



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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5th February 2023

Dear Miss Walton

22/00876/LBC Listed Building Consent for Demolition of Modern Farm Buildings and Conversion / Extension of Redundant Traditional Farm Buildings into Four Residential Dwellings at Home Farm, Forcett Hall Road, Forcett, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL11 7SB

Also Ref. No: 22/00875/FULL

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 Forcett Hall/Park which is registered at 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.

The Shuttleworth family owned Forcett from the 1590's, and in the c.1740 Daniel Garrett substantially remodelled the earlier house for Richard Shuttleworth. (Hall Listed Grade I). The gardens and park are of a similar date possibly designed by the 'Durham Wizard', Thomas Wright, (1711-1786) astronomer, mathematician, instrument maker, antiquarian, architect and garden designer. They are also notable for the incorporation of part of an Iron Age oppidum into the designed landscape to the south-east as part of a former carriage drive and walk. The kitchen gardens (walls, gates and Garden House listed grade II) lie 150m north-east of the Hall and consist of two walled enclosures, the western productive garden, and to its east, another former productive area now a grassed enclosure with the hexagonal dovecote (listed grade II*) and the park perimeter wall as the east side that is the registered boundary here. The dovecote lies c. 30 m north of the proposed development site and had both an ornamental and practical function as a design feature within the significant Forcett landscape.

This planning application relates to non-designated heritage assets but within the registered boundary of the Forcett estate that is notable for many heritage assets that are designated.

The site comprises redundant farm buildings historically used as a dairy farm. The farm comprises an enclosed courtyard-plan farmstead with no attached farmhouse, as well as subsequent modern structures infilling much of the historic courtyard. However sufficient evidence is preserved –

combined with historic mapping – to suggest that it was probably developed in the mid-to-late 18th century, or shortly after.

The Heritage Impact Assessment (Blue Willow Heritage) comprises a good record for Home Farm, and we note at 1.3 Description of the Proposed Development:

‘The proposed scheme seeks to convert the farmstead into four residential barn-conversion dwellings. In order to achieve this, the scheme will involve a series of alterations to the non-designated historical barns and the demolition of the modern ancillary structures. This proposed residential development is the result of an initial scoping assessment undertaken by Solstice Heritage LLP (Scott 2022). The scoping assessment identified the potential to successfully convert the farmyard through a sensitively designed scheme that is respectful of the surviving heritage resource within the site and its wider historical association within the Forcett Hall Park. Therefore, the design of this scheme has been carefully considered as it has involved input from heritage professionals from both Solstice Heritage and Blue Willow Heritage. The design has sought to limit impacts to the fabric, setting and significance of the non-designated assets, whilst also ensuring an appropriate design in terms of massing, materials and form.’

We agree with the above statement and have no objection in principle to the proposal however we have been unable to determine the detail of fenestration, materials etc in the plans submitted – there is no notation on the existing and proposed site models, nor on the existing and proposed elevations and the information on the application form is limited. We therefore cannot come to any decision about the quality and sensitivity of the proposed scheme.

We agree that there is the possibility of archaeology on the site and that there should be an archaeological watching brief and record made of any finds.

On the submitted Landscape Sketch Plan Option 3 we have reservations. Although the site was a historic farm court yard we consider that in view of our climate concerns, the need to increase the current levels of biodiversity and that this is a historic rural estate, that the landscape plan for the future of this site should pay more heed to those criteria and give the future residents good ‘green space’. There is a lot of hard landscaping on the Sketch Plan. Why are there large areas of sett paving? In particular immediately south of Units 1 and 2. Could the tarmac be replaced by gravel, as well as reducing the setts? If it was felt that there is a need to prevent the gravel from moving about then mesh could be used beneath the gravel. Gravel would certainly give a more rural and historic estate feel and there would be less run off.

Also in our view, for development on an estate with a breadth of heritage assets, there should be more detail of the design and planting submitted eg what species will be in the hedgerows? Will it be a native mixed hedge, or beech, or hornbeam etc. Why are there two rows of five trees in planters. What species of trees are proposed and how will they survive? Trees should be in the ground not in planters. If there are archaeological restraints, the whole site might need rethinking and in which case we would expect a more detailed scheme when the site has been cleared and any archaeology determined. We have not seen any information in the plan for domestic infrastructure such as bin/recycling stores. We agree that estate fencing is a suitable boundary for the units.

In conclusion, we have no objection to the principle of converting the redundant traditional farm buildings into residential dwellings, but as noted above, we have considerable reservations about the scheme as in the submitted documents.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

cc. Historic England e-yorks@historicengland.org.uk; Conservation@ the Gardens Trust