

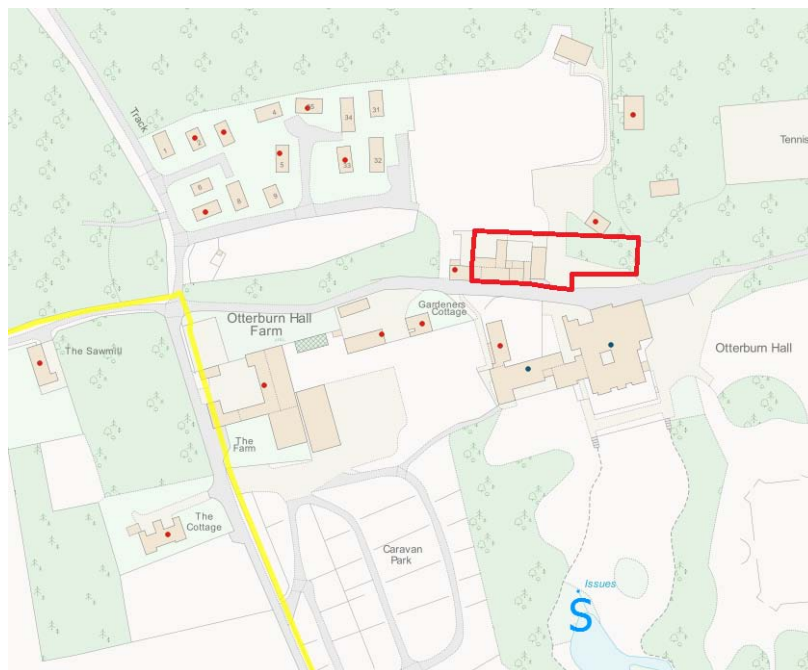


## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

<b>Application Reference Number</b>	16NP0025
<b>Description / Site Address</b>	Change of use of Coach House to 14 bed hotel/guest house including restaurant and Installation of septic tank at The Coach House, Otterburn Hall, Otterburn, Northumberland, NE19 1HE
<b>Expiry date of publicity / consultations</b>	25 March 2016
<b>Last date for decision</b>	25 April 2016

### Details of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of The Coach House, Otterburn Hall from accommodation ancillary to Otterburn Hall Hotel to provide an independent hotel/guest house accommodation (C1 use class). The building would be served by ancillary kitchen and restaurant facilities which are proposed to be open to both residents and non-residents. The works additionally comprise the installation of a septic tank to serve the building, for which planning permission is also sought.



*Aerial view of the site (outlined in red) showing proximity to surrounding buildings on the wider Otterburn Hall estate*

The Coach House is the former stables to Otterburn Hall, and is Grade II Listed. The stables were built in c.1870 for Lord James Douglas, who owned Otterburn Hall, and are built of brick with a Welsh slate roof and elaborate decorative barge boards. The Stable block was much altered in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to form conference facilities and accommodation ancillary to the main Hall, which at that time was operating as a Hotel; the Hotel has now been closed, and the estate parcelled up and sold in lots.



*View facing north west towards front elevation of The Coach House.  
Dovecote Cottage visible to far left (east)*

The proposed change of use seeks the retention of the existing layout of the building, with no internal or external changes proposed as part of this application; no floor plans or elevations have therefore been submitted to accompany the proposals.

The accommodation would comprise of 14no. en suite bedrooms, with a kitchen, function room and staff room at ground floor level. The building would be served by 20 parking spaces, with at least 13no. visitor parking spaces located within the existing car park to the east of the building and at least 4no. staff parking spaces located to the rear of the building. The proposed septic tank would be located within woodland east of the visitor car park, the specification of which has been included within the information submitted.

Works to install kitchen facilities have been undertaken alongside a number of minor external and internal repairs to the building, which following discussions were deemed by the Authority to not require Listed Building Consent. Discussions are ongoing between the applicant and the LPA in order to determine whether further minor alterations and repairs to the building would require Listed Building Consent. Listed Building Consent is also not required for the proposed change of use as this is deemed to not affect the special interest of the Listed Building.

