

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	20NP0010
Description / Site Address	Proposed construction of an Agricultural Building at High Stokoe Farm, Falstone, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1AG
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	21 February 2020
Last date for decision	27 March 2020

Details of Proposal

This application seeks approval for the erection of an agricultural building on land to the west of High Stokoe Farm to house alpacas. The farm and associated land is located within the open countryside approximately 1.7km south east of Falstone and around 300m north of the River North Tyne.



Figure 1: Site Location

The building is to be located in a field currently used for grazing, approximately 60m to the west of the existing farmhouse and recently approved (19NP0058) holiday accommodation. There is an existing outbuilding to the eastern side of the field, with the proposed building being to the western boundary, approximately 40m from the existing outbuilding. A small shelter which sits within the proposed footprint of the building would be removed as part of the proposals.

The building would have a footprint of 13.7m x 9.1m with a height to eaves of 3.65 and height to ridge of 4.9m. The building is to be constructed from a combination of 1.5m high concrete panels with timber space boarding above and a fibre cement sheet roof. The building is to be used for the housing of alpacas which would allow compliance with relevant animal welfare requirements regulations and allow for expansion of the existing tourism / farming enterprise which operates from



the site. The supporting information indicates that the location of the proposed building has been chosen to make use of favourable ground conditions whilst also ensuring that the building is an appropriate distance away from the tourist accommodation approved under application reference 19NP0058, while still being well related to the farmstead.

Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018)

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 3	<i>General Development Principles</i>
Policy 5	<i>General Location of New Development</i>
Policy 14	<i>A Sustainable Local Economy</i>
Policy 15	<i>Sustainable Tourism & Recreation Development</i>
Policy 17	<i>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>
Policy 19	<i>Tranquillity</i>
Policy 20	<i>Landscape Quality and Character</i>
Policy 21	<i>Farming</i>

Northumberland National Park Local Plan 2017-2037 Publication Draft Plan

Policy ST1	<i>Sustainable Development</i>
Policy ST2	<i>General Development Principles</i>
Policy ST4	<i>Spatial Strategy</i>
Policy DM7	<i>Rural Economy and Diversification</i>
Policy DM8	<i>Agricultural Development</i>
Policy DM10	<i>Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>
Policy DM11	<i>Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies</i>

The NNPLP has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Comments from the Inspector have been received as a result of the Hearing at the end of January 2020. As some of the policies within the NNPLP are subject to modification and further consultation, it is considered they can currently be afforded little weight. However, the following policies in the Local Plan relevant to the current application are not subject to modification and can be given more weight: DM7, DM8 and DM11. It is however the view of the LPA that consideration of the policies within the NNPLP would not materially alter the assessment of the proposals as undertaken below.



Paragraph 213 of the NPPF advises that weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to the degree of consistency with the NPPF i.e. the closer a policy in a local plan accords with the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given to them. The adopted development plan is the Northumberland National Park Core Strategy (2009) and the policies within the Core Strategy are considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and can therefore be given due weight.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

Relevant Planning History

- 19NP0058** Proposed conversion of existing barn and byre to form 2no. holiday units. *Application conditionally approved 23/07/2019.*
- 17NP0129** Proposed conversion of existing byre and barn into 2 no. holiday units. *Application withdrawn*
- 13NP0037** Proposed first floor extension to dwelling house, including traditional style dormer windows and a bathroom extension, together with siting of a caravan for the duration of the proposed works and retrospective consent for construction of timber shed/car port to replace existing shed. *Planning permission conditionally granted 07/08/2013*
- 13NP0007** Proposed first floor extension to dwelling house including addition of dormer windows, bathroom extension and renovation of barns. *Application withdrawn.*

Consultation/Representations

Falstone Parish Council: No response

NCC Highways: No objection: Subject to relevant informatives and the red-line plan showing the point of vehicular access to the public highway;

Assessment

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

- The principle of the development;
- Design and amenity
- Impact upon National Park special qualities;

The Principle of the development



The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places emphasis on a presumption in favour of sustainable development to guide decision making. Policy 1 of the NNPA Core Strategy Local Development Framework (Core Strategy) seeks to ensure that development proposals will conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park. Policy ST1 of the emerging NNPLP places a similar emphasis on sustainable development which furthers the statutory National Park purposes and duty. The effects of the proposed scheme on special qualities of National Park are discussed in more detail later in this report.

Core Strategy Policy 5 states that new development in the open countryside will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the development cannot take place in an identified Local Centre, Smaller Village, or through the reuse of an existing building. A similar approach to the location of new development is taken by policy ST4 of the emerging NNPLP although little weight can be given to this policy at the current time.

