



# YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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14th March 2023

Dear Ms Martignoni

**Reference: Woodland Management Plan (WMP) reference 1271964. Notification of WMP and associated felling licence on Registered Parks and Gardens, Norton Conyers. Grid Ref SE315753.**

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee with regard to any proposed development that could affect a site included by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks & Gardens – Norton Conyers at Grade II, List Entry Number: 1001068. 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.

Norton Conyers has a long history with various families: Conyers, Norton, Musgrave and the Graham's who bought it in 1624. The registered site is on fairly flat land running south-west to the banks of River Ure. Norton Conyers Hall (listed grade II\*) is a medieval building with extensions and alterations of the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and the gardens and designed landscape have probably been altered similarly to give a setting for the Hall and facilitate the family's pursuits. The access points to the Hall eg Crow Wood (Cpt 6b) and the drive from Wath Lodge, and the views enjoyed as family and visitors progressed along them, the pleasure grounds particularly Wilderness Wood, (Cpts 5a1, 5a2, 5a3), and the views from the Hall itself and its south-west facing terrace across the South Lawn (named 'The Lawn' on OS 1<sup>st</sup> Ed map), are important facets of the historic designed landscape.

We have noted the information in the WMP that the woodlands across the estate have been under managed for a period and that the aesthetic, amenity and biodiversity elements of the woodland will be carefully considered and promoted...'. From our knowledge the House is listed grade II\*.

Thank you so much for sending us such helpful consultation information in your e-mail. We really value that extra detail and the maps showing the registered area:

Thinning works are proposed in cpt 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a1, 6a1, 6b, 11 and 12a within the RP&G site.

Regeneration felling coupes with restocking are proposed in cpt 4a1, 6b1 and 6b2 within the RP&G site.

Clearfelling and restocking is proposed in cpt 5a2 and 5a3 and 6a2 within the RP&G site.

The restocking mix includes: pedunculate oak (30 to 50% depending on cpt), hornbeam (10 to 30%), sycamore (35-40%), small leaf lime (10-15%), silver birch (10-60%), wild cherry (10%), beech (20%), hazel (5-15%), yew (5%), sweet chestnut (10%), woody shrubs (5-10%), Norway maple (5%). ‘

There are no Scheduled Monuments on the site but a carved stone entrance gate (Norton Conyers Gate listed grade II) on the southern end of cpt 6b was recently damaged in a car accident and Historic England might have been consulted as part of the repair process and the old icehouse just to the north of Norton Conyers Gate in Cpt 6b has recently been restored.

As YGT has not done any research on Norton Conyers we have had a look at the early OS maps:

Yorkshire CII.11 surveyed 1890 published 1891 25":1mile shows **Crow Wood (Cpt 6b, 6b1, 6b2)** with a walk overlooking the South Lawn and a **statue near the Ha-ha** which would have been an ‘incident’ to be enjoyed along the walk. Crow Wood is largely mixed woodland with the more or less central path/drive from Ripon Lodge and the old ice house to the north of Lodge.

**Church Walk (6a1, 6a2)** has a linear path on the west side for views across the North Lawn (named ‘The Park’ on OS 1st Ed map) towards Wilderness Wood. It is mixed woodland.

The OS maps surveyed 1907, published 1909 and also surveyed 1928, published 1929 are similar.

Yorkshire CIII.7 surveyed 1890 publ 1891 25":1mile shows **Wath Belt, Cpts 4a, 4b**, deciduous with a little conifer. By 1908/9 with groups of conifers scattered through and by 1928/9 4a1 is a conifer plantation.

The pleasure grounds called **Wilderness Wood – Cpts 5a1, 5a2, 5a3** – are important and it was noted in 1998 that where the woodland widens (5a1) and paths lead north-west, they go past brickwork exposed in the roots of a fallen tree which appears to be of a 17<sup>th</sup> century date and may be the foundations of a building. In 1998 there were a number of ponds partially dried up including one c.500m north-west of the Hall with a central island. This is shown on the old OS maps eg Yorkshire CII.11 surveyed 1890, published 1891, within the deciduous woodland. A system of banks or terraces lies south and west of the pond on land which slopes down to the south-west. The large oval pond c.700m north-west of the Hall in 1998 had a shore planted with ornamental trees mixed with self-sown native species. OS Yorkshire C II.10 1890/91 shows Cpt 5a3 as deciduous with a little conifer to the west of the Fish Pond. **Cpt 5a1 has a statue marked to the south of the Fish Pond** but this is not marked on later OS maps. Cpts 5a1 and 5a2 are deciduous woodland but some conifer presumably part of the ornamental nature of this area.

The statues in Cpts 6b and 5a1 are also marked on the OS 1st Ed 6":1mile Yorkshire Sheet 102, surveyed 1853 and published 1856. At this time Wilderness Wood was named High Wood.

In designed landscapes a Wilderness is a wooded feature with (usually winding) paths running through it. Early examples (17<sup>th</sup> century) were formal with geometric elements but in the 18<sup>th</sup> century informal winding paths produced a wilderness with a ‘natural’ labyrinth supplying the element of mystery and surprise. Statues, seats and views out into the park were incidents. Wray Wood at Castle Howard was first designed having straight *allées* but from 1718 onwards it became a series of meandering paths leading from one group of sculpture to another. It is quite possible that Wilderness Wood at Norton Conyers evolved in a similar manner. So, we suggest that special care is taken here.

The former locations of statues are important as stone or brick plinths are likely to survive so it is best to check on the ground if possible, to determine where they may be from the map evidence and leave any material evidence *in situ*. We appreciate that this may not be so easy but those doing the thinning work should be aware of where there may still be evidence. Care should also be taken around the ice house noted at the southern edge of Cpt 6b.

We trust the information that we have outlined in this consultation will be helpful for informing the woodland work at Norton Conyers and the care needed, and the Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust have no objection.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth  
Trustee Conservation and Planning

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