### **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 7	<i>Conversion of Buildings outside Settlements</i>
Policy 12	<i>Transport and Accessibility</i>
Policy 14	<i>A Sustainable Local Economy</i>
Policy 15	<i>Sustainable Tourism &amp; Recreation Development</i>
Policy 18	<i>Cultural Heritage</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 Building Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Design Guide SPD)

NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)

### Relevant Planning History

<b>74NP0003</b>	Conference centre extension. <i>Conditional planning permission granted 09.09.1974</i>
<b>87NP0028</b>	Construction of additional second floor for use as conference rooms. <i>Conditional planning permission granted 09.11.1987</i>
<b>87NP0030</b>	<i>Alterations and extensions to annex north of main building to form conference centre with bedrooms. Conditional planning permission granted 10.11.1987</i>
<b>87NP0038LBC</b>	Listed Building Consent for construction of additional second floor for use as conference rooms. <i>Conditional LBC granted 10.11.1987</i>
<b>87NP0039</b>	Listed Building Consent for alterations and extensions to annex north of main building to form conference centre with bedrooms. <i>Conditional LBC granted 10.11.1987</i>

### Consultation/Representations

**Otterburn Parish Council: The application is supported.**

**Historic England: No comments offered.** *The application should be determined in accordance with National and Local policy guidance and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.*

**NNPA Historic Buildings Advisor: No objections.** *The proposal would accord with local and national planning policy by sustaining the significance of the Grade II listed building and its setting.*

**NNPA Historic Environment Officer: No objections.**



**NCC Highways Authority: No objections.** *The amount of trips generated by the proposed development can be accommodated on the highway network, and no alterations are proposed to the existing access, manoeuvring and parking arrangements. When completed, the development would not have an adverse impact upon highway safety.*

A site notice was displayed at the site on 08.03.2016 in addition to 7no neighbour letters issued on 04.02.2016.

The Case Officer was copied into an email dated 11.04.2016 from a third party to the applicant raising issues regarding private access over the visitor car park and the proposed drainage arrangements for the septic tank.

### **Assessment**

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

- The Principle of the Development;
- Design, Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Tranquillity and Amenity;
- Drainage, Water Supply and Waste;
- Impact upon Cultural Heritage;
- Highways and Rights of Way; and
- Renewable Energy Provision

### **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 (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.

The application site is located within the open countryside whereby development is limited under Core Strategy Policy 5 to that of the re-use of existing buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that this cannot take place in an identified settlement and would not impact detrimentally upon the special qualities of the National Park. As the development would comprise the re-use of an existing building, the proposal would accord with Policy 5 in this respect. The addition of a septic tank to the site must logically also take place within the open countryside, and is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy 5, subject to further considerations surrounding the impact of the development upon the National Park's special qualities.

Core Strategy Policy 7 provides support for the conversion of existing buildings within the open countryside to employment use (including tourism) where the building is capable of conversion



without the need for significant alterations or extensions and contributes to the special qualities of the National Park. It is considered that the proposed change of use would accord with Policy 7. Core Strategy Policies 14 and 15 provide support for the creation and expansion of sustainable employment and tourism uses which maximise opportunities for visitors to understand and enjoy the National Park, without negatively impacting upon its special qualities. It is considered that the provision of visitor accommodation within a building which is currently redundant would accord with Policies 14 and 15 in principle.

It is noted that the proposed change of use relates solely to the use of the building as hotel/guest house accommodation. It is therefore considered appropriate to include a Condition restricting the occupancy of the building to holiday use only, as permanent residential accommodation in this location would conflict with Policy 7 and require local needs restriction in line with Policy 10.

### **Design, Landscape and Visual Impact**

The proposed conversion incorporates no internal or external changes to the existing building. The development would therefore have no visual impact upon the building, surrounding area or wider landscape, in accordance with Core Strategy Policies 1 and 3 and the NPPF.

