



The Gardens Trust
70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ
Phone: (+44/0) 207 608 2409
Email: enquiries@thegardenstrust.org
www.thegardenstrust.org

margiehoffnung@thegardenstrust.org

13th December 2021

Research - Conserve - Campaign

Ms Danika Hird
Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
Bucks HP19 8FF
devcon@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

Dear Ms Hird,

Ref : 21/02851/AOP - Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved except for access and scale for the construction of a new Category C prison (up to 67,000 sqm GEA) within a secure perimeter fence together with access, parking, landscaping and associated engineering works; HM Prison Grendon, Springhill Road, Grendon Underwood, Buckinghamshire HP18 0TL

Further to our letter of 10th September, Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) and the Gardens Trust (GT) in the light of a recent site visit, wish to amplify our comments and **confirm our objection**.

The GT is the statutory consultee with regard to proposed development affecting all grades of historic landscapes listed by Historic England (HE) on the Register of Parks and Gardens. Although the grounds at Grendon Hall are not yet a Registered Park and Garden (RPG) it is, nonetheless, a locally (and possibly regionally) significant designed landscape and a strong candidate for the current Local Listing upgrade by Buckinghamshire Council. We urge you to consider the application in the light of this significance.

This application damages the setting of the garden, and the fabric and character of the parkland, of Grendon Hall which is Listed Grade II. Recent research by BGT has identified the key elements of that designed landscape and that they survive largely intact despite mid-late C20 localised developments related to the prison and staff accommodation. A recent site visit to the gardens made by a member of the Bucks Gardens Trust has confirmed the high level of survival of the Hall, and the gardens and park layout together with views over the surrounding countryside.

The North Park

The North Park lies west of the Hall and gardens, and north of the main historic drive from the lodge to the Hall. It is of high significance to the ornamental designed landscape for the following reasons:

- a) As parkland within the 1880s ensemble when both Hall and grounds were created. It formed part of a sweeping whole, along with the South Park south of the main drive.
- b) As the immediate setting for the most important element of the designed landscape: the garden to the west and south of the Hall.
- c) As the setting for key extensive views from the Hall west and south-west to distant Otmoor and Graven Hill near Bicester.
- d) As the setting for key views from the circuit path around the garden perimeter, particularly from the west end of the main garden terrace, a viewpoint which was formerly marked by a

feature which probably included a seat to enjoy these views (OS, 1900).

- e) As the immediate northern setting for the Listed Grade II gateway and main drive, facilitating bucolic views of the Hall in the main approach.
- f) As the frame for distant views of the elevated Hall and gardens from the public road, particularly north of the Lodge leading into Edgcott.

Key views are mapped below on the 6" OS 1900 below, and the site of the viewpoint at the west end of the terrace is ringed on the 25" OS 1900 below. This area survives intact except for the loss of trees, which could easily be replanted in the historic pattern, and the obscuring of some views by outgrown or introduced hedgerows.

As a result of the recent site visit it is clear that the proposals for the North Park are highly damaging to key elements of the design. These proposals will destroy the late C19 historic fabric and character of the North Park by the introduction of alien features, particularly the new gateway, extensive road and sports pitches, and re-landscaping of the areas between, including a new pond. It will greatly damage the immediate setting of and views from the core of the site (the Hall and gardens) which is of the highest significance to the design, and from the main drive and Listed gateway, which together form a feature which is also highly significant to the design. It will also damage designed views of the Hall and its gardens from the public road.

South Park

The South Park is not so immediately visually connected with the Hall and gardens. It is the park destination for walks from the Hall, particularly the spectacular elevated views from the high point on Spring Hill (and possibly also from Mill Hill to the south) over the Vale of Aylesbury, including Waddesdon Hill, Brill Hill and the Chilterns beyond. These contrast with the views of Otmoor from the North Park.

It is also the southern setting for the main drive and Listed Grade II gateway. The south park was not physically divided from the north by a fence line, and the drive deliberately was not fenced in order to promote the parkland character for visitors as a seamless whole. It is the frame for glimpsed views of the Hall from the public road between Grendon and Edgcott villages south of the Listed gateway. Today this is obscured by the park development of houses and later vegetation.

