

## **DELEGATED DECISION REPORT**

<b>Application Reference Number</b>	14NP0048
<b>Description / Site Address</b>	Change of use and Conversion of Redundant Estate buildings to Micro-Distillery and installation of plant and machinery to support this use including the erection of a lean-to shed to the east elevation and a chemical store at Whitefield Hall, Hepple, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 7LN.
<b>Applicant</b>	Sir Walter Riddell
<b>Agent</b>	Sir Walter Riddell
<b>Expiry date of publicity / consultations</b>	N/A
<b>Last date for decision</b>	18/07/2014

### **Planning Policy**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March, 2012.**

- 3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- 7. Requiring good design.

#### **Northumberland National Park Core Strategy and Development Policies Document**

*Policy 1: Delivering Sustainable Development*

*Policy 3: General Development Principles*

*Policy 7: Conversion of buildings outside settlements*

*Policy 14: A Sustainable Local Economy*

*Policy 17 Ecology*

*Policy 20: Landscape Quality and Character*

*Policy 25: Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency*

### **Relevant Planning History**

14NP0007: New single storey building located to the North-West of the existing house to accommodate a new biomass heating plant to provide heat and hot water for the existing and new buildings, with associated ancillary accommodation, office space and storage

Approved 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014

### **Consultation Responses**

Parish Council: Support

NNPA's Landscape and Forestry officer: No objection

NNPA's Access and Recreation Officer: No Objection

NNPA's Ecologist: No Objection

Northumbrian Water: no objection  
NCC Highway: no objection  
NCC Public Protection: No objection, two informatives suggested  
Environment Agency: No objection

## **The Proposal and Site**

This application seeks the Change of Use of redundant buildings for the creation of a micro distillery within a collection of redundant buildings at Whitefield Hall, Hepple. The proposal includes the installation of machinery and plant to support this use and the erection of a lean-to storage shed to the east elevation with chemical store.

The proposed works are located within former outbuildings to the east of the main house which are constructed of sandstone under a slate roof dating from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings consist of four rooms, Ingredients, Preparation and store room, the still room and store and boiler room to ground floor level and an office and WC to the first floor. An external lean-to is to be constructed to the eastern elevation with a timber structure on a stone dwarf wall.

The buildings are located within a courtyard of buildings adjacent to the gardener's cottage. The group of buildings form two courtyards with the distillery occupying the north-eastern courtyard of the site. The proposal includes little change to the existing buildings with the only additions to the site being the installation of a lean to store in timber, a IBC (Hazardous Chemical Store) to the northern side of the courtyard and a compressed natural gas compound to the eastern side of the yard.

The machinery to be used includes a silent closed loop system with no escape of odour combined with a steam jacketed heating system and water cooled condenser recovery system for maceration of waste and office heating.

## **Assessment**

The issues for consideration in the assessment of this application are:

*The Principle of Development*  
*General development Principles*  
*Sustainable Local Economy*  
*Ecology*  
*Impact on Landscape Quality and Character*  
*Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency*

### *Principle of Development*

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of decision-taking. The NPPF also seeks to support a prosperous rural economy, stating that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Specifically the NPPF seeks to

ensure support for sustainable rural developments which benefit business in rural area, which respect the character of the countryside.

Policy 1 of the NNPA Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development proposals will conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park, make efficient use of land materials and infrastructure. In the case of the proposal, the outward appearance of the building will only change slightly with new structures limited to the construction of a timber lean-to and chemical and gas bottle store within the enclosed courtyard of the site. No wider impacts on the special qualities or character of the site will be presented by the development and provided the proposal meets the other relevant policies in the Local Development Framework the development is considered to meet the criteria of Policy 1.

Policy 7 of the Local Development Framework concerns the conversion of buildings outside settlements and states that the change of use of buildings to employment use will be supported where the building is capable of conversion and the building is of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without significant extension. In the instance of the proposal, the building for conversion is of good condition with the only extension limited to a small timber lean to within the yard. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy 7 and therefore Policy 1 of the Local Development Framework.

### *General Development Principles*

Policy 3 of the Local Development Framework states that development should conserve the special qualities of the National Park. The proposal will involve minimal changes to the building restricted to the construction of a timber lean-to within the existing courtyard at the site and compounds for gas bottles and hazardous chemicals. The proposed timber lean-to is of traditional vernacular design and the compounds are entirely screened by the existing buildings and boundary treatments. The conversion of the buildings ensures that the attractive, traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings will be retained and restored as, there is no heritage designation attached to the site, this will ensure redundant attractive buildings are retained at the site with a new use.

The proposed use at the site is essentially of low-level industrial/processing use. The machinery to be installed is of a type which will not produce manufacturing odours and all processes will be discrete with no noise intrusion. Delivery levels and traffic movements are considered to be of very low scale and no issues have been raised by Northumberland County Council highways department.

The Public Protection Department of Northumberland County Council have also assessed the application and have not raised any objection to the scheme but have requested informatives be placed on any approval which ensure the storage of gas and the storage of hazardous chemicals are carried out in accordance with relevant legislation.

The proposal also includes the installation of a package water treatment plant – which is to be installed alongside the existing drainage. The installation is seen as an improvement to the existing antiquated system and Northumbrian Water have raised

no objection to the proposal. The Environment Agency have also assessed the details for the treatment plant and have raised no objection provided no trade effluent is discharged via this plant. It is recommended that waste management details are submitted as a condition attached to any approval. It is considered this part of the application would also accord with Policy 3.

Due to the design of the proposal, the inclusion of all new structures within the existing collection of buildings and the lack of negative impact on amenity, either through traffic movements and levels of impact through the processing the proposal is considered to accord with Policy 3 of the Local Development Framework.

