DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	**17NP0053**
Description / Site Address	Approval of details reserved by condition 21 (external lighting) of planning permission 15NP0087 at The Sill, Bardon Mill, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 7AN
Consultation Expiry	24 May 2017 (internal consultee only)
Last date for decision	4 July 2017

Details of Proposal

This application provides the details reserved by planning condition 21 of planning permission 15NP0087, for The Sill Landscape Discovery Centre and YHA building. Condition 21 requires the submission of a scheme detailing the external lighting strategy, to include the number, location and technical specification of the external lighting units to be provided on the site, in order to ensure that there is no unacceptable harmful impact upon the dark skies and tranquillity of the area, or upon biodiversity.

The condition in full reads as follows:

> *Prior to the installation of any external lighting on the application, a detailed lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, to include*
> - *The specific location of all external lighting units*
> - *Design of all lighting units design*
> - *Details of beam orientation and lux levels across the site*
> - *Proposed measures such as motion sensors and timers that will be used on lighting units*
>
> *Reason: The principle of the lighting details submitted in the Lighting Assessment, Lighting Plan and Luminaire Strategy are acceptable, however additional information is required to ensure that there is no harmful impact upon the tranquillity and intrinsically dark character of the National Park, or upon the biodiversity of the area, in accordance with Policies 1, 17 and 19 of the Core Strategy and NPPF.*

The application includes site plans and a roof plan (and photos of locations on the roof), showing the locations of external lighting. Manufacturer specification details have also been provided for each of the lighting units. More supporting information

on the lighting is provided in an email from the planning consultant, in reply to a series of questions from the planning officer.

The plans indicate that the following lighting would be provided:

Northern part of the site:

- **4 no. Erco Castor Bollard luminaire floor washlights** (900mm height, powder coated aluminium finish, 701 lumen luminous flux, 24W LED bulbs, 4000K neutral white lighting, directing light to all sides, across a 360° range, and are designed to direct light downwards) – one of these would be located near to footpaths and the events space in the north-west corner of the application site, with the remaining three located in areas close to the south of the building;
- **5 no. Erco Castor Bollard luminaire floor washlights** (900mm height, powder coated aluminium finish, 309 lumen luminous flux, 12W LED bulbs, 4000K neutral white lighting) – these are designed to direct light downwards. Three of these would be located towards the western part of the site, directing light towards the east, across a 180° range, with the other two units located within the central part of the upper car park

Southern part of the site:

- **3 no. Erco Castor Bollard luminaire floor washlights** (900mm height, powder coated aluminium finish, 309 lumen luminous flux, 12W LED bulbs, 4000K neutral white lighting) – these are designed to direct light downwards and would be located towards the western part of the site, directing lighting within the site, predominantly directing light towards the east, across a 180° range;
- No external lighting is proposed in the overflow car park to the south of the site.

Roof of the building:

- **3 no. Erco Axis walklights** (16 lumen luminous flux, 1.7W LED bulbs, 3000K warm white lighting**)** – these would be situated within timber edging adjacent to the path, approximately 150mm above ground level, and would direct light downwards. They would be located:
    - One on the path on the north of the roof, pointing west-north-west;
    - One on the south-west corner of the path, pointing south-west, towards areas of the roof that would not be open to pedestrians;
    - One on the south-east corner of the roof, facing west-north west (this has been revised from the originally submitted proposal to locate the light on the adjacent corner, facing north-north-east)

- **3 no. red emergency lights** (associated with emergency sirens) which would only come on in the event of an emergency/evacuation of the building, when emergency sirens were sounding.

Information on the proposed time clocks that would control the bollard lighting has been provided in a letter from CAD21 consulting engineers. These lighting units would be switched on from dusk to 8pm Monday – Friday, and dusk to 10pm on Saturdays and Sundays. No proposals for timeclocks are provided for the lower key lighting to be provided on the roof. It is understood that this lighting on the roof is in place to safely guide people up and down on dark days / evenings, and this has been confirmed by the applicant.

