



# YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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5<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Ms Murray

**24/00740/LBCM. Listed Building Consent for the erection of 30 one-bedroom serviced apartments (Use Class C1) within the existing listed Walled Garden of the Owston Hall Estate. Stockbridge Lane, Owston, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN6 9JF.**

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. 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 and includes the walled kitchen garden. It lies within the Owston Conservation Area.

This response is from the YGT.

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>

The historic designed landscape around Owston Hall was shaped by Bryan Cooke (1756-1821) and his son, Philip Davies-Cooke, between 1785 and 1853. Bryan consulted the landscape designers Thomas White in 1785 and Humphry Repton in 1792, after making plans to build a new hall in the centre of his landholdings in Owston. These had been consolidated through enclosure and purchase since the Cooke family acquired the estate in 1698. While positioning the new hall there would have given him space to create a large park and gardens, he decided instead to put the building next to the existing hall to the east. Although this partly negated White's and Repton's proposals, some of their suggestions for improvement were adopted by Cooke over the next thirty years. These included a new kitchen garden, parkland, pleasure grounds, flower garden and extensive plantations. Repton's advice in his signature Red Book 'Ouston Hall', (should be Owston Hall, it was an error by Repton) is dated 1793. It is now held by Doncaster Heritage Services, (copy in Eyres and Lynch 2018, 35-47). See references below.

The Grade II listed Walled Kitchen Garden of the Owston Hall Estate, the subject of this LBC dates from 1791 (see detailed extract from our website referenced below) and in recent times was given

planning permission for a housing development of eight dwellings – 17/00068/FUL. The current proposal is for the erection of 30 one-bedroom serviced apartments within the Walled Kitchen Garden. We understand that the only element that will need listed building consent are works that directly impact on the wall and its associated structures not the development within it, however as the new proposals are a significant change we would like to comment on the full application in addition.

As we would expect of a historic walled kitchen garden, it has been designed facing south/south-east, with heat-retaining brick lined walls, in order to have the optimum orientation for sunlight and warmth for the best and earliest growth. The north-west wall with its inner face, south/south-east, was also heated by furnaces and hot air flues to ensure that tender fruit was not damaged by frost. The kitchen garden area is known to have had a range of buildings including 6 separate glasshouses, one of which was an indoor fernery. (The early OS maps give a good indication of the distribution of the glasshouses.) Traditionally the perimeter paths would have been at a convenient distance from the walls enabling vegetables, fruit and flowers to be grown with fruit trees trained against the wall. Traditionally the main paths were made of gravel or smooth pebbles set in hoggin and were wide enough for two or more people to walk abreast and for access by cart/wheelbarrow. (See ref: *Walled Kitchen Gardens*, below)

We were not consulted about the earlier approved application for the walled kitchen garden but welcome both the current proposed use that should retain it as part of the ownership/management of Owston Hall, and the works to repair the walls. However, we have concerns about the proposed form of the development which we consider does not give enough emphasis to the historic, cultural and aesthetic significance of this part of the designed landscape at Owston Hall.

Having visited the site in November 2023 we appreciate the very poor condition of the walled kitchen garden with its damaged/dilapidated walls in certain areas, the loss of all the glasshouses and its overgrown nature. However, it is still a very 'readable' part of the historic designed landscape, a significant area. We consider that any development should pay special heed to that rather than proposing what we consider to be a more 'urban' design. There are maps and good records in the Doncaster Archives that include lists of plants etc growing in the walled kitchen garden in 1883. (See CS Archaeology Report December 2011, Annex B in Planning, Heritage and Design Assessment and YGT report).

We strongly recommend that the walls of the walled kitchen garden can be seen as the main feature with their associated borders and perimeter paths. The proposed design pays scant regard to this historic traditional design of walled kitchen gardens and has the appearance of a small housing estate dropped into this historic area. The landscaping bears little or no relevance to the historic tradition even though the proposal could in our view be much more sympathetic to the heritage and of a quality to complement a carefully designed contemporary scheme.

We have noted and support the Consultation Assessment and Justification Report from your Authority's Planning Policy and Environment, Design and Conservation Officer, Peter Lamb. At Para 9 : 'The idea was for the development to be relatively simple but have a contemporary feel so as to be clearly a new intervention but not to overtly compete with the walls that should remain the main feature. Considerable emphasis was also put on the quality of the landscape.' This is a useful summary, and we support the detail in the report.

