

SUMMARY OF THE OBJECTIONS OF THE MIDDLETON TYAS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT MIDDLETON LODGE

Background

This document sets out a summary of the objections of the Middleton Tyas Residents Association to the proposals for minerals extraction and development of a visitor attraction at Middleton Lodge. This summary is taken from the report by England and Lyle Chartered Town Planners that draws together the findings of a number of technical specialists that have been appointed to examine the submitted applications.

The proposed development is both significant in scale and is complex. The assessment of the application has raised a number of issues, many of which are inter-related. The key findings and therefore matters of objection to the proposals are set out below:

- There is no need to release any further reserves of crushed rock aggregate in North Yorkshire at the present time.
- The application site has not been identified within the development plan as being either in a preferred area or within an area of search.
- The future allocation of any further crushed rock aggregate provision should be made through the preparation of the North Yorkshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework and NOT via premature individual applications.
- The proposals will not impact on the level of consent for crushed rock aggregate extraction in the protected landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) of North Yorkshire.
- The application site and that of Barton Quarry are in principle unsustainable locations for minerals extraction and processing as they are entirely served by road transport.
- It is clear that the financial and business case for the development of the quarry and how it is linked with the development of the visitor attraction has not been made in the application. This is somewhat surprising as the key argument put forward to justify the proposals is that the minerals extraction is a form of enabling development.
- No provision is made to secure the restoration of the site should the development fail.
- There is no justification for the development of the quarry as a form of enabling development because the costs of restoring the Listed Buildings is not so great that it cannot reasonably be financed by normal means and because the minerals extraction would have a significant adverse impact on the setting of the listed buildings, therefore adversely affecting their historic character.
- The Environmental Statement has failed to examine properly the alternative options to the development proposal and fails to adopt a robust approach to assessing alternative sources of funding or uses for the historic buildings, rather than relying upon 'enabling development'.

- The Environmental Statement has seriously under-estimated the environmental impact of the proposals as the estimate of visitor numbers is wildly inaccurate by missing a potential 170,000 visitors per annum.
- The proposals have not considered the impact of the development upon essential existing essential village services.
- The application does not provide details of the claimed employment generation, nor does it consider whether employees can be sourced locally, or brought into the area. It does not consider the accommodation requirements of any staff or the impact of commuting and associated parking requirements.
- The Environmental Statement fails to consider the possible environmental effects of dust resulting from drilling and blasting.
- The assessment of the noise issues in the Environmental Statement, whilst generally covering the topics expected, omits consideration of reversing alarms. Additionally, the work undertaken could have been more extensive so as to provide a fuller picture of the likely noise impacts of the development.
- The Environmental Statement does not consider the likely effects of blasting and vibration on the listed structures and no assessment is made as to whether these structures may be adversely affected by the proposed blasting.
- The transport assessment has been found to be seriously flawed and is not sufficient to assess the environmental impacts of the proposal.
- The principal landscape objection is to the features proposed that will permanently adversely alter the historic landscape. A more sympathetic and enlightened approach to restoration should be expected. A more appropriate restoration proposal, would have been to fully restore the landscape to the 18th Century character to '*preserve and enhance*' the setting for the listed buildings and complement the development of restaurant and conference facilities in this historic landscape.
- The environmental statement fails to assess properly the impact of the development on the historic heritage of the site and the estate. The development would result in adverse impacts and change to the historic environment contrary to both national and local policy.
- The proposal fails to consider properly the effects of the development on hydrology and the impacts of the potential development on the water environment and dependent ecology cannot be determined.
- The Environmental Statement has not considered properly the issue of the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- The environmental statement does not assess properly all of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposals on the ecology of the area.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this report demonstrates that both the application and Environmental Statement do not make a case for the granting of permission for the proposals which are clearly contrary to national, regional and local planning policy. The application does not provide a clearly reasoned justification for the granting of permission for this new quarry as 'enabling' development that can clearly be undertaken without the need for the quarry.

This report and appended specialist reports also demonstrate that the proposed visitor attraction, to be created by the restoration of the quarry void, would be intrusive into and destroy a significant historic landscape. The proposals cannot then achieve their stated purpose of restoring the Middleton Lodge Estate.

The Environmental Statement fails to make a full assessment of the environmental implications of the proposals and has not systematically drawn together and assessed properly all of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposals. Therefore, the likely environmental effects cannot be understood properly by both the public and the determining authority and the applications should be refused.