



## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

<b>Application Reference Number</b>	16NP0083
<b>Description / Site Address</b>	Creation of visitor accommodation incorporating demolition and re-build of extension to west elevation and internal and external alterations at Lowtown, Walltown, Greenhead, Northumberland CA8 7JD
<b>Expiry date of publicity / consultations</b>	13 September 2016
<b>Last date for decision</b>	13 October 2016

### Details of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the creation of visitor accommodation within an existing building known as Lowtown, incorporating the demolition and re-build of an extension to the western elevation, enclosure and creation of curtilage, installation of a septic treatment plant and the refurbishment of an access track.

Lowtown is located within the open countryside approximately 2.5km (direct route; approx. 3.2km by road) north east of the village of Greenhead, approx. 120m south from the nearby unclassified public road.

The building, a Grade II listed former farmhouse, occupies an isolated position within the landscape atop the Vallum Scheduled Ancient Monument, within the setting of Hadrian's Wall. The property is understood to have been constructed in 1800 and has been unoccupied for some time, as evidenced by the overall condition of the building. The cottage is currently unserviced, with the track leading from the road to the property and surrounding agricultural land now partly overgrown.

Listed Building Consent is additionally sought for the proposed works under application 16NP0084LBC. As these form part of the overall scheme these are also to be considered by this application.