The South Park will not be physically affected. It will, however, sustain damage in its setting to the north from the major new development, which will be highly intrusive in the panoramic views particularly from an ornamental park gateway, and the important panoramic park viewpoint on the high point of Spring Hill.

The North Setting

The setting to the north and north-east, to the rear of the Hall and its service structures, and adjacent to the north side of the walled garden which was formerly part of the east pleasure grounds, will be damaged. While the setting and views from these features are of lesser significance than those relating to the North Park and environs of the Hall and adjacent gardens, and the South Park viewpoints, they will be damaged to a greater degree by the dense modern development in the adjacent setting which has to some degree been compromised already.

In conclusion

- The Gardens Trust reiterates that these proposals will cause significant, irreversible and highly harmful damage to the fabric and character of Grendon Hall designed landscape and to the northerly setting. The setting of the Grade II listed Hall and gate piers and metal fencing at the entrance to the prison site will also be damaged.
- The site of the new site entrance and road, football pitch and associated modern landscaping is in a key part of the historic park which comprises the immediate setting for Grendon Hall and would result in irreversible and highly damaging harm to the historic fabric and character.

The Gardens Trust therefore strongly objects to this application and urges the Planning Authority to reject this application.

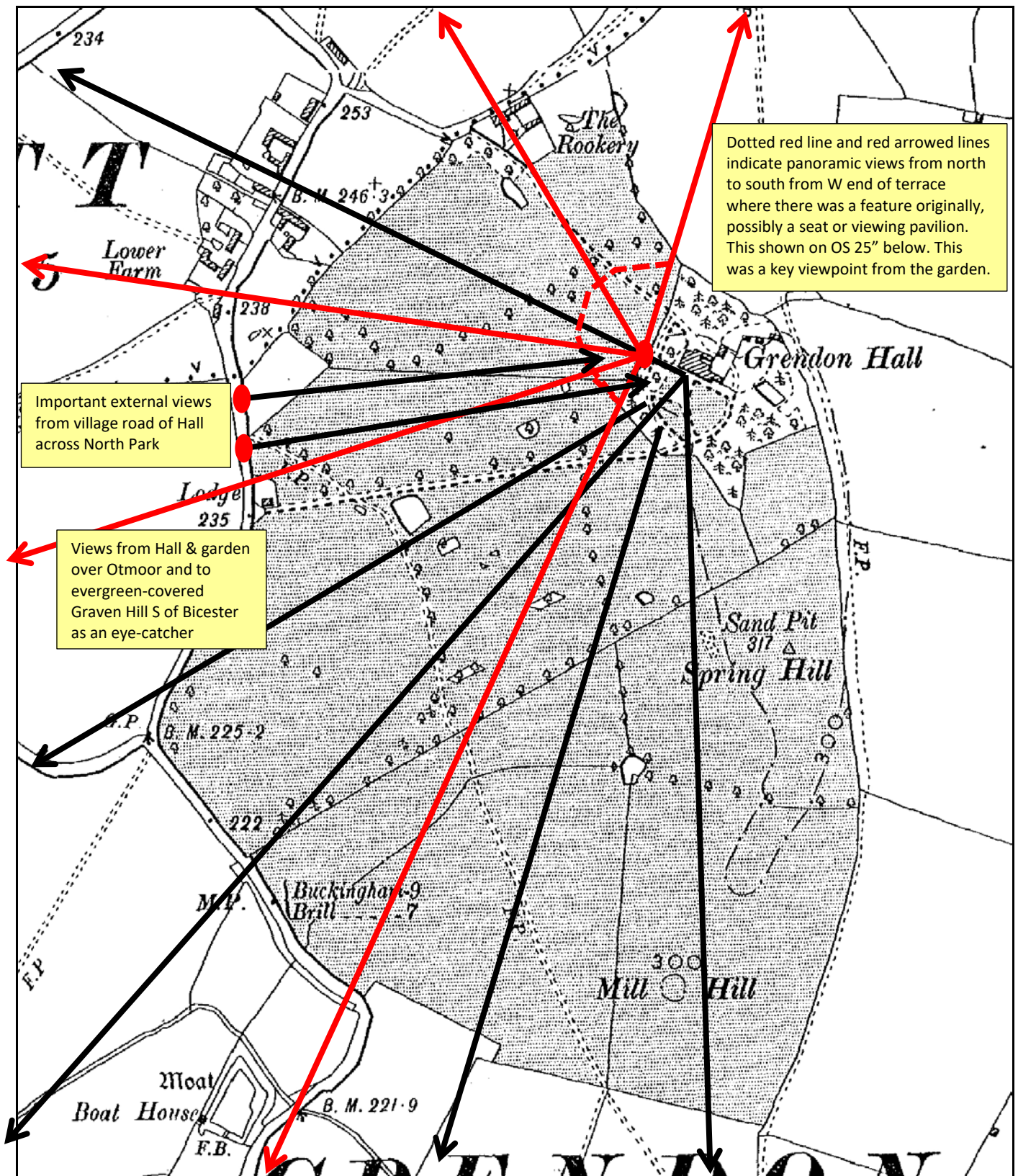
Yours sincerely,

Margie Hoffnung
Conservation Officer

