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## Studley Royal Park (United Kingdom)

### No 372rev

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## 1 Basic data

### State Party

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

### Name of property

Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey

### Location

North Yorkshire, England  
United Kingdom

### Inscription

1986

### Brief description

A striking landscape was created around the ruins of the Cistercian Fountains Abbey and Fountains Hall Castle, in Yorkshire. The 18th-century landscaping, gardens and canal, the 19th-century plantations and vistas, and the neo-Gothic church of Studley Royal Park, make this an outstanding site.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

14 March 2012

## 2 Issues raised

### Background

The property was inscribed in 1986 without a buffer zone but the need for one to protect against large scale or poorly sited renewable energy schemes, large-scale agricultural developments, and inappropriately sited buildings which could harm its setting or key views into and out of the inscribed property was recognised and addressed by the proposal in the 'Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site Management Plan' of 2001. The Periodic Report of 2006 noted that the property boundaries were inadequate, stating: "Although the World Heritage Site boundary covers the core area of the designed landscape, some significant features lie outside. There is a need to review the boundary to ensure that it includes those areas that are essential to retain the site's outstanding universal value. There is also a need to develop a formal buffer zone."

### Modification

The current request does not include modification to the boundary of the property, but is for the establishment of a buffer zone around the existing World Heritage inscribed property. The State Party's submission states that revisions to the boundary of the World Heritage property will be considered as part of the review of the 'World

Heritage Site Management Plan' in 2014, following full consultation with relevant landowners and stakeholders.

The proposed buffer zone has been designed to contribute to the maintenance of the outstanding universal value of the site by including outlying parts of the designed landscape and precinct (and their visual settings) where these had not been included in the World Heritage Site boundary; by protecting the visual setting of the property, and by protecting key vistas from within the property to foci beyond it.

Beginning from the Galphay Mill Bridge beyond the property's Lindrick Gate in the north, the boundary follows the Studley Roger Parish boundary east, then the road B6265, turning south-east at Bishopton Bridge across the designed views to Ripon Cathedral. The vista to the Cathedral is also to be protected, but the boundary shown on the map provided is a straight projection running out to the north-east to enclose Blois Hall Farm beyond the cathedral and does not follow cadastral lines. The boundary then runs south along the River Skell, Ripon Rowel Walk along the east side of the Skell Valley, and Whitcliffe Lane to How Hill Road, enclosing the visual envelope from within the Park except for the expansive view from the summit of Gillet Hill. The boundary then encompasses How Hill, which is the focus of the vista to the south along the canal within the Park, to meet Monk Wall marking the boundary of the Fountains estate and follows this around to the north to meet the lane north-east of Sawley Hall, which it then follows until the lane turns west.

The buffer zone boundary continues north-west along the western edge of Skell Bank Wood and Spa Gill Wood following the south-western edge of a short-lived extension of the Aislabie designed landscape along Spa Gill, roughly parallel to the River Skell until it is crossed by the road B6265. The boundary turns north around the western boundary of Horseley Gate Farm and then runs north along the Parish boundary and the River Laver. It encompasses the Laver Banks, which were managed by William Aislabie as a third section of designed landscape on the route from Studley Royal to his other designed landscape, Hackfall, and continues north along the river to complete the buffer zone boundary at Galphay Mill Bridge.

The submission states that the proposed buffer zone will therefore protect the integrity of the wider historic estate by including Spa Gill Woods, Chinese Wood, How Hill tower and Laver Bank. These are outlying elements of the designed landscape that current research suggests should have been included in the World Heritage Site boundary.

The buffer zone will be protected under National planning policies, in particular Planning Circular 07/09: Protection of World Heritage Sites (July 2009) and by the Harrogate Borough Council's Draft Development Plan Document (DPD) (2011) with protection policies included in the Harrogate Borough Local Development Framework. At present the vista to Ripon Cathedral and beyond to Blois Hall Farm is not included in the DPD, but the Borough

Council is intending to include it following public consultation in spring, 2012.

ICOMOS considers that all components of the Aislabbie designed landscape and monastic precinct should be included within the World Heritage property boundary and notes the State Party's intention to consider revisions to the boundary of the World Heritage property as part of the review of the 'World Heritage Site Management Plan' in 2014.

It therefore seems premature at this stage to establish the boundaries of the buffer zone, before the property boundary itself is reviewed.

