



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

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Mrs Val Hepworth

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Ms Jillian Rann
Place Shaping and Economic Growth
Harrogate Borough Council

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Dear Ms Rann

23/00102/SCREEN Screening opinion for proposed 1.3 MWp solar farm with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure. Land Comprising Field At 421265 479957 North Of Swinton Estate Office Swinton North Yorkshire

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, in this case Swinton Castle at Grade II*. 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.

The designed historic park and garden of Swinton Castle is a significant example of the 'rugged picturesque' incorporating extensive rockwork, grottoes, rustic bridges etc. It is a wild and dramatic landscape.

There are two chains of lakes. Those nearest the Castle (Home Lake, Boathouse Pond etc) and a further chain of lakes to the south- west (from Quarry Gill, Lake Superior, Storth Pond,) created when the area of the old minor road was incorporated into the designed landscape for Sir William Danby the elder in the 1760's. The transformation of this pastoral landscape to one characterised by irregularity and drama with rockwork, rustic bridges and grottoes was carried out for Sir William Danby the younger under the supervision of Adam Mickel II (1747-c.1815) in the years following 1796. John Foss of Richmond (1745-1827) was also involved in the landscaping work including completing Quarry Gill Bridge in 1822 (listed grade II), designing a rustic bridge at Boat House Pond/Coffin Pond, c.1813 (listed grade II and coffins listed grade II) and modifying Home Lake 1814-15.

The site for this screening opinion lies at High Swinton immediately to the north of the registered park and garden boundary north of Swinton Castle (listed grade II*). The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (1.6) for the proposed solar farm indicates that it proposes approximately 2448 solar photovoltaic panels, each having a surface area of 2.6 square meters. The PV panels will be mounted at 20° to the horizontal and facing south to maximize solar gain. The panels will be mounted on pile driven supports, with a maximum height of 2.1 meters above ground level (AGL). In addition to the arrays the proposals include the provision of new access tracks, transformers, inverters, and underground cabling. No concrete or permanent foundations would be required to install the panels

and no additional security fencing. A length of new hedge is proposed to the northern section of the western boundary. Although not shown on the plans we understand there is large new agricultural type building with a large roof area nearby.

We would like to point out that the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment at 3.3 states Swinton Castle as listed grade II when it is grade II* and at 3.5 the Registered Park and Garden is not grade II but grade II* - we presume that the distance noted in 3.5 should be 180 metres and not 180 miles.

We note the Landscape Visual Assessment at 6.1 'Viewpoint Assessment indicates that within 1.5 km of the site the solar farm would be substantially screened by local buildings, vegetation, or landform within and around the Swinton Park Solar Farm. However, some of the arrays may be theoretically visible from high ground further afield including: • Swinton Road • Havernook Lane • Fearby Road.'

We have not noted any mention of glare which could potentially be seen from miles away and have some concerns about this and any harmful impact of the proposal on the c. 105ha registered site which is on land that rises gently to the west.

Swinton Castle and its environs is rich in important heritage assets, and we query whether an Environmental Impact Assessment should be prepared for the proposed development looking at the historic environment. We advise that your authority's conservation and archaeology advisors should be closely involved in this process and further advice is gained from Historic England.

Yours sincerely,

Val Hepworth
Trustee Conservation and Planning
Cc. Historic England; conservation@ the Gardens Trust