cc. Joanna.Horton@buckinghamshire.gov.uk & Rod Baker : mail@bioedge.co.uk

Grendon Hall

External views from the Hall and garden to south and west

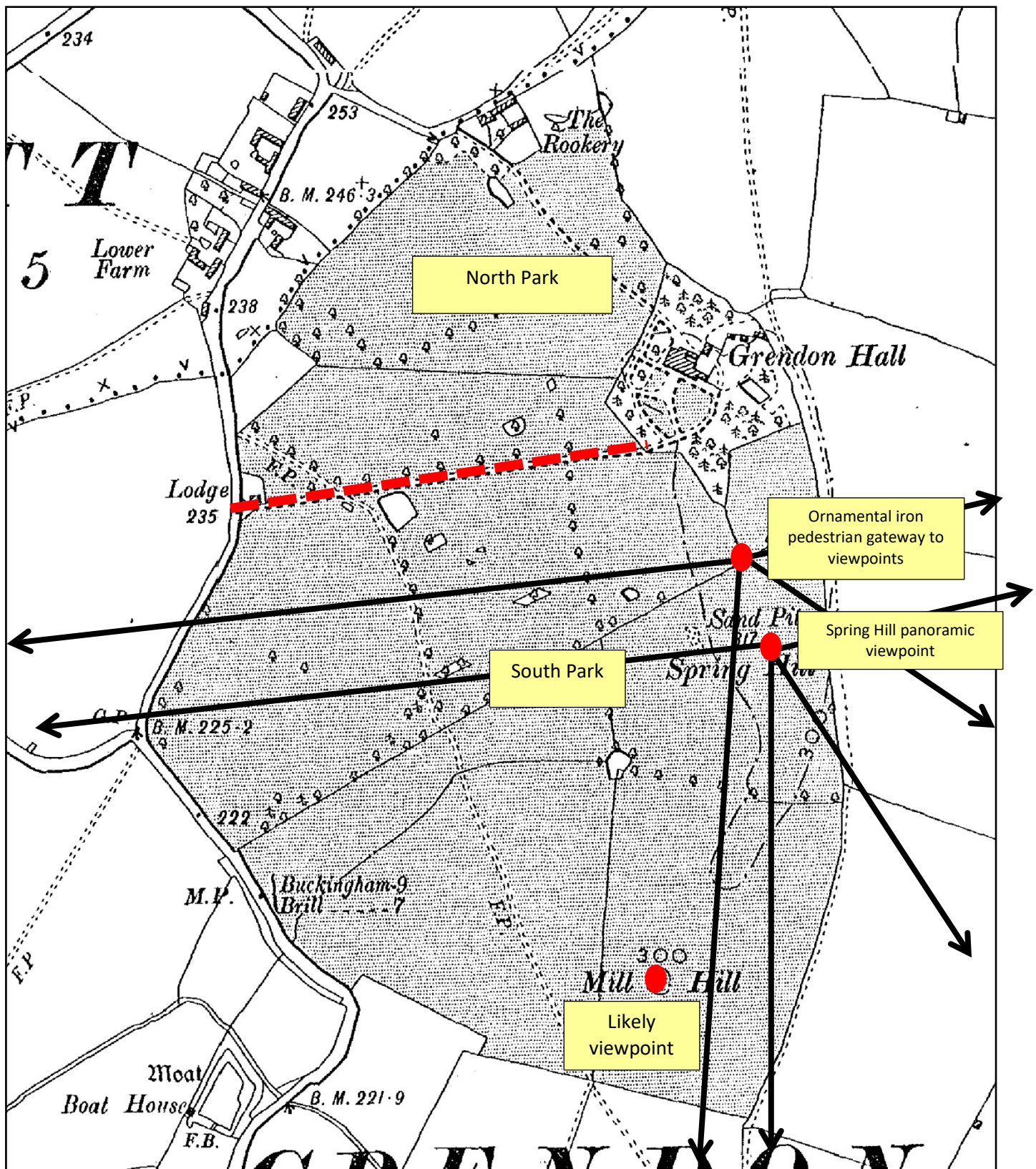


OS 6", 1900 when the Hall and grounds were newly built and laid out.

Historic views from Hall and garden which survive or are recoverable with removal of some vegetation.

Key viewpoints from South Terrace, Garden circuit path, Hall.

Definition of pleasure ground: An informal area of the garden. In this case it is used in the sense of the formerly wooded areas north and east of the Hall. Here the garden is the more formal and highly cultivated area to the west and south which survives although with some alterations.



OS 6", 1900, extent of North and South Parks when the Hall and grounds were newly built and laid out. Panoramic viewpoints in South Park marked.

Parkland character

The park was intended to be viewed as a largely seamless whole with few fence lines to break it up. The use of pasture united it visually along with the retention of existing agricultural tree lines with some additional scattered specimens. The park was divided into two character areas to north and south of the drive.

North Park Significance

1. The immediate ornamental setting for the garden and Hall

2. The frame for extensive views over the Oxfordshire countryside to the west and south-west from the garden and Hall.
3. The northern setting for the main drive. The north park was not physically divided from the south by a fence line, and the drive deliberately was not fenced in order to promote the parkland character for visitors as a seamless whole.
4. The important frame for views of the Hall from the public road between Grendon and Edgcott villages north of the lodge. The land sweeps up to the Hall perched prominently above.
