

THE STANLEY SMITH (UK) HORTICULTURAL TRUST

Application Summary Sheet (please do not extent beyond one page)

Contact details

Name: Contact details withheld to comply with the Data Protection Act

Organisation: Newby Hall and Gardens

E-mail:

Address:

Telephone number:

About your project

Please provide a description of the project which you are applying for a grant for. Use the box below to provide a short high level synopsis and continue on separate sheets with a wider description as necessary.

The restoration of the rock garden at Newby Hall to realise the aspirations of the original creators, Robert Vyner and Ellen Willmott; to create one of the best rock gardens in Britain. Our aim is to create a planting scheme which enhances the rock formation and safeguards the rock garden for future generations.

Please identify the category of the Trust's objectives which you believe your project meets.

To promote the creation, development, preservation and maintenance of gardens

Please describe personnel who will be participating in the project (if appropriate).

Kevock Garden Plants, specialists in growing alpine plants and designing rock gardens. David and Stella Rankin have been employed on a consultancy basis to provide advice as well as creating planting schemes for each of the beds.

Please describe your long-term plans for the future of the project once the grant has been used (if applicable).

Our aim is to realise the aspirations of Robert Vyner and Ellen Willmott, to create one of the best rock gardens in Britain. We want it to be a place of learning, as well as a place of beauty, and hope that it not only helps to trigger a renaissance of rock gardening but helps to inspire the next generation of horticulturists.

Financial Information

Please attach all relevant financial information such as expected other income and proposed expenditure.

Sum applied for: £5,000

Please send your application (including this cover sheet and any supporting documents) in electronic form, hard copy or both to the following addresses:

Postal address (hard copies): Dr David Rae, Director, Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 20a Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR

E-mail address (electronic copies): d.rae@rbge.org.uk

Introduction

Newby Hall, near Ripon in Yorkshire, is a large garden that is famed for its collection of trees and a 172-metre-long double herbaceous border. Newby has been in the family since 1748 and is now owned by Richard Compton and his wife Lucinda. Designed by Christopher Wren, Newby Hall was built between 1691-1695 and formal gardens were created shortly afterwards.

Early in the 20th century the Darlington firm of Kent and Brydon was commissioned to create a two-acre rock garden. At that time the Hall was owned by Robert Charles de Grey Vyner, who was a friend of Ellen Willmott, and who wanted his rock garden to be like that built for Ellen (by Backhouse of York). So arguably he had the best consultant possible for developing a garden area, which he probably hoped should become as impressive as anything to be found in the UK. This huge project was started in 1912 and completed on 27th August 1914, just after the beginning of the First World War. Vyner died soon afterwards, but after a period of neglect, the rock garden was developed by the present owner's grandfather, Major Edward Compton. However, the Second World War resulted in its decline, from which it never recovered. Now the dwarf conifers and acers have become huge trees, choice alpinists have disappeared under a carpet of ivy and ground elder and the rock garden has been transformed into a woodland.

Project Description

The restoration of the rock garden has been a long-term objective for the current owners, Richard and Lucinda Compton. For such an impressive rock formation, the planting is underwhelming and the garden itself looks neglected. Our aims are:

- to realise the aspirations of Robert Vyner and Ellen Willmott, creating one of the best rock gardens in Britain;
- to create a planting scheme which enhances the rock formation;
- to restore the rock garden to the original aesthetic intended by the creator, Robert Vyner;
- to safeguard the rock garden for future generations.

Schedule of Works

Given the scale of the project, it could take up to five years, but we would like to complete it by autumn 2023. Taking time will help to spread the costs and allow more attention to be paid to restoration of the more difficult planting areas. It will be interesting for the visitors to see the project develop and the transformation from overgrown woodland, back to the bare rock, followed by planting and restoration to the original aesthetic. Meanwhile, complete clearance of the ground vegetation will be shocking to some visitors at Newby Hall, but interpretation boards will be used to inform visitors about the reasons for this approach.

To date, some ground vegetation has been removed to allow a condition report of the rock formation to be carried out. Work started in November 2019 to reduce the overhead canopy and increase the light levels. Many mature conifers have been removed, already transforming the over-grown jungle aesthetic.

The garden consists of 21 main zones, separated by paths. A full survey has identified the areas available for planting and the aspect of all the beds. Within them soil type, light levels and aspect of all planting zones have been recorded. Kevock Garden Plants nursery has been heavily involved in the creation of planting plans and a schedule of works for the coming year.

