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Planning Department
North Devon Council
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Barnstaple
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By email only: Planning@northdevon.gov.uk
April 7th 2026

Dear Mr K Evely,

Planning Application: 81536

**The Wood Yard The Old Sawmills Filleigh Barnstaple Devon EX32 0RN Devon
Siting and use of rural workers dwelling and associated worksThe Wood Yard**

Thank you for consulting the Gardens Trust in its role as Statutory Consultee on the above application which may have a material impact on the significance of Castle Hill, a Grade 1 registered park and garden (RPG) included by Historic England on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. We have liaised with the Devon Gardens Trust and their local knowledge informs this joint response.

The listing describes the site as 'An early C18 formal landscape with structures and water features laid out by Earl Clinton around a mansion designed by Lord Burlington, altered to a more natural form and extended in the mid C18 by Matthew, Lord Fortescue. Further C19 developments include early C19 structures and pleasure grounds around the house and extensive late C19 ornamental planting across the estate.'

We were consulted on the previous application on this site (application number 81214) and our response was a no comment albeit we felt it was regrettable that there was no reference to the Grade 1 status of the RPG and the fact that the proposed new structure is well within the RPG and situated close to the Grade II listed Sawmill. However, our response was reached without a site visit or the benefit of the additional information that the Case Officer identified in their report and which was mentioned in Point 1 of the Decision Notice refusing planning permission dated February 9th 2026.

We have now reviewed the documents in this new application and we note the following:-

- the Location Plan and Block Plan are not identical if they are identifying the proposed temporary residential/office building.
- as previously stated, it was not clear from the previous application that there would be other structures on site for processing the wood and we note that the new Planning Statement (Quiet Waters, undated) states that the: 'Industrial plant that is demountable and not permanently affixed does not automatically fall within the definition of operational development'. However, this implies that the units function as industrial machinery rather than buildings which we understand would be permitted under Schedule 2, Part 4, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015'
- However, no indication is given of the scale of this equipment and, whilst the residential element might be 'modest and single-storey.... It does not intrude into open parkland, woodland glades or formal landscape features associated with the historic estate.' (Section 14 'Heritage Considerations' of the aforementioned Planning Statement), no detail is given of the operational plant and structures - 'retort kilns and flare stack and associated machinery' - which might impact on the parkland, eg be visible, especially in winter. Although these may not require planning permission, there is no assessment of their impact on the RPG, including smoke and other potential emissions.
- The application site is visible from the mock castle on the hill to the north of the mansion and within the RPG and potentially from other parts of the landscape. We acknowledge it may be screened by broadleaf tree cover in summer but we would query whether the kiln and stack may potentially protrude above the tree cover?

With regard to the proposed new temporary residential building, our position remains the same (no comment, GT letter 28th January 2026). Whilst, we do not object in principle to such **temporary** activity (historic landscapes have always included working elements), however the temporary nature should be subject to the relevant and adequate enforceable conditions. Whilst these facilities may not require planning permission as we detailed above, given this is within a Grade I RPG, the applicant needs to provide full detail about the scale and operational implications of the activity in the original and this planning application and we remain concerned at the potential impact on this significant site.

If you have any further queries, please contact us at this email address, and we would be grateful to be advised of the outcome of the application in due course

Yours sincerely

Joanne Mirzoeff BA (Hons) MSc
Consultant Conservation Officer