Relevant Planning Policy & Guidance

Local Policy

NNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (Core Strategy)

Policy 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
Policy 2 Climate Change
Policy 3 General Development Principles
Policy 17 Biodiversity & Geodiversity
Policy 18 Cultural Heritage
Policy 19 Tranquillity
Policy 20 Landscape Character
Policy 25 Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency

National Policy

→ *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*
→ *Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)*

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- *NNPA Building Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Design Guide SPD)*
- *NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)*

Relevant Planning History

- 17NP0055 – Non-material amendment to planning permission 15NP0087 (new Landscape Discovery Centre and Youth Hostel) in respect of amendments to solar panels (live application)
- 17NP0054 – Works at the north and west of The Sill development incorporating realignment of northern garden footpath and gate, alteration to events space position, addition of seating, and addition of 7 no. condenser units and extra gabion basket screening adjacent to bin store, live application
- 17NP0016 – Advertisement Consent - Non illuminated external signage, approved, April 2017
- 17NP0013 – Approval of details reserved by condition 29 (grease trap specification) of Planning Permission 15NP0087, approved May 2017
- 17NP0010 – Approval of Details reserved by conditions 23 and 30 (water storage cistern) of Planning Permission 15NP0087, approved March 2017
- 17NP0005 – Approval of details reserved by condition 20 (car parking payment systems and associated infrastructure) of 15NP0087, approved March 2017
- 16NP0066 – Approval of details - Condition 19 of 15NP0087, in respect of balustrade details, approved July 2016
- 16NP0065 - Application for advertisement consent on a temporary basis for 3 no. banners at National Park Centre Once Brewed Bardon Mill Hexham Northumberland NE47 7AN, approved August 2016
- 16NP0055 – Approval of details reserved by conditions 11 and 12 (highways details) of 15NP0087, approved July 2016
- 16NP0012 – Approval of details reserved by conditions 8 (green roof) and 14 (gates) of 15NP0087, approved June 2016
- 15NP0090 – Approval of details reserved by conditions 10 and 13 of planning permission 14NP0038 in respect of storage area and construction, withdrawn by applicant
- 15NP0088 – Non Material Amendment following grant of Planning Permission 15NP0061 (Roofscape), withdrawn by applicant
- 15NP0087 – Variation of conditions 2, 9 and 12 of 15NP0061 (variations to plans, construction & storage areas), approved April 2016
- 15NP0085 – Approval of details reserved by conditions 19, 24 and 25 of 15NP0087, approved May 2016
- 15NP0061 – Variation of condition 28 (energy measures) of 14NP0038, approved September 2015
- 15NP0059 – Discharge of condition 20 (land contamination) of 14NP0038, approved September 2015

- 15NP0054 – Discharge of conditions 10 & 13 (construction/demolition management, parking, storage schemes) of 14NP0038, approved September 2015
- 15NP0043 – Discharge of condition 3 (archaeological scheme of investigation) of 14NP0038, approved September 2015
- 15NP0035 – Discharge of condition 5 (bat measures) & part discharge of condition 21 (materials) of 14NP0038, approved August 2015
- 14NP0038 – The demolition of existing National Park Visitor Centre (D1), Offices (B1), Cafe (A3), Retail (A1) and 79 bed Youth Hostel (Sui Generis) and associated car parking, and redevelopment of site as new Landscape Discovery Centre incorporating Exhibition Space (D1), Cafe (A3), Offices (B1) and Retail (A1) and 86 bed Youth Hostel (Sui Generis) together with 87 No. permanent car parking spaces, 93 No. overflow car parking spaces, associated landscaping, substation and crossing point across the B6318 Military Road, pedestrian ramp within the roadside ditch and formation of pedestrian refuges and route within wooded copse, permission granted conditionally, October 2014

Consultations/Representations

NNPA Landscape Officer: No objection, the following points raised:

- The design, numbers and locations of bollard lighting are considered acceptable;
- While acknowledging the low lumen level, has reservations about the positioning of one of the down lighters located on the roof, as this points towards the Military Road from an elevated level and could be viewed from the Military Road from an elevated height, with the walkway illuminated. (NB – the plans have been amended to relocate this light since the receipt of these comments).

