



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: The Countess of Harewood

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www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Mrs Val Hepworth

Trustee

Conservation and Planning

Mrs Hannah Lyth
Planning Officer
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Wakefield Council

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6th September 2022

Dear Mrs Lyth

22/01415/FUL. To Extend and Refurbish the Children's Playground, Thornes Park, Wakefield.

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 Thornes Park, a public park which is registered 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. It was very useful to have our telephone conversation about this planning application and the one for Clarence Park Lodge the other day.

As you will know Thornes Park consists of three historically distinct areas of landscaping, the earliest dating from the later 18th century. With Clarence Park and Holmfield Park, it forms a large parkland to the south-west of the centre of Wakefield, and the features include the earthwork remains of a former motte and bailey castle, a rose garden within the old kitchen garden of Thornes House (house now lost), gate lodges and two drinking fountains. It is a good example of an urban municipal park of the late 19th and early 20th centuries where the layout survives almost intact. It has added interest in a late 18th century landscape possibly designed by John Carr of York.

The playground is located in the northern area of Thornes Park away from the most historic features and the proposed playground extension is between the existing main playground and its large car park. We note the comments of your Authority's Senior Arboricultural Officer and support his points that it is unclear whether adjacent trees will be impacted. This should be determined, and steps taken to protect the trees as he proposes. We are unsure as to whether there should be any new tree planting, but your Arboricultural Officer can advise. We are aware that from a safety point of view that there should be clear sight-lines for the children's carers between the parking, seating and playing areas.

The parks and countryside officers will be aware that the Wild Flower Area immediately to the north of the play area will need careful management to ensure that the wild flowers thrive. The land needs to be nutrient-poor, so if currently grass, it will need mowing and the arisings (mowings) removed to

reduce the fertility until it can accommodate the successful growth of wild flowers. It is likely that some hand weeding to remove invasive grasses and weed species will be required in the first years. Maybe this could be supervised and done by pupils from a local primary school? The area will need to be mown after the flowers have set seed, say during August annually and the arisings again removed.

The Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust have no objection to the proposal and trust that it will increase the community value and use of the park.

You may not know that the YGT runs a Small Grant Scheme which may be useful for small projects or as additional funding for larger schemes in historic parks and gardens where there is public access and details can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

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