The proposed septic tank would be installed underground within woodland to the east of The Coach House, the only visible evidence of which would be a 450mm manhole cover. It is not considered that this would impact upon visual amenity of the area. This aspect of the proposal would thus accord with Core Strategy Policies 1 and 3 and the NPPF.

### **Tranquillity and Amenity**

#### *Tranquillity*

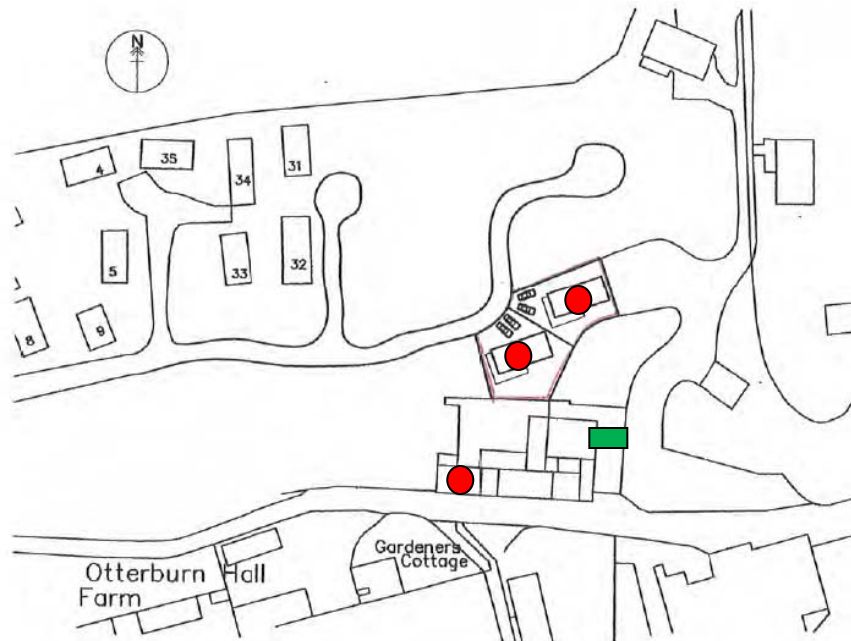
On the basis of the information submitted, it is understood that there is no external lighting proposed as part of the development. It is however considered prudent to include a Condition restricting the installation of any further external lighting on the site without the need for planning permission, in order to protect the tranquillity of the area, including the designated Dark Sky Park. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of impact upon tranquillity in this respect, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 19 and the NPPF.

#### *Amenity*

Prior to the recent closure of Otterburn Hall Hotel, it is understood that the Coach House operated as guest accommodation ancillary to the main Hall, with a function room at ground floor level used for wedding ceremonies. The historically established use of the building in this way is such that it is not considered that the resumption of a similar use would have a significant impact upon the residential amenity of the surrounding area and properties over and above the previous similar use of the building. However as this use is not presently operational, and the proposed use of the building would also incorporate the installation of kitchen facilities, the impact of the proposed development surrounding residential uses must be considered, particularly with regard to the residential property adjacent to the west (known as Dovecote Cottage) and 2no. lodges recently approved under 15NP0096 to the north of The Coach House.



During a visit to the site on 03.03.2016, it was noted that kitchen facilities had been installed within the modern offshoot to the far east of the building; however as this kitchen area is in excess of 25m from the closest adjacent properties identified above, it is not considered that this facility would impact detrimentally upon residential amenity.



*Annotated plan from application 15NP0096 (Construction of 2no. new lodges), showing proximity of kitchen (green) to closest residential properties).*

As the Coach House directly adjoins Dovecote Cottage to the west (as shown on the above plan), the impact of the proposed change of use upon the amenity of this property must also be considered. It is understood from visits to the site during March 2015 and 2016 that the rooms within the Coach House directly to this boundary are bedrooms, en suite bathrooms, and a boiler room, which are to remain in situ. It is therefore considered that these rooms would provide sufficient 'buffer' in order to protect the amenity of any future occupiers of Dovecote Cottage from uses within the Coach House.

