



**National
Trust**

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20 May 2024

James Mountain,
Planning Services,
Bassetlaw District Council,
Queens Building,
Potter Street,
Worksop,
Nottinghamshire,
S80 2AH.

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear James Mountain,

**National Trust Response to Planning Application for Installation and Operation of a Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System (Output upto 40 MW), with Associated Works, Equipment, Infrastructure and Landscaping
(Reference: 24/00384/FUL).**

The National Trust is a charity founded in 1895 to promote the permanent preservation of places of historic interest and natural beauty for the benefit of the nation and is Europe's largest conservation organisation. With the support of our Parliamentary Act, we are legally responsible for the protection of some of the most beautiful, historically important and environmentally sensitive places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Whilst in principle we are supportive of renewable energy, recognising the pressing risk of climate change, we also believe relevant projects can be delivered with respect for the setting and significance of heritage assets. In relation to these proposals, we feel that this balance could be better achieved and offer the following comments accordingly.

This representation expands on our reasoning and position. We trust that this will be considered in the decision-making process, and we are happy to continue pro-actively engaging with the relevant stakeholders moving forward.

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Director-General: Hilary McGrady
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Registered charity number 205846

The National Trust and Clumber Park

Carved out of the ancient forest of Sherwood, Clumber Park is a beautiful expanse of parkland, heath and woods covering more than 3,800 acres.

For over three centuries, Clumber Park was the country estate of the Dukes of Newcastle. Although the house was taken down in 1938, there are many glimpses of its grand past to explore. From the Gothic-style chapel, often referred to as a 'cathedral in miniature', you can follow in the footsteps of the Dukes through the peaceful Pleasure Grounds to the walled kitchen garden where you can experience sights, scents and a taste of the past.

Clumber's history as a Ducal Park, its importance for nature conservation, and its capacity provide informal recreation on a vast scale in a beautiful setting mark it out as a hugely significant property in the National Trust portfolio.

The estate includes a Grade I Registered Park and Garden and has 30 listed structures – including two at Grade I and seven at Grade II* - and a 525-ha Site of Special Scientific Interest. Also, of particular relevance here, to the east of the Registered Park and Garden lay a range of gates and lodges which have individual, and cumulative, significance as historic arrival and entrance points to Clumber Park. Furthermore, Hardwick Village within the east of the Registered Park and Garden contains a number of listed structures related to its role as an estate village.

The Clumber of the 18th century remains most apparent in its landscape, vistas and temples – especially around the 36-ha lake with its bridge, cascade and grotto – plus the Park's seven entrances and gatehouses, and its enormous walled kitchen garden. The important overlay of the 19th century is prominent too, in the fine Gothic Revival family Chapel with important fittings and soaring spire, the pleasure grounds, double-lined Lime Tree Avenue and estate village and the slightly later giant lean-to glasshouse.

Accordingly, the heritage assets outlined here are considered to be of the highest level of significance and of exceptional interest.

The National Trust's Position on Renewable Energy Production

The National Trust has a duty to protect and care for special places so people, nature and culture can thrive. We believe that climate change poses one of the greatest threats to these values. We believe strongly in the need to grow renewable energy and reduce the UK's and the Trust's use of fossil fuels.

The UK needs to meet at least carbon net zero by 2050 or earlier. We recognise the scale and complexity of the challenge to the nation of transitioning to renewable energy and acknowledge that any impacts upon the setting and significance of special places across the country will need to be considered in light of the pressing need to deliver clean energy. We believe delivering renewable energy projects with respect of the setting and significance of places is possible and all projects should aim to do so. We will continue to stand up for the places we look after, and where necessary hold developers to account for good practice.

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The National Trust's Response to the Application

The proposal relates to the construction and operation of a solar farm, including a battery energy storage system with an estimated output of up to 40MW. The site is proposed for 73.22 hectares with land around this being used to provide opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancement. An overall lifespan of 40 years is expected, prior to decommissioning and restoration.

Whilst we do not object in principle, we have some concerns relating to the setting of Clumber Park. In this case, the proposals site is located 50m from the eastern boundary of Clumber Park, separated by the A614. Therefore, the proposals present a potential risk to the wider setting of the Registered Park and Garden and associated historic arrival and entrance points. An important element of setting is also experiential in nature, with large numbers of visitors able to access and explore Clumber Park's natural beauty. We ask that this is considered in the decision-making process.

We note that visual screening, both existing and proposed, is liable to change over time and seasonally, making it more effective at some points than others, but would go some way to mitigate any views of the solar farm from Clumber's heritage assets, as considered within the Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment. Should planning permission be granted the Trust would therefore request that a suitable condition is placed on the proposed planting scheme, or any subsequent revisions of the planting scheme, to ensure that all planting is established effectively and maintained for the life of proposal. Recognising that planting must be suitable in the landscape.

Wherever appropriate, the National Trust would welcome any potential to reduce the scale of the solar farm and move the proposal further from the boundary of Clumber Park to help reduce the impact of these proposals. Site Capacity is considered within the Design and Access Statement and states that the site is viable as is proposed, but the Trust would welcome additional consideration of the viability of a smaller capacity in this case.

In all, the Trust request that Bassetlaw District Council satisfy themselves that the above has been sufficiently considered and any public benefit of the proposals is adequately weighed against any potential harm to the setting of the nearby heritage assets including those related to Clumber Park.

In light of this, and with regard for Clumber Park's significance and setting, the National Trust requests that relevant heritage, landscape and ecological review is carried out within the decision-making process.

More broadly, if Bassetlaw District Council are minded to approve the application, we request that the type and nature of solar panels is agreed and conditioned as per the specification in the Glint Assessment, March 2024 to minimise the risk of glint and glare in the wider landscape. This includes the use of non-glare/non-reflective type panels. Also, that all opportunity is taken to maximise visual screening in a means suitable to the site and landscape. Finally, the Decommissioning Method Statement should be secured with

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appropriately robust conditions. This will ensure the future legacy of the site beyond the proposed operational period and seek enhancement opportunities.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Haigh

Ruth Haigh,
Assistant Planning Adviser, Midlands and East of England.

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