**Fig. 1:** *View facing north west towards Lowtown*

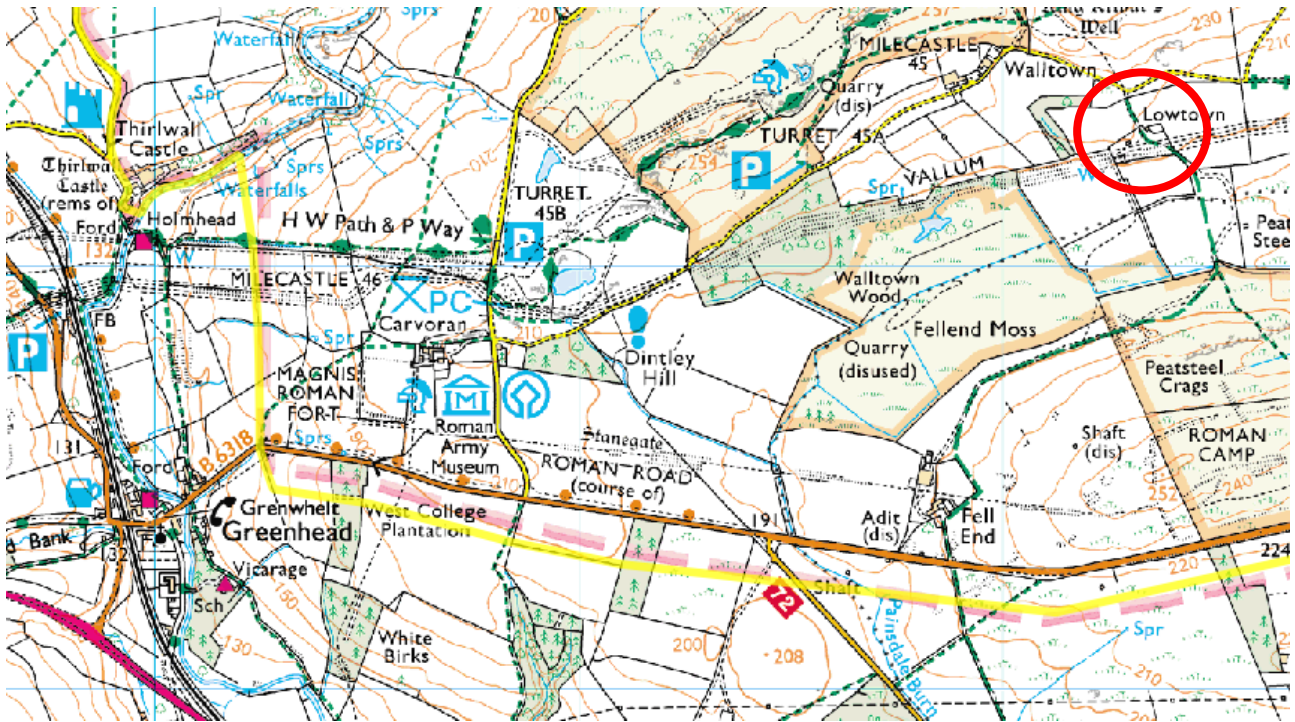
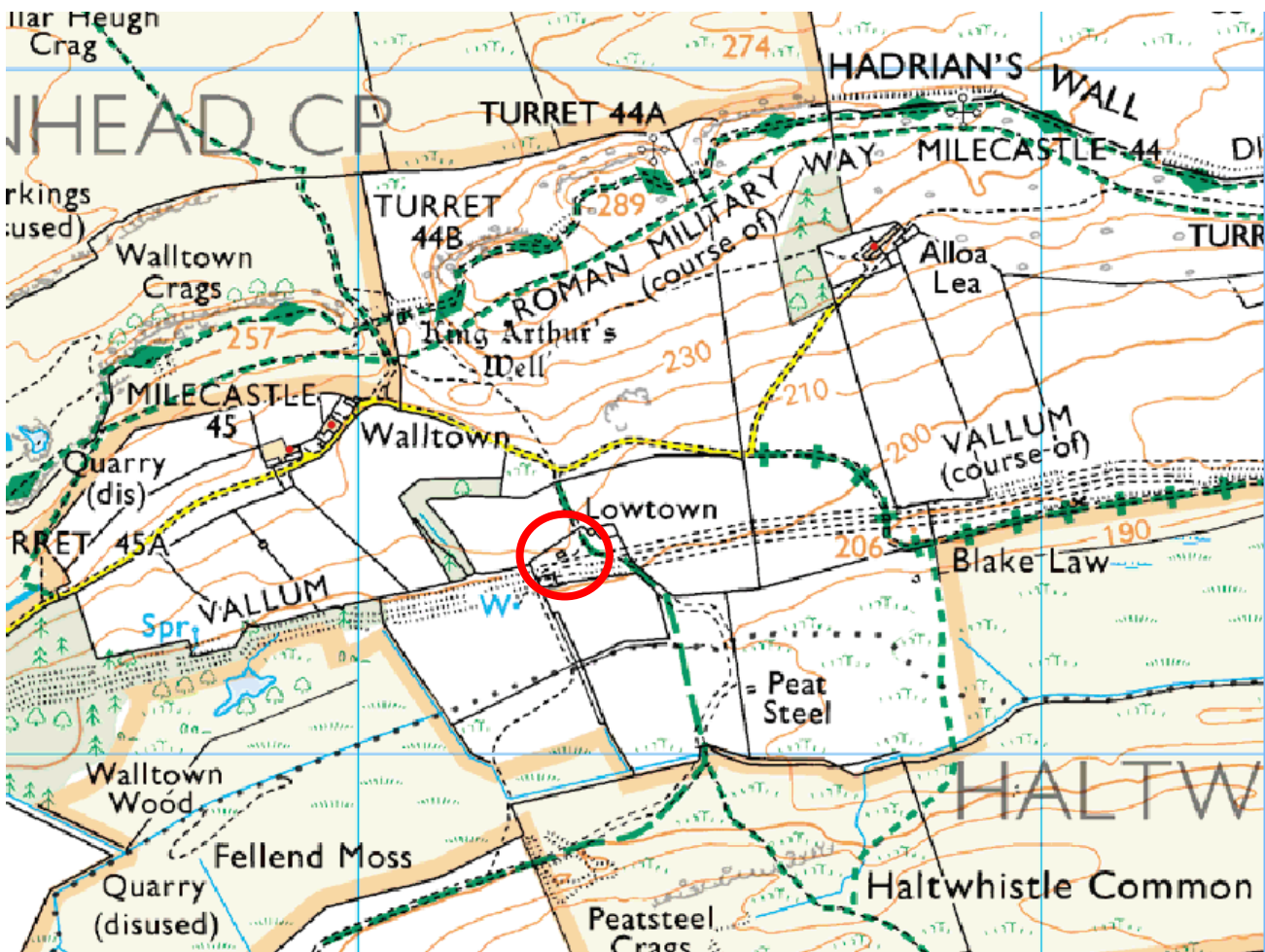


Fig. 2: OS Map showing proximity of Lowtown (circled) to Greenhead

Fig. 3: OS Map showing location of site within surrounding area





## **Planning Policy & Guidance**

### **National Policies**

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

National Planning Practice Guidance

### **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 9	<i>Managing Housing Supply</i>
Policy 10	<i>New Housing Development</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 17	<i>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</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**

**16NP0084LBC** Listed Building Consent - Creation of visitor accommodation incorporating demolition and re-build of extension to west elevation and internal and external alterations including works to window and door openings. *Pending determination*

### **Consultation/Representations**

**Greenhead Parish Council: No response received**

**Historic England: Comments made**

*Further details regarding service connections and the management of the garden space should be sought in order to ensure that the archaeological and setting impact of these is acceptable. Subject*



*to the satisfactory resolution of these issues, conditions should be attached requiring the approval of final landscaping details and to ensure that any excavations are the subject of an archaeological watching brief.*

**NNPA Historic Buildings Advisor: Objection**

*The proposed development is considered to be harmful and is not accompanied by sufficient evidence to justify the submitted proposals. Moreover, the same result could be achieved with a more sympathetic design following better analysis of the building. The proposals contained within the application therefore fail to accord with national and local planning policy.*

**NCC Highways: No objections, subject to conditions**

*The proposed development is considered to conform in highway terms with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed car parking, which should be secured by condition, and cycle parking are considered to be acceptable. Details of refuse storage (where required) in should be secured by condition.*

*The proposed upgraded access onto the U7034 must accord with NCC Type A specifications. Alterations will also be required to the existing vehicle crossing points, and in this regard the applicant is advised to contact NCC Highways. **NCC Highways update comments (06/10/2016):** Following further consideration of the information submitted the applicant will not be required to following the Section 184 Agreement process requiring the installation of a vehicular crossing point to be arranged and implemented.*

**NNPA Historic Environment Officer: Comments made**

*Lowtown is a Grade II Listed building at risk set close to a Scheduled Ancient Monument (the Vallum) and within the setting of Hadrian's Wall. It is a significant Listed building within an area of high archaeological significance and sensitivity.*

*No works should take place until a scheme of archaeological work has been agreed and a written scheme of investigation approved by Northumberland National Park Authority. This should involve a desk-based assessment and visual site inspection in order to establish features which might be impacted upon by the proposal, including the potential impacts to the setting of the World Heritage Site.*

**NNPA Ecologist: Comments made**

*The proposed development will require a Natural England license. The mitigation and compensation strategies proposed within the Bat and Barn Owl Survey submitted are likely to be successful and should be conditioned. The barn owl boxes proposed are considered to be proportionate and their provision should be conditioned.*

**NNPA Access and Recreation Officer: No objections**

*There is one public bridleway within the immediate vicinity of the site and the area is not designated as open access.*



*The plans include the refurbishment of this access route to which no objections are raised on the condition that the Public Right of Way is protected throughout. The planned works must have no effect on legal users accessing this route by foot, cycle or horse. No action should be undertaken to obstruct the path or in any way prevent or deter public use of the path without the necessary legal diversion or closure order having been made.*

### **NCC Environmental Protection: No objections**

*No objections are raised subject to the development being undertaken in accordance with the information submitted. The applicant is additionally advised to contact a member of the Private Water Supplies Team with regard to the requirements of The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2016.*

**No representations received** in response to neighbour notification letters issued on 30.08.2016, a notice displayed at the site and a notice displayed within the local press.

### **Assessment**

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

- The Principle of the Development;
- Design and Visual Impacts and Impact upon Cultural Heritage;
- Tranquillity and Amenity;
- Utilities and Infrastructure;
- Impact upon Biodiversity;
- Highways and Rights of Way; and
- Renewable Energy Provision.

### **The Principle of the Development**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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 in the subsequent sections of 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 the development cannot take place in an identified settlement and would not impact detrimentally upon the National Park's special qualities. The development would predominantly comprise the re-use of an existing building, and would thus accord with policy 5 in this respect. The addition of a replacement extension to the building alongside the provision of services and a refurbished access track are reasonable requirements of the scheme and are therefore considered to accord with



policy 5, subject to further considerations surrounding the impact of the development as a whole upon the National Park's special qualities.

Core Strategy policy 7 and relevant supporting text make clear that any building outside of an identified settlement to be converted must:-

- a) Be capable of conversion;
- b) Contribute to the special qualities of the National Park; and
- c) Be of sufficient size in order to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant alterations or extensions which would detract from its character and appearance and that of the wider landscape.