Assessment

Context

Both the principle of the development itself, and the principle of the use of external lighting associated with the development, have been considered during the determination of planning application 14NP0038, which granted planning permission for the development. The development will cater for visitors including those attending events at the Landscape Discovery Centre, YHA customers, as well as NNPA staff and those working from the business hub at the site. The nature of the proposed uses will necessitate access to the building via car park and circulation areas, during hours of darkness.

The key issue identified for consideration in this application is whether the detail of the proposed external lighting scheme would have any unacceptable adverse impacts upon the tranquillity, dark skies and intrinsically dark character of this part of the Northumberland National Park and the internationally designated 'gold-tier' Northumberland Dark Sky Park.

The proposed lighting scheme's effects on landscape, amenity, cultural heritage and biodiversity are also considered in this report.

Tranquillity and dark skies

During consideration of the initial application by the LPA, it was acknowledged that external lighting would be required across a number of locations around the site, to allow for safe circulation and movement around the site. Indicative lighting plans were submitted with the original application, indicating that external lighting would be likely to be required along footpath areas (particularly to the west of the site), within the car park areas, to the front of the building, and in association with the outdoor events spaces, as well giving an indication of the type of lighting that may be chosen.

The detailed lighting proposals now put forward are consistent with these general aims and locations, but also demonstrates a reduction in the amount of lighting proposed when compared with the indicative plans submitted with the 2014 application, which is welcomed. The following paragraphs consider the specific characteristics of the submitted lighting scheme and appraise whether it is considered to be appropriate in its local context, and whether sufficient protection is afforded to the dark skies and tranquillity of the area. Consideration has been given to the content of the *Northumberland Dark Sky Park Exterior Lighting Master Plan* and the *Good Practice Guide for Outside Lighting in Northumberland International Dark Sky Park*, which is based on the principles of the *Lighting Master Plan.* These documents are material considerations in determining this application.

Number and location of lighting units – The number of lighting units is considered to be appropriate, given the location of the site, the nature of the approved use of the site and building, and the intended function of the lighting to guide visitors to the site along footpath, car park and circulation areas.

A total of twelve bollard lights are proposed, which is a reduction from the indicative proposals submitted with 14NP0038, and is considered to be a reasonable and necessary number of lighting units to allow visitors to circulate around the site safely after dark. This includes a total of seven units to light the footpath areas across the west of the site, at regularly spaced intervals, stretching from the south-west of the car park, up to the events space at the north-west corner. The spacing of these at regular intervals allows the number of lighting units that need to be provided to serve this purpose to be minimised. The remaining five bollard units are to be located within the central part of the north car park, and to the front of the building. These are again well spaced and directed, to allow the total number of units to be kept to a minimum. This helps minimise the effect of the lighting on dark skies and tranquillity, and also limits the amount of energy consumption.

Three low level lighting units are to be provided at points on the path on the green roof, to allow pedestrians to be able to navigate this area at night. This is a small number of units, in the context of the length of this path, and is again considered to be acceptable in terms of the number of units.

The Landscape Officer had raised concerns with the location, or, more specifically the direction of one of the lights to be located on the roof (south-east corner), pointing north-east. Concerns were raised due to the fact that this could lead the area to be lit up when the surrounding landscape is enveloped in darkness. These concerns were noted, and, it was considered this solution would have had increased potential to light a much larger area of the path, than other alternatives. This is in part due to the fairly prominent location, and the direction towards the Military Road, and due to the combination of the direction of the light and the sloping gradient of the path in this area.

The scheme has subsequently been amended following discussion, to ensure that this light faces away from the Military Road and that part of the path, reducing the area that is likely to be illuminated by the downlighter, and reducing the likelihood of this lighting being visually prominent or causing excessive illumination.

The number of emergency lights is also considered to be appropriate.

Design of lighting units – The bollard lighting units are considered to be appropriate in terms of their design. The lighting units are fully shielded, ensuring that all of the light generated is directed downwards, and that there is no upward light spill. The supporting email submitted by the agent states that the bollard lighting "*uses an internal projection lens to ensure that no light is emitted above the horizontal line as required to conform with dark sky principles."* The avoidance of any upward light spill is essential, as upward light spill could have a much greater effect on the dark skies and tranquillity of the area.