In 2020, the first six zones will be kept clear of vegetation for the full growing season to ensure all weeds are eradicated before planting in the autumn. Kevock Garden Plants have supplied a planting scheme for these zones. A local stonemason, Collin Rickard from Ripon Cathedral, will be employed to restore some of the older pinnacles, which were gifted from York Minster, and restoration work will be carried out on some of the stonework features and follies.

Repairs to the existing stonework and footpaths will be carried out in March 2020. Further improvements to allow disabled access in the rock garden will then be started, with rills being capped with coping stones to allow greater access, with further works to remove steps and installing ramps being carried out in October 2020.

Through the winter of 2020 the pond, which is a key feature at the south end of the rock garden, will be cleared, with remedial works being carried out before the gardens reopen to the public in spring 2021.

It is envisaged that a similar approach will be taken in subsequent years, with five beds being cleared and planted in each of 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Project Personnel

Newby Hall has employed the help of Kevock Garden Plants, specialists in growing alpine plants and designing rock gardens. David and Stella Rankin have been employed on a consultancy basis to provide advice as well as creating planting schemes for each of the beds.

Kevock have considerable experience of rebuilding and replanting historic rock gardens, sometimes working with garden designers, and always complying with clients' requirements. They have restored the rock garden of an Arts and Crafts house near Glasgow, planted the rocky outcrops in a large rock garden near Henley, provided advice and supplied plants for a large garden near York, and worked on clearing, rebuilding and planting a quarry garden near Sheffield, originally done by Clarence Elliott. They have built new rock gardens large and small, and there are many on-going projects. All plants will be supplied by Kevock, ensuring consistency and continuity throughout the project.

Within the existing team at Newby Hall, there is a skilled team of horticulturists who have experience of working with alpine plants and rock gardens.

Project Budget

The project has been forecast at costing between £130,000 and £150,000. This has been budgeted into the Newby Hall accounts for the following four years and is one of the reasons for carrying out the project in stages, rather than doing it in one year. Newby Hall has carried out a number of large projects in previous years, such as the installation of a new railway line and replanting of the herbaceous border, so feel comfortable with handling and budgeting for a project of this size.

Renewing the rock garden will be financed by Richard and Lucinda Compton, with the funds being made available on a yearly basis as the next stage of renovation is implemented.

Expenditure for 2020 will be highest as much of the repair work to the infrastructure will be carried out in the spring and autumn of 2020. Plant costs will be highest in 2020 and 2021 as the largest beds are scheduled to be planted first.

Newby Hall is requesting a grant of £5,000 from The Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, to be used towards the acquisition of plants from Kevock Garden Plants for the first stage of planting, to be done in autumn 2020, and for the purchase of materials - compost, mulch and stone.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Consultant fee (including design work)	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000

Plants (average £50/sq m, total 1400 sq m planting space)	-	£20,000	£20,000	£15,000	£15,000
Compost and mulch	-	£3,600	£3,600	£3,600	£3,600
Stone to replace damaged rockwork	-	£3,500	-	-	-
Footpath renovation	-	£8,000	£12,000	-	-
Stonework specialist	-	£5,000	-	-	-
Pond clearance (repair work contingency)	-	£2,000 (£5,000)	-	-	-
Yearly totals	£5,000	£47,100	£40,600	£23,600	£23,600
Cost project	£139,900				

Future Vision

Our aim is to realise the aspirations of Robert Vyner and Ellen Willmott, to create one of the best rock gardens in Britain. The opening of the tree canopy has already started to reveal the original vision of the creators and it is our wish to create a planting scheme that not only complements the existing rock structure but enhances it.

For the first time we will be hosting a student from the Heritage and Botanic Garden Training Programme and the rock garden will be an amazing resource for them to learn about the sympathetic restoration and renovation of a historic garden. The student will be hands-on with all aspects of the project from clearance and path building, to researching planting combinations and implementing planting schemes.

Newby Hall has close links with the Horticulture department at Askham Bryan College and we will be bringing in groups of students to give them the opportunity to work on a historic rock garden and give them valuable experience.

We want it to be a place of learning, as well as a place of beauty, and hope that it not only helps to trigger a renaissance of rock gardening but helps to inspire the next generation of horticulturists.