



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Dear Ms Martignoni

Consultation on Felling Licence for Nun Appleton grid ref: SE 545 404.

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee with regard to any proposed development affecting a site listed by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks and Gardens. In this case Nun Appleton, which is registered 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.

The history of Nun Appleton stretches back to at least the 12th Century when it was a nunnery. Following the Dissolution, the property passed to Sir Thomas Fairfax (1521-99) and his descendant Thomas, Third Lord Fairfax, as General Fairfax, commanded the Parliamentary forces from 1654-1650 when he retired. It is this mid17th Century period which is most interesting from a historic designed landscape and garden standpoint although we understand little or almost nothing seems to survive above ground. Like John Aislabie at Studley Royal in the early 18th Century and many others, Fairfax spent his retirement laying out his gardens at Nun Appleton designing them formally with a military theme. Andrew Marvell, tutor to Mary Fairfax dedicated his poem *Upon Appleton House* to her father, General Fairfax and emphasized the natural beauty of the site and the formal gardens. The park developed later during the ownership of the Milner family in the 18th Century and later in the mid19th Century when Lady Milner also created a formal garden with a fishpond. A little later she created a terrace along the south side of the house and linked the smaller parts of the garden together, along with draining the park and ordering the embankment of the River Wharfe. When Nun Appleton was in Fairfax ownership the land was described as 'a noble park with splendid oak trees' (ref: CR Markham). And the Andrew Marvell poem mentions shady woods and woodland with mature trees.

The estate is very private, and we have never been able to visit. Compartments 1-10 are within the Registered Park and Garden, the other compartments are well beyond to the west. The felling licence is for thinning with only one small compartment no 4, (0.72ha) within the registered boundary

to be clear felled. This is 100% Sitka spruce and European larch and is to be replanted with 70% oak, 15% lime and 15% hornbeam. The compartments seem to be 20th century woodland planting. Compartment 1 Home Farm Plantation embraces the east side of the pond at Home Farm and post-dates the 1906 OS map (published 1908). The thinning will be of sycamore and Scots pine. Compartments 2,3,4,5 are the Acaster Belt along with compartment 6. The southern part of this eastern registered boundary belt is called Walnut Grove. We don't know if there have been walnuts in these compartments before the 20th century but it's an interesting name and maybe historically walnuts were planted by the boundary track which was probably a pleasure ground ride from the Hall. Apart from compartment 3 which has pedunculate oak and Scots pine, the other compartments for thinning are broadleaves (sycamore/ash) with conifers and we note that the conifers are mainly Scots pine; a good designed landscape tree.

Compartments 7 and 8 are Sicklebit Wood, birch, pedunculate oak and sycamore, to the south of Walnut Grove and near the River Wharfe. Compartments 9 and 10 are sycamore, ash, Norway spruce and Scots pine woodland forming part of the southern registered boundary, and east of the serpentine fish pond which is part of the pleasure gardens extending east from the terrace.

Compartments 2-6, 9 and 10 are depicted on the 1906 OS map (published 1908), little has changed. Some conifers are marked on the 1906 map, but we don't have any information about which species may have been planted originally. We can only note for future reference that new exotic conifers became very fashionable following introductions from North America from the 1850's. But the conifers currently in the compartments have probably been planted relatively recently and we understand not well-managed.

Where the woodland edge faces onto the park it will be important in views, so we recommend particular care there. Where possible the woodland edge should reflect all the species planted in the compartments.

The Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust have no objection to the proposal. Our references below may be of interest.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth
Trustee and Chairman Conservation and Planning

Cc Zoltan Varju, Forestry Commission, Bucks Horn Oak; John Stonard, Team Leader Development Advice, Yorkshire and the Northeast Historic England; conservation @gardens trust

REFS

CR Markham, *Life of the Great Lord Fairfax*, 1870,
H Macdonald (ed), *Andrew Marvell* 2nd ed 1956, pp79-107
A Dixon Hunt, *Andrew Marvell: His Life and Writings*, 1978