



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Dear Mr Gallagher

ZD26/00094/FULL Full Planning Permission for installation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array with associated inverters, cabling, and access, to provide approximately 1.27 MW of renewable energy for Middleton Lodge Estate; including seeding of species-rich grassland beneath and around the panels. Middleton Lodge, Kneeton Lane Middleton Tyas, North Yorkshire. DL10 6NJ

Thank you for consulting The Gardens Trust (GT) in its role as Statutory Consultee with regard to any proposed development that could affect a site included by Historic England (HE) on their Register of Parks & Gardens (RPG) – Middleton Lodge at grade II, (list entry number: 1001699). 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 and is authorised by the GT to respond on GT's behalf in respect of such consultations.

Middleton Lodge, (listed grade II*, list entry number 1317085), was designed by John Carr of York and built between 1777 and 1780 for the barrister George Hartley with the grounds being laid out at a similar time. The RPG of c 41.4h a consists of pleasure grounds, formal gardens, landscape park and walled kitchen garden. This planning application relates to the north-western area just beyond The Farmhouse (now Forge Restaurant, spa, etc) and outside the RPG.

We note (Heritage Statement 5.1.8) that permission was granted some time ago for the modern agricultural buildings and subsequent roof installation of solar panels. *The evaluation for the solar installation application (ref: 22/00880) concluded that the target agricultural buildings are entirely incidental to the estate's core historic assets and benefit from sufficient physical separation and mature visual screening to ensure the development generates no adverse impacts on the wider heritage setting.*

We agree that the proposed solar farm will be largely screened from the RPG and other heritage assets by farm buildings and established trees and hedges. There may be some glimpses across to the solar farm from the access to the estate that passes alongside the north-western wall of the Fig House and Walled Garden on its route to the Reception Building. However (Heritage Statement 4:1:6) notes that *Hedgerow planting to reinforce the existing [historic] northwest boundary is proposed, with scope for further boundary planting if required.*

We are pleased to note the panels are stated to be of low reflectivity and that: *The land underneath and immediately around the solar panels will be seeded with a species-rich native wildflower and grass mix (such as the EM2 meadow mix) to establish a permanent, low-input grassland habitat.* (Heritage Statement 4.1.5)

We acknowledge the scientific evidence that climate change is an existential threat to the future of RPGs, and that shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy as quickly as possible is a critical tool for mitigating the impacts of climate change. Overall, we conclude that the public benefit of this proposal outweighs any possible minor degree of harm.

The Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens Trust consider that this planning proposal, with confirmation of hedgerow and tree planting as suggested to reduce any impact on the RPG and other heritage assets, will result in less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale and we have no objection.

Yours sincerely

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning
cc. Dr Kristof Fatsar, Yorkshire & the North East, Historic England; conservation @ The Gardens Trust