



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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21st September 2021

Dear Mr Sharp and Ms McCarthy

Consultation on Felling Licence for Bella Vista Plantation, Bretton Hall Application 012/1401/2021 Job Earnshaw & Bros Ltd Woodlands

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. In this case Bretton Hall, which is registered grade II. 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.

Bretton Hall is a unique heritage asset combining as it does a number of listed buildings including the mansion; pleasure grounds of late 18C and early 19C, parkland of the 18C with earlier origins and links with two notable landscape designers/gardeners, Richard Woods (1716-93) and Robert Marnock (1800-99); and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park laid out on part of the pleasure grounds and parkland.

The subject of this application is Compartment 22a which is the western portion of the historic Bella Vista Plantation that is bisected by the Beaumont Drive and is situated just within the north/northwest boundary of the Registered Historic Park and Garden. We note that on the Operations and Restocking Maps it is notated as deciduous woodland. However, we understand that it is currently mainly coniferous with some sycamore and an understorey of Rhododendron ponticum.

Thank you for answering my queries and particularly to Ciara for our very helpful telephone conversation.

The Bella Vista Plantation has an interesting history. The stepped gothic folly called Bella Vista stood in the eastern portion of the Plantation, on high ground (c.500ft) above the mansion and was probably constructed c.1770. By the time of the 1810 estate map it is shown to have a spire,

(Yorkshire Archaeological Society, BEA/C2/MPD/17a, see reference below), and by the end of the 18th Century it was functioning as a lodge. The significance of Bella Vista is indicated by one of the bedrooms in the mansion being called the Bella Vista room. The building was used by the military during the Second World War and it then fell into disrepair and was demolished soon after.

I have looked at the early Ordnance Survey maps and found that the Bella Vista Plantation is shown much as it is today. The 1st Edition 6":1mile surveyed 1849-51 and published in 1854 indicates the woodland as mixed coniferous and deciduous with the folly with a pond to its east in the eastern portion ie east of the drive. The 25":1mile (map CCLXII.NW) surveyed in 1891 and published in 1893 is similar but the plantation is shown as deciduous. The largely deciduous trees to the south are more scattered in the parkland enabling the reciprocal views between the mansion and Bella Vista folly. The later 25":1mile maps of 1930, published 1932 and the 1948 map published 1949 both show Bella Vista Plantation as mixed woodland.

Thank you both for the details of this application:

There is to be the clear felling of Japanese Larch, Corsican Pine and Sycamore – the latter less than 10% of the compartment. It is a relatively even aged stand and 20% understorey of *Rhododendron ponticum* will be removed (as part of the higher tier agreement) along with the larch to protect the estate from *Phytophthora ramorum*. The felling will be carried out by hand using chainsaws and winch outside of nesting times. There are some mid storey Oaks that have regenerated within the compartment and these will be protected and retained in the new planting. The lower area of the compartment has some mature Beech.

The restocking (essentially for commercial purposes) will be 50% Grand Fir and 50% Douglas Fir at 2m centres (2,500/ha). The planting design will keep the species separate so that the Douglas Fir does not shade out the Grand Fir and there will be 10% open space.

The historical and OS map evidence indicates that the Bella Vista Plantation, with its folly and on high ground behind the mansion, was significant in reciprocal views from the later 18th Century and would have been a feature of the landscape design that was carried through into the 20th Century. It seems possible that the Japanese Larch (introduced 1861), Corsican Pine (an earlier introduction at c. 1759) and Sycamore may have been planted in the 1950's with the Beech and Oaks indicating remnants of earlier planting that would probably have been part of the historic patina of design.

Douglas Fir (introduced c. 1827) and Grand Fir (introduced c. 1831) would not have been in any original planting nor of course the Japanese Larch. The Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) are historically a good landscape design species particularly for their picturesque qualities which may well have been the case in Bella Vista Plantation. In our opinion the edges of the plantation facing down the park towards the mansion and alongside the drive are the most sensitive locations and if it is possible in terms of depth of soil and aspect, it would be helpful to include some Scots Pine here along with some more Beech to strengthen the existing mature Beech. We strongly support the protection and retention of the latter along with the Oaks.

Overall, we have no objection to the proposals, trust that the historic dimension will be recognised and thank you for your helpful advice.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth
Trustee and Chairman Conservation and Planning

Cc John Stonard, Team Leader Development Advice, Yorkshire and the Northeast Historic England;
Margie Hoffnung, the Gardens Trust

REF:

Lynch, Karen, '*Happily Situated, in an Elegant Style*': *The Development of the Bretton Hall Landscape, c1760-1830*, *Garden History* 41:1 pp75-95.