



DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	16NP0024
Description / Site Address	Alteration and extension of existing mains water service trench to accommodate new and/or upgraded Electric, LPG & Telecommunications infrastructure and associated landscaping works. Creation of new LPG compound at Brownrigg Lodges, Bellingham, Northumberland, NE48 2HR
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	24 March 2016
Last date for decision	21 April 2016

Details of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the alteration and extension of the existing mains water service trench in order to accommodate new and upgraded electricity, LPG and telecommunications infrastructure alongside associated remedial landscaping works at Brownrigg Lodges, Bellingham. The works additionally comprise the creation of a new LPG compound on the site for which planning permission is also sought.

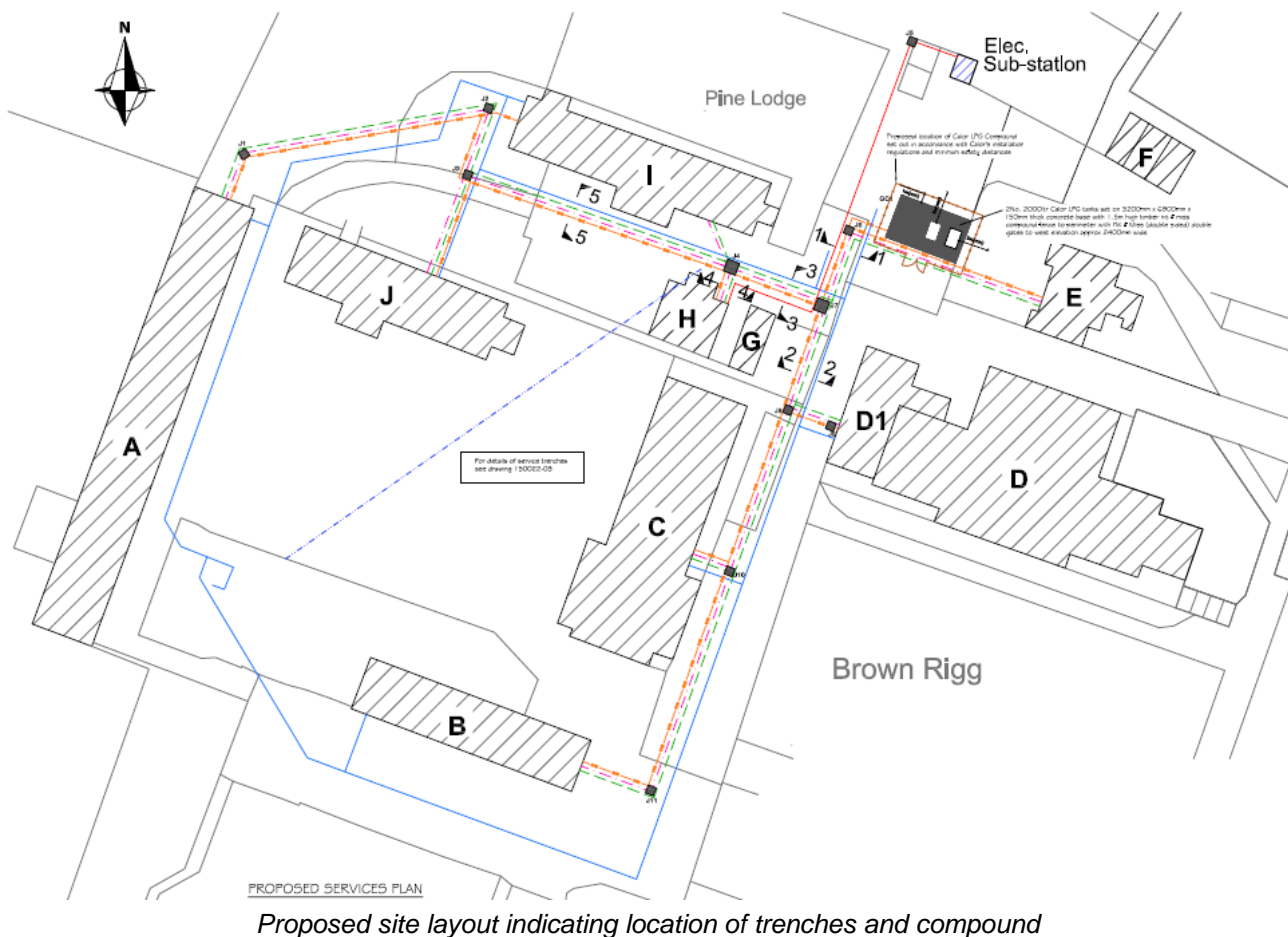
The application site, known as Brownrigg Lodges, is located approximately 0.7km south of Bellingham, situated west of the B6320. The site is positioned directly north of the Bellingham Camping and Caravanning Club and Forestry Commission district office, and is accessible via a private driveway which adjoins the main road.



Map view of site (marked with star) showing proximity to Bellingham and surrounding key sites



The Brownriggs site has a lengthy and interesting history, from its early days as a school built by the National Camps Corporation in 1938, later used as a WWII evacuee accommodation, and latterly as a riding/outdoor pursuits centre. The site, which comprises the original school buildings and associated grounds, is now used in part for holiday accommodation and hired general function rooms alongside the proprietor's property, although a large number of other buildings on the site are redundant due to their dilapidated state. A total of 10no. buildings populate the site (denoted as A-J); the majority of these are arranged around a gravelled courtyard, with 3no. buildings (D, E, & F) positioned beyond the west of the courtyard. It is understood that the proposed works are to provide a much-needed overhaul of the existing utilities infrastructure on the site in order to support the redevelopment of the site in the future.



Proposed site layout indicating location of trenches and compound

The proposed trench works comprise a total length of approx. 250m up to a depth of 750mm, as shown on the Service Trench Sections (Drawing no. 150022-05). The proposed trenches would follow the path of the existing water supply pipeline, which runs between and around buildings on the site as shown on the Proposed Services Plan (Drawing no. 150022-03); the proposed trenches would be dug and the new services laid, following which the ground would be re-instated and landscaped to match the existing condition.

The proposed LPG compound would be positioned approximately 11m east of Pine Lodge (the proprietor's property) on a gravelled area currently occupied by planters/disused brick foundations. The compound would be sited upon a 150mm thick concrete base, and would be enclosed by 1.5m high 'hit and miss' timber fencing with a 2.4m wide gated access to the southern side.



Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

National Planning Practice Guidance (2015)

Local Policies

Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) (2009)

Policy 1	<i>Delivering Sustainable Development</i>
Policy 2	<i>Climate Change</i>
Policy 3	<i>General Development Principles</i>
Policy 5	<i>General Location of New Development</i>
Policy 12	<i>Transport and Accessibility</i>
Policy 14	<i>A Sustainable Local Economy</i>
Policy 15	<i>Sustainable Tourism & Recreation Development</i>
Policy 19	<i>Tranquillity</i>
Policy 20	<i>Landscape Quality and Character</i>
Policy 25	<i>Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency</i>
Policy 28	<i>Utilities and Infrastructure</i>

Supplementary Planning Guidance

NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)

Relevant Planning History

- 07NP0031** Conversions and extensions to existing building at outdoor pursuits centre to provide 4 self-catering residential accommodation units. *Conditional planning permission granted 09.08.2007*
- 86NP0030** Detailed application for the change of use of former boarding school to outdoor holiday and pursuit centre. *Conditional planning permission granted 02.05.1986*

Consultation/Representations

Bellingham Parish Council: No response received

NCC Environmental Protection: No objections, on the basis that providing that the measures detailed in the application documents are implemented as stated.

NCC Buildings Control: No response received

Public consultation: No response received as a result of a site notice displayed on 03.03.2016 and letters issued to neighbouring properties on 01.03.2016



Assessment

The main issues to be taken into consideration in the assessment of this application are:-

- The Principle of Development;
- Impact upon Visual Amenity and Landscape;
- Tranquillity and Impact upon Local Amenity;
- Highways and Rights of Way; and
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

The Principle of the Development

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, demonstrating high quality design and sustainable construction; these are addressed later in this report.

