



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: The Countess of Harewood

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www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Mrs Val Hepworth
Trustee

Conservation and Planning

Mr Gerard Walsh
Principal Development Management Officer
Place Shaping and Economic Growth
Harrogate Borough Council

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conservation@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Dear Mr Walsh

22/04808/FULMAJ Ripon Dean & Chapter, Ripon Cathedral Extension Building.

The Gardens Trust (GT) is the 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 conservation partnership with it.

The garden site itself is not registered but is within the buffer zone for the World Heritage site of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, which, among other factors, leads us to have significant concerns about the impact of these proposals.

The site for the proposed Ripon Cathedral Extension Building lies to the north of the Cathedral in the Cathedral Garth immediately south of the Courthouse Museum and Stonemason's Yard. This area is a garden in the ownership of Harrogate BC and maintained by that authority's parks department. It is valued as a calm garden site in an urban area with otherwise little public greenspace. The garden includes several significant mature, high value trees – including a veteran beech tree - which would be lost as part of the scheme, impacting on visual amenity, carbon capture, cooling of the surrounding area etc. The proposed scheme would impose buildings on about half of the present garden area.

The Archaeological Evaluation (FAS Heritage) notes that 'the proposed development site lies within an area that was held as part of the Archbishop of York's manor of Ripon from the 11th century and is known to have been the site of the Archbishop's manor house and court. Some medieval elements survive – specifically the Old Courthouse (west of the precinct, in private hands) and stonework reused in the western boundary of Minster Gardens South. The current Courthouse Museum is known to have replaced a medieval building that would have formed part of the manorial complex. Beyond this, however, little is known of the layout and character of the medieval manor house; much of this area has remained as open ground (bowling green, garths, gardens) and so there is high potential for below-ground remains relating to this complex to survive.' The 1854 OS map shows the former bowling green – still extant in 1839 - to have been laid out as a formal garden: largely the area of the garden today (pp20-22).

The site is situated within the Ripon Conservation Area, designated on 13th March 1968. The designations also include the Grade I listed (1150164), scheduled monument (1003148) Cathedral Church of St Wilfrid and St Peter; The grade II* listed (1150165) Old Deanery; grade II* listed (1174464) Courthouse Museum as well as the grade II listed (1174466) Old Deanery Boundary Wall and grade II listed (1315493) Old Courthouse Boundary Wall. The site is part of the Cathedral Precinct area and thus within the Scheduled Monument area (1003148) and forms part of the buffer zone of Studley Royal World Heritage Site (WHS), which includes Fountains Abbey (1000094). Studley Royal is linked via a key designed view from the drive of Studley Royal Deer Park 'appropriated as a visual landmark' (UNESCO).

The viewpoint from the west side of The Court House towards the Cathedral would be completely altered as a result of the development – rather than seeing garden, trees and the Cathedral beyond, this natural and historic view would be replaced with a high and imposing modern building which would hide views of a major part of the Cathedral from one of the main public footpaths through Ripon and towards the Cathedral.

We appreciate that 300 new trees planted out beyond the WHS will increase the biodiversity of that agricultural field but fail to see that it can compensate for the loss of half the present garden at the centre of this historic Cathedral setting.

We have noted and agree with the comments and advice from your authority's Principal Conservation Officer, Head of Parks, Arboriculturist and Principal Landscape Architect and will not repeat them here.

We consider that the loss of the garden and trees will result in significant harm to the Ripon Conservation Area, to the Old Courthouse due to development within its setting and to the views out of the World Heritage Site towards Ripon. Moreover, the loss will reduce the already limited public benefit of greenspace in the centre of Ripon. NPPF, (July 2021) Section 16, Paragraph 202 requires that in an application such as this one, public benefits deriving from the proposal must outweigh the harm that is caused by it. In this proposal we are unable to see that this is the case.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

Cc. Historic England; conservation@ the Gardens Trust