



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Mrs Val Hepworth
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22nd February 2024

Dear Ms Murray

23/01552/LBCM Listed Building Consent for redevelopment of Owston Hall: Demolition of existing conservatory, new single storey side extension and internal alterations forming bar and dining area. Relocation of existing WC's/ Kitchen/ bar. New external patios including raised terrace over spa extension and internal alterations to spa. New spa entrance lobby to ground floor level. New sunken swimming pool patio and retaining wall. New single storey side extension forming increased internal swimming pool area, plant room and storage. Proposed three storey rear extension forming 23 additional hotel bedrooms. External hard and soft landscaping including new car park. Owston Hall Hotel, Owston Lane, Owston, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN5 0LP.

ALSO as above your notification: 23/01551/FULM

Thank you for reconsulting 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. 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 historic designed landscape, Owston Park, is not on the Register but is designated as a Park or Garden of Local Historic Interest by the City of Doncaster Council. This response is from the YGT.

Much of the parkland of Owston Hall has been turned into golf courses (one an 18-hole course associated with the Owston Hall Hotel and another independent 9-hole course) which has altered the historic designed landscape, however although much altered, the parkland is still legible today as the setting for Owston Hall and its associated buildings. Owston Hall is Listed Grade II* with the Church of All Saints Listed Grade I immediately to the north-east. The estate is within the Owston Conservation Area.

You will know from our previous response dated 19th September 2023 that my colleagues at the YGT have researched Owston Hall park and garden and the completed historic report and statement of significance for Owston is on our website -

<https://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/research/sites/owston-hall#info> This includes a list of exotic species that were planted. See the Site Description section, and Ref at the end of this letter.

We have the following advice/comments regarding this reconsultation:

Car Parking and Lift - We welcome the removal of the parking from the south-east of the Hall and in this context, we consider that the previously proposed ramp to be replaced with a lift will be a much more discrete solution and not so damaging to the entrance front of the Hall. We suggest that some careful evergreen planting alongside the lift when viewed from the south-east, will assist its integration into the historic elevation.

We also have some concerns about the proposed car parking area to the east that has recently been cleared and we agree with your Authority's Design and Conservation Report (19th January) that the proposals might be acceptable if amended in various ways. This area seems in general to be the most suitable site for any proposed parking but will have an impact on the setting of both the Hall and the Church. Therefore, we advise that there should be further landscaping and tree planting bearing in mind that there should not be any compacting vehicular movements in tree root areas. Further tree planting will preserve the appearance of the Conservation Area and the historic park and garden. And in this context, we advise that historic exotic tree species would be appropriate (see Heritage Statement p19, that also includes Fig 13, John Peltro after Humphry Repton, *Ouston [sic], Yorkshire – Seat of Bryant [sic] Cook Esqs*, engraving July illustration from *Peacock's Polite Repository*, 1798 (The Collection of Nigel Temple, courtesy of The Gardens Trust))

We have not noted any details of the bin stores.

Conservatory – We regret the demolition of the 19th century conservatory as although it is a relatively recent replacement (1990's), the previous proposal was for the re-use of the 19th century metal frame which would potentially have continued the design integrity of this part of the Hall's west elevation. However, we do not object given the current condition.

Sedum Roof – Swimming Pool Extension and Spa Extension

Although in principle we support 'greening' measures, the sedum roofs will need some regular attention every 6 or 12 months in April or October – slow release fertilizer and weeding.

Landscaping – In terms of the patio area on the west side (*Sketch Layouts and Possibilities for Owston Hall Hotel Doncaster*), we consider that the suggestions are very contrived and not in keeping with the Repton landscape. They would be out of character and intrusive. Humphry Repton was influenced by some of the Picturesque ideas and suggested that areas near the house be prettified by formal gardens or flower parterres with formality introduced by a terrace with balustrade and steps. The latter would be elegant with picturesque planting of shrubs and perennials - and he often used low trellised enclosures for flowers.

The Proposed West Elevation drawing shows new native tree planting. We are pleased to see that the existing Atlas Cedar (T40), a historically appropriate species is retained, but advise that rather than native trees historic exotic tree species should be planted.

We agree with your Authority's Design and Conservation Report (19th January) that the 'Proposed landscaping appears to be more formal than being more natural in line with its most important historic style of being picturesque.'

As we noted in our letter of 19th September Owston Hall has an interesting landscape design history which could be used to underpin future landscaping proposals rather than the somewhat formulaic nature of the plans submitted. In our view this would add to the unique qualities of the hotel, spa and golf course(s) and make it an even more special destination that stands out from others. We advise that a proper conservation plan for the landscape setting of the Hall/hotel is needed. The setting is an important consideration. We recommend a specialist in garden and landscape conservation is required since we are dealing with a Grade II* Listed Building.

In summary the Yorkshire Gardens Trust has concerns that the currently proposed scheme would still harm the Grade II* listed building, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the Park and Garden of Local Historic Interest. Whilst the harm is less than substantial, we do not consider that this would be outweighed by sufficient public benefit and meet the requirements of NPPF para. 205, 206, 208.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

Cc Historic England, e-yorks@historicengland.org.uk; Conservation@ the Gardens Trust

REF: <https://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/research/sites/owston-hall#info>

From Site Description:

Arboretum

This was developed from 1827 in the pleasure grounds south of the kitchen garden and south and east of the hall in the former Hall Ings. Species that were planted included (E7/3):

Common Name	Latin name	Location
Athenian poplar	<i>Populus nigra subsp. caudina?</i>	Fishpond Close
Black Italian poplar	<i>Populus x canadensis 'Serotina'</i>	Fishpond Close
Poplar leaved birch	<i>Betula populifolia</i>	Fishpond Close
Chinese ash	<i>Fraxinus chinensis</i>	Fishpond Close
Snowy Mespilus	<i>Amelanchier lamarckii</i>	Paddock by churchyard
Early Mespilus	<i>Mespilus germanica ?</i>	Paddock by churchyard
Cut leaved alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa 'Imperialis'</i>	Fishpond Close
Manna ash	<i>Fraxinus ornus</i>	Fishpond Close
Lombardy popular	<i>Populus nigra</i>	Fishpond Close
Silver fir	<i>Abies alba</i>	Pleasure ground between garden and brewhouse
White American spruce	<i>Picea glauca</i>	Pleasure ground between garden and

fir		brewhouse
Parsley leaved elder	<i>Sambucus nigra f. laciniata</i>	Paddock by churchyard
Snowdrop tree	<i>Halesia carolina</i>	Paddock by churchyard
Bondue tree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	Paddock by churchyard
Tamarisk germain	<i>Tamarix ?</i>	Paddock by churchyard
Tamarisk French	<i>Tamarix gallica</i>	By brewhouse
Three thorned acacia	<i>Senegalia senegal</i>	Paddock by churchyard

The species were grouped in areas in the pleasure grounds and are noted on a plan of c. 1830 (H1/3/22, **Figure 3**).

Flower Garden

Located next to the south of the kitchen garden (**Figure 3**), it was started in 1818. The planting here also reflected Davies-Cooke's interest in unusual species such as striped blackcurrants (*Ribes nigrum?*) and blood coloured bladder senna (*Colutea orientalis*) (E7/3).