

Brief: Vision, Strategy and Workplan for Lotherton Hall Estate formal gardens

Deadline for proposals: **31.8.22**

Primary Contact	Secondary Contact
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1. Introduction

Leeds City Council (LCC) invites costed proposals for a vision, strategy and workplan for the 'Edwardian' gardens of Lotherton Hall. The gardens are of high significance being listed grade 2 in the Parks and Gardens register. The purpose of this commission is to build upon previous research and with reference to the policies and principles of the Conservation Management Plan, produce a clear action plan for the conservation, restoration and ongoing maintenance of the formal gardens. This document describes the key heritage features of the site, what LCC is looking for in the proposal, and practical details on submitting a response.



2. Key heritage features

Lotherton is a country house estate 3km east of Aberford and 16km north-east of Leeds. A full description of the historical features of the site, along with an evaluation of their significance and relevance today can be found in the Lotherton Conservation Management Plan.

The following is an outline description of the heritage features of the gardens and the key features of the rest of the estate:

a. Gardens and designed landscapes

- The most significant aspects of the designed landscape at Lotherton Hall are a result of the works directed by Laura Gwendolen Gascoigne in the early 20th century in creating the 'Edwardian' formal gardens (Grade II listed); incorporating features from an earlier scheme. The formal garden lies to the south and east of the house made up a series of 'garden rooms' laid out in the Arts and Crafts style. The gardens provide the setting for the principle façade of Lotherton Hall and the two are designed to work together.
- The original formal structure of the garden is in the main extant retaining the shape of Mrs Gascoigne's garden but amendments to the sense of enclosure, the style of planting and the loss of ornaments and structures has changed the character.
- The garden is approached from the west through the formal entrance area which in turn branches into access to the Hall and the entrance to the gardens leading onto a 'grid-iron' path system with yew hedges and herbaceous borders; a terrace, walled garden and pond garden all form part of the formal area which gives way to a shrubbery and the 'The Dell' to east and dissipates into a wildflower meadow to the south, with haha and open fields beyond.



- **Park**
This area contains most of the surviving pre-1890s elements of Lotherton's landscape. Notably the park includes ridge and furrow to the north and west of the estate, alluding to Lotherton's heritage as an agricultural village. Other open fields almost encircle the estate.
- **Shelter belt Woodland**, including Captain Wood to the north and east of the formal gardens

b. Built heritage

The surviving buildings from the Gascoigne period are:

- **Lotherton Hall**
Asymmetrical hall covered mansion house originating as an 18th century village house, later rebuilt and extended in the early 19th century with further extensions and faced in hall between 1896 and 1903. The house is now an accredited museum and no longer a residence.
- **Lotherton Chapel (Grade II*)**
A small stone built, 12th century chapel, a remnant of the former village of Lotherton.
- **The Old House (Grade II listed)**
Stone built former farmhouse dating to early 17th century with late 17th century additions.
- **Stables, motor houses and former staff accommodation**
Today this complex is occupied by a café, shop, an exhibit of cart and coaches, workshops, office accommodation and informal storage.
- **Gardener's cottage.**
To north east of the Hall. Now bird garden offices and staff facilities.
- **Lodge cottage.**
'Queen Anne revival' single storey house dating to 1908. Now privately owned.
- **Gardener's cottage.**
At the northern end of the secondary, eastern drive. Now privately owned.

c. Collections

The principle collections at Lotherton Hall are within the house under the management of Leeds Museums and Galleries. The house is an accredited museum and its collections of fine and decorative arts are Designated under the Arts Council England's designation scheme.

d. Wildlife World Zoo

A registered zoo built over what were kitchen gardens, an orchard, and parts of the park. Its collections have principally focussed on avian species due its heritage as an aviary, but mammals have also been added in recent years as the zoo moves towards presenting information in relation to habitats and conservation rather than individual species.

e. Natural heritage

Beyond the formal gardens Lotherton principally consists of improved/semi-improved grassland with shelterbelts of trees to the north, north east and more recently to the western boundary. The wildflower meadow to the south of the formal gardens is thought to be to be a remnant of old

magnesian limestone meadow, later planted with bulbs to form part of the garden. There are a number of mature and over-mature beech and oak which survive throughout the parkland. Part of the value of Lotherton lies in the presence of tree cover and permanent grassland, in an area in intense arable cultivation.



