



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Dear Ms Rich

Temple Newsam Tree Planting

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust 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 Temple Newsam registered grade II with the house listed 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 historic parks and gardens and is authorised by the GT to respond on GT's behalf in respect of such consultations.

We understand that the Woodland Creation Team at Leeds City Council are looking at the parkland tree areas and considering oak, lime, beech and sweet chestnut as species to use, as these were historically present. However, as you say with the climate emergency it may be appropriate to diversify the range of species a little, such as Scots or stone pine or cedar varieties, as these are predicted to thrive in the changing climate and will be big carbon storers, especially as species such as beech may not do so well by 2050. You also suggest that any non-native species cannot be seen from the house.

Thank you for your further information. We have consulted our YGT landscape architect conservation colleague with particular experience of Temple Newsam, and we all agree that it is excellent news that tree planting is planned on the western side of the main house. We wish to commend the fact that following our discussions no new tree planting is suggested where the historic west facing avenue was sited - up until at least the C18th.

Our conclusions in short are:

- Sites chosen will not support the species listed because of the extremely depleted nature of the soil after 1970's opencast mining.
- Current tree belts alongside contain only pioneer species which are struggling.
- Soil Rejuvenation in all areas of future tree planting is required
- 'Ripping' of compacted areas (fairways at Temple Newsam) and incorporation of large quantities of organic materials, both to a minimum of 1m depth is a proven solution
- Species chosen are the ideal ones for restoration of a Capability Brown landscape. Of suggested additions, Scots Pine and Cedar of Lebanon (not other Cedar species) would be appropriate.

Explanation:

An assessment of the tree 'belt' growth alongside the old golf fairways, next to the proposed W6,10 and 'Parkland' mixes, has shown that the current tree species (that have survived from the 1970 plantings?) are all coloniser types which fix their own nitrogen suggesting that the soil beneath is particularly nutrient poor. Colonisers do not have the 200+ years lifespan suitable for a registered/listed landscape.

According to our knowledge, this area was opencast for coal during the 1970's. As a result, its topsoil is likely to be very shallow and the subsoil compacted and probably polluted as well. Older opencast sites, from the 1940's and 50's had 150mm of topsoil replaced if the land was originally pasture and no topsoil at all if the area was woodland. Was that the case at Temple Newsam after the 1970's work?

Your suggested mix of tree species are all recognised as climax woodland species i.e. the oak, beech, sweet chestnut you mention. These climax species are the ideal ones which would provide the scale and tree silhouettes for a Capability Brown Landscape such as Temple Newsam. They however will simply not grow if the soil nutrition and permeability is as inadequate as it appears to be. Neither we believe would the suggested Cedar (*Cedrus libani*) or Scots Pine grow well enough for such a valued public site, the setting of the very rare Elizabethan Mansion and internationally famous museum.

Having witnessed some very successful woodland regeneration on a local post war woodland site (ie no topsoil provided by the NCB at all) in 2006/7 which is still flourishing today, we believe that soil amelioration work is absolutely necessary if any sort of restoration growth, appropriate to the setting of a Grade 1 listed house is to be achieved.

YGT would be happy to share our knowledge of the basic techniques used, the broad range of species grown as a result and if needed further evidence of their continued progress.

We cannot therefore support the current proposals as we feel they would be distressingly unsuccessful and a waste of everyone's time, effort and budget.

Yours sincerely

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