However since it is to be another two years before the property boundaries are reviewed and no doubt longer until legal protection is in place, and in the light of possible threats and the fact that there is currently no buffer zone, ICOMOS considers that it would be expedient to grant the current request for the buffer zone to ensure interim protection under national and local planning policies.

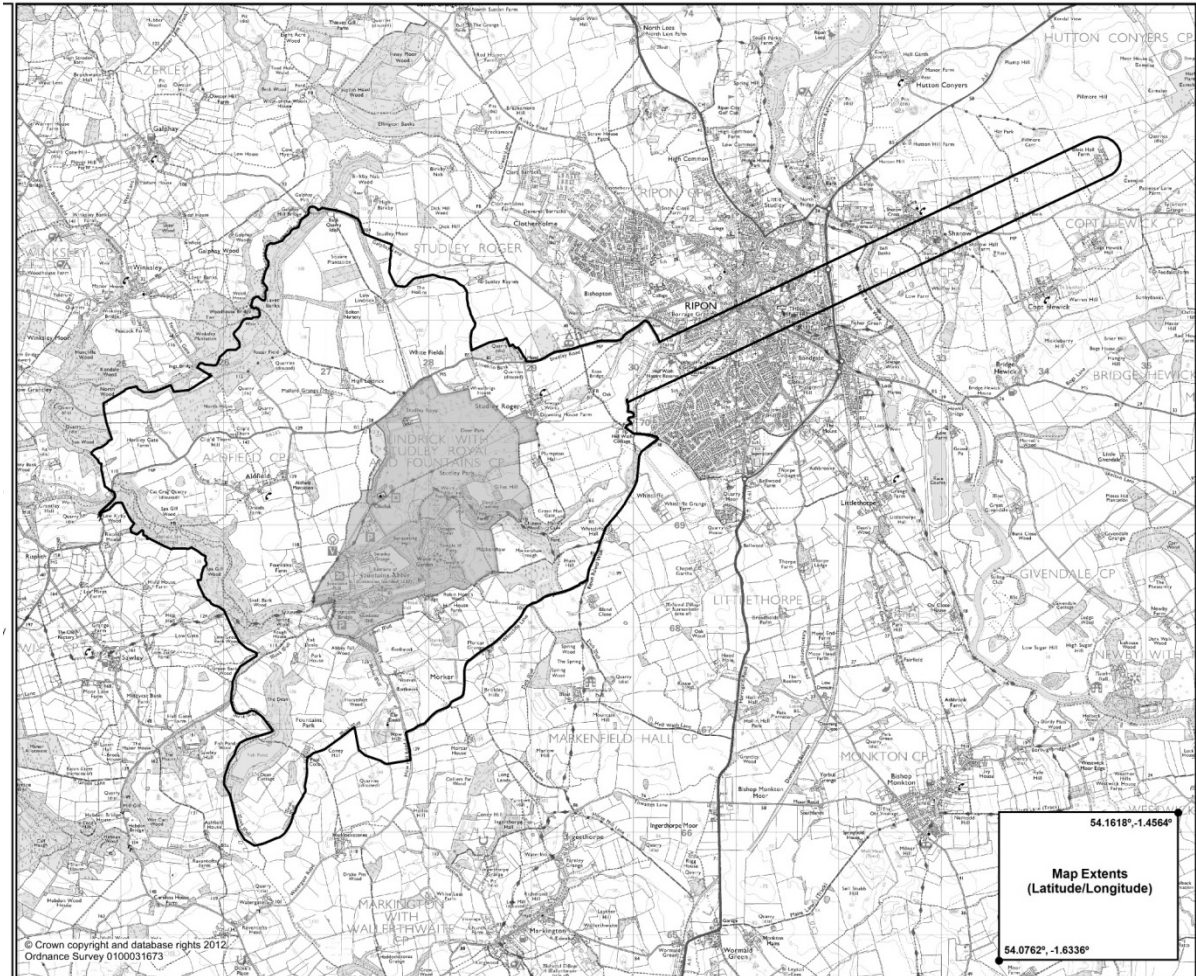
### **3 ICOMOS Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation with respect to inscription**

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey, United Kingdom, be **approved**.

ICOMOS also recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- redefining the boundary of the property as intended in the 2014 review of the Management Plan;
- considering and redefining or confirming the buffer zone boundary in the light of any proposed amendments to the property boundaries;
- finalising planning protection policies for the vista to Ripon Cathedral.



Map showing the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone