



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

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30th November 2023

Dear Ms Westwood

ZD23/00575/LBC Listed Building Consent for Change of Use of Land for 20 No lodges within an area of cleared woodland with an associated access track and scheme of planting, Land At Scot Butts Wood Forcett Lane Forcett North Yorkshire. NGR NZ 17098 11362

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, NHLE 1001063. 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, NHLE 1316916)). 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 (Scheduled Monument, NHLE 1016199) into the designed landscape to the south-east as part of a former carriage drive and walk.

This planning application relates to proposed development in Scot Butts woodland that lies in a large area forming the southern section of the registered park and garden and thus within the registered boundary of the Forcett estate that is notable for many designated heritage assets. The proposed entrance is via the existing gateway on the eastern boundary of the woodland and then through the oppidum and along an access road that skirts along the western edge of the oppidum within the woodland to access the cleared area where the lodges are proposed to be situated near the southern tip of the woodland. Much of the woodland was replanted in the 20th century but there remains a band of earlier trees in the northern section of the woodland where it bounds the southern part of High Park – these are likely to be part of the planting for the earlier woodland/ designed landscape in the far views from Forcett Hall and to be experienced from the carriage drive and walk along the oppidum.

We have noted the following in the report 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Ecological Impact Assessment for Land at Scots Butts Wood, Forcett Chalets', dated July 2022:

It is for 14 camping chalets rather than the 20 that are in the application.

Appendix 3 Raw Data Forcett Park – Estate Plan p32, includes the notation, 'Yellow hatch shows Scot Butts Lodge Development Area', and the yellow hatching covers the whole of the Scot Butts woodland. Does this mean that in the future there may be a larger area with lodges?

9.3 Potential Impact on Protected Species - Lighting Advice. See also Planning Statement October 2023 at 5.5.3.

We have concerns about the introduction of lighting in this development and agree with the importance of mitigating the impact of lighting and the advice given. However, we have not noted that the visual impact of lighting is addressed in the application and particularly have concerns about the visual impact on a large rural area during the darker months after leaf-fall.

The Sketch Layout Plan dated February 2023 as its name suggests does not in our view give sufficient detail of the applicant's plans for the development in what is an area of significant heritage assets:

There is little detail of the development such as the main access road, the road surfaces to the lodges themselves, hard standing and car parking for vehicles and tree root protection. Will there be hot tubs and associated lighting? What will be the design of the lighting for the whole site and how will its inevitable impact be mitigated and reduced? Where will refuse and recycling be stored and how will access be facilitated for its collection?

In terms of the main access, the archaeology watching brief only looked at the immediate top surface, not the lower sub-surface levels to be dug up for sustainable drainage systems and road. We advise that there should be a further watching brief, or pre-works excavations (e.g. trial trenches) to mitigate possible impact. Our concerns about possible archaeology damage in the development area remain.

Are there any plans for a welcome centre/shop? And if so, where will it be sited?

Hedges. We can't see that anyone has looked at the status of hedges (parish boundary, enclosure), though the possibility of their removal is in the application see Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at 1.8d and 7.9b; and Planning Statement at 5.5.4.

The Planting Plan dated March 2023 does not seem to indicate that any conifers will be planted. The only evergreen species is *Ilex aquifolium*, Holly.

Looking at earlier maps - OS 25 inches: 1mile map sheet Yorkshire XXV.1 surveyed 1892, published 1893 indicates that Scot Butts was mixed woodland of deciduous trees and conifers. Similarly in the revision 1912, published 1914. And later mapping 1933-43.

We advise that conifers such as our native Scots pine and yew should be incorporated into the planting. The planting plan should be reinstating the planting of this woodland, especially in view of the recent clearing that has taken place. It is an opportunity to improve the habitat based on historic precedents and deliver biodiversity and aesthetic quality.

On the Planting Plan key 'Ms' relates to *Malus sylvestris* but the notation on the drawing of the lodge locations has 'Ma'; presumably *Malus sylvestris*?

There is no mention of occupancy for this development, and this should be clarified.

Overall, the Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust does not consider that the application will result in a direct negative impact on the registered park and garden. However, we have concerns about the lack of detail which should be addressed in the determination and therefore in view of this lack of detail we object to this application as submitted.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

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