### *Sustainable Local Economy*

The NPPF states that development plans should support sustainable rural tourism which Policy 14 of the Local Development Framework reinforces. Policy 14 also states that the national park will support proposals for new businesses where they relate to the special qualities of the national park but do not impact negatively on them and are home-based employment activities which do not adversely affect neighbours or neighbouring land uses. In the case of the proposal, the new distillery is considered to be of small scale and part of a wider range of businesses connected with the Hepple Whitefield estate. The nearest neighbouring property is the Gardner's Cottage located to the western side of the courtyard. The neighbouring property is located a sufficient distance from the application site as to not cause any issues of concern to neighbour amenity and the proposed use would not have a negative impact over and above that presented currently by the agricultural use in operations surrounding the site. The proposal would help promote the diversity of the business operations at the site ensuring longer time survival and sustainability of employment at the estate and will provide a new full-time employee and a new part time employee post. Due to the reasons outlined above the proposal is considered to accord with Policy 14 of the Local Development Framework.

### *Ecology*

Policy 17 of the Local Development seeks to ensure that proposals for development preserve or enhance the biodiversity of the National Park. The proposal has been assessed by the NNPA's Ecologist and it is considered that it would not present any negative impacts on protected species. The NNPA's Ecologist has requested that due to the proximity of the adjacent SSSI a waste water management plan condition be attached to any approval.

### *Impact on Landscape Quality and Character*

The proposed development is to be located within an existing collection of buildings and the existing yard to the site. The new structures part of the development will not be visible within the wider landscape context. Policy 20 of the Local Development framework seeks to ensure that development does not present any issues of detriment to the landscape character of the National Park and in this instance it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with this policy.

### *Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency*

In delivering sustainable development, the provision of renewable energy initiatives, both in production and use of energy in new development is paramount in delivering sustainable development. The NPPF is clear that sustainability is at the core of assessing new development. Policy 25 of the Local Development Framework reinforces the importance of renewable energy within new developments. The applicant has stated that the proposal holds renewable and reduced energy consumption as one of the key principles of the business ethos. The use of locally sourced materials and ingredients is combined in the operation of the new development with using energy sources from renewable sources. The application has been submitted with the intention of using bio-methane as a renewable fuel for the steam process ensuring 90% of operational energy is from renewable sources. In addition the long-term aspiration for energy sourcing at the site is from waste whisky product thereby reducing the carbon footprint of the operation further. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the criteria of Policy 25 of the Local Development Framework.

### **Positive and Proactive Planning Statement**

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determined to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Taking all of the above into account, including development plan policies and other material planning considerations including the NPPF, it is recommended that the local planning authority grant permission for application reference 14NP0048 subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To ensure that the development is commenced within a reasonable period of time from the date of this permission and to comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Application Form received on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014
- Site Location Plan received on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014
- Existing and Proposed Plans Drawing No1 received on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2014
- Machinery Specification Document (Muller series Aroma) received on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2014
- Container Storage Specification Document received on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014

- Existing and Proposed Plans, Elevations and Sections received on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014
- Package Sewerage Treatment Plant Specification Document received on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to enable Northumberland National Park Authority to adequately control the development and to conform with Policies 1, 3, 7, 14, 17, 20 and 25 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to the operation of the development hereby approved details of a waste water management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved waste water management plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the operation of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To protect the quality of the water courses and the adjacent SSSI and ensure the development complies with Policy 17 of the Northumberland National Park Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.

4. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority detailing the external lighting treatment to be installed on the building hereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of landscape amenity of the site and to ensure accordance with Policy 20 of the Northumberland National Park Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.

### Informatives

1. This planning permission is granted in strict accordance with the approved plans. It should be noted however that:

(a) Any variation from the approved plans following commencement of the development, irrespective of the degree of variation, will constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action.

(b) You or your agent or any other person responsible for implementing this permission should inform Northumberland National Park's planning authority immediately of any proposed variation from the approved plans and ask to be advised as to the best method to resolve the matter. Most proposals for variation to the approved plans will require the submission of a new planning application.

2. This consent is granted subject to conditions and it is the owner and the person responsible for the implementation of the development who will be fully responsible for their compliance throughout the development and beyond. If there is a condition that requires work to be carried out or details to be approved prior to the commencement of the development this is called a "condition precedent". The following should be noted with regards to conditions precedent:

(a) If a condition precedent is not complied with, the whole of the development will be unauthorised and you may be liable to enforcement action.

(b) In addition if a condition precedent is breached, the development is unauthorised and the only way to rectify the development is the submission of a new application. If any other type of condition is breached then you will be liable to a breach of condition notice.

3. it is advised that the applicant should seek any necessary approval for the storage of hazardous chemicals at the location indicated on the proposed site layout. The storage of hazardous chemicals at the location indicated on the proposed layout. The storage of these chemicals may need to follow guidance from DEFRA and the Environment Agency.

Please note that to prevent land contamination and pollution of any regulated water courses or groundwater, storage of hazardous chemicals would normally require a bund around any IBC chemical storage to contain 110 per cent of the maximum capacity of the largest tank or drum. It would also be prudent to have an outside store covered to prevent rainwater filling the bund or rain causing an overflow during or after a catastrophic failure of any drum/tank.

	Signature	Date
<b>Planning Officer</b>		

I hereby certify that the proposal may be determined by the Chief Executive or the Head of Planning or relevant Director under the current Delegation Scheme. I can confirm that planning permission should be granted under delegated powers, as outlined in the recommendation above.

	Signature	Date
<b>Interim Manager: Development Management</b>		
<b>Chief Executive</b>		

