

DMC2015-028

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Application No: 15NP0080

Proposed Development: Construction of timber decking and installation of 4no. rooflight windows (Retrospective) at Lodge 14, Otterburn Lodge Estate, Otterburn Hall Estate, Otterburn, Northumberland, NE19 1HE

Applicant Name: Mr. Gurjit. S. Ladhar

Reason for Committee Decision: Parish Council Objection

Recommendation: Approval, subject to Conditions

1. Background, proposal and Site

1.1 This application seeks retrospective planning permission for the construction of timber decking and the installation of 4no. rooflight windows to the chalet known as Lodge 14, Otterburn Hall, Otterburn.

1.2 Lodge 14 is a two storey 'Swiss-style' holiday lodge; this is timber clad, with a steeply pitched tiled roof. Land levels beneath the lodge fall sharply towards the rear (south east), leaving the building partially elevated above ground level, supported by a breezeblock/brick plinth.



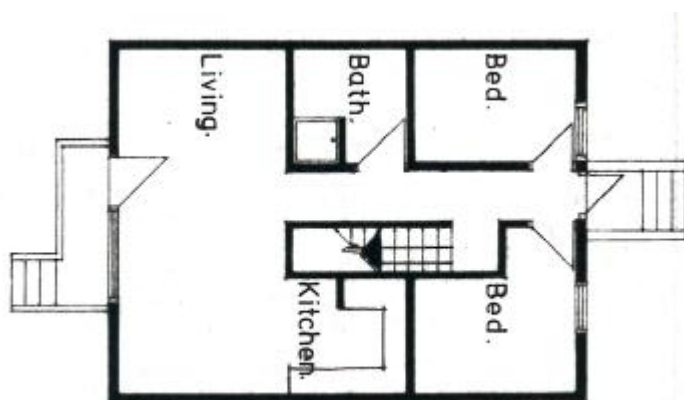
Front elevation of Lodge 14; view facing towards the south west

- 1.3 Lodge 14 and the surrounding chalets occupy a large site (known informally as the 'top site') to the north west of Otterburn Hall. This site is enveloped by mature trees, separated from the Hall by the Estate driveway and buildings positioned along part of the southern site boundary. The chalet in question lies to the south eastern corner of the site, located adjacent to an area used for car parking, and is closely surrounded by trees and shrubs.



Aerial view of Otterburn Hall and 'top site'. Approximate position of Lodge 14 annotated with red/white rectangle. Otterburn Hall annotated with red/white star (2008 Google Maps extract)

- 1.4 It is understood that planning permission was granted for Lodge 14 under application reference 87NP0029. This was later amended by application 89NP0072 in order to re-position the chalet within the site. Approved plans relating to application 87NP0029 shown areas of decking to the front and rear of the lodge.



Ground Floor Plan.

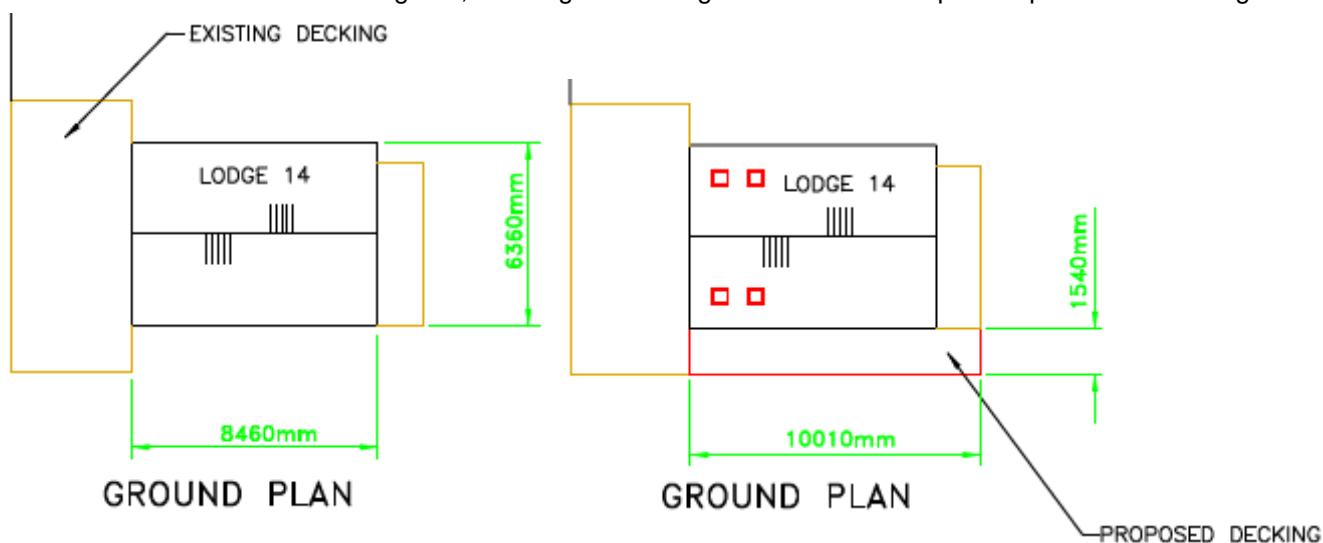
Extract from approved floor plans for Lodge 14 relating to application 87NP0029.

This shows the chalet and small decked areas to the front and rear elevations

- 1.5 The area directly to the north west of Lodge 14 is open, grassed land, demarcated with low fencing and pathways. This area of land benefits from planning consent for the siting of 35 timber chalets, permitted under application reference 87NP0031. This consent was implemented within 5 years of the date that permission was granted, and therefore remains valid. To date, approximately one third of the lodges granted consent on the wider site have been constructed, with construction of the remaining chalets ongoing following recent sale activity.
- 1.6 Akin to the surrounding lodges, Lodge 14 previously benefitted from two smaller areas of decking to the front and rear, shown on the plans relating to application 87NP0029. The replacement decking surrounds the lodge on three sides, with steps to the front elevation. This decking is elevated up to approximately 1 metre above ground level due to the immediate topography, topped with 1 metre high wooden balustrading. The 4no. rooflights for which retrospective planning permission is also sought are positioned towards the front of the lodge at ground floor level.



View of side elevations of Lodge 14, showing 4no. rooflights for which retrospective permission is sought



Extract from application plans showing top-down view of pre-existing decking, outlined in yellow (*left*) and proposed decking and rooflights, outlined in red (*right*)

2. Planning Policy

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making, but is a material planning consideration and the proposed development must also be assessed against the policies within it. The chapters within the NPPF referred to below are considered to be of particular relevance in the consideration of this application.

Principle and Location of Development

- 2.2 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out the importance of achieving sustainable development, emphasising the need for the planning system to perform an economic role, a social role and environmental role in doing this.
- 2.3 Paragraph 14 of NPPF states that in decision-taking, local planning authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Design and Amenity

- 2.4 Chapter 7 outlines the importance of good design of the built environment. This section impresses that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning, and also encourages the use of design guides by Local Planning Authorities. NNPA has an adopted Building Design Guide SPD, which is relevant to the determination of this application.

National Park Special Qualities

- 2.5 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF gives great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should be given great weight in National Parks.
- 2.6 By encouraging good design, planning decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. This is set out in paragraph 125 of the NPPF.

Local Policies

- 2.7 *Northumberland National Park Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Policies (CSDP)*



Policy 1	<i>Delivering Sustainable Development</i>
Policy 3	<i>General Development Principles</i>
Policy 5	<i>General Location of New Development</i>
Policy 18	<i>Cultural Heritage</i>
Policy 19	<i>Tranquillity</i>
Policy 20	<i>Landscape Quality and Character</i>

Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.8 *Building Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document*

2.9 *Landscape Supplementary Planning Document*

3. Relevant Planning History

3.1 *Application Site*

87NP0029 – Erection of two four-bedroom chalets. *Approved with Conditions, 10.11.1987*

89NP0072 – Revised siting of two holiday chalets. *Approved with Conditions, 15.02.1990*

3.2 *Adjacent Sites*

87NP0031 - Siting of 13 static caravans and 22 timber chalets (amended to siting of 35 timber chalets). *Approved with Conditions, 24.03.1988*

93NP0009 - Variation of condition no. 7 of planning permission 87/E/419 to permit varied occupancy period for approved chalets. *Approved 15.04.1993*

15NP0028 - Construction of raised decking and steps (retrospective) at Lodge 3, Otterburn Hall (nearby to development site). *Approved with Conditions, 18.06.2015*

15NP0081 - Construction of additional timber decking (retrospective) at Lodge 13, Otterburn Hall (adjacent to development site) (Live application)

4. Consultee and Public Responses

4.1 **Otterburn Parish Council: Objects** to the proposal, for the reasons summarised below:

- The decking is much larger than that which should be permitted
- The decking covers a very large area in comparison to the size of the lodge
- The lodges are not in keeping with the location and other developments on the Otterburn Hall estate



- Concern over future prospective proposal to add a bright white 'guard' to decking around a nearby lodge
- Concern over installation of hot tubs and inadequacy of supporting infrastructure (waste and foul water)

4.2 **NNPA Historic Environment Officer:** No response received

4.3 **NNPA Access and Recreation Officer:** No objection

There are no Public Rights of Way in the vicinity of the development.

4.4 **NNPA Landscape and Forestry Officer:** No response received

4.5 **Site notices:** One site notice was placed adjacent to the application site. No responses were received.

5. **Assessment**

5.1 The key issues identified for consideration are:

- The Principle of the Development;
- Design, Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Tranquillity and Amenity;
- Impact upon Cultural Heritage; and
- Highways and Rights of Way

The Principle of the Development

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of decision making. Policy 1 of the NNPA Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development proposals will conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park (landscape character, tranquillity, cultural heritage, geodiversity and biodiversity), demonstrating high quality design and sustainable construction. The effects of the proposed development on these qualities are discussed in more detail later in this report.

5.3 The proposed decking is not considered to adversely impact upon the special qualities of the Park due to its relatively small scale, design and inherent nature as a replacement structure, albeit larger than the pre-existing area of decking. The scale and nature of the proposed rooflight windows are such that these would not impact upon the special qualities of the Park. The proposals would thus meet the criteria set out in Core Strategy Policy 1 and the NPPF.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impact

- 5.4 Core Strategy Policy 3 promotes the principles of sustainable development, requiring sustainable design and construction in order to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.
- 5.5 Having considered the application site in relation to the wider top site, the proposed decking is considered to be in keeping with the overall appearance of the host timber chalet. This would comprise a smart addition to the building, relative to many older areas of decking to lodges on the top site, which have become somewhat dilapidated and scruffy. The proposed rooflight windows are additionally considered to be in keeping with the nature of the host chalet, and would not detrimentally impact upon the appearance of the lodge or surrounding area.



Lodge 14, facing from the west. Elevation of decking to the rear of the chalet is visible to the far right (*above*)

Examples of decking to chalets on the top site (*4.no lodges, below*), all of which benefit from planning permission granted under 87NP0031.





- 5.6 The design and appearance of the decking further replicates the character of the host and surrounding chalets, all of which benefit from areas of timber decking, and thus appears as a complimentary and sympathetic stylistic addition.
- 5.7 Whilst the overall footprint of the decking is acknowledged to be somewhat large, it is not considered that this increase in size would impact detrimentally upon the overall appearance of the surrounding area, and would be in keeping with the general scale of other decked areas to chalets on this top site.
- 5.8 Concerns have been raised by Otterburn Parish Council over the appearance of the Lodges, particularly that they are not in keeping with the location and other developments on the Otterburn Hall estate. This concern also relates to speculation surrounding the addition of a white 'guard' around decking to a nearby lodge, and the installation of hot tubs, which may impact detrimentally upon the already-inadequate Estate infrastructure.
- 5.9 Planning permission was granted for chalets on this top site approximately 25 years ago, and Lodge 14 has been in situ for a time period exceeding 4 years. As such, the only aspect of the proposal to be considered as part of this application is the proposed decking and rooflights to this particular lodge. The principle and appearance of the lodges therefore cannot be considered as part of this application. The potential installation of a decking guard to a nearby lodge does not constitute a material consideration to this case and cannot be afforded weight in the assessment of this application. It is acknowledged that there is a hot tub in place to the area of decking for which retrospective planning permission is sought; however this does not require planning permission in itself and therefore does not form part of this application. Whilst concerns raised by the Parish Council regarding waste and foul water supply are understood and acknowledged with respect to the wider site, this is not relevant to this application.
- 5.10 From a landscape perspective, there are no nearby publically available receptor sites of the proposed decking. It is however acknowledged that the development would be visible to other users of the top site. Considering the relatively small scale, nature, design and use of timber for the proposed decking, it is not considered that the development would significantly impact upon the landscape character or views of this part of the National Park. The development is thus considered to accord with Policy 20 of the Core Strategy and NPPF.