The bollards are also of a low height (900mm), meaning that light will be kept close to the ground, and will be focused on lighting the pathways and circulation areas that they are associated with, limiting the area above ground that is to be illuminated.

The lighting units within the roof are at a very low level, close to the surface of the path itself, and again are fully shielded and angled down. They are designed to provide a very low level of illumination at three points across the roof, to allow people to navigate their way around the roof when it is dark. Based on the revised location that has now been provided for the light at the south-east corner of the roof, these lights are considered to be acceptable.

While the emergency lighting is not fully shielded, and luminosity details are not provided, it is considered that their impact on dark skies would be negligible, as they would only be illuminated in the rare case of emergencies.

The design of the lighting units is considered to be appropriate and in accordance with dark sky lighting guidance.

Luminous flux of the luminaire & other technical information – The more luminous of the two bollard light designs that have been chosen is the 360° units, of which four are proposed in total, in the locations closest to the main building. The product information and the supporting email provided by the agent clarifies that a 3300 lumen light engine is used, but that the design of the lighting unit will mean that a light source of approximately 700 lumens will be emitted, due to the internal reflection and light distribution within the lighting unit.

The site is located within an area designated in the *Lighting Master Plan* as a 'predominantly dark area'. The *Lighting Master Plan* advises that new units must be fully cut-off / shielded regardless of lumen output, while the *Good Practice Guide* advises, as a general guide, that lumen output should ideally be less than 600 lumens.

The use of a lighting unit that emits 700 lumens is considered to generally accord with the principles of the *Lighting Master Plan* and *Good Practice Guide* in this case. Due to the relatively low numbers of lighting units that are proposed, and their dark-sky friendly design, it is not considered that a lumen output of 700 lumens would harm the dark skies and tranquillity of this part of the National Park.

The remaining eight units are the 180° units, which are generally located further away from the building. These emit a luminous flux of approximately 300 lumens, which is a relatively low level of luminosity, which is in full accordance with lighting guidance for the Dark Sky Park.

The dark sky guidance documents also advise that the colour of the light source is important in achieving dark sky friendly lighting, advising that units should ordinarily be no higher than 4000K on the Kelvin scale. The lighting proposed for both of the designs of bollard lighting is a 4000K LED natural white light source, and would be acceptable, and in accordance with this guidance.

The three lighting units to be provided on the roof have a very low lumen output of 16 lumens, and are 3000K warm white LED bulbs. This fully accords with dark sky guidance and is considered suitable.

Duration/frequency of lighting – The bollard lighting would be controlled by photocells and timeclocks, and would be on from dusk until 8pm during the week, and from dusk until 10pm on Saturdays and Sundays. It is considered that is reasonable, allowing visitors, guests and staff to access the building safely after dark, whilst ensuring that the light source is removed at times when people are less likely to be using the footpaths and circulation areas, benefitting the predominantly dark skies in the area.

The lighting on the roof would not be time restricted, to enable safe movement across the roof. This is considered to be acceptable, due to the very low luminosity, and small numbers of these lights.

The emergency lighting would only come on in emergency situations and any effects of this would therefore be negligible.

Summary – Overall, it is considered that the cumulative impacts of the proposed lighting units are acceptable. The number, design, luminosity, colour and duration of the light sources proposed are considered to be in accordance with, and an improvement upon the expectations set by the indicative information submitted when planning permission was granted for the development.

It is considered that the implementation of the proposed lighting scheme in association with the approved development would afford adequate protection to the night skies and the tranquillity of the National Park and the International Dark Sky Park. The proposals accord with NNPA Core Strategy policies, including Policy 19, as well as the policies in the NPPF, including paragraph 125, in this respect. The Landscape SPD also notes that any lighting should be kept to a minimum and installed effectively to protect dark skies. It is considered that the proposals, bearing in mind the context of the development, site, and surroundings, would meet with this objective.

Landscape character

The external bollard lighting would only be illuminated at night, when the character and features of the landscape would not be easily observable. The proposed scheme's effects on the predominantly dark night-time environment have been considered in the section on tranquillity. The landscape character of this part of the National Park would not be harmed by these lighting proposals, which enable the development to remain in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 20 and the Landscape SPD.