It is therefore not considered that this aspect of the proposed change of use would result in an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the surrounding area. The application thus accords with Core Strategy Policy 3 and the NPPF.

## **Drainage, Water Supply and Waste**

### *Foul Drainage*

The Environment Agency is the statutory consultee advising the LPA, however a proposal of this scale falls outside of the proposals that the Environment Agency wishes to be consulted on. The aspect of Foul Drainage is therefore to be considered by the LPA.

The method of foul drainage proposed is through a new Septic Tank. Technical details of this have been provided as part of a Foul Drainage Assessment and Planning Statement submitted and the location of the Tank identified on the proposed site plan.



Planning Practice Guidance states that a Package Treatment Plant is the most preferable option, other than a mains sewer connection, followed by a Septic Tank. The applicant has stated that there is no mains connection available and has provided a map indicating the nearest available mains connection is a Doe Crag Cottages some 250m away. Due to this distance and the scale of the development, it is accepted that connecting to the public sewer would be unreasonable in this case.

Based on the information submitted, it is understood that the applicant has engaged in direct discussion with the Environment Agency (by whom the foul drainage method hierarchy is stipulated), who have given their agreement to the installation of the Septic Tank as specified within the application. Whilst no justification has been provided as to why a Package Treatment Plant would not be suitable for the site, based on these discussions and the approval of the Environment Agency having been given, it is considered that the proposed Septic Tank would be acceptable in this case.

The information submitted indicates that the proposed Tank would be of sufficient capacity to serve the site, as agreed between the applicant and the Environment Agency, and is therefore considered to be acceptable. It is understood that the feasibility and functionality of the proposed Septic Tank in order to meet the needs of the site would be assessed later under Building Control regulations, rather than as a planning matter. It is therefore considered that the checks which would be undertaken by this Service would ensure that tank would be of an appropriate capacity so as to serve the site and also safeguard this aspect of the development from any detrimental impact upon amenity. However, should the proposed system be deemed inadequate by Building Control at this stage, the principle of any replacement Septic Tank may be re-assessed as a planning matter.

The Case Officer was copied into an email dated 11.04.2016 from a third party to the applicant raising issues regarding the proposed drainage arrangements for the Septic Tank; specifically that a stream to the far east of the site has recently been stopped-up and therefore cannot be used for waste water discharge from the Tank. Based on the information submitted it is understood that the Tank would discharge into the wooded area to the east of the site, rather than directly into the adjacent stream. The concerns raised are therefore considered to be satisfied in this way. The development is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy 28 and the NPPF with regards to foul drainage.

#### *Water Supply*

NCC Environmental Protection is the statutory consultee advising the LPA in this regard, however a proposal of this scale is deemed to fall below their risk appetite. The aspect of Water Supply is therefore to be considered by the LPA. The information submitted indicates that the proposed development would be served by the existing water supply to the building. This is considered to be acceptable in principle and would accord with Core Strategy Policies 3 and 28 and the NPPF.

#### *Waste*

The information submitted does not include details of areas to store and aid the collection of waste; however it is understood that the site is covered by NCC refuse collection services and sufficient space would remain within the curtilage of the building for the storage of bins without detrimental impact upon the amenity of the surrounding area or highway safety.



### **Impact upon Cultural Heritage**

The Coach House is the former stables to Otterburn Hall, and is Grade II Listed. The application site is located within the area of the Registered Battlefield of Otterburn and is adjacent to number of Listed Buildings including Otterburn Hall, to the south of the site.

Due to the location of the site within a Registered Battlefield, Historic England (HE) has been consulted on the application. HE has responded with no comments, advising that the application should be determined in accordance with National and Local policy guidance and on the basis of the Authority's specialist conservation advice. The NNPA Historic Environment and Historic Buildings Officers have also therefore been consulted.

