



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Dear Ms Waddington

ZB23/01330/FUL | Creation of a new Mediterranean garden on land east of Beningbrough Hall, comprising new accessible paths, garden features and associated planting scheme with resurfacing of existing paths. | Beningbrough Hall Beningbrough Park Beningbrough York North Yorkshire YO30 1DD

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.

Beningbrough Hall is a grade I listed building and sits in its wider parkland registered at grade II, together with other structures listed at grade II associated with the Hall and Gardens immediately adjacent to the Hall. The significance of the listed buildings and parkland is well described in the Heritage Significance and Impact Assessment (HIA), so will not be repeated here.

The garden site that is the subject of this proposal is wholly contained within the registered parkland but is itself not cited as a contributor to the heritage significance of the park within the Register entry description. It is close to the Hall (but there are limited views of it from the Hall), the listed garden wall to the north and to the kitchen garden wall to the east. The HIA notes that the garden site was historically an enclosed and discrete area whose layout and planting has been altered several times since the construction of the present Hall. As indicated on the aerial photograph in the HIA it remains largely enclosed today although the most recent significant design for it by noted gardener and NT Gardens Advisor, the late Graham Stuart Thomas, favoured a simpler, more manageable and open layout post the Edwardian Rose Garden period. This had been lost probably between the Wars before the NT took on Beningbrough in 1958. That design has itself been largely abandoned, to leave an area that, apart from pathways, a mounded bank running east-west (which may be a significant remnant of much earlier layout), a few trees and archaeology, reveals little evidence of its former designs.

The application seeks to restore the enclosed characteristic of the area, to reference the Hall's Italianate interiors (though in a more general Mediterranean style suitable to a warming climate), and references also former water features on this site and to the south of the Hall outside the ha-ha. The National Trust have commissioned a significant contemporary garden designer (Andy Sturgeon) to follow the stature of GS Thomas, again as a reference to former work in the area. The new design seeks to complement other planned garden work and the recently created pergola beyond the

garden wall to the north. In the absence of the Conservation Master Plan of 2015, or the parts of it showing the intended final design, it is hard to assess how the full implementation of the various new gardens will relate to each other and to the historic landscape. The full design is not the subject of this application, and there is no attempt to show how visitors will encounter these gardens as they perambulate the grounds. We see this as a weakness of the application, finding it hard to judge how this present application's proposals fit into the whole.

The design for this garden has little precedent in the garden history of the estate as far as we can judge from the scant evidence that's available. What we do know is described and well- analysed in the HIA, which shows that archaeological investigation has revealed outlines of designs in the wider landscape. There is some visible evidence of these designs at ground level, and excavation supported by GPR has provided more data to support a fuller interpretation of the layout of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century garden on the site. In addition, there is art-historical evidence, and cartographic evidence of varying scales and dates that reveals little but outline detail from later periods. It can be argued nevertheless that there is enough evidence to represent or recreate some former features of the sequence of different gardening approaches over time at Beningbrough.

One point that we would like to make relates to the main path from the mansion to the American Garden which is shown on the OS 1st Edition 6" survey (HIA Fig 8) and the OS 1st Edition 25" pub 1893 (HIA Figs 10a, 10b). This path skirts the southern side of the trees/shrubbery that clothe the raised land/mounded bank running east west enclosing the Cherry Lawn on its southern side. We think that this may be an important feature of an earlier design and should not be ignored in the development of the new garden as it gives understanding to the evolution of Beningbrough's gardens over a very long period of time. It should be possible to incorporate this into the new work.

The HIA shows that one of the main characteristics of the garden has been that of regular change over the generations. The contention of the Conservation Master Plan of 2015 that in this area a new design of modern appearance, reflecting the needs of contemporary visitors and contributing to the sustainability (financial and environmental) of the Hall and grounds over the coming years, is one we support. However, we strongly suggest that the historical context is not ignored and that the path from the mansion to the American Garden along with the mounded bank is incorporated into the plans.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

cc. Historic England; Conservation, the Gardens Trust