



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: Countess of Harewood

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www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Mr Daniel Strode
Planning Services
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Mrs Val Hepworth
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10th January 2024

Dear Mr Strode

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23/06823/FU New soakaway and associated works to existing drainage system, Lotherton Hall, Lotherton Lane, Aberford LS25 3EB.

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. In this case the gardens at Lotherton Hall are registered at 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.

We refer you to our letter of 8th June 2020 for **Application Number: 20/02609/FU Installation of replacement drainage system with supplementary rainwater harvesting.**

Lotherton Hall (and estate was bought by the Gascoigne family in 1825 when the house was a modest late Georgian House facing westwards towards the 12th century Chapel of St James (Listed Grade II*). Colonel FRTT Gascoigne and his wife Laura Gwendolen enlarged the house first to the east (1896), then to the west (1903) and with new stables, motor houses and drive. Mrs Gascoigne was influential in the extension, design and planting of the gardens probably with advice from Ellen Wilmott (1858-1934) and other significant estate owners and gardeners in the Edwardian period and subsequently. The family presented the Hall, estate and an endowment to the City of Leeds in 1968. Lotherton Hall is a valuable heritage asset, museum and country park much enjoyed by the local and wider community. The village of Lotherton, which was served by the chapel, has been lost but underground archaeology remains along with remnants of medieval ridge and furrow.

The existing drainage and soakaway system are no longer fit for purpose and have been giving problems for some time, so we in principle support this planning application. However, we do have concerns that do not seem to have been addressed.

There are proposed surface water sewer and manholes and proposed foul sewer and manholes close to the Hall buildings and therefore within the registered garden and also in proximity to the 12th century chapel. Although much of the proposed work, septic tank and soakaway lie outside the registered boundary they are nevertheless within the setting of the registered area and importantly in the wider historic site with its heritage assets, and the proposed soakaway on the eastern side of the drive is within that part of the park. Proposed works within the former walled garden now the Bird Garden may also reveal significant archaeology and should also be monitored.

We have not seen a Heritage Statement which would show a clear understanding of the heritage assets, their significance, assess any harm and any mitigation to be undertaken. We consider this is important and is required by the NPPF para 200.

In our previous letter we wrote that our main concerns are impact on the trees and archaeology.

The planning documents include an Arboricultural Survey dated February 2020 and several Tree Plans, but we have not noted any details of how the trees and their root zones will be protected during the trenching and other works that could damage the trees. The trees are an important facet of the overall design and heritage of Lotherton. There is no information as far as we can see regarding the disposal of spoil from the trenching or the storage of materials during the work. The spoil should not be spread within the root protection zones and care should be taken not to compact the soil. Soil compaction could result in the demise of the trees. Care needs to be taken in general to prevent damage to the registered park and garden and the other heritage assets. We would expect that there should be precise guidance on these matters for the contractor.

On the archaeology we have noted the detailed response from the West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service (WYAS) and the advice from Historic England and we share their concerns. There is the potential at Lotherton for considerable archaeology so this needs to be addressed in the proposals for the new drainage and soakaway system. It is possible that archaeology could reveal new information on the history of Lotherton. We defer to the expertise of WYAS on the evaluation required.

We have no objection in principle to this planning application but consider that our concerns outlined above need to be addressed.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

cc. Historic England; the Gardens Trust