

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release

Meeting: Environment Committee

Date: 4th September 2003

Report of: Acting Director Environment

Subject: Stanmer Estate Historic Landscape Survey and Restoration Management Plan

Ward(s) affected: Hollingbury and Stanmer

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To report to members the results of the draft study and seek approval for the management and restoration plan for Stanmer Park and for making further applications to relevant grant authorities for funding to implement the plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee approve the second draft of the plan and to delegate authority to the Assistant Director to approve the final draft, following the results of further consultations.

2.2 That the Committee authorise the Assistant Director to submit applications for grants towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Management Plan.

2.3 That the Assistant Director of Environment, together with the Director of Corporate Services be instructed to review the management of the Stanmer Estate and to submit a report making recommendations on how its management can be improved and integrated.

3. Information/background

3.1 The need for an Historic Landscape Study and Restoration Management Plan for Stanmer was identified in The Vision For Stanmer Study and the Stanmer and Coldean Local Nature Reserve Management Plan. Recently, development pressures impinging on the Stanmer Estate and Historic Park from Sussex University, the Albion Football Club's Falmer Stadium proposal and the

development of Stanmer House, have led to calls from English Heritage, The Sussex Downs Conservation Board, and local conservation organisations for this Study to be carried out as a matter of urgency. The Study is financed largely by a grant from DEFRA under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, with contributions from the SDCB and the Council. The work has been carried out by the Colson Stone Practice.

3.2 The purpose of the plan is to:

- i) assess the condition and value of the historical, wildlife and landscape elements identified in the park and appraise any restoration work necessary;
- ii) review the use and management of land within the application area and current management practices;
- iii) present a programme of work to achieve the restoration and management objectives in such a way that it can form the basis of a future application for a 10 year Countryside Stewardship agreement/ESA agreement.

3.3 Due to the conditions on the DEFRA grant, the timetable for completion of this project is extremely tight.

Conclusions of the Study

3.4 The Study concluded that the historic landscape which is predominantly 18th Century, is remarkably well preserved, despite the pressures of modern development around the southern edges. However, the park suffers from serious problems of inappropriate use, uncontrolled car parking and traffic. Most modern planting has eroded the historic character of the 18th Century designed landscape. The post war glasshouses and buildings in the area of the walled garden, Council nursery and depot and adjoining paddock are harmful to the views within the park and the setting of nearby listed buildings. It also concluded that the proposed replacement W.C.s changing rooms adjacent to Stanmer House, required as part of the development of the house would be harmful to the setting of the house and the historic park and an alternative location should be found. A number of the historic structures, walls and bothies within the park are in need of repair.

Recommendations of the Study

3.5 The main recommendations in the Consultation draft are: to resist any new development within the study area unless it is demonstrably beneficial to the aesthetic and ecological quality of the landscape, the removal of most of the post war plantings and restoring the largely intact 18th Century planting scheme, substantial additional screen planting around the nursery and depot areas and along the southern boundary with the A27 Bypass, concentrating

parking to the southern end of the park, (sacrificing a poor quality football/cricket pitch), restricting car traffic within the park (these proposals dovetail with proposals developed by the Countryside Team), improving the village car park and removing all other public parking in the park, restricting Nursery area, farm and depot traffic to the West Drive from Ditchling Road, reinstating the cricket pitch in front of Stanmer House, reintroducing grazing to the central section of the park, opening the areas on the west side of the valley currently on short term tenancies to public access and removing the fence lines, rationalise the depot and Council office area and screening it with planting, relocating the horticultural college buildings into the Walled Garden, and reverting their current site to a paddock.

3.6 The farm tenant has recently given up his dairy herd and entered most of the land within his full tenancy into the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme under the grassland tier. The farm business has therefore moved away from mixed dairy and arable towards beef cattle rearing. A problematic and controversial issue is the future of the historic farm buildings and the potential need to adapt the modern farm buildings for livestock rearing. At time he was interviewed for the study, it appeared that the tenant had yet to finalise his plans for meeting his obligations for ESA grant aid. Further discussions are therefore needed with him.

3.7 A key issue highlighted by the consultants is the need to rationalise the management of the estate within the control of one body with sole responsibility specifically for its management and with its own designated budget.

3.8 Legal implications,

3.8.1 Some of the proposals in the study will require the consent of the farm tenant and Cherrywood Investments Ltd who lease Stanmer House and its immediate garden area, to implement. The leases to the Community groups in the former Nursery Area and the Horticultural College are due for renewal currently or in the near future. The new leases will need to reflect the proposals in the plan and include clauses to secure its implementation. The Council's grounds maintenance contract is also due for renewal and the new contract will also need to reflect the proposals in the study.

3.9 There are no identified equalities implications of these proposals.

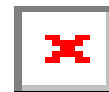
5. Consultation

5.1 The following tenants, organisations and individuals have been or are being consulted: the farm tenant, Cherrywood Investments Ltd, the Horticultural

College, Stanmer Organics Co-operative Consortium, Care Co-ops, Sussex Downs Conservation Board, BTCV, DEFRA, English Heritage, English Nature, The Garden History Society, Sussex Gardens Trust, Stanmer Preservation Society, Society of Sussex Downsmen, CPRE. (comments awaited)

5.2 Internal consultations include Corporate Service, Legal Team and Property & Design Team and those Teams in Environment Department with responsibilities relating to Stanmer Park. (comments awaited)

COMMITTEE REPORT APPENDIX



Meeting/Date	<i>Environment Committee 4th September 2003</i>
Report of	<i>Acting Director Environment</i>
Subject	<i>Stanmer Estate Historic Landscape Study and Restoration Management Plan</i>
Wards affected	<i>Hollingbury and Stanmer</i>

Financial implications

Implementation of the Restoration Management Plan will have to be from within existing resources assisted by grants.

Finance Officer consulted: Alistair Ridley Date 12th August 2003

Legal implications

Lawyer consulted: Hilary Woodward Date 12th August 2003.

<p>Corporate/Citywide implications The Study advises bringing the management of the Stanmer estate under a single body with a designated budget.</p>	<p>Risk assessment There are no significant risks identified.</p>
<p>Sustainability implications The Study represents a substantial contribution towards managing the Council's lands more sustainably.</p>	<p>Equalities implications There are no significant identified equalities implications</p>
<p>Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder The proposals to concentrate parking at the south end of the park and to restrict traffic through the park will restrict joy riding, dumping of stolen cars and rubbish and travellers invasions.</p>	

Background papers [Part 1 reports only]

1. The Stanmer Park Historic Landscape Survey and Restoration Management Plan Rev 2 July 2003.

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