The change of use of existing buildings to employment use (including tourism, as applicable in this instance) is supported by Policy 7 in principle where all of the above criteria can be met. The supporting text to policy 7 highlights the need for buildings for conversion to be considered 'capable of conversion' without substantial rebuilding, extension or alteration, with the emphasis on the developer to demonstrate that the development constitutes a conversion rather than a rebuild. Whilst in a dilapidated condition, it is considered that Lowtown is certainly capable of conversion and thus meets with criterion a). Criterion c) is clear in its direction that any building to be converted should be of sufficient size to negate the need for a significant extension which would detract from both its and the surrounding landscape's character and appearance. The scheme incorporates a large extension to the western elevation which as discussed below is considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the building, whilst simultaneously failing to demonstrate that the size of the building in its current form would not be sufficient to accommodate that the proposed use or that an extension of such a scale is necessary to facilitate the proposed conversion. It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme as a whole would fail to accord with the provisions of Core Strategy policy 7, specifically criterion c).

The application seeks change of use of the property to create visitor accommodation. Core Strategy policies 5, 7, 9 and 10 would not permit full-time residential use of a property in this open countryside location and therefore a condition would be required as part of any planning approval in order to ensure that the property was used for holiday accommodation only.

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. Whilst it is considered that the development would fail to accord with Core Strategy policy 7 for the reasons outlined above, the re-use of the building for the purpose of visitor accommodation is considered to accord with policies 14 and 15 and could therefore be supported in principle.

## **Design and Visual Impact and Impact upon Cultural Heritage**

### ***Policy context***

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a building or its setting



or any features of special architectural or historic interest which is possesses when determining applications for planning permission that affect a listed building.

Core Strategy policy 18 seeks to ensure that protection is afforded to the National Park's cultural asset sites, giving particular protection to listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments by only permitting development which does not conflict with national policy.

Chapter 12 Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that in determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should take account of a number of considerations, in particular the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Within the NPPF, 'significance' is defined as the value of a heritage asset attached to its heritage interest (be it archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic) which can derive from both the asset's physical presence and its setting, and Paragraphs 132-134 introduce and discuss the concept of harm caused by inappropriate development (such as the alteration or destruction of the asset or development within the setting) which can affect this ascribed significance. In particular, Paragraph 132 highlights the irreplaceable nature of heritage assets and thus requires that any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification, in support of which Paragraph 133 advises that where a proposed development would lead to substantial harm, Local Planning Authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm.

The NPPF states that "*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning*", and that development should be responsive to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 66 specifically refers to design, advising that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to stifle innovation or originality through a requirement for development to conform to certain forms or styles, however emphasises the importance of promoting/reinforcing local distinctiveness. Core Strategy policy 3 provides support for development proposals that conserve and enhance local character and the Park's special qualities through appropriate and sympathetic design that contributes to the amenity of the area. Core Strategy policy 7 (c) provides support for the conversion of buildings where the building is of sufficient size without the need for significant alterations or extensions which would detract from its character and appearance and that of the wider landscape.

### ***Assessment of proposals***

The proposals seek the re-use of Lowtown as visitor accommodation, for which both planning permission and Listed Building Consent (LBC) are sought. With regards to this application, a summary of proposed works for which planning permission is sought is as follows:-

- The removal and replacement of an extension to the west elevation (incurring the removal and replacement of an existing chimney [and flue] and formation of a doorway to provide internal access, for which LBC is sought);
- The enclosure and creation of domestic curtilage change from agricultural land;
- The installation of a septic treatment plant; and
- The refurbishment of an access track and creation of associated landscaping/vehicular parking.



In addition to the above, a number of external and internal works are proposed to the building for which Listed Building Consent is sought; as these form part of the overall scheme these are also to be considered by this application.

Lowtown is a Grade II listed stone and slate former farmhouse situated within the open countryside north east of Greenhead. Originally listed in 1987, the building was recorded at this time as of unusual quality despite being in disuse, a state which appears unchanged given the lack of supporting infrastructure and its dilapidated condition.