On our site visit we saw the stone arched doorway near the northwest corner of the walled kitchen garden leading into Garden Plantation that was part of the pleasure grounds walk, and trust that this will be repaired. The area along the outside of the western kitchen garden wall had fruit trees shown on early OS maps and may have been a 'slip garden' with the ornamental doorway inserted as a feature leading into Garden Plantation.

In view of the historic significance of the walled kitchen garden we also advise that there should be an archaeological watching brief for any work in that area.

We have also noted on Owston Hall Drone Views 1 and 2 the large area of car parking south of the Walled Kitchen Garden in an area that was the Flower Garden and Arboretum. The Flower Garden was started in 1818. Although not part of this planning application we would like to note that this area may have some interesting and older trees or shrubs remaining which should be identified and incorporated into future plans. We also suggest – and we understand that there have been recent discussions – that this historic area could again become a part of the pleasure ground walks for Owston Hall as a hotel.

In summary the Yorkshire Gardens Trust has concerns that the currently proposed scheme would 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. 195, 197, 202, 205, 206, 208. We therefore object to this planning application in its present form.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth  
Trustee Conservation and Planning

Cc Historic England, [e-yorks@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:e-yorks@historicengland.org.uk); Conservation@ the Gardens Trust

REF:

1. Eyres, Patrick, Lynch, Karen; *On The Spot: The Yorkshire Red Books of Humphry Repton, Landscape Gardener*, New Arcadian Press 2018. P31-47.
2. Turnbull, Deborah, Wickham, Louise; Thomas White (C.1736-1811) *Redesigning the northern British landscape*, Windgather Press, 2022. P222-224 and other pages.
3. Klemperer, *Style and Social Competition in the Large Scale Ornamental Landscapes of the Doncaster District of South Yorkshire, c. 1680-1840*, BAR British Series 511 (Oxford, 2010).
4. Campbell, Susan, *Walled Kitchen Gardens*, Shire Publications, 2006

## **YGT Owston Hall Park and Garden**

### **Site Description pp 9,10:**

4.9 KITCHEN GARDEN The first kitchen garden was located adjacent to the hall and in 1768, it covered just under 2 acres (E3/1/3, Figure 1). Whether this is the one referred to in accounts from 1719 (E11/1) is not clear as the area due south of the hall is also called a garden with trees shown (possibly an orchard) in the 1768 survey. With the remodelling of the landscape, a new walled kitchen garden was built in 1791 approximately in the position indicated by White at the northern end of Long Close. The walls remain and are listed Grade II (NHLE 1314851). A survey from 1803 (E3/8/3) gave its extent at 1a 2r 13p, which was just the area within the walls. To the north was added a service area that measured an acre. There is a reference to work being done by a mason on the 'Peach House' (E11/12) between 1807 and 1813. This may have been the freestanding building shown outside the northern wall on the 1830s plan (Figure 3). By the 1840s there was a range of glasshouses on the northern wall and a freestanding one inside. On the west section of the north wall were two furnace sheds providing heat for the adjacent walls and on the east section were the bothies or service buildings (Figure 4). By 1883, another wall had been built in the northern section with an attached glasshouse, together with a fernery on the northern side of the north wall (CS Archaeology 2011, 9). An inventory of that year (E7/12) listed the following 'Garden Buildings': Stove House, Vinery No 1, Vinery No 2, Orangery, Conservatory, Fernery, Peach House and Frames. No details are given of location but Figure 7 indicates where they may have been. Another glasshouse was added to the wall just north of the peach house by the tenant, W. H. Matthews, in 1908 (MERL TRMES AD1/1916) and an extension was put to the southern side of the possible orangery before 1930.

**P6: Historic Development of the Site:** 3.3.3 Later history Davies-Cooke's son, Philip Bryan, succeeded in 1853 but did little to the estate due to his father's debts and floods in 1866. He let the estate from 1857 and moved permanently to Wales in 1881. While the grounds and kitchen garden were maintained, little was added with the exception of a gothic archway from the northeast side of the kitchen garden to the Garden Plantation. This reputedly came from the medieval chapel at nearby Thorpe-in-Balne that had collapsed in 1865. Another decorative arch similar to a ruined bridge was put in the pleasure grounds around the kitchen garden possibly at the same time.