The proposed development would take place within the open countryside, however as this is not 'local needs development' this does not need to be directed towards a Local Centre, as identified by Core Strategy Policy 5. New development is only permitted within the open countryside where this cannot be located within an identified settlement, or fulfilled through the re-use of an existing building. Due to the nature of the development as an upgrade of existing utilities infrastructure on an established site, it is recognised that the work must be undertaken in this location. The utilisation of the position of the existing water supply pipeline in determining the position of the new supply lines is also considered a prudent choice in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 5, as this may then reduce the total amount of excavation and subsequent impact upon the surrounding area should works be required to all underground services in the future.

Core Strategy Policies 14 and 15 provide support for the creation and expansion of tourism, business and recreational developments which maximise opportunities for visitors to understand and enjoy the National Park without negatively impacting upon its special qualities. Whilst not directly creating or expanding a tourism development, the proposed works would accord with Policies 14 and 15 in principle through the upgrading of utilities infrastructure, which are understood to be required in order to facilitate the future growth and redevelopment of existing tourism operations on the site.

Open countryside development must also conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park, and provide opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of these special qualities without negatively impacting upon them. Core Strategy Policy 28 provides further support for the development of utilities and infrastructure projects in particular, provided that these would not impact detrimentally upon the special qualities of the National Park. Subject to the acceptable safeguarding of these special qualities, the proposal would accord in principle with Core Strategy Policies 1, 5, 14, 15 and 28 and the NPPF.



Further Utilities and Infrastructure Considerations

As aforementioned, Core Strategy Policy 28 supports the development of utilities and infrastructure projects which serve business needs provided that these would not impact detrimentally upon the special qualities of the National Park; these aspects of the proposal will be assessed in greater detail throughout this report.

The proposed LPG compound would be enclosed by 1.5m high fencing incorporating 2.4m wide double gates and positioned adjacent to an area accessible by vehicles. In this regard, it is understood that the compound has been designed in accordance with relevant installation regulations so as to ensure that this could be safely accessed and serviced; this would then be assessed at a later stage under Building Regulations in order to ensure that the development would meet all necessary safety requirements. It is however also noted that NCC Environmental Protection have raised no objection to the proposal at this stage, providing that the development is implemented in accordance with the information submitted. It is considered that the subsequent Building Regulations assessment would ensure that the development as proposed would not have an adverse impact in terms of public safety and amenity, and could be suitably accessed by service vehicles without adverse impact upon vehicular movements within the site. However, should the proposed development be deemed unacceptable by Building Control in accordance with relevant safety regulations, or it be found that the compound cannot be accessed by service vehicles due to its design or position, a revised scheme may then be re-assessed as a planning matter against all relevant planning policies.

Impact upon Visual Amenity and Landscape

Whilst slightly elevated above the adjacent B6320, the application site remains largely obscured from the surrounding vehicular highway due to screening provided by mature trees to the north, east and west. Views of the site from the Pennine Way to the south are obscured by Ealingham Rigg fell, although it is understood that the land immediately south of the Brownriggs site is open access land, from which the application site is visible.



View facing south towards application site from adjacent B6320, which is obscured by a number of mature trees. Arrow indicates approx. position of proposed compound.



Aerial view of application site

Arrow marks position of view in above photograph. Red denotes proposed compound; blue denotes proposed route of underground services

It is likely that the proposed service trench works would have some initial impact upon the visual appearance of the site, although this impact would be temporary and the works are unlikely to be visible from within the surrounding landscape due to their relatively small scale and also the position of the site relative to surrounding screening and limited number of public viewpoints. Once completed, the remediation and re-landscaping of the ground surface affected by the works would then negate any long-term visual impact upon the site and surrounding area. It is therefore not considered that the proposed trench works would impact upon the visual amenity or surrounding landscape character or views of the National Park.



Photomontage of view north towards site of proposed compound; brick foundations to be removed



The proposed compound would result in the introduction of a new structure within the site in place of existing disused brick foundations. It is considered that the compound would be well integrated alongside existing surrounding buildings and would be of a sympathetic design and scale. It is unlikely that the proposed structure would be readily visible from outside the site due to the scale and position of this and screening provided by surrounding buildings and vegetation, and therefore it is not considered that the structure would have a significant impact upon the landscape character or views of this part of the National Park. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy Policies 1, 3, 20 and 28 and the NPPF.

