



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: The Countess of Harewood

Vice-presidents: Lady Legard, Peter Goodchild, Nick Lane Fox

www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Ms Laura Smith
Operations Admin Officer
Forestry Commission
Operational Delivery Team
Bucks Horn Oak Hub
Farnham, Surrey GU10 4LS

Mrs Val Hepworth
Trustee
Conservation and Planning

conservation@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

laura.smith@forestrycommission.gov.uk

3rd March 2025

Dear Ms Smith

Consultation on Felling Licence for Wharnccliffe Estate 012/734/2025, SK 309 988

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 (RPG). In this case Wortley Hall, which is registered grade II and lies within the Wharnccliffe Estate. 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.

Wortley Hall has been associated with the Wortley family since the time of King Stephen and significant architects and landscape designers have worked there from Ralph Tunncliffe in the 1730's, and over the further course of the 18th Century, Giacomo Leoni, Matthew Brettingham and John Carr of York – the latter was responsible for the stable block and outbuildings. At the beginning of the 19th Century the south front garden terraces of the Hall were completed and also the laying out of the park. William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843) is said to have worked 'in a Pricean spirit' (alluding to the important picturesque landowner/writer and designer Uvedale Price) at Wortley (*Gardeners Magazine, Vol 16 1840 pp105-08*) although the extent of his work is not clear.

The park covers c.249ha bounded to the south- west by Wortley village and Howbrook Lane, to the north-west and north by Hermit Hill Lane, and to the east and south by farmland. High Wood Dike runs south-west to north-east through the park at the base of a valley.

In November 2024 we were consulted by Darryl Stubbs, Senior Forest Manager at Tilhill re the Woodland Management Plan (WMP) for the Wharnccliffe Estate and I understand that my e-mail to Darryl with notes on the WMP dated 8th November, were sent to you.

The Compartments 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 are part of the RPG. The other compartments in your felling consultation are largely irrelevant for a consultation to the Gardens Trust. For clarity I will repeat the relevant comments of 8th November as they still stand:

'There are also possibly some compartments eg 17a which may be in the setting of the RPG and therefore have some impact, but you will know best from your local knowledge of the topography.'

I've noted that eg compartment 14c is part of Lane Royds Park Golf Course that has been long-established in this northern section of Wortley Park RPG so management parameters here will be different to other parts of the estate.

I presume that High Wood that forms a central spine of the RPG is important in views and would require perhaps a little more assessment of the historic nature of the planting bearing in mind that Wortley has links with the landscaper WS Gilpin, and that within High Wood and alongside High Wood Dyke are paths in those compartments. I understand that High Wood still displays some ornamental plantings as noted in the HE Register description dated 2000. See my note below re views and seats from 24": 1mile OS map surveyed 1891.

I note that other woodland eg Copley Wood, cpt13a, Brick Kiln Plantation cpt12a, and compartment 14f etc are on or near the RPG boundary.

Looking at the 24":1mile OS maps Yorkshire CCLXXXII.10 and .6 surveyed 1891, published 1892 many of the compartments in RPG were mixed deciduous and conifers eg Copley Wood, Brick Kiln Plantation, High Wood. The latter has an extensive network of footpaths, presumably some for utilitarian reasons but also for pleasure grounds walks with views as evidenced by their location, incorporated seats and footbridges.

I found the WMP document interesting and was pleased to note on p9:
'To maintain and improve the aesthetic and landscape values of the woodland over the long term'
'The woodlands are managed under coupe/selective felling as opposed to clearfelling. This retains woodland boundaries and softens the impact of harvesting works.
Many of the Estates woodlands can be seen across the landscape from various vantage points owing to the topography of the area.'

I note Section 8 Monitoring that there is proposed southern provenance trees for restocking...'

Darryl replied:

'Yes, there are still signs of the original landscaping in High Wood i.e. large conifers and infrastructure. All the restocking species are listed in the excel document under harvesting and restocking, although they may only be listed as Mixed Conifer or Mixed Broadleaves if less the 20% of the total mix. This will also allow me to choose species suited to the site for the future climate predictions. I also don't intend to carry out all the harvesting listed in the felling plan, but I need options for the next 10 years.'

I have just contacted Darryl again re your consultation and had a very useful discussion about the felling licence proposals:

We understand that the majority of the felling is regenerative felling (RF)/silvicultural thin where a small group of trees (coupes) within a woodland are felled allowing light demanding species such as oak, beech to establish. The felling is targeting diseased ash. All coupe felling will be replanted with a more diverse mixture of species and provenance to help against climate change and diseases.

There is a TPO covering part of Cpt 14, about which Barnsley Council will be consulted. (Darryl mentioned that there are oak veteran trees in Cpts 15c and 14e, so obviously care in these areas is important.)

In Cpts 14 and 15 coupe felling will open up the structure.

Cpt 15a of 5.5ha. 1.5ha coupes will be felled in stages over a 10-year period.

We welcome the removal of *Rhododendron ponticum* in the RPG compartments to help the natural regeneration establish.

We welcome the retention of the edge tree planting as part of the works. This we consider will assist in some retention of views/aesthetic qualities of the woodland.

The Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust have no objection to the proposed work in the RPG area of the Wharnccliffe Estate.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

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