



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: The Countess of Harewood

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www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Stella Spriggs
Principal Planning Officer
Leeds

Chris Webb
Chair
Yorkshire Gardens Trust

20 April 2024

Dear Stella Spriggs

24/01411/FU: Harewood House, Harrogate Road, Harewood, Leeds LS17 9LG; Removal of existing play equipment and siting of new play equipment and associated works, including hard and soft landscaping

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee for proposed developments that could affect sites included by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks & Gardens. The Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT) is a member organisation of GT, works in partnership with it in the protection and conservation of registered sites, and is authorised by GT to respond on GT's behalf in such consultations.

You will be aware that on 26 October 2023, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/55/part/3/chapter/3/>) enacted strengthening the protection for registered parks and gardens amongst others and giving them the same level of planning protection as listed buildings and conservation areas. Chapter 3 (Heritage), Para 102, 58B (1) states 'In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for the development of land in England which affects a relevant asset or its setting, the local planning authority or (as the case may be) the Secretary of State must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting.' It continues Para 102, 58B (2) 'For the purposes of subsection (1), preserving or enhancing a relevant asset or its setting includes preserving or enhancing any feature, quality or characteristic of the asset or setting that contributes to the significance of the asset'.

The Grade 1 registered park and garden at Harewood is clearly of the highest significance, the details of which do not need to be repeated here. It is, however, important to note that this application relates to a part of the RPG that has been degraded in a piecemeal fashion in the 20th century. The application seeks to begin the healing of the landscape by removing intrusive play equipment and introducing new equipment in a less obtrusive location that nevertheless enables adults to supervise the area sensibly.

This application sits in the wider context of the Harewood estate and grounds, which are subject to masterplanning. YGT has been consulted on this planning exercise (as have Historic England), and we support the general thrust and sensitive approach taken to it. Nevertheless, because this application relates to a discrete area within the estate, we are happy that it can be judged as a discrete application in its own right; it is a necessary preliminary to subsequent landscape improvements across the wider estate, which does not compromise further improvements and changes to the landscape in this area.

The existing play area is intrusive, featuring in views to and from the stable block, the bakehouse and the route to the woodland and around the lake. It is a highly popular facility, but it adversely impinges on the appreciation of the earlier layouts of this area, which is also scarred by wide tarmac service roads. Its removal to a more

discrete location is supported by YGT as the first part of a broader and deeper set of changes in this and other parts of the estate.

However, we do have concerns about the information provided about the access route to the new play area. We cannot see the reasoning behind the chosen route other than the fact that it links to existing paths in the area. In places the route is located close to tree roots, but there is little information about how these roots are to be safeguarded from the development. There is no indication of the width of the new path (presumably wide enough for the passage, each way simultaneously, of buggies and wheelchairs (each of various designs). There is no information about how this new path links to visitor facilities in the redeveloped Bakehouse, nor how it links to new paths in the redesigned area between the Bakehouse, Stables and House. Is the new path aligned on any historic route? What is the aesthetic impact of the new path; will it even be visible from a distance given the possibility of planting to disguise its presence?

In relation to planting, the application gives scant information on the treatment of the area to be vacated by the old play equipment. There are grasses that will grow in the shade provided by the retained trees, and there are shrubs that would flourish similarly e.g. Osmanthus spp, Pachysandra, Mahonia spp, Xanthorrhiza, Vinca, and others, all of which could enliven the area, depending on the manner in which this area is to be treated.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Webb
Chair, YGT

Cc e-yorks@historicengland.org.uk
Conservation@theGardensTrust.org
Kristof.Fatsar@HistoricEngland.org.uk