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February 5 2016

App ref P/2014/0342 Wynnstay Kitchen Garden development

Wynnstay Grade I

Ref No PGW (C) 64

The Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales

Thank you for consulting with the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust on the further revisions to
App ref P/2014/0342

This year there will be national interest in any development on what in Wales is an extremely rare Grade I site at Wynnstay designed by Capability Brown.

2016 is the Tercentenary of Capability Brown. This is being internationally celebrated and throughout Britain with the CB300 programme. In view of this, the above revised scheme should be put to the CB300 committee which has many Brown experts, the Landscape Institute and also to ICOMOS UK.

The International CAPABILITY BROWN Tercentenary Festival in 2016, CB300, will raise awareness of the value of the work of Capability Brown and the need for its proper protection and conservation.

WHGT continue to have strong objections to the inappropriate amended scheme for this unsympathetic new build which fails to enhance the historic environment.

WHGT Clwyd committee have met and considered this revised scheme which was also discussed with experts at a WHGT national planning seminar. Whilst the revised footprint is now smaller than the earlier design, the new scheme is considered far too suburban for such a special site. WHGT are of the opinion that the previous design with its glassy conservatory style was more appropriate to this walled garden environment.

It remains inexplicable that the first scheme gained planning consent given all the flaws that are accurately detailed in Steve Dobie's letter of Jan 20 2016: the failure to address parking and waste management, over fenestration and ornamentation, adverse impacts on neighbouring Rose Cottage and Georgian House and no link or coherent relationship to the Pleasure Ground.

The revised plan in this application lacks any elegance or symmetry. The particularly poor landscaping and siting of the garages is a concern. Garages for units 1, 6 and 7 and the store by unit 6 are scattered and visually exposed as they protrude into the garden. They fail to be properly integrated into the scheme.

Capability Brown took down buildings which were ugly, in the wrong place or interrupted the view. Landscaping and design next to the work of Brown and Wyatt needs to have a finesse and elegance. The revised elevations are too solid and lack symmetry, both individually and as an overall scheme. The revised plan shows typical suburban two storey modular building units rather than a more classical and elegant integrated and centralised design.

Wynnstay is the only notable Capability Brown site in North Wales and very probably the only Grade I site in the world where any development is being considered in a Brown walled garden.

The original outdated enabling development, **RUA P/2000/089**, was tied to a **106 Agreement**. According to the fourth schedule: *the gardens shall be fully restored in accordance with a detailed scheme prior to the first occupation of any of the buildings*.

In 2012 on a site visit WHGT members saw that Unit 8, Watkin Manor, the first completed residence of this development was occupied whilst the planting and the landscaping of the garden remain unfinished. Although the restoration of the North fruit wall, part of the enabling development, has been praised, the Loxley restoration of the chapel / former orangery and construction of Unit 8 is not satisfactory.

In the construction of Unit 8 an original eighteenth century compartment wall within the Grade I walled garden was destroyed, thus harming the very heritage the enabling scheme was meant to save. The prefab replacement wall falls far short of what would normally be considered an acceptable restoration in a Grade I site and this too has degraded the landscape.

Underground garaging and waste management is the only reasonable solution for any development on this site. This would solve both these major problems, provide for visitors and allow for a high standard of architecture with better spacing and landscaping appropriate to a garden landscaped by Britain's foremost 18th century garden designer. There is already a tunnel at Wynnstay built to hide what was considered unsightly in the past so there is a precedent for going underground to hide what is unsightly today. Extraneous garden walls are an inadequate and inappropriate solution to dustbin management on this nationally important site.

The proposed individual suburban gardens do not sit well in this landscape. This development should have a well maintained and restored walled garden with appropriate planting in common. The new pathway between a house and garage adds to the awkward lack of symmetry of the entire scheme.

The submitted revised details of boundary treatment and the elevations are not remotely like the 1772 Georgian Blackburn House, West Lothian, the selected historical precedent for the Wynnstay walled garden development in the Design Statement. Blackburn House is an inappropriate example as this is not garden architecture. The simple elegance and symmetry of the Blackburn House with generous spacing between the linked central block and its pavilions is not evident in the proposed layout or in the elevations. No elevation in the submitted scheme recalls any known Brown designed building.

The revised scheme fails to take account of the 'sense of place' and the heritage value of the walled garden setting of this historic landscape.

We consider this proposal is in conflict with National Planning Framework section 7 (Requiring Good Design), Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and also Planning Policy Wales chapter 6.5.25 which states that register sites are 'a material consideration' when determining a planning application.

An enabling development is intended to enhance and contribute to the Grade I landscape. WHGT consider that this planning application fails to do that. Instead, this development will have a detrimental impact on the garden, and on the significance of this Grade I site.

WHGT strongly object to this revised planning application.

Yours sincerely
Glynis Shaw (WHGT Clwyd Branch)