



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

President: The Countess of Harewood

Vice-presidents: Lady Legard, Peter Goodchild, Nick Lane Fox

www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

Mrs Hilary Saunders
Planning Officer
North York Moors National Park Authority
planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Mrs Val Hepworth
Trustee
Conservation and Planning

conservation@yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk

27th August 2025

Dear Mrs Saunders

NYM/2025/0279, Application for removal and regrading of unauthorised excavated standing areas, redistribution of deposited material and planting/seeding works at Valley Footpath between Merricks East Wood and Northfield Wood, Hackness

Thank you for consulting the Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT). The Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT) is a member organisation of the Gardens Trust (GT) - the Statutory Consultee with regard to any proposed development affecting a site listed by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks and Gardens (RPG). 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.

This planning application affects the historic designed landscape at Hackness and although this landscape is not on the RPG, it is nevertheless of significance and has been researched by the YGT.

The following paragraph is the summary of heritage values from the **Hackness Statement of Significance** resulting from YGT's research.

REF: yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk/research/sites?keywords=Hackness

‘Successor to the gardens and park associated with a late sixteenth century manor house and its medieval predecessor, the designed landscape at Hackness was laid out within the space of only a generation at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. It is an almost complete example of landscape design executed on a modest scale after the fashion of the day and drawing on the beauty of the surrounding landscape. Most features survive, as well as some of the historic planting, and there is continuity of use in many parts of the landscape. Hackness is the only place within the National Park where a medieval village was removed to make way for a landscape park and with the undisturbed remains of the earlier manor surviving within the park, the late eighteenth century designed landscape offers the potential to understand the development of the landscape over a long time period. The designed landscape now represents a significant characteristic of this part of the National Park, with features close to the hall making an important contribution to the modern streetscape, and overall, it appears as an integral part of a landscape which has been enjoyed by visitors for well over 200 years.’ **Appendix 1 Map from the YGT report showing the outline of the designed landscape.**

The documents for this planning application include the Design and Access Statement that has been prepared in support of a restoration scheme following the issue of a Planning Contravention Notice by your Authority:

(1. Introduction). The footpath and adjacent slopes are within a valley used by Hackness Sporting Society. The Statement notes that it is submitted in support of the restoration proposal to return the site to the condition that existed before a cloudburst event in July 2024.

The Statement also notes (2. Site Context; their 'bold' type) that the land includes a **historic footpath** long used by Hackness Sporting Society for seasonal access on foot and by quad bike. It states that the path has not been widened but rather **cleared of natural debris and sediment** that had washed onto it due to the July 2024 storms. The surrounding landscape was disturbed by the **movement of excavated material** and by the creation of shooting stand area beyond the original path corridor.

We note at 3. Planning Background and Proposed Works that reactive works were undertaken in July 2024.

We have studied the documents and consulted the YGT Research and Recording Group for further advice. We think that the historic character of the landscape has been changed in recent years and that historically the Valley Footpath as in this planning application, did not exist.

We offer the following comments and advice.

The area of this planning application concerns the narrow valley at the extreme north- east corner, running north- east from Thirlsey Bottoms through Merricks East Wood with Northfield Wood on its eastern flank. In terms of the Valley Footpath there is definitely no path marked as late as on the OS map, **1968 (on a 1:2500 map - attached in 2 parts)**. There is a path running SW-NE through Thirlsey Bottoms but this deviates to run in a more northerly direction and then continues up the slope through Merricks East Wood. This change in direction is to the south of the area in the planning application which runs along the bottom of the valley/gully. The path shown on the 1968 OS map is actually in existence in **1890**, but was almost certainly not formalised with a surface since it is just annotated 'FP'. **Please see 1890 OS 25":1mile map attached.** We wonder if the current right of way has evolved from this mapped path, with people finding it easier to follow a route at the bottom of the gully than walking along a steep slope.

We attach some photos from March 2023 **Appendix 5-8** - after some tree clearance but before major works. They are taken from 3 positions - position 3 is approximately at the Northern limit of the work and the other positions to the south of this. The valley is very narrow and certainly couldn't have accommodated a 2-3m wide track.

A YGT member took further photos on 22nd August 2025 for comparison. **Appendix 9-14.** They were taken at the northern and southern extremities of the planning application plus two in between. It appears that large amounts of material have been quarried away and used to infill the bottom of the gully, thereby making it wider.

The member also walked through Hilda Wood, which does have historic rides dating from the original landscape design and unfortunately one of these was significantly widened probably during the same programme of works.

The maps and photos are listed in the Appendix below and will be attached to this response.

The evidence suggests that historically the Valley Footpath as in this planning application, did not exist.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning

cc. Yorkshire and the Northeast Historic England, Kristof Fatsar, conservation@thegardenstrust

APPENDIX

- 1. Map from the YGT report showing the outline of the Hackness designed landscape.**
- 2. OS map, 1968 (on a 1:2500 map - attached in 2 parts) Hackness Narrow Valley NE.**
- 3. As above- 2nd part.**
- 4. OS 25":1mile 1890 map Hackness Narrow Valley NE.**
- 5. Hackness March 2023. Thirlsey Bottoms E gully Position 3. Looking Down Approx Northern Limit of Work.**
- 6. Hackness March 2023. Thirlsey Bottoms E gully Position 3. Looking Up.**
- 7. Hackness March 2023. Thirlsey Bottoms E gully Position 2. Looking Down.**
- 8. Hackness March 2023. Thirlsey Bottoms E gully Position 4. Looking Down.**
- 9. Hackness 22nd August 2025. N end of planning app from N.**
- 10. Hackness 22nd August 2025. Looking N from N end of planning app.**
- 11. Hackness 22nd August 2025. S end of planning app from S.**
- 12. Hackness 22nd August 2025. S end of planning app from N.**
- 13. Hackness 22nd August 2025. Between N and S end of planning app.**
- 14. Hackness 22nd August 2025. 2nd photo Between N and S end of planning app.**