The cottage, which is thought to date from 1800 by the inscription on the oval stone above the doorway, is attractive in its construction and appears little changed in the intervening 200 years, comprising 2 storeys and 2 bays with cut stone surrounding the door and window openings, alternating stone quoins and a protruding stone 'skirt' partially surrounding its base. In particular the cut stone around the door and windows and oval datestone allude to a sense of importance that the building may once have had, as noted by the listing description, indicating that this was not merely a rusticated cottage, given this attention to detail which is not commonplace among Northumbrian farm buildings.



**Fig. 4 (clockwise from top left):** Oval datestone above entrance; alternating stone quoins to NE corner (stone lean-to visible); stone 'skirt' to foot of building; example of stone window surround





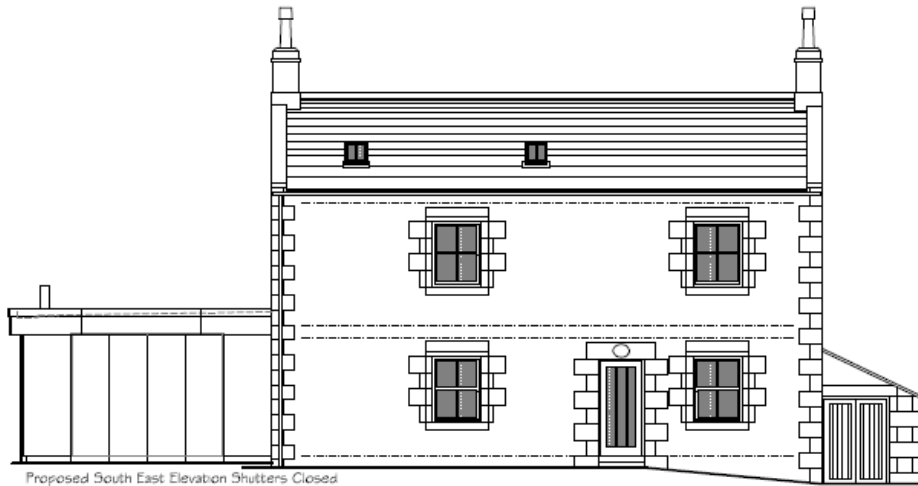
The significance of Lowtown, whilst partly ascribed to the historic and aesthetic values of the building, is equally attributed to its unusually isolated rural setting. The cottage is set some distance from the nearby public road, obscured from view on approach by local topography, and is reached from the north via a well grassed-over track which provides access to the farmland beyond, adding to its sense of general wildness, compounded by its abandonment. Once reached, the building is located within a field with no defined curtilage or nearby structures (excepting two small lean-to buildings), occupying a unique position atop the Vallum Scheduled Ancient Monument within the setting of Hadrian's Wall, with extensive views of the surrounding landscape.

The western elevation of the building houses a dilapidated corrugated steel lean-to (footprint 3.6m x 2.8m) containing a brick boiler, from which protrudes a flue terminating in a chimney stack. The application proposes the removal of the lean-to, boiler, flue and chimney and construction of a replacement extension alongside the reconstruction of the chimney in stone to serve a new woodburning stove. An opening would also be created within the western wall to provide internal access into the proposed extension.



**Fig. 5:** View facing east towards existing corrugated steel extension

The proposed extension would project 5m from the side of the property for a width of 5.3m, incorporating a total height of 3m (3.5m including flue). The walls of the extension would be inset 0.25m from the corners of the cottage, with the overhanging roof inset by 0.1m. The extension would be clad in Corten steel incorporating a Sarnafil roof and powder coated aluminium doors and windows, proposed to be concealed by Corten steel sliding shutters when in disuse. The Heritage Statement submitted suggests that *“the proposed extension will be larger than the current extension but it is subservient to the dwelling and does not compete with the existing building. The material and design are deliberately contemporary and will provide a contrast to the existing buildings and will not be seen as a pastiche”*.



**Fig. 6:** *Front elevation of Lowtown incorporating proposed extension*

The supporting Heritage Statement highlights the dilapidated condition of the property, noting that few features could be repaired and retained, further stating that the most significant aspects of the property are those which are included within the Listing description, which encompasses no internal features, and thus the proposals would not significantly impact upon the character or understanding of the building. The application additionally emphasises the benefits of restoring the property, in particular that this would increase visitor accommodation with the area.

