

Norfolk Gardens Trust is the primary body concerned with the conservation and enhancement of outstanding gardens and landscapes in Norfolk. The Trust is consulted, via the Gardens Trust national body, on development proposals likely to affect gardens and parklands which have been formally designated by Historic England in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest.

Berry Hall's grounds are not formally registered. However, there are many examples of parks and gardens which are not registered but are nevertheless of significant historic and/or landscape interest. In national planning policy these are termed non-designated heritage assets. In many cases, NGT is not consulted on development proposals affecting these places but is able to make representations on such cases.

The grounds of Berry Hall are extensive and provide the immediate setting for the Grade II listed Hall. They include lawns extending towards the River Tud and eastwards towards Berry Lane. There are more enclosed and screened gardens to the north and west of the Hall. In my view the significance of these grounds, both in their own right and in contributing to the Hall's setting, is sufficient for them to be considered a non-designated heritage asset. The Cultural Heritage assessment prepared by Highways England explains that existing planting currently helps to mitigate the noise and visual effects of the existing A47 on the Hall and its grounds.

While there would be no direct physical effect on Berry Hall, the proposed dualling scheme would have a significant effect on its surroundings. The proposed new junction to the north of the Hall would make the new road more prominent in that part of its setting. Work areas and a concrete batching plant would also be sited near the gardens. Although the Highways England Cultural Assets assessment refers to proposed additional planting, it is not clear that the harm to the Hall and its grounds would be effectively mitigated.

The NGT was not consulted by Highways England on this scheme. Had there been consultation I consider that the Trust would have lodged an objection in respect of the effect on Berry Hall and its grounds.