

PLANNING POLICY & HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE TWICE BREWED INN

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 I am instructed by Twice Brewed LLP to submit this planning application for a micro brewery at the Twice Brewed Inn at Bardon Mill.
- 1.2 The site lies within the Northumberland National Park area ("the NNP") and the authority has provided detailed pre-application advice to the applicant by letters of 22 July and 6 September 2016.

THE SCHEME

- 2.1 The application is for an extension to the existing public house and hotel to accommodate a microbrewery and bar ("the Scheme"). A separate planning application is also being made for a new access from the car park onto the B6318 Military Road.
- 2.2 The extension will be in random natural stone with stone quoins under a slate roof. It will be built off the rear wall of the existing building away, set back from the Military Road and Vallum. The extension will be linked to the existing building with a glazed entrance area which provides circulation into the existing function room / restaurant and hotel facilities.

PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 The site is directly adjacent to the Roman Vallum, a Scheduled Ancient Monument ("SAM") which encompasses the verge, highway and land north of the road, but does not include any of the application site. This land is designated for its historical value and interest as a Roman feature dating from around AD160 and is also a World Heritage Site.
- 3.2 The adopted development plan is the NNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies (2009). Whilst this plan is a little dated I consider its policies in relation to this scheme are up to date and carry full weight.
- 3.3 The NNPA vision is set out in the Core Strategy in the following terms –

"Northumberland National Park Authority will be proactive, innovative and forward-looking, working towards a National Park with thriving communities and a sustainable local economy grounded in its special qualities, including a richness of cultural heritage and biodiversity, a true sense of tranquillity and a distinct character associated with a living, working landscape, in which everyone has an opportunity to understand, enjoy and contribute to those special qualities."
- 3.4 It is important to note that the Authority's vision recognises the importance of sustainable local economies and thriving communities within the Park.

- 3.5 Policy 14 the Authority supports the local economy and proposals which enable local businesses which cater for tourists to expand and diversify.
- 3.6 Policy 15 also supports developments which maximise opportunities for visitors to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park whilst not adversely impacting on them.
- 3.7 The NPPF is an other material consideration and its policies carry weight depending on the status of the development plan.

THE APPLICANTS CASE

- 4.1 The Twice Brewed is a well established facility in the national park which is a pub to both locals and visitors from all over world and an important food and accommodation facility on the route of Hadrians Wall. The location is crucial to walkers and visitors as there is no public transport along the wall from late September through to Easter and the nearest hotels are some distance away at Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle. The Twice Brewed is a vital facility to many people enjoying the special qualities of the Park and Hadrians Wall in particular.
- 4.2 The Twice Brewed was purchased by the applicant in June 2015 and substantial money has been invested in its refurbishment. It now provides 18 letting rooms, and in the region of 140 covers for food in the bar and restaurant. The occupancy rates are maintained at over 90% in the summer season but in winter can go as low as 10%. The majority of people who stay over are walking in the area, mostly on the Wall.
- 4.3 The business is an important local employer of 47 staff in the summer all from the Haydon Bridge / Haltwhistle area. The weekly running costs are in the region of £10,000 which is a significant local investment. Since the refurbishment it is estimated that the business has grown by about 32%. However The Sill visitor centre currently under construction on the adjacent site will undoubtedly compete directly with the food and accommodation service.
- 4.4 Therefore the applicant has identified a microbrewery as a diversification project with a unique selling point. It will brew beers to drink in the pub and restaurant, or to take out, and also supply local pubs and outlets. The craft beer market in the UK is experiencing sustained growth rates against a backdrop of flat beer sales overall. Membership of craft beer clubs is also continuing an upward trend.
- 4.5 The microbrewery will be an independent destination for visitors but will link directly into complementary facilities on site. People will be encouraged to visit the brewery and stay for food in the pub. Likewise those arriving for a meal will have the opportunity to tour the brewery. It is important that the brewery, bar and restaurant are linked as the applicant can then increase its offer to include a function room, wedding venue and private bar.
- 4.6 The microbrewery will generate 3 full time equivalent jobs which it is hoped will go to local residents.