The Authority is supportive of the proposed restoration of Lowtown, considering its use as holiday accommodation to be appropriate in principle and its conversion to constitute a public benefit in that this would aid the conservation of an at-risk building which in itself would have no impact upon the area in terms of visual amenity or cultural heritage, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 7, 14, 15 and 18 and NPPF Paragraphs 132-133. The Authority considers that some form of extension to the building may be acceptable in principle and would be a reasonable requirement of such a scheme, and supports the proposed removal of the existing dilapidated corrugated steel lean-to in principle, with no objections to the proposed removal and replacement of the existing flue and brick chimney stack. It is furthermore accepted that any restoration would incur substantial intervention given the internal condition of the property and existing windows

However notwithstanding the above, whilst the scheme would arguably achieve such public benefits in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 133, in failing to provide clear and convincing justification (as required under NPPF Para. 132) for the proposed extension in its current form, substantiating the harm which this poses, and demonstrate that this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits (which would outweigh the harm), as expressly required by NPPF Paragraphs 132-133, the proposed scheme pays no regard to the historic interest of the building, resulting in unjustified harm to its significance and thus fails to accord with NPPF Paragraphs 132-133.

In the absence of justification for the proposed extension to the western elevation, this appears to Officers to be borne from a desire for additional space rather than an understanding of the building and its significance, and the application is not supported by sufficient justification to demonstrate that an extension of this design and scale is necessary to facilitate the proposed conversion of the building. The extension is considered to be inappropriate in the context of the building, being disproportionately large and of incompatible design, and consequently fails to reflect or respect the



character and significance of Lowtown and its setting. The position and size of the proposed extension would dominate the building and would additionally interfere with the attractive stone quoins to its corners depreciating an understanding of the building; the design of the extension is considered to be too top-heavy and would unbalance the appearance of the cottage. The proposed extension would therefore be harmful to the significance and special character of Lowtown by virtue of design, scale and position and would therefore be contrary to Core Strategy policies 1, 3, 7 and 18 and the NPPF.

The former layout of Lowtown comprised a central staircase directly ahead on entering to the cottage, with one room on either side at both ground and first floor level, totalling 4no. rooms. There is now limited evidence of this former layout as the building is severely dilapidated internally however the Authority does hold photographs taken in 2012/2013 which provide evidence of this, as supported by the existing floor plans submitted



**Fig.8 (left):** 2012/2013 photograph showing former staircase and ground floor partition walls; **(right):** Current condition of cottage showing position of former staircase, as viewed Sept 2016

The proposed scheme seeks the re-configuration of the former layout of the building, repositioning the staircase to the north western corner and creating additional rooms using partition walls, incorporating the formation of additional window openings within the roof and to the south and north elevations. In addition, the application seeks the proposed replacement of all existing windows (presently unglazed and boarded over) with double glazed timber units, excepting the proposed new window to the north elevation which would be aluminium framed. The justification for this work is set out within the Heritage Statement which argues that *“the most significant aspects of the property are set out within the Listing description...there will be minimal loss of significant historic fabric through this proposal for the alterations to the existing dwelling. None of the elements which are being altered internally are mentioned in the Listing and they are not considered to be significant in term[s] of historic importance...the proposals do not have a significant impact upon the*



*character of the existing Grade II listed building and they do not diminish the understanding of the property. The proposals retain the “distinctiveness” of the property”.*

As aforementioned, the LPA acknowledges that substantial works would be required to re-introduce any internal layout within the building (be it a replication of the former layout or a new layout; both would require the introduction of new material) and such level of intervention is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle. However in failing to provide clear and convincing justification (as required under NPPF Para. 132) for either the modified internal configuration or formation of new windows openings or evidence that the existing layout could not be replicated to fulfil the desired space within the requirement for additional window openings, so as to minimise the loss of historic fabric and alterations to the external facade of the building, the proposed scheme pays no regard to the historic interest of the building, resulting in unjustified harm to its significance and thus fails to accord with NPPF Paragraphs 132-133.

The proposed internal layout, formation of new window openings and extension would therefore be harmful to the significance and special character of Lowtown by virtue of design, scale and position and in the absence of clear and convincing justification to demonstrate that this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm, the application fails to accord with Core Strategy policy 18 and the NPPF.

Given the present condition of the former windows, the installation of new windows to the property is considered to be reasonable and acceptable in principle, and the use of timber sliding sash windows could be supported. The proposed installation of double glazed window units is however considered to be without justification and is therefore unacceptable without such explanation. Additionally, there is no justification provided to support the proposed double glazed aluminium window to the north of the property.

