Salisbury Cathedral Close
Preservation Society

Mrs Becky Jones
The Planning Department
The Council House
Bourne Hill
Salisbury SP1 3UZ

28th May 2026

Dear Becky,

PL/2024/00373 and PL/2024/00720 (LBC): Change of use of Leadenhall from education to offices and meeting rooms, facilities for events etc

You will be aware that Historic England decided not to register the gardens of Leaden Hall. The trustees of the Society continue to believe this was the wrong decision.

The research for the registration application by Dr Kate Felus generated a considerable amount of evidence about the garden, its important historic links (not least with John Constable) and the extent of what remained of planting and structures.

Against this background, we read the comments of senior landscape architect Maxine Russell (23rd March 2026) with regard to the landscape aspects of this project with interest.

We note that, in her opinion, 'the proposals should be guided by Heritage Impact Assessment.' As we have previously pointed out there has not been a Heritage Impact Assessment of the scheme covering the garden of Leaden Hall. The garden – it should be noted – is both the setting of the Grade I listed building (plus 5 other grade II structures) and an undesignated heritage asset. A Heritage Statement was produced for this planning application in December 2023. <u>This does not appear to have been updated or superseded by a full Heritage Impact Assessment? Am I correct in assuming, therefore, that a key piece of information on which to base a recommendation about the planning applications is missing?</u>

The Heritage Statement allocates only three pages to a description of the garden and wider setting, with greater weight given to the latter. Neither that, nor the later paragraphs which are described as evaluating the impact of the proposals, show any historical landscape knowledge. For example:

- The report demonstrates no understanding of the planting nor significance of the remaining landscape vistas.

- The evidence of kitchen garden planting is overlooked (eg historic fruit trees). Indeed, the writer appears unsure whether there was a kitchen garden which renders any assessment of the impact of the proposed archive building problematical.
- While there is a brief reference to Constable in the Background section of the document, the section assessing significance makes no reference to John Constable, despite the numerous paintings he created of the garden and wider vistas while staying with Archdeacon Fisher at Leaden Hall.

Some aspects of the Heritage Statement are inaccurate, describing the proposed archive as "…clearly subservient and … modest in its scale." The archive building will be forward of Leaden Hall with a dominant roofline.

A reader unfamiliar with the garden and setting, relying on the Heritage Statement, would risk failing to fulfil the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework by underestimating the cultural significance of the garden, the extent of what has survived and the potential impact on the setting of Leaden Hall and the Cathedral. They might also conclude that the former school classrooms and other structures took up a greater proportion of the garden than is the case.

In order that – as Ms Russell implies is necessary – the impact of the scheme on the garden is tested, we are sharing the research we commissioned with you. This explains the evolution of the garden, its rarity and its cultural significance.

The paper "Constable's Leaden Hall paintings as evidence of Design" particularly explains how the vistas of the design worked both to and from the garden, across the river and water meadows, as demonstrated by Constable's wealth of sketches. We note that Ms Russell also stated in her letter that a HIA 'could be used to assess the impact on 'cultural views' e.g. from the water meadows.'

We hope, therefore, that this research will be helpful and will be taken into account?

In view of the large volume of material, I am depositing a full set of documents together with this letter for your attention at Bourne Hill.

In order to facilitate uploading of the material to the Comments section of the planning portal, Liz Slater will send a Wetransfer link to you and to Development Management at the beginning of next week. The link will remain live for four days. She will also send the link to other copy recipients of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy

Jeremy Edwards
Chair
Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society

Cc:
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Maxine Russell email: Maxine.Russell@wiltshire.gov.uk
Andrew Minting, Conservation Officer
Catherine Armstrong, Conservation Adviser, South-West England, Georgian Group