



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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HOBSON & PORTER BEGINS WORK ON UK'S FIRST DEDICATED TREE HEALTH CENTRE

Yorkshire & Lincolnshire based construction firm Hobson & Porter Ltd have won the contract to build the UK's first Tree Health Centre. The Yorkshire Arboretum, located near Castle Howard in North Yorkshire, has raised funds to build and operate the UK's first purpose-built facility to expand public awareness about the threats to our trees posed by an increasing number of pests and diseases, and the need to keep our trees as healthy as possible. Capital funding for the project has come from the Peter Sowerby Foundation, £286,000 of the Government's Local Growth Fund, secured by the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership (YNYER LEP) and from private donations. Start up and operating funding has come from The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund.

Designed by SALT Architects of Beverley, East Yorkshire, the Tree Health Centre will offer training courses given by specialists and cater to all levels of expertise. Following successful pilot courses held in 2018, the centre will offer training on a commercial basis mixing classroom, lab and outdoor learning settings, as well as a public outreach programme.

Yorkshire Arboretum Chief Operating Officer Mathew Harrison says: "We are delighted to announce Hobson & Porter Ltd as building contractors for the Tree Health Centre. The company has strong links across Yorkshire with a proven track record of delivering third sector projects – they are keen to promote environmental preservation, and we believe their approach matches our core strategy and values."

Sam Alexander, chair of YNYER LEP's Skills and Employability Board, said: "The natural environment plays a vital role in our social and economic health as a region. It is crucial we have the skills available to protect Yorkshire landscapes and contribute to tree health in the UK and beyond. With the help of funding secured by the LEP, this specialist knowledge centre will build the capacity in the region to protect tree health and lead the way for others. We're pleased to see the project reach this latest milestone."

Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth, Jake Berry, said:

“We’re deeply committed to boosting economic growth and levelling up our communities across the North and the Midlands.

“It’s great to hear that thanks to over £285,000 from the Local Growth Fund, the UK’s first Tree Health Centre is being built right here in the Northern Powerhouse and will safeguard the region’s natural environment for future generations to come.”

Arboretum Director John Grimshaw said ‘We’ve been planning this building for ages, and it’s so exciting to see works starting at last. We look forward to delivering sound advice on the management of healthy trees for a healthy environment – a critical issue for us all.’



Figure 1 Tree Health Centre impression by SALT Architects

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Yorkshire Arboretum and Ray Wood are gardens of the Castle Howard Arboretum Trust, an independent charity (registration number 1044931) established to maintain and protect these unique collections. Founded in 1997 as a partnership between the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Castle Howard, the Trust's patron is HRH The Prince of Wales.

The Yorkshire Arboretum is located opposite the entrance to Castle Howard and is open from 10am – 4pm every day from March – November, with extended opening at weekends from May – October. In addition to the 120 acre garden of trees there's a children's woodland playground, a café offering delicious home-cooked seasonal food and drink and a gift shop. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. Admission is £7 for adults, £3.50 for juniors (12-16) and £17.50 for families. Under 12s are admitted free. Find out more at

www.yorkshirearboretum.org

The arboretum's annual event programme includes a wide range of family and outdoor activities, botanical and horticultural education, and arts and crafts workshops. Full details are available at www.yorkshirearboretum.org

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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