



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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8th June 2022

Dear Ms Lucitt

22/01972/MAF Construction of 11 dwellings and associated works. Land Off Cousen Road Bradford West Yorkshire BD7 3JX

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee with regard to any proposed development affecting a site included by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks & Gardens – Horton Park (grade II). The Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT) is a member organisation of the GT and works in partnership with it in respect of the protection and conservation of registered sites, and is authorised by the GT to respond on GT's behalf in respect of such consultations.

This planning application is located immediately to the south of Horton Park on land that was formerly the Joseph Nutter Orphanage built in 1888, ten years after Horton Park was opened. The historic link between the orphanage and the park was evident not only through the elaborate sunken design of the intervening path with its matching pedestrian entrances and matching walling materials and style, but also the creation of a generous green space achieved by the setting back of the orphanage buildings from the mutual boundary.

Horton Park, opened in 1878, was designed by William Gay, one of the finest Victorian landscapers in the north. Gay is perhaps best known for his cemeteries, including Undercliffe Cemetery, (established 1854), and Toxteth Park Cemetery, Liverpool (opened 1856), but he also designed parks including Saltaire Park (Roberts Park). He was one of the most imaginative and gifted designers of the period, using "raised and sunken terraces to enhance the complexities of the landscape" such as the grand terrace at Peel Park.

Map evidence (particularly OS 1893) shows the original layout of the grounds in front of the orphanage is in a simpler style but similar to that of Horton Park and it was also likely to have been designed by Gay. The sunken arrangement of the path between the orphanage and the park specifically enabled the two to "borrow each other's landscapes" – similar in concept to a ha-ha. Originally it is most likely that metal railings would have topped the intervening walls to enable the reciprocal views to be appreciated.

In principle we have no objection to this site being developed for housing. However, we do have concerns about aspects of this application.

It appears to us that new development on this site needs to recognise its inevitable role as part of the setting of its neighbour Horton Park. In our opinion the new housing should be designed so that the green landscaping within its site should provide a soft and generous interface with the intervening boundary wall, and the design should provide a reasonable opportunity for successful future landscape maintenance. It appears to us that the currently proposed arrangement for the new houses presents inappropriate massing of buildings hard up against this sensitive interface, and that this very arrangement squeezes and fragments the landscaping within the housing site so that successful future maintenance will be unrealistic.

As the developed land adjacent to this north-east boundary of the site would be completely privately owned there would be no control over the landscaping of these plots and hence their contribution to the setting of Horton Park. We totally agree with the pre-application enquiry response, (p12, Supporting Statement) that the trees along the boundary should not be retained within domestic curtilage, but in areas of public or shared open space maintained through a management agreement.

We note that in this proposal none of these large family houses would be built with a garage. The lack of any indoor storage space for bicycles, gardening equipment, power tools etc. is likely to be result in additional buildings erected, yet further marring the setting of the park.

The blue palisade perimeter fence has been identified as being a "negative attribute" (Supporting Statement, p.12). We agree that this is partly due to its unsympathetic colour but equally its style is brutally inappropriate for a residential site. We advise that the original boundary wall should be restored, topped with new metal railings reflecting the original period style. We note that original decorative metal railings were still extant in Horton Park in 2014. We recommend that railings are painted a very dark green colour, for example in the shade, "Invisible Green". (Black was not considered to be a good colour for metalwork during the Victorian period.)

We have not seen a detailed landscaping proposal for this site – but on the Proposed Site Plan is indicated "Steps Concrete" for Plot 9. These appear to be a pre-existing flight of steps down to a pedestrian gateway to the park. If this gateway is to be closed, then we request that the closure is made by matching stonework, perhaps set back 50mm to help identify this historical change.

In conclusion we consider that this planning application as submitted will harm the setting and significance of Horton Park.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

cc. Chris Mayes, Landscape Architect North of England, Historic England
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