

North York Moors National Park Authority  
The Old Vicarage  
Bondgate  
Helmsley YO62 5BP  
By email only [planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk](mailto:planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk)

18 July 2024

For the attention of Mrs Hilary Saunders



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Dear Mrs Saunders,

**NYM/2024/0449 Application for removal of condition 1 of planning approval  
NYM/2014/0639/CU to allow unrestricted and permanent event use of the site at Park  
Plain, Duncombe Park, Helmsley**

Thank you for consulting the Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee on the above application which has a material impact on the significance of Duncombe Park, an historic designed landscape of national importance which is included by Historic England on the Register of Parks and Gardens (RPG) of Special Historic Interest at Grade I. The inclusion of this site on the statutory register requires great weight to be given to its conservation.

We have liaised with our colleagues in Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT) and the following comments are a joint response submitted on behalf of both our organisations. Please note that, as we have not been able to make a site visit, our comments are based on the documents submitted in support of the application.

Duncombe Park is a highly designated heritage asset significant because of its early date as a designed ornamental landscape with one of the earliest recorded ha-ha's (c1718-23), a serpentine structure attributed to Charles Bridgeman (d 1738) and the East Terrace with its Ionic Temple (c.1730, attributed to Vanbrugh, listed Grade I) and Tuscan Temple, (c.1730 attributed to Sir Thomas Robinson also listed Grade I). It is suggested that Vanbrugh may have advised on the layout of Duncombe Park as he was working in Yorkshire in 1718, 1721 and 1724. There are also possible influences by Steven Switzer (1682-1745). It has been described by Jellicoe et al 1986, as 'a landmark in the development of the English natural style'.

Within the registered boundary to the west of Duncombe Park House (Listed Grade I), the stables (Grade I), the gates and railings (Grade I) and the laundry (Grade II\*) and thus within their setting, lies the western part of the park, called Park Plain. This is the former Fallow Deer Park and is on level pasture land sloping slightly to the north and largely treeless. However, the woodland belt around Park Plain is classified as Ancient Woodland (Spring Bank Wood) and Park Plain is also adjacent to Duncombe Park's National Nature Reserve (also SSSI).

Application NYM.2014/0639/CU. Change of use of agricultural to a mixed use of land for events open to the general public at Park Plain, Duncombe Park, Helmsley was determined on 26/11/2014 and expires in November 2024. The current application is for the condition of 10 years (condition 1 and the only condition) to be altered to unrestricted and permanent.

We understand from the supporting document that the events provide positive economic outcomes for Helmsley and environs as well as Duncombe Parks's heritage assets and that there has been no detrimental effect. The land is grazed by livestock under a seasonal grazing licence.

However, in view of Park Plain being part of an RPG of exceptional interest (around only 9% of registered sites), the Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust has concerns about the removal of time-limited permission. As we all know situations can change over time and with the changing climate this may become more marked. We consider that planning permission for 10 years is a good balance between economic use and the conservation and review of any negative impacts upon this highly designated heritage asset and should meet the requirements of NPPF paragraphs 201 and 205.

The Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust supports the retention of condition 1 if permission is granted for an extension of the mixed use of Park Plain for agriculture and events. We would be grateful to be advised of the outcome of the application in due course, and to remain included in the consultation if further information is submitted.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Allighan BSc (Hons) MSc CMLI  
Conservation Casework Manager & Acting Conservation Officer

cc Yorkshire Gardens Trust