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Planning Officer  
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Direct Dial: [REDACTED]  
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Our Ref: RG/ALN508529  
Your Ref: 15NP0047  
Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Dear Mr Stanworth

**15NP0047 – SINGLE STOREY REAR BEDROOM EXTENSION WITH GLAZED LINK TO EXISTING PROPERTY AT BRIDGE END COTTAGE, LOW ALWINTON**

We have been instructed by Mr and Mrs Latcham of the Rose and Thistle, Alwinton to object to the above referenced application. The application raises a number of serious concerns which are outlined below with discussion.

**1. Size and Scale**

The purpose of the National Park is to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. In doing so the Northumberland National Park Authority has developed a Local Development Framework (LDF) which provides a core strategy and development policies which are vital to providing effective management of the National Park. The LDF has a central role to maintain the character of the park and to foster the social and economic well-being of the parks communities.

Having viewed the plans which support the planning application it is clear that the existing building known as Bridge End Cottage is going to receive a complete and thorough redevelopment to turn a very compact single bedroom cottage into a 3 bedroom dwelling house. This is particularly relevant as Policy S3 of the Core Strategy (CS) identifies 'General Development Principles' and ensures that residential extensions are subservient to the main building and do not substantially increase the size whilst being sympathetic to the existing buildings scale, siting and form.

As a result of the extensions the overall footprint of the building will be extended in excess of 50% of the existing footprint thereby dramatically and significantly altering the size and also the existing function of the building. The LDF Design Guide – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) identifies at section 6.3.2 that successful extensions not only respect the character but are subservient particularly in terms of scale. The design guide also goes onto identify that smaller buildings have less scope for extensions and that a threshold exists beyond which further extension would significantly affect the character of the host building.

On consideration of Bridge End Cottage, the internal layout and its overall character and appearance there is a strong argument to suggest that the Cottage should be retained without alteration and any extension, particularly one which increases the footprint in excess of 50% will have a significant impact on the character of the original building. As a result the extension would not appear subservient to the size and scale of the original Cottage but rather would be an unsympathetic addition which destroys the historical layout, function, character and appearance of the existing cottage.

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## **2. Design and Appearance**

Although we have discussed above the size and scale of the proposed extension it is also important to consider the design and appearance. The CS and the SPD mentioned above are both relevant to the consideration of the design and appearance of the proposed extension and should be considered in the determination of this planning application.

Policy 3 of the CS requires high quality of design which will protect and enhance the local character and distinctiveness. In particular materials should be appropriate to the site and its setting and the development itself should be sympathetic to existing building in terms of siting, form and mass. The proposed extension has been designed to be to appear modern and contemporary however with this come a disassociation and a detachment from the host building both in terms of the physical structure but also the relationship between the extension and the existing built form.

Although the extensions and alterations are going to be to the rear of the existing property elements of the extension will be visible from the south as you approach Alwinton and from the east and north when in close proximity to the property, particularly adjacent to the bus stop and when in the beer garden of the Rose and Thistle. As a result the choice of material and the overall design are extremely important considerations.

It is recognised that rhythm between the host building and the extension is important and an attempt has been made to introduce a pitched roof to replicate the pitched roof the Cottage interspersed with flat roof elements providing breaks within the form of the building. However it is felt in this case that the addition particularly because of its 'detachment' from the main building and the choice of contrasting materials to those of the Cottage result in alien form of development which impacts on the setting and also the appearance of the Cottage.

As a result, and in particular when viewed from the south the extension will dominate the appearance of the Cottage, whilst the glazed linking structure and the outbuilding appear awkward in terms of the size, massing and also the design and appearance of the original cottage which conflicts with the content of Policy 3 and the SPD overall.

## **3. Party Wall and Implications for Noise and Disturbance**

Whilst 'Party Wall' issues are not necessary planning matters they do and can have a significant impact on the ability to either start or complete works which have planning consent. The mention of the Party Wall is particularly relevant in this case as the drawings clearly identify and include an annotation to the 'Party Fence Wall'.

As a result the rear wall (north elevation) of the proposed extension should it be approved would be incorporated into and form part of the Party Wall to the Rose and Thistle. Whilst other procedures exist around the 'Party Wall Act' the National Park Authority (NPA) must recognise the implications of the proposed extension forming part of the Party Wall.

Of particular concern is the potential for noise and disturbance occurring from the Beer Garden of the Rose and Thistle impacting upon the living conditions of the occupants of the new extension. The potential for noise and disturbance is therefore increased as there will be no separation between the Beer Garden of the Rose and Thistle. This situation will be made worse again by the existence of large roof lights to both roof slopes of the extension which when open would allow significant noise pollution to occur to the occupants.

As such, the applicant must be made fully aware of the implications of siting an extension firstly, adjacent to an existing Beer Garden and secondly, the implications resulting from the proposed extension forming part of the Party Wall. The Rose and Thistle do not want to be opened up to complaints arising from an existing Beer Garden as a result of a new residential extension immediately adjacent and adjoining the grounds of the Pub.

#### 4. Other Matters

Although we have raised three major points above, there are also a series of smaller issues which we would like to draw to your attention.

**Massing and impact on outlook** – Due to the position and the size of the proposed extension and the separation distance between the built form of the Rose and Thistle to the north, there is the potential for the massing of the northern elevation of the proposed extension to severely impact the outlook and as a result the living conditions of the south facing rooms of the Rose and Thistle. We could ask that due consideration is given to this matter.

**Dark sky** – The Northumberland National Park is recognised for its Dark Skies through the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. The proposed extension with the use of extensive glazing and also the large roof lights has the potential to contribute towards the incremental loss of Dark Skies within the NPA. As a minimum the large roof lights and extensive glazing should be removed or altered.

**Noise complaints** – Although partly mentioned above the NPA must be satisfied that the proposed extension will provide an appropriate standard of accommodation which takes account of the adjoining Pub and Beer Garden. Further the NPA should seek to protect the Rose and Thistle and must be satisfied that the proposed extension will not lead to complaints regarding noise and disturbance as a result of the proximity of the Pub and Beer Garden.

#### Summary

It is therefore considered that the proposed extension results in a form of development which appears alien within its setting whilst the increase in floor area is disproportionate to the footprint of the existing Cottage. As a result the unique and individual character of Bridge End Cottage will be lost through unsympathetic additions which do not appear subservient to the character and appearance of the Cottage itself.

Further the overall position against and forming part of the Party Wall raises significant concerns regarding whether or not an appropriate level of residential accommodation can be provided within the extension. Due to the proximity of the extension and the Beer Garden the proposed extension raises the potential of complaints against the Rose and Thistle particularly in relation to noise and disturbance.

Finally, issues around the massing, and the living conditions of the southern facing rooms of the Rose and Thistle have not be adequately dealt with, whilst there are serious concerns over the incremental loss of the Dark Skies status of the NPA as a result of the extensive use of glazing and the two large roof lights.

Overall the proposals appear to be in conflict with Policy 3 of the CS and fail to accord with the criteria of the SPD and therefore should be refused.

Should you wish to discuss the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Otherwise, I trust that you will register this objection as such and inform us of the decision or appropriate planning committee meeting in due course.

Yours sincerely,

  
Craig Ross  
Planning Consultant

For and on behalf of George F White LLP

cc Mr and Mrs Latcham