5. The frame for glimpsed views of the Hall from the drive.

South Park Significance

1. The detached park destination for walks from the Hall, particularly the spectacular elevated views from the high point on Spring Hill (and possibly also from Mill Hill to the south) over the Vale of Aylesbury, including Waddesdon Hill, Brill Hill and the Chilterns beyond. These contrasted with the views of Otmoor from the North Park.
2. The southern setting for the main drive. The south park was not physically divided from the north by a fence line, and the drive deliberately was not fenced in order to promote the parkland character for visitors as a seamless whole.
3. The frame for glimpsed views of the Hall from the public road between Grendon and Edgcott villages south of the lodge. Today this is obscured by the park development of houses and later vegetation.

6.



1899 OS 25" scale
Feature at west end of terrace ringed red.



Views from main lawn and Hall to west over Otmoor and (centre) evergreen-covered Graven Hill S of Bicester rising from it as an eye-catcher. The North Park is partly obscured by an historically inappropriate hedge planted in the later C20 and now outgrown and gradually obscuring views.



Part of panoramic views of distant ridges from north to south from W end of terrace where there was a feature originally on the park boundary, possibly a seat or viewing pavilion. This is indicated on OS 25" and was a key viewpoint from the garden.

This view faces generally north-west with the evergreen-covered Graven Hill S of Bicester at far left. The tall hedgerow is historically inappropriate as the distant view should only be punctuated by well-spaced specimen trees left from the former hedgerow (pre-1880s).