



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: The Countess of Harewood

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www.yorkshiregardentrust.org.uk

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Mrs Val Hepworth
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19th September 2025

Dear Mrs Bastow

NYM/2025/0549 Alterations and extensions to existing building together with reconfiguration of space to create ticket kiosk, shop, offices, dirty entrance and plant room together with the construction of replacement orchard house for use as volunteer rest area at Cleveland Way, Helmsley Walled Garden, Duncombe Park Helmsley. (Revised scheme following withdrawal of Nym/2023/0542)

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 (RPG) – Duncombe Park at Grade I. 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.

Duncombe Park is 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, the rectangular walled kitchen garden (Helmsley Walled Garden) lies c.800m north-east of the House immediately west of Helmsley Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument that is also within the registered site. The walled kitchen garden was moved here in 1754 after flooding destroyed the earlier walled garden in the valley.

As we noted in our response to the 2023 withdrawn application, the Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust have no objection to the principle of the development. We understand the requirement of the charity to increase usable space etc alongside developing the walled garden sympathetically as a considerable community and tourist heritage asset.

The plans submitted for this application has two sets of proposed elevations (number D42201406); revision B and revision C both dated January 2023 – a little confusing. However, we note that

revision B is the design amended following advice from NYMNPA and revision C has replacement Orchard House elevations added.

The proposed extensions will form east and west 'wings' to the central buildings behind the conservatory (Orchid House) and will not to be visible from within the walled garden except at the eastern end where the dirty entrance and plant room will extend further east beyond the existing back wall. Here we query whether a rooflight and the solar PV to the south facing roof will be visible from within the walled garden but to one side and whether they will be visible from the Castle. We note that through pre-application discussions the design utilises traditional brickwork, a slate roof and timber windows. The plans for the Orchard House are also pleasing and will be a beneficial improvement.

We appreciate the detailed Planning, Design and Heritage Statement (August 2025) and in view of the existential threat of climate change appreciate the need for solar PV. Similarly, in view of the history of the site and its proximity to Helmsley Castle Scheduled Monument, we suggest that an archaeological watching brief may be useful.

Overall, the public benefit as a result of this planning proposal will outweigh any potential adverse impact on the significance of the RPG and the Grade I and Scheduled Helmsley Castle.

The Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust have no objection.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

cc. Dr Kristof Fatsar, Yorkshire and the Northeast Historic England, (e-yorks@historicengland.org.uk);
Conservation @The Gardens Trust