

From: Robert Mayhew  
Sent: 03 March 2015 12:00  
To: DC Consultation  
Subject: RE: Planning Application Consultation 15NP0008 Hesleyside Hall, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2LA

Dear Chris,

15NP0008 - Erection of one `hut on wheels` to provide tourist accommodation at Hesleyside Hall, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2LA

Thank you for consulting me on the above application. Having looked at this application and attended site I would like to make the following observations.

The application site lies in the Border Moors and Forests National Character Area, Rolling Upland Valleys Local Character Type and Upper North Tyne Valley Character Area. The grounds surrounding Hesleyside Hall, a Grade II\* listed building, are also registered under the Historic Buildings and Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and gardens for its special historic interest.

The proposed location chosen for the Shepherd's Hut is south of an avenue of trees lying either side of the eastern entrance drive approximately 280 meters south east from the Hall itself. The site lies within a formal parkland garden that was originally set out the early 18th Century and is characterised by avenues of trees radiating out from the Hall and informal clumps of trees set between these.

Impact upon Landscape Character – The application states that the Shepherd's Hut is essentially a mobile structure, with the proposed being constructed out of reclaimed oak and pitched pine and it is hoped that this will blend in with the earthy colours of the surrounding vegetation. I would suggest that whilst Shepherd's huts may be characteristic to the Northumberland uplands, Hesleyside Hall is set in a valley bottom and they are not typical of a formal parkland setting. However, this is the third application for such structures at Hesleyside Hall and the earlier applications were approved for three similar structures. This proposal would appear to be in a better location in that whilst it is in the same vicinity of the previous three huts, it would be better screened by an existing conifer block of trees that lie to the north of the proposed location and this would screen the hut from the principal receptor site, namely the C200 minor county road to the north and east. Due to the size, design and construction materials proposed for the Shepherd's Hut and the potential temporary nature of this development, I would suggest that there would be a low impact upon the landscape character of this part of the National Park. It is not clear from the application whether the applicant intends to let the Shepherd's Hut all year round but given the mobile nature of the huts, the impact could be temporarily removed altogether if the shepherd huts collectively were relocated to a discreet storage area during periods of long-term vacancy.

Impact upon Views - Public access to the grounds is restricted and the nearest point from which the development is likely to be visible is the C200 minor

county road that passes approximately 350m to the north and 150m to the east of the site. As such the Shepherd's Hut will not be prominent in the landscape when viewed from this receptor site. If the Shepherd's Hut is not to be let all year round, consideration to relocating it to somewhere less visible could reduce their visual impact altogether for certain periods of the year. If the huts are to be let all year round, then I would suggest that the use of wood burning stoves in winter is likely to draw additional attention to the units as smoke may drift across the parkland areas. I note and accept the proposed method for sourcing and providing wood fuel for the stoves used in the Shepherd Huts and this ensures that the undesirable practice of unmanaged foraging of firewood by the occupiers should be alleviated. I am also aware and welcome the fact that the Hesleyside Estate already has a Forestry Commission approved woodland management plan in place and a sustainable approach to native broadleaved woodland management is being adopted by the applicant.

Based upon experience from similar visitor accommodation units I would be wary as to whether the Shepherd's Hut may attract additional external infrastructure that may itself have a visual impact upon the setting of the historic parkland and garden, ie pic-nic tables, benches, decking, games etc. I believe that such infrastructure should be discouraged as it will increase the effects that this development will have upon the views and landscape setting.

On a separate note in relation to the trees found within the historic park and garden, I understand that the hut proposed by the applicant will not require any foundations to be laid or services led to or from it in trenches and therefore there will not be any disturbance to the roots of existing trees as a result of this development.

I understand from the design and access statement that there will be a Dark Skies compliant external lighting unit needed as a result of this application. Details of this unit would be useful to see in order to be reassured that there will not be any additional light pollution that may impact upon the Dark Skies Park status of the National Park.

Finally, as previously identified this application, if approved would represent the introduction of a fourth mobile accommodation unit into this designated parkland landscape. Should additional units be required I would suggest that the cumulative effect of these units would need further consideration. The approach to date has been somewhat sporadic and a more holistic long-term vision for this tourism venture would be welcomed.

In conclusion, I can confirm that I do not propose to object to this application as I do not believe that it will have a significant effect upon the landscape character or views into or out from the National Park. I would however like to make the following recommendations:-

- If the proposed use of these units is to be seasonal, then the applicant should be encouraged to relocate the unit somewhere more discreet during periods of long-term vacancy;
- The provision or use of furniture and additional external infrastructure should be restricted to prevent any further impact upon the landscape character or views of this part of the National Park.

- Even though it is mentioned in the application, I proposed that a condition be included with this application such that wood-fuel should not be gathered by occupants of the shepherd huts as this may lead to damage to the historic parkland trees. Wood should be sourced and provided by the Estate from a sustainable source.

If you have any questions in relation to the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

regards

-----Original Message-----

From: DC Consultation

Sent: 04 February 2015 14:12

To: Robert Mayhew

Subject: Planning Application Consultation 15NP0008 Hesleyside Hall, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2LA

Please see the attached consultation regarding a planning application which has been received by Northumberland National Park Authority. Full details can be viewed at <http://nnpa.planning-register.co.uk/plaPlanningAppDisplay.aspx?AppNo=15NP0008>  
DC Consultation, Development Control Consultation  
Tel: (x)

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Robert Mayhew, Landscape and Forestry Officer

Tel: [REDACTED]

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