In this instance the proposals relate to the provision of an agricultural building to house alpacas associated with the existing rural enterprise. As such it is accepted that the building could not realistically be located within a Local Centre or Smaller Village due to the need to be close to the existing holding. While there is an existing building located to the eastern edge of the field to which the application relates, information submitted in support of the application indicates that this is already used for farm / secure storage and would therefore not be available for the housing of alpacas. As such it is considered that the proposals accord with the requirements of Core Strategy policy 5.

NNPA Core Strategy Policies 14 and 15 aim to create and retain a sustainable local economy through the provision of support for sustainable tourism and recreation developments which relate to, and allow opportunities for, visitors to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park without detrimentally impacting upon them. Policy 15 offers specific support for proposals which integrate with existing visitor facilities or include the conversion of buildings. The building is required to ensure compliance with relevant animal welfare regulations which would allow expansion of the existing tourist attraction operating from the site (alpaca walking) which will in turn support the recently approved tourist accommodation. It is therefore considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of policy 14 and 15. The proposals are also considered to accord with the requirements of policy DM7 of the emerging NNPLP.

Policy 21 is supportive of proposals which enable *'farming and farming to become more competitive and sustainable, to diversify and to demonstrate good environmental and farming practices'*. As the building is required to ensure appropriate housing for livestock linked to the existing tourism business operating from the farm, the proposals are also considered to accord with policy 21

Design and amenity

Core Strategy policy 3 is supportive of proposals which *'demonstrate high quality design and construction, which protects and enhances local character and distinctiveness through careful*



integration with the existing built form'. Policy ST2 of the emerging NNPLP places a similar emphasis on high quality design although it can currently be afforded little weight.

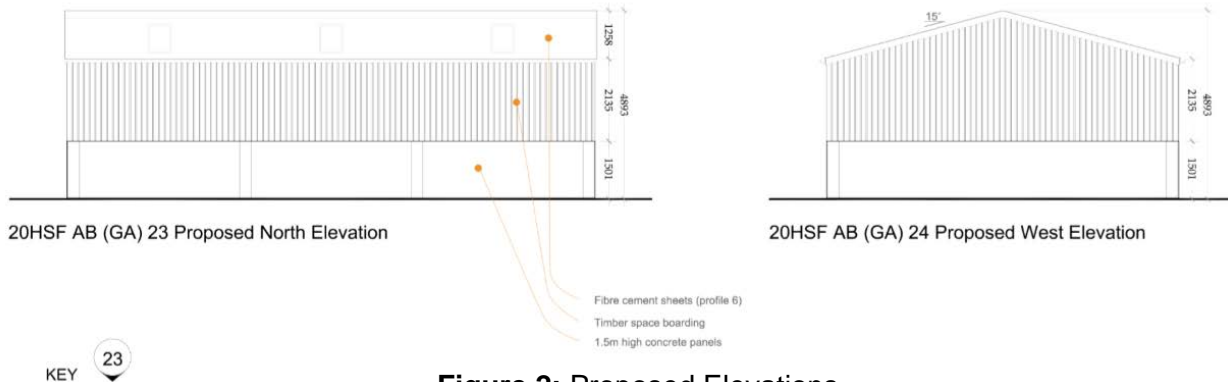


Figure 2: Proposed Elevations

In this instance the proposals relate to the provision of an agricultural building. It is to be constructed in a utilitarian style typical of agricultural buildings found throughout the National Park, including within the general vicinity of the application site. In addition, the building is to have a modest footprint and height for an agricultural building. As such, it is considered that the proposed design, size and massing of the building is acceptable.

The building would be located approximately 60m from the nearest residential property with an existing general purpose agricultural building located between the two. The nearest residential property outside the ownership of the applicant is at a distance in excess of 150m (Low Stoke Bungalow). On this basis, and as the field in which the building is to be located is already used for livestock, it is not considered that there would be any additional adverse impact on residential amenity over and above those associated with the existing arrangements.

Impact upon National Park special qualities

Landscape

Core Strategy policy 20 states that *'The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change'*. A similar approach is taken by policy DM11 of the emerging NNPLP.

The proposed building would be located to the western side of a small field, away from the existing collection of farm buildings / farmhouse which are located between 40m – 60m to the east. It is generally preferable for new buildings to be located in close proximity to existing buildings to limit the spread of development and to minimise any impact on local landscape character. While it would be preferable for the building to be closer to the existing development on site, it is noted that the proposed location of the building is within a small self-contained field (bounded by stone walls) which already houses a building. By virtue of the presence of the existing building and strong boundaries, the field has a sense of farm curtilage rather than open countryside and as such it is



considered that an additional agricultural building of modest dimensions could be accommodated in the location proposed without any undue harm to landscape character.