3. Scope of work

a. Vision, Strategy and Workplan

- The final document will provide a clear prioritised action plan, based upon the Lotherton Conservation Management Plan to guide the conservation/restoration as appropriate of Lotherton's historic gardens and to inform ongoing maintenance thereafter.
- It will build upon the development of a vision that allows Lotherton to fulfil its potential as an historic visitor attraction with significant historic gardens, whilst allowing for pragmatic and sensitive solutions to enable its modern function.
- The document should focus primarily on the formal gardens and shrubberies but should also provide clear principles with regard to considering the impact from developments on the wider estate.
- The vision will be formed with reference to the Lotherton Conservation Management Plan and will be integral to that plan considering development of the site in the long term with a view to improving the visitor experience to make the site more sustainable.
- The document should build upon existing research, most notably Mette Eggen's 1988 MA thesis, the Lotherton Conservation Management Plan, recent unpublished research carried out by Jane Furse and photographs and home movies newly acquired from Gascoigne family members.

- The output should include plans of the formal gardens, incorporating mapping and assessment of the plants, structures, furniture, gates, fences and garden ornaments for their significance and future lifespan.
- The document should include an analysis of the skills and resources within the current team and map these against the action plan to highlight any insufficiencies to identify training or recruitment needs.
- The plan will identify priorities for capital spending and provide cost estimates that may be used to create discrete funding bids to support works.
- The plan will include planting/felling proposals for the gardens and their visual envelope and will consider opportunities to contribute to LCC's net zero carbon target, where appropriate.

b. Engagement with staff and stakeholders

The consultant will be required to engage with the Council to understand the site and LCC's vision for Lotherton, along with key stakeholders the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

4. Required experience and application details

Consultants should be experienced garden historians, with a track record producing practical action plans and have experience of stakeholder engagement and an openness to taking relevance into account while forming the plan.

Tenders are invited setting out experience and approach. Written submissions, including CVs, shall be made by 10am on 31.8.22 to: Maria Akers, Senior Estates Manager, Leeds Parks and Countryside maria.akers@leeds.gov.uk

Fee: there is a fixed fee for this work of £10,000 excluding VAT.

Timescales: the work shall be completed and final reports submitted within 4 months of appointment.

5. Research sources

Mette Eggen, *The Edwardian Garden at Lotherton Hall* (MA dissertation, University of York, 1988)

Donald Insall Associates, *Lotherton Conservation Management Plan* (2022)

Andrew Butler, *Lotherton Hall Estate Leeds. Cultural Landscape Management Plan* (2001)

Adam White, *Lotherton Hall* [guidebook] (Leeds Museums and Galleries, 2007)

Various authors, *Leeds Art Calendar* (LACF, various dates). For index of all articles on Lotherton Hall and its collections see Numbers 117-8 (1996-7)

Other potentially useful documents:

David Weldrake, West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, *Lotherton Hall Park Assessment*, October 1995. Described in the first paragraph as 'a preliminary assessment of the archaeological potential for Lotherton Hall Park and its surrounding area ... [which] was commissioned by Leeds Leisure Services and is intended to inform site management plans and to assist in maximising the historical, educational and recreational potential of Lotherton Hall and its environs' (Weldrake 1995). A set of site management recommendations, compiled by Ian Sanderson of the WYAS and derived from the assessment, was separately communicated to the commissioning body.

Julia Wynne Thorpe, *Lotherton Hall Estate Management Plan*, Draft 1999. Compiled on her own initiative by a member of staff in the Parks and Countryside Division of Leeds City Council's Department of Learning and Leisure who used to work as Countryside Ranger on the Lotherton estate (Wynne Thorpe 1999). The plan consists of a brief survey of the estate, followed by a series of policy options. First drafted in 1995 and revised three times thereafter, it has never been formally adopted, although it contains many well-argued proposals. A very useful table of land usage is given on page 8 and all information of that kind given in this plan is taken from it.

Julia Wynne Thorpe, *Captain Wood Management Plan*, Habitat Studies Assignment, H.N.C., Bishop Burton College, 1996. A more detailed study of this part of the estate, followed by a series of operational objectives and management options (Wynne Thorpe 1996).