Tranquillity and Impact upon Local Amenity

Core Strategy Policy 3 seeks to protect the wellbeing of local communities by ensuring that amenity is not adversely affected in terms of visual impact, pollution, noise or waste. Whilst some impact upon the amenity of neighbours to the site in terms of noise during the construction phase of the works may occur, this would only be temporary, and it is not considered that the development would impact detrimentally upon local amenity once constructed. The proposal thus accords with Core Strategy Policy 3 in this respect.

On the basis of the information submitted, it is understood that there is no external lighting proposed as part of the development. External lighting may however be a future requirement of the development (namely the proposed LPG compound) and it is therefore considered prudent to include a Condition restricting the installation of this on this part of the site in the future, in order to protect the tranquillity of the area, including the designated Dark Sky Park. Subject to the inclusion of such a Condition, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of impact upon tranquillity in this respect, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 19 and the NPPF

Highways and Rights of Way

The proposed development would not impact upon existing public rights of way within the area or the surrounding highway network. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy 12 in this regard.

Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

Core Strategy Policies 1 and 2 seek to maximise energy efficiency in buildings and achieve the highest environmental standards. Policy 25 requires all new development, including conversions, to minimise the amount of energy used during construction, achieve high energy efficiency and realise the potential for the generation of on-site renewables. Due to the nature of the proposal as a utilities infrastructure upgrade, Policy 25 would not be applicable in this case

Recommendation & Conditions

It is recommended that conditional planning permission is granted 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, dated 25th February 2016

Location Plan (Drawing No. 150022-04) (Rev. A), dated 1st March 2016

Proposed Services Plan & Section (Drawing No. 150022-03) (Rev. E), dated 1st March 2016

Service Trench Sections (Drawing No. 150022-05) (Rev. A), dated 25th February 2016

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development accords with Policies 1, 3, 5, 12, 14, 15, 19, 20 and 28 of the NNPA Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting within the compound area hereby approved required in connection with the development hereby permitted, details of the external lighting shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details should include:

- The specific location of all external lighting units;
- Design of all lighting units;
- Details of beam orientation and lux levels; and
- Any proposed measures such as motion sensors and timers that will be used on lighting units.

The approved lighting scheme shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained as such thereafter, unless removed entirely.

Reason: In order to ensure that there is no harmful effect upon the tranquillity and intrinsically dark character of the area, including the Northumberland Dark Sky Park through excessive light pollution, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 19 and the NPPF

Informative Notes

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 development, irrespective of the degree of variation, will constitute unauthorized development and may be liable to enforcement action.
 - (b) You or your agent or any other person responsible for implementing this permission should inform the Northumberland National Park Authority's Development Management team immediately of any 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 application.
2. This Planning Application 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 approved prior to the commencement 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 unauthorized and you may be liable to enforcement action.
- (b) In addition if a condition precedent is breached, the development is unauthorized 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. The proposed development lies within an area that has been defined by The Coal Authority as containing potential hazards arising from former coal mining activity. These hazards can include: mine entries (shafts and adits); shallow coal workings; geological features (fissures and break lines); mine gas and previous surface mining sites. Although such hazards are seldom readily visible, they can often be present and problems can occur in the future, particularly as a result of development taking place.

It is recommended that information outlining how the former mining activities affect the proposed development, along with any mitigation measures required (for example the need for gas protection measures within the foundations), be submitted alongside any subsequent application for Building Regulations approval (if relevant). Your attention is drawn to The Coal Authority Policy in relation to new development and mine entries available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-on-or-within-the-influencing-distance-of-mine-entries>

Any intrusive activities which disturb or enter any coal seams, coal mine workings or coal mine entries (shafts and adits) requires a Coal Authority Permit. Such activities could include site investigation boreholes, digging of foundations, piling activities, other ground works and any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings and coal mine entries for ground stability purposes. Failure to obtain a Coal Authority Permit for such activities is trespass, with the potential for court action.

Property specific summary information on past, current and future coal mining activity can be obtained from: www.groundstability.com

If any of the coal mining features are unexpectedly encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to The Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848. Further information is available on The Coal Authority website at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

Background Papers

Application file 16NP0024
EIA Screening Opinion

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer		
Head of Development Management or Chief Executive		