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By email only planning.rye@northyorks.gov.uk

25 October 2024

For the attention of Alan Goforth



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Please reply to:
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Dear Alan Goforth,

ZE24/00001/MFUL ZE24/00002/LBC Change of use of Gilling Castle and Foals Yard outbuilding to form 10no. one-bed, 10no. two-bed and 1no. three-bed over 55's rental apartments, erection of 6no. one-bed and 8no. two-bed dwellings following demolition of existing buildings in the grounds together with leisure and sporting facilities, associated access, parking, landscaping, infrastructure, substation and engineering opportunities: St Martins Ampleforth The Castle Main Street Gilling East YO62 4HP

Thank you for forwarding the Landscape Capacity: SWOT Analysis of the various options considered for the location of the new build element of the above application. We have now studied the assessment and liaised with our colleagues in Yorkshire Gardens Trust (YGT). The following comments are therefore submitted on behalf of both our organisations. As you will be aware from our previous comments dated 31 January and 22 March, this is the element of the overall application about which we raised most concerns.

The Gardens Trust (GT) and YGT welcome the removal of the former educational and sporting facilities from the west of Gilling Castle, modern features which have compromised the historical and visual integrity of this area of the Registered Park and Garden. Ideally, we would have wished to see the opportunity taken to fully restore the historic designed landscape and setting of the Castle and are disappointed that, in planning terms, the area is being treated as 'previously developed land' and the proposed location of the new-build dwellings. We would ask North Yorkshire Council to assure themselves that this is indeed the minimum number of dwellings required to ensure the economic viability and the success of the overall development.

Having studied the SWOT analysis for the five alternative options for the location of the new-build housing, the GT and YGT accept the constraints imposed on options 2, 4 and 5 due to topography of the parkland, the existing golf course and distance from Gilling Castle as the central hub for the development and offer no further comment on these locations.

In relation to options 1 and 3, (a revision of option 1), we note there is considerable overlap between the two layouts with no.3 being slightly further from the Castle than no.1, with the introduction of the planted buffer zone and garden area. Whilst we welcome this re-arrangement in option 3, we do not consider that a strong perceived visual and physical connection of the development to the primary heritage asset is necessary. Although we have some concerns about the topography intervention and habitat disruption necessary at the western end of this layout, we wonder whether the negative impact on Gilling Castle RPG, is likely to be concentrated in short to medium term largely during the construction phase.

We further note that that the detailed layout of the option 1 included in the SWOT analysis now appears to have been superseded by 'Block Plan-New Build-00.41' dated 9 October 2024, and included as one of the submission documents. In this layout, unit 1 (detached) has been relocated in the area formerly allocated for the enclosed gardens as unit 14. By doing this, i.e. the removing of one of the more obtrusive elements into the outward views from Gilling Castle as illustrated in the Predicted Model Visualisations, viewpoint A1 in Gilling Castle LVIA, the visual impact appears to be slightly reduced. We would therefore be grateful if you could confirm that this is now the proposed layout of the new-build units as submitted for planning permission. Having considered options 1 and 3 closely, on balance, the GT and YGT consider that option 3 is likely to cause less harm to the significance of Gilling Castle RPG, through the reduction of impact on outward views from the Castle.

As far as we are aware, no details are as yet available for the landscape treatment of the new-build housing plots, and whether there will be uniformity of design and management to prevent a fragmented suburban appearance inappropriate within the RPG. All landscaping and planting should respect the historic nature of RPG and be carefully considered vis a vis the effect that it would have on reciprocal views and the longevity of the scheme. There should be conditions that prevent future removal or felling of planting without careful consideration of the effect that it would have on the setting of the heritage assets and the RPG itself. As such, we would expect to see a robust conservation management plan in place for the RPG, also covering the terrace gardens and historic glasshouses and consider this should be a condition of granting any planning permission.

We note that all parking for the residents of Foals Yard and the new houses is to be located at the Wellness Centre, with only pedestrian or arranged transport between the two sites. The only vehicular traffic movements within these areas will therefore largely be restricted to emergency and service vehicles. Such an arrangement appears to negate the need for the sinuous footpath with lighting between the new houses and parkland; with such a low traffic volume this cannot be necessary on safety grounds. Removal of this path would allow for both strengthening of planting between the houses and parkland and removal of the proposed lighting, reducing light-spill from the development and its impact on the RPG. Conversely, there is little information regarding the integration of the historic North Walk into the proposed layout. We assume, that at its eastern end, this will form the basis of the pedestrian route between the Wellness Centre and the new houses although its alignment would appear to be disrupted by the development.

To summarise: the Gardens Trust and Yorkshire Gardens consider that, on balance, option 3 appearing to be less visually intrusive and would result in less harm to the significance of Gilling Castle RPG. However, we also consider that there is still some detail and information lacking, as highlighted above, to fully assess these proposals. We have no further comments at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Allighan BSc (Hons) MSc CMLI
Conservation Casework Manager & Acting Conservation Officer

cc Yorkshire Gardens Trust