The existing lean-to to the eastern elevation comprises a stone structure with fibre cement corrugated roof, proposed to be replaced with Corten steel corrugated roofing and double doors installed. The northern elevation of the building evidences of a former doorway, now blocked up, its position marked by a stone lintel and variation in the pattern of stonework, which the scheme proposes to re-open. The proposed alterations to the lean-to structure to the eastern elevation (comprising the re-roofing and installation of doors) are considered to be acceptable in principle in terms of their impact upon the character and significance of Lowtown.

The exact position of the doorway to be reopened to the northern elevation has lead to confusion over the plans submitted. This is due to an apparent inconsistency in terms of the position of this former opening as seen externally and what is visible internally. When viewed internally, it appears to Officers that the former doorway is directly ahead covered with timber boarding, close to a small window and aligned with the former staircase within a slight recess directly opposite the front entrance (see Fig. 8, above), however the plans submitted show this opening to be slightly offset from this boarding to the west, for which there is no obvious internal evidence of a former doorway. However as viewed externally, the stone lintel for this former door appears further away from the window as it does internally. As commented by the Historic Buildings Advisor, an investigative assessment of the development and significance of the building to support the proposals would have identified and provided clarity on this matter. Notwithstanding this matter, it is however considered that the re-opening of this doorway would be acceptable in principle in terms of its



impact upon the character and significance of Lowtown, however the exact location of the doorway requires further investigation and clarification.

The proposed refurbishment of the access track, landscaping, delineation of curtilage and installation of septic treatment plant would not be detrimental to the visual amenity or cultural heritage of the area, and would thus accord with Core Strategy policies 1, 3 and 18 the NPPF, subject to conditions requiring the final details of these aspects where appropriate.

Whilst the Historic Buildings Advisor has raised concerns regarding the proposed parking and paved areas, these are considered to be reasonable requirements of such a scheme and thus on balance would not be harmful to the amenity or setting of Lowtown and its surroundings.

Both Historic England and the Historic Environment Officer have raised no objections to the scheme however have recommended the submission of additional information and attachment of conditions requiring an Archaeological Watching Brief, given the historical importance of the site. Both are considered to be reasonable and could be dealt with through conditions and further discussions as part of a planning approval.

## **Tranquillity and Amenity**

### *Impact upon Amenity*

Lowtown is remotely positioned, its closest neighbours being Walltown Cottage and Walltown Farm, some 400m to the north west and Allolee, some 640m to the north east. Due to this remoteness, it is not considered that the proposed development would impact detrimentally upon the residential amenity of the occupiers of these properties. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Core Strategy policy 3 and the NPPF in this respect.

### *Tranquillity*

Northumberland National Park is internationally recognised as a Dark Sky Park, awarded this status in 2013 by the International Dark Sky Association. This status therefore has clear implications for the type and level of external lighting that is appropriate within the Park.

Based on the information submitted it is understood that the proposed scheme would incorporate external lighting, although details of this have not yet been provided. The intention of the applicant to ensure that any such lighting will comply with the Northumberland National Park '*Good Practice Guide for Outside Lighting*' is additionally noted.

The proposed installation of new external lighting is considered to be acceptable in principle and a reasonable requirement of such a site. However due to the very remote location of Lowtown and absence of existing external lighting and thus light pollution, it is therefore important to minimise the impact of any new external lighting upon the tranquillity of the area in terms of the Dark Sky Park by virtue of its design, location or specification, which could be secured through an appropriately worded condition. Subject to the inclusion of such a condition it is considered that this aspect of the proposed development would accord with Core Strategy policy 19 and the NPPF.



## **Utilities and Infrastructure**

The reconnection of the property to services including water, telecoms and electricity is considered to be a reasonable requirement of the scheme and would therefore be acceptable in principle, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 3 and 28. Comments provided on behalf of Historic England requested further details of service connections in order to determine whether their provision would impact detrimentally upon the Scheduled Ancient Monument; information to this effect has since been provided by the applicant and is considered to be acceptable in principle. The submission of a comprehensive service provision plan could then be secured by condition, as requested by Historic England, in order to ensure that the Vallum would not be impacted upon.

The scheme proposes the installation of a new foul drainage system located to the north west of the property however does not include further details setting out the design and scope of this. It is therefore considered that the aspect of the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to the final details of the proposed system which could be secured by condition.

