copses and shelterbelts which are in keeping with the character of the park.

Thus, although it is correct to suggest that much of landscape can still be appreciated along the London Drive both approaching and departing from Cricket House, it would be wrong to suggest that the design of the upper park leading to the London Lodge is clear and appreciable since loss and change have substantially diminished this area. What remains is the landform, together with the declining skyline beech shelterbelt along Windwhistle Ridge, a few distinctive parkland trees in critical locations and the enclosing woodlands of Burs Lears Copse and Rookery Plantation.

The proposals which accompany the development of the holiday lodges specifically address this diminution in character by re-establishing a sense of entry into the park with extensive new woodland plantings to either side of the London Drive and by new plantings along the break of slope to the north of the drive which originally formed the parkland boundary characterised by a tree lined hedgerow.

These planting proposals therefore accept the introduction of new development, which is contained by them, whilst providing a larger scale contextual reworking of this entrance landscape. As such the proposals address a particular concern within historic landscapes, alluded to in the objection from the Garden History Society, namely the irretrievable damage to character and appearance and the potential for repair. In reality the proposals are sympathetically assimilated into the historic landscape and are beneficial, re-establishing context and a sense of entry into the park and, in the substantial planting works proposed, also address the removal of inappropriate planting which mar the existing composition. These proposals are not slavish but dynamic, providing an historically based reinterpretation of this area of the park.

The objection also raises concerns with regard to adverse visual impact severely compromising the character and appearance of the historic landscape of Cricket House.

I am concerned that in lodging an objection on these grounds that no indication or specific example is provided which states how the character and appearance of the historic landscape is impacted, nor how this has been assessed as severe.

As discussed above the landscape proposals which accompany the holiday lodges development will provide for substantial dense tree and shrub plantings which will, within a reasonable establishment period, provide containment of the development. The built forms of the lodges will not therefore be evident from views within the park.

Where views exist out from / into the development, these are either over areas not within the original designed parkland or are long distant higher level views to the wider landscape which do not impinge upon the lower lying Cricket Park.

From this I would therefore suggest that the visual impact of the proposals cannot in any way be described as severely adverse, rather, the established development in contributing to the conservation of this area of the park is beneficial.

Suggestion is also made to the only justification being.. *'that it 'enables' the heritage asset, but that this is certainly not applicable in this case'*.

It should be borne in mind that all landscapes exist because there is the will and the financial support necessary to be able to invest money in the, nowadays, almost purely amenity value that they represent. If the financial viability of the estate is not allowed to thrive the very existence of the park and landscape is threatened.

In the past these decisions were taken in the natural course of events with change a constant companion, hence the decline of this north-east upper park during the 20th century. Designation has provided protection but comes with little financial support. There must therefore be a

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relationship between landscape change and preservation which is the dynamic of conservation. This allows well considered proposals, sympathetically handled, to contribute to the ongoing history of such a site by providing viable developments which can contribute to the support of such a landscape.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Walding'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Simon Walding

cc Stephen Taylor Cricket St Thomas Estate
Andrew Preston Greenslade Taylor Hunt

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