Amenity

It is not considered that the development would harm the more immediate visual appearance of the site and surroundings. The amount of lighting is consistent with the indicative proposals put forward in terms of the amount, location and design, and the amount of lighting has in fact been reduced further from the initial indications.

The lighting is located and designed in a manner to ensure that the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties would not be affected.

The proposals accord with Core Strategy Policy 3 and the NPPF.

Cultural Heritage

The Committee report for application 14NP0038 acknowledges that a significant amount of information has been provided in relation to investigations into the potential impacts on archaeological features within the development site, using a number of assessment methodologies, concluding that surveys have not uncovered anything of archaeological significance that may be affected by the development. The installation of the units will involve some excavation into the ground, however, on the basis of the detailed consideration of archaeology on the site to date, it is not considered that archaeology would be affected by the development. None of the

proposed lighting units would be installed within the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument towards the north of the site.

The setting of the World Heritage Site and other heritage assets were considered when determining the original application, which was accompanied by the indicative/aspirational information on lighting. It is not considered that the lighting proposals would materially affect the setting of any heritage assets.

Biodiversity

The NNPA Ecologist's comments on application 14NP0038 requested that external lighting provided should be down lighting, with lighting turned off when not in use, to reduce lighting output.

The ecologist drew particular attention to the fact that lighting provision for the lower part of the site should not be excessive, as, prior to development, this area was not lit at all. Only 3 of the 300 lumen units are provided on the south part of the site, spaced well apart to minimise the number of units needed, which is line with this aspiration.

The ecologist also noted the importance of not up-lighting trees, or the features on the new buildings that are specifically designed for bats. The lighting scheme that has been proposed achieves this. External lighting is located over 20 metres away from the bat barn at the north west of the site, and the closest external lighting source proposed is around 15 metres away from the elevations where the additional bat mitigation is to be provided. The proposed lighting is designed to be fully shielded, angling light downwards and allowing no light above 900mm above ground level.

It is not considered that the lighting proposals would impact upon bats, or other protected species, and that the lighting proposals would not conflict the provisions of Core Strategy Policy 17 or the NPPF in respect of biodiversity.

Summary

The proposed external lighting scheme is considered to be acceptable, in terms of the design, location, luminosity and number of the individual units, and the cumulative effects of the lighting scheme when viewed as a whole.

As set out in the assessment of the proposal above, the proposed lighting scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of its effects on tranquillity and dark skies, and in terms of all of the other material planning considerations referred to in the report. It

is recommended that this approval of details application is approved, requiring implementation of the lighting scheme in accordance with the revised details submitted.

Recommendation

That the details reserved by condition 21 of 15NP0087 are approved, subject to implementation of the scheme in accordance with the details listed below:

- 'Electrical Engineering External Services Layout' 3736_00_XX_DR_E_201 Rev C05 received on 9/5/17
- 'Electrical Engineering External Services Layout' 3736_00_XX_DR_E_202 Rev C03 received on 9/5/17
- 'Green Roof – Pedestrian Access Layout' SIL-GK-00-ZZ-DR-L-4301 A Rev C06 received on 19/5/17
- Product specification for 'Erco; Axis Walklight; 33733.000 Graphit m LED 1.7W 230V AC 64lm 3000K warm white' received on 9/5/17
- Product specification for 'Erco; Castor Bollard luminaire; Floor washlight; 33929.000 Graphit m LED 24W 3300lm 4000K neutral white' received on 9/5/17
- Product specification for 'Erco; Castor Bollard luminaire; Floor washlight; 33924.000 Graphit m LED 12W 1650lm 4000K neutral white' received on 9/5/17
- Email from Cundall, 30 March 2017, 11:22
- Letter providing timing for external bollard lighting entitled 'RE: The Sill, Once Brewed, Haydon Bridge, Northumberland. NE47 7AN' from Darren McGurk CAD21 ltd received on 9/5/17

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer		
Head of Development Management		

Background Papers

Application Files 17NP0053, 15NP0087, 14NP0038