## **Impact upon Biodiversity**

The application site does not fall within any designated ecological sites of international, national or local importance. The designation of the '*Allolee to Walltown Site of Special Scientific Interest*' (SSSI) (identified for its grassland habitat) on land north of the public road is however noted.

Core Strategy policy 17 encourages development which does not impact adversely upon biodiversity. The application has been accompanied by a Bat and Barn Owl Survey which includes proposed mitigation measures for both species, following examination of which the Ecologist considered to be proportionate and acceptable, further advising that a Natural England license will be required. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon ecology, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 17 and the NPPF.

## **Highways and Rights of Way**

Lowtown is situated approximately 120m south of the nearby unclassified public road and is accessed via a grassed track which runs north to south. Sections of the track appear to be in more frequent use than others, with the end closest to the public road clearly defined by gravel and earth ruts, and the section directly east of the property now indistinguishable and completely overgrown. This track is also the route of a public right of way which continues past the property to the south east.

The proposed development proposes the refurbishment of the track along its entire length, details of which have been submitted. The scheme additionally incorporates 2no. vehicular parking spaces directly adjacent to the property in addition to the provision of cycle parking within the existing lean-to storage building.

Following consideration of the information submitted, NCC Highways Authority have raised no objections subject to the inclusion of conditions to secure the creation and retention of the proposed car parking area and the submission of refuse storage and strategy details.



Whilst the Historic Buildings Advisor has commented that the proposed parking, hardstanding and boundary treatment suburbanises the cottage and would thus be harmful to its setting and it is accepted that this aspect of the proposed development would to some extent suburbanise the property, these are considered to be reasonable requirements in bringing the building back into use and therefore on balance are considered to be acceptable. Following consideration of the information submitted it is considered that this aspect of the proposed scheme is acceptable in principle in accordance with Core Strategy policies 3 and 12 and the NPPF, subject to conditions concerning car parking, refuse and material to be used for the proposed track, parking and hardstanding.

### **Renewable Energy Provision**

Core Strategy 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.

As detailed within the information submitted, due to the nature of the building and additionally the sensitivity of the surrounding landscape, it is accepted that it is not possible for significant renewable technologies to be incorporated within the proposed scheme. The proposed use of wood burning stoves as a renewable central heating source and of recycled and sustainably/locally sourced materials is however recognised. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would accord with policy 25 in this respect.

### **Recommendation & Conditions**

Following assessment of the information submitted against the relevant national and local planning policies it is considered that the proposed development by virtue of the proposed extension to the western elevation, would be harmful to the significance of Lowtown and its setting and would therefore be contrary to Core Strategy policies 1, 3, 7 and 18 and Paragraphs 132-134 of the NPPF.

It is therefore recommended that planning permission should be refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed extension to the western elevation, by virtue of its design, scale and position which would obscure the stone quoins to the corners of the building and thus depreciate the understanding of the building, would be harmful to the significance and special character of Lowtown. Clear and convincing justification for the works as required by NPPF Paragraph 132 has not been provided and there is no evidence of the benefits of the scheme which would outweigh the harm identified to the heritage asset. The proposed extension would be harmful to the significance and special character of Lowtown and would therefore be contrary to Core Strategy policies 1 and 18 and Paragraphs 132-134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposal fails to accord with Core Strategy policy 7 in that a large extension is proposed which would detract from the character and appearance of the building and would therefore fail to contribute to the special qualities of the National Park.



3. The applicant has failed to provide sufficient evidence to justify the proposed internal layout alterations or demonstrate that the existing layout could not be replicated without the requirement for additional window openings, in order to minimise the loss of historic fabric. The proposed internal layout and formation of new window openings are therefore harmful to the significance and special character of Lowtown and would therefore be contrary to Core Strategy policies 1 and 18 and Paragraphs 132-134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
4. The proposed scheme fails to provide sufficient evidence to justify the proposed installation of double glazed timber and aluminium window units. The proposed installation of double glazed windows is therefore harmful to the significance and special character of Lowtown and would therefore be contrary to Core Strategy policies 1 and 18 and Paragraphs 132-134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Background Papers**

Application file 16NP0083  
EIA Screening Opinion

	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Planning Officer</b>		
<b>Head of Development Management or Chief Executive</b>		