



# YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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[www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk)

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21<sup>st</sup> November 2022  
Dear Ms Ramadhin

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## **22/03797/FUL Erection of an ancillary woodland management building/workshop. | Nanny Knowles Wood North of Track Beverley North Yorkshire (Eagle Hall)**

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee with regard to proposed development affecting 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. With our local knowledge we also on occasion comment and give advice on sites that are not listed on the HE Register of Parks and Gardens.

The designed woodland garden at Eagle Hall is not registered but is significant as a relatively unchanged example of a Victorian woodland garden. Historically lead mining has been continuous in the Greenhow area since Roman times but on a large scale since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and it is as a result of the lead mining activities – the Eagle Level from 1825 - and problems with the water that led to the lakes/fish ponds that are the focus of the woodland garden laid out later in the century. Eagle Hall woodland is important in views from all approaches to Pateley Bridge and particularly for walkers along the Nidderdale Way.

In the 1990's I undertook research on Eagle Hall's designed landscape and was privileged to have access to the Mountgarret family archive and photographs from c.1900. The study was copied to the then owner Mr Paul Garforth and I subsequently contributed to the Eagle Hall Heritage Centre Feasibility Study in 1999.

At that time, I thought that the woodland at Eagle Hall designated as ancient woodland appeared to have been continuously replanted with the oldest existing trees probably not earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the exception of some of the beech, that could have been planted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. See Appendix.

The woodland garden was probably laid out in the 1880's and complements the house that was rebuilt by William Atkinson of York for the Hon H.E. Butler (later 13<sup>th</sup> Viscount Mountgarret) between 1876 and 1879, the estate having been bought for him by his great-aunt, Miss Rawson of Nidd Hall.

The woodland garden incorporated the lakes, cascades, bridges, woodland walks, the drive and more open park area below the house and between the two fish ponds/lakes. The park was a large area of mown grass with groups of exotic conifers, shrubs and ornamental heathers. Further exotic conifers and deciduous trees were added to the existing woodland as accents in the composition. Comparisons can be made with Titus Salt's Milner Field laid out by Robert Marnock in the 1870's.

We would like to draw your attention to our letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 in response to the planning application:

**15/03345/FUL** : Erection of 1 dwelling with associated access (Site Area 0.32 ha), formation of lake and installation of package treatment plant, to include treeworks. Eagle Hall Woods To The South Of West Lane Red Brae Bank Beverley, N.Yorkshire.

In our letter we recommended that a detailed tree survey, down to the level of species, should be prepared for the whole site and that the position of specialist rhododendrons that are not *R. ponticum* should be identified in order to inform a woodland conservation management plan, which should ideally run for 25 years and be tied to any approval by a Section 106 agreement. We also noted that further details were needed of the proposed works to repair and reinstate the historic bridges and the historic ironwork on the site.

Since 2015 we have not had any further communication about any of the works at Eagle Hall so were unaware of the current situation until being notified by the Nidderdale AONB of a new application for a woodland management building/workshop in the woods following the owner's decision to withdraw a similar application earlier this year (not notified to GT/YGT).

Nanny Knowles Wood, the site of the current application, lies to the south-west of the new house, 'Stillwater', on the side of the valley that rises south above Eagle Level. The OS 6 inches:1mile map sheet 135 NE, published 1910 indicates this woodland as mixed coniferous and deciduous. It will undoubtedly have ecological value and is part of the setting of the historic designed landscape.

We understand the applicant's requirement for a building to carry out woodland management work listed in the submission but strongly query whether the very extravagant building proposed, similar in morphology to 'Stillwater', really is necessary. Its massing and specification with its glazed balustrades and concrete columns are suggestive of another dwelling. Such a large building also suggests more activity than managing 14.89ha of woodland long-term. We also have concerns that such a development will potentially cause more damage to the historic access drive through the woodland and could result in more light and noise pollution.

Overall, the Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust have concerns for the Victorian woodland garden design of Eagle Hall woods which we consider to be quite unusual. We trust that a Conservation Management Plan is being implemented for the whole of the historic designed landscape/woodland and work will be completed to restore the planting and design particularly to the area to the east of the sloping drive and below/south of Eagle Hall around the larger lake/fish Pond.

As submitted the Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust consider that the proposed management building/workshop will potentially cause harm to the heritage and ecology of the site.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth  
Trustee Conservation and Planning

cc. Chris Mayes, Landscape Architect North of England, Historic England  
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## **APPENDIX NOTES from 1999 survey of Eagle Hall Woodland:**

There are a wide variety of species including common beech, copper beech, common lime, sycamore, oak, ash, horse chestnut, holly, yew, alder, rowan, hazel, a few birch and two fern-leaved beech on the south side of the larger fish pond. The conifers apart from the stand of larch on Pincher Hill, are generally planted as accents amongst the deciduous trees. They include: Lawson cypress, Sawara cypress 'Squarrosa', coast redwood, giant sequoia (wellingtonia), deodar cedar, blue Atlas cedar, Norway spruce, western hemlock, southern Japanese hemlock and silver firs. To the south of the large pond is a Lawson cypress, a Sawara cypress 'Squarrosa' and two coast redwoods; next to the dam is a wellingtonia and western hemlock and four further wellingtonias pierce the woodland, which supports some deodar cedars, to the south side of the sloping drive from the house to the bridge. The north bank of the smaller fish pond is enlivened by deodar and Atlas cedars alongside the track with some spruce behind underplanted in part by laurel and scattered with yew, holly and hawthorn and with several copper beech to the east. Other parts of the wood have a considerable planting of evergreens. The other notable planting is the hollies, some of which are variegated, flanking the sloping drive from the house.