The NNPA Historic Environment Officer has provided a response on the proposal and raises no objection. The NNPA Historic Buildings Advisor has considered the information submitted, and has responded with no objections, stating that the proposed change of use would accord with national and local planning policy by sustaining the significance of the Grade II Listed building and its setting. The proposed septic tank would not impact upon the setting of the surrounding Listed buildings and structures, and would benefit the site in facilitating the re-use of the Coach House as a hotel. The application is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy 18 and the NPPF in this respect.

### **Highways and Rights of Way**

The proposed development would be served by 20no. parking spaces, 4no. of which would be used for staff parking within an existing parking area to the rear of the building, and 13no. of which would be visitor parking, located within an existing parking area to the east of the building. Based on the information submitted, it is further noted that the visitor parking area to the west of the building would be able to accommodate at least 13no. cars, with additional space provided within a communal parking area to the south.

The proposed development has been considered by the NCC Highways Authority, who have raised no objections on the basis that the development would not have an adverse impact upon the highway safety of the area and would not alter existing access, manoeuvring or parking arrangements. The development is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy 12 and the NPPF.

The Case Officer was copied into an email dated 11.04.2016 from a third party to the applicant raising issues regarding 4no. of the parking spaces proposed within the visitor car park (those perpendicular to the remaining spaces); specifically that these spaces would encroach upon the access road up a car parking area on the 'top site'. Based on further discussions between this third party, the applicant and their agent, it is understood that a 5m wide access would be retained between the Coach House and these 4no. perpendicular parking spaces in order to continue to allow vehicular access up to the 'top site', as shown the plans submitted. The concerns raised are therefore considered to be satisfied in this way. Notwithstanding this, issues of private access and Rights of Way are considered to be civil matters and therefore would not be considered as part of the planning process.





## **Renewable Energy Provision**

Policy 25 requires all new developments, including conversions, to minimise the amount of energy used during construction, achieve high energy efficiency, and utilise renewable energy sources in order to offset at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements of the development.

The application proposes the re-use of an existing building with no further internal or external alterations, excepting the installation of a septic tank. A minimal amount of energy would therefore be used during the implementation of the proposed works.

The Coach House faces south onto the internal Estate road, with a narrow curtilage to the rear and side of the building, the majority of which is proposed to facilitate vehicular parking on the site. Due to the Grade II Listed designation of the building and visibility of the south-facing front elevation, it is considered that the installation of solar panels to this roof slope would be inappropriate. The installation of solar panels to the north-facing rear roofslope or elsewhere within the site is considered to be unfeasible due to the orientation of the building and constraints presented by the overall site layout. The installation of alternative renewable technology is also considered to be unfeasible for these reasons. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in its current form in relation to Core Strategy Policy 25.

## **Recommendation & Conditions**

It is recommended that 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 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016
- Design and Access Statement, dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016
- Location Plan 1:1250 (MD1042.PS.01), dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016
- Block/Site Plan 1:500 (MD1042.PS.01), dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016
- Foul Drainage Assessment Form (FDA1), dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development accords with Policies 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25 and 28 of the NNPA Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting within the site, 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

4. The development hereby permitted relates to the provision of short-term accommodation only and shall not be used at any time as permanent residential accommodation. Occupiers of the approved accommodation must occupy this as short-term accommodation only. For the avoidance of doubt, this type of Occupier must not be occupying the building as their sole or main place of residence. In order to facilitate the enforcement of the foregoing, a register of occupiers of the premises to which this planning permission relates shall be made available to the officers of local planning authority upon request, following 24 hours notice.

Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is used for holiday accommodation only and to control the occupancy in accordance with Policies 5 and 10 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.

### **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.



**Background Papers**

Application file 16NP0025

EIA Screening Opinion

	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Planning Officer</b>	R Adams	19/04/2016
<b>Head of Development Management or Chief Executive</b>	S Buylla	19/04/2016