Tranquility and Amenity

- 5.11 As no new external lighting is shown as part of the proposal, the tranquillity of the Park would not be adversely affected. The proposal therefore accords with Policy 19 in this respect.
- 5.12 Due to the nature of the decked area and use of the wider site, it is considered likely that this may have some level of impact upon the amenity of adjacent chalets, including those yet to be built to the west of Lodge 14.



- 5.13 Notwithstanding this, consideration must also be given to the pre-existing area of decking to both Lodge 14 and all other lodges on this site, and the level of impact upon amenity resulting from this. On balance, therefore, whilst the proposed area of decking is somewhat larger than the area of decking that existed prior to this, it is not considered that that this would impact significantly upon the established level of amenity enjoyed by surrounding chalet occupiers. As such, this application is considered acceptable in terms of impact upon residential amenity and thus accords with Core Strategy Policy 3 and the NPPF.

Impact upon Cultural Heritage

- 5.14 Due consideration has been given to any likely impacts of the application upon cultural heritage and the historic environment of the National Park, particularly given the setting of the application site within the grounds of Grade II Listed Otterburn Hall and associated Listed outbuildings.
- 5.15 When assessed in context to the established level of impact resulting from the existing top site development, it is not considered that the proposed development would impact detrimentally upon the surrounding designated heritage assets. The development thus accords with Core Strategy Policy 18 and the NPPF.

Highways and Rights of Way

- 5.16 The proposal would not impact upon the safety of the surrounding highway network. No Public Rights of Way would be affected by the proposal. The development therefore accords with Core Strategy Policy 3.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposals being considered by this application are the retrospective construction of decking and installation of 4no. rooflight windows at Lodge 14, Otterburn Hall. The Lodge forms part of a wider site known as the 'top site', located to the north west of Otterburn Hall, which plays host to a number of existing timber holiday chalets.
- 6.2 The principle of development is considered acceptable, given that the proposal would not impact adversely upon the special qualities of the National Park, and thus accords with Policy 3 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.
- 6.3 Subject to suitable Conditions that are detailed below, the development is considered to be acceptable and compliant with relevant planning policies in respect of design, amenity, cultural heritage, the landscape quality and tranquillity and public rights of way. Taking into account relevant development plan policies, particularly Core Strategy Policies, 1, 3, 5, 18, 19 and 20 and other material planning considerations, including the NPPF, it is recommended that the local planning authority **GRANTS PLANNING PERMISSION**, subject to the conditions below.

1. The development hereby permitted shall be retained in accordance with the following approved plans, documents and correspondence:

Application form, received 21st September 2015

Site Plan, received 21st September 2015

Amended proposed Alterations Plan (Revision A), received 15th October 2015

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to enable the Local Planning Authority to adequately control the development and to conform with Policies 1, 3, 5, 18, 19 and 20 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. The facing materials and finishes of the development shall be retained in accordance with details contained in the application. The development shall not be constructed other than with these approved materials.

Reason: In the interests of the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and to conform with Policies 1 and 3 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Contact Officer:

For further information contact **Rebecca Adams**, Planning Officer on 01434 611552 or e-mail: planning@nnpa.org.uk

Background Papers:

Application file 15NP0080



15NP0080

Northumberland National Park Authority

