

Rebecca,

16NP0031 - Proposed erection of agricultural building for the housing of stock at Gibbshill Farm, Bardon Mill, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 7AP

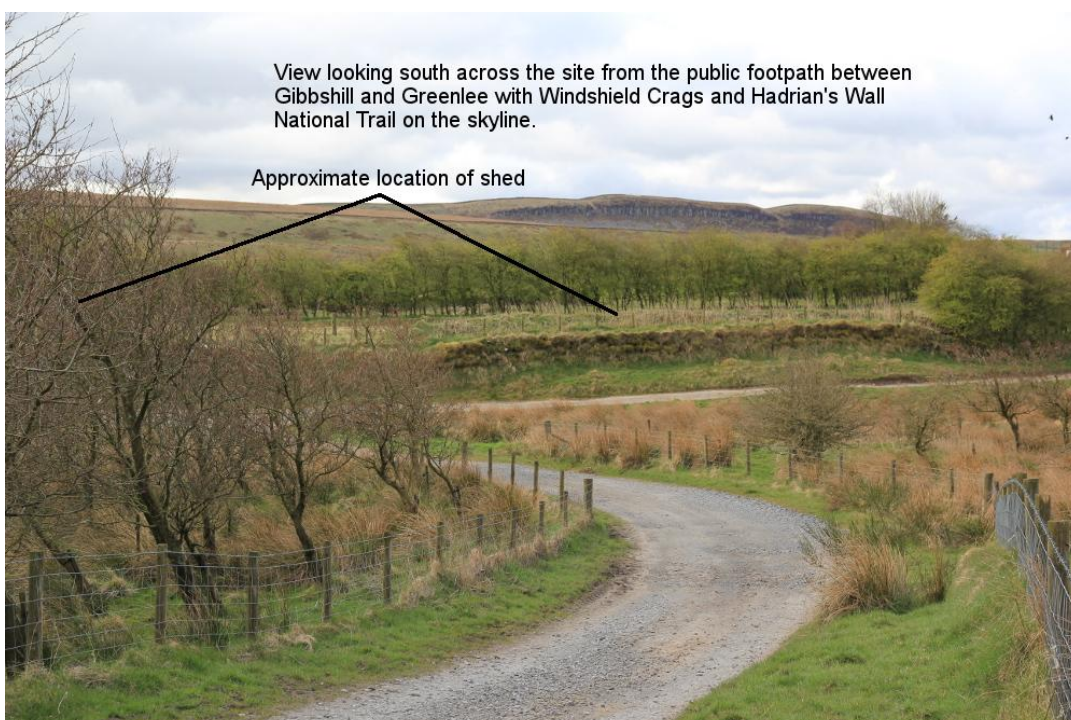
Having reviewed the documentation for this application and attended site I would like to make the following observations with respect to the landscape, Dark Sky Park and Lighting implications of this application.

I can confirm that there are no notable trees on site that are likely to be affected as a result of this application and the applicant has indicated in the application form that lighting is not applicable and as such I deduce that there will be no new external lighting required. As such the Dark Sky Park status of the National Park should not be affected as a result of this application either.

With respect to the effect upon the landscape character and views of this part of the National Park, I can confirm that Gibbshill Farm lies within the open landscape that forms part of the Tyne Gap and Hadrian's Wall National Character Area and as such is looked down upon from sensitive receptor sites such as the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail at Windshields Crag, see pics 1 and 2 below.



Pic 1.



Pic 2.

Whilst the identified site would sit furthermost from the residential dwellings located at Gibbs Hill Farm, the new shed would lie in line with and immediately to the west of an existing stock shed and within the curtilage of the working farm unit. See aerial photo below.



As can be seen in the aerial photo there is an existing, relatively young Hawthorne hedge located just to the south of the proposed site of the new shed and this has been left to get away and grow to some four metres in height. As a result it is in danger of developing open gaps in its base and thus is ready for laying. See Pics 3 and 4 below.



Pic 3

View looking north across the site with the existing overgrown hawthorne hedge in the middle ground, screening much of the proposed development site.



Pic 4.

With recent tree planting schemes to the north of the site and higher ground again to the north and west, this location sits relatively low down in the immediate landscape and is screened to a large degree by existing vegetation. It is my view that a stock shed build on the proposed site at Gibbshill Farm will have a limited effect upon the landscape character and views of this part of the National Park, but this is due in large part to the existing overgrown Hawthorne hedge found along the southern boundary of the site. This hedge would provide screening of the southern elevation of the shed and probably part of the roof line from receptor sites such as the HWPNT located approximately 1.5 km to the south. The design and use of materials that match the colour and construction of the existing stock shed found on site also helps to ensure that the proposed building will not be visually prominent within the landscape.

However, my concern is that once this hedge comes into management, as one might reasonable expect to happen on a well managed farm, and is reduced from 4 metres to roughly 1.5 metres in height, the southern elevation of the shed and roof line will become exposed to sensitive receptor sites to the south. The effect upon the views from this part of the National Park will be undesirable. It is for that reason that I would recommend the applicant be required to plant some standard trees into the line of the existing hedge so that once grown, these standards will continue to screen the southern elevation of the new stock shed whilst the Hawthorne hedge can be cut and managed as a stock proof hedge.

Therefore I do not object to this application but am concerned as to the effect that the new shed could have on views from sensitive receptor site located to the south including the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail and therefore I would welcome it if you would consider applying a condition along the following lines should this application be successful.

- 1) Six stand trees (3 x Scots Pine and 3 x Sessile Oak) should be incorporated at even spacing into the line of the existing Hawthorne hedge and grown to maturity to screen the southern elevation of the shed from sensitive receptor sites located to the south of Gibbs Hill Farm.

For clarity, I have identified on the aerial photo below, the suggested planting locations of this additional tree planting but if you require any further clarification on this matter please do not hesitate to get back in touch.



Robert Mayhew
Landscape and Forestry Officer
April 2016