- 4.7 In planning policy terms this scheme will support the existing tourist facilities on site and as a business the Twice Brewed caters predominantly for people enjoying the special qualities of the Park. According to the Core Strategy tourism and accommodation account for 49% of business on the national park. If people are walking in the area, visiting Hadrians Wall or other attractions and they enjoy food and accommodation at the Twice Brewed then that brings money into the local economy both directly and indirectly. Diversification of the applicant's business into brewing/hospitality will have a positive impact on investment and expenditure and will not in any way impact negatively on the special qualities of the park. For those reasons I see no conflict with Policy 14.
- 4.8 The explanatory text to Policy 15 identifies Farmers' Markets, walking, climbing and cycling as visitor experiences in the Park. The Twice Brewed caters for all these groups. In terms of Policy 15 the existing pub and accommodation are already visitor facilities and the brewery will add to this offer.
- 4.9 The extension has been designed to reflect the host building, but remain subservient to it, with simple robust fenestration. It will be in random natural stone under a slate roof which is the local vernacular. The scale of the building is dictated by the plant and machinery of the brewery and the height is both for operational reasons (cleaning and maintenance) and to allow for safe working.
- 4.10 The site is in a sensitive location but the extension is linear in form, reflecting local vernacular. There is a strong line of mature trees alongside the road meaning the extension will only be seen from a short section of the Military Road across the car park. It will be screened by these trees and by the existing building to the west. The extension will be seen in longer distance views from public footpaths to the north but from here it will be seen in the context of The Sill development, a substantial building to the east which also extends into open countryside to the south. Given the amount of built development in the immediate vicinity of the site I do not consider this extension will harm either the landscape or the special qualities of the Park.
- 4.11 The NPPF advises that great weight should be given to conserving National Parks and the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage is important.¹ In this location I am of the view that the landscape quality is its upland quality and remoteness. Whilst the extension is built development in the open countryside it is well related and justified as diversification of an existing business. But in any event I find that the impact of the scheme would be neutral and therefore will conserve the remoteness of the landscape. There is a need for the brewery to be physically and functionally linked to the Twice Brewed and it would not have the same potential to attract direct and indirect expenditure in another location. Therefore there is a good economic case for the scheme.
- 4.12 The site has a safe and lawful access onto the Military Road and the car park layout has been amended. I see no harm to highway safety by the traffic generated and all parking will be accommodated on the site.

¹ NPPF §115

- 4.13 The site has an existing drainage system which was installed in 2008 and comprises a main sewage line and three 11,000 litre tanks feeding into reed beds. The brewery is expected to brew less than twice per week in a 5bb brew kit. I am advised that this existing system and permit to discharge is more than adequate to deal with the existing and proposed uses on site.

Heritage Assets

- 4.14 The scheme has been amended on advice from NPPA officers and it will now have no impact whatsoever on the SAM. I am not aware of any other archaeological interest features in the vicinity of the site.
- 4.15 The site is inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as a frontier of the Roman Empire. According to the Statement of Universal Outstanding Value² the series of frontiers reflect Roman military architecture and the power of the Roman Empire. If this scheme goes ahead the location and setting of the frontier will remain clear in the landscape and there will be no impact on the authenticity of this feature.
- 4.16 One of the Attributes of the WHS is that the setting of the frontier should offer the opportunity to understand and appreciate Roman military planning and one of the Objectives in the Management Plan is to raise awareness of World Heritage. I do not see this scheme in any way harming those and if the new brewery attracts more people into the area then it may widen the demographic of visitors to the WHS.
- 4.17 The WHS is a designated heritage asset and significant weight should be attached to its significance. However I consider the harm arising from this scheme, if any, to be less than substantial. On balance the public benefits are a substantial privately funded investment creating local employment and supporting an important tourist facility. If The Sill were to compete with and outperform the Twice Brewed, the loss of such a valuable facility in the Park would not be in the public interest.
- 4.18 There is a listed building directly west of the site at West Twice Brewed which is a late 18th century farmhouse and barn. This is listed grade II. From the listing description and my observations on site it appears to be listed as a good example of a vernacular building which is relatively unimproved. The setting of this building is its curtilage and the open space directly around it. The brewery building will have no direct physical relationship to the listed building or its setting. I therefore see no harm arising from this scheme. As there would be no harm, there is no conflict with the NPPF.

² 21 July 2015

CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This site is in a sensitive location in the National Park and World Heritage Site, but the Twice Brewed is a well established and vital business which supports the local economy directly, through wages and employment, and indirectly by attracting people into the area where they will spend more money. The applicant has already made a substantial private investment into the business and this represents the next phase of development.
- 5.2 The principle of an extension to expand and diversify the business is accepted by the NNPA. The microbrewery is a logical development which will both complement the existing food and accommodation offer whilst adding to its value.
- 5.3 The key issues for this application are the details of the scheme. The building is subservient to the existing public house and reflects its scale and fenestration. But the use of traditional materials, random rubble and slate, is more in keeping with the local vernacular.
- 5.4 The extension is set off the back face of the building and will only be seen in short views from the Military Road and in longer views from footpaths to the north. Therefore in landscape terms the impact will be neutral.
- 5.5 The SAM and WHS are important material considerations, but a new brewery will not harm the Attributes of the WHS. In fact given beer brewed here is said to have fortified the Yorkist foot soldiers on their way to the Battle of Hexham in 1464 a modern microbrewery is following a long tradition on this site.

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Dated this second day of November 2016