This is also in the context where the proposed building is away from any sensitive visual receptors. The property is served by a private access with the nearest public roads / rights of way being located approximately 400m to the north and south. As the building is within approximately 40m of the existing agricultural building, at a distance of around 400m the building would be viewed as part of the wider developed footprint of High / Low Stokoe. As such, it is considered that the proposals would lead to minimal impact on landscape character outside of the immediate area. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy policy 20 and policy DM11 of the emerging NNPLP.

Biodiversity

The proposed building would be located within an existing agricultural field. Core Strategy policy 17 states that the National Park will '*protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and geological conservation interests across the National Park*'. Policy DM10 of the emerging NNPLP offers similar support to proposals which maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the National Park although little weight can be given to this policy at the current time.

The proposed building would be located within a grazed field. Due to the nature and location of the proposals, any impact on local biodiversity is likely to be limited and would not warrant the need for an ecological survey or any ecological mitigation measures. As such, the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy policy 17 and policy DM10 of the emerging NNPLP.

Tranquillity

The site is located within a rural part of Northumberland National Park and is also located within the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. Core Strategy Policy 19 and paragraph 180 of the NPPF require development proposals to conserve tranquillity and intrinsically dark landscapes. A similar approach is taken by policy DM11 of the emerging NNPLP.

While the submitted plans do not indicate that there would be any lighting required as part of the proposal, as the site is within a remote open countryside location in the Dark Sky Park, it is considered appropriate to attach a condition to restrict the installation of any external lighting required in association with the proposed development without approval first being sought from the Authority. Subject to a suitably worded condition, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy 19, policy DM11 of the emerging NNPLP and the NPPF.

Given the nature, scale and location of the proposals, it is not considered that there would be any impact on the cultural heritage of the National Park.



Highways

Amongst others, Core Strategy policy 3 requires new development '*..not to have any detrimental effects on highway safety.*'. A similar approach is adopted by policy ST2 of the emerging NNPLP although this can currently be afforded little weight.

The application site is accessed via the existing unclassified road which runs from Falstone and serves both High Stokoe and Low Stokoe. Given the nature of the proposals, providing housing for livestock already present on the holding, it is considered that the proposals would generate minimal additional traffic movements. NCC Highways have been consulted on the proposals and have raised no objection. At the request of Highways, informatives have however been attached advising the applicant of the need to ensure that no materials or equipment are stored on the highway and that the depositing of mud, debris or rubbish on the public highway should be avoided. Highways also requested that a plan be submitted showing the point of vehicular access to the public highway from the application site, which has been provided.

As it is considered that the proposals will have minimal impact on the local highway network and as no concerns have been raised by NCC Highways, subject to appropriate informatives, the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy policy 3 in respect of highway safety.

Recommendation & Conditions

Grant conditional permission 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, as required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by 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, received 30th January 2020;
- Location Plan received 30th January 2020;
- Existing Site Plan Dwg 30HSF AB (EW) 01 received 4th February 2020;
- Proposed Site Plan Dwg 30HSF AB (EW) 02 received 4th February 2020;
- Proposed Elevations Dwg 30HSF AB (GA) 21-24 received 30th January 2020;
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan Dwg 30HSF AB (GA) 01 received 30th January 2020;
- Proposed Roof Plan Dwg 30HSF AB (GA) 04 received 30th January 2020;
- Supporting Statement, Insight Architecture, Proposed Livestock Building, received 30th January 2020.



Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to enable the local planning authority to adequately manage the development and to ensure the proposal accords with policies 1, 3, 5, 17, 18, 19, and of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) and the

3. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting associated with the development, details of the external lighting shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with 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 during the operation of the development, unless removed.

Reason: In order to ensure that there is no harmful impact upon the tranquility and intrinsically dark character of Northumberland National Park and the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park through excessive light pollution, in accordance with Policies 1 and 19 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

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 the development, irrespective of the degree of variation, may constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action.
 - (b) You, your agent, or any other person responsible for implementing this permission should inform the Local Planning Authority immediately of any proposed 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 consent 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. Some conditions may require work to be carried out, or details to be approved prior to the commencement of the development.

Where pre-commencement conditions are not complied with, the whole of the development could be unauthorised, and you may be liable to enforcement action. In some



circumstances, the only way to rectify the situation may be through the submission of a new application. If any other type of condition is breached then you may be liable to a breach of condition notice.

3. The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

4. Building materials or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed. You are advised to contact the streetworks team on 0345 6006400 for Skips and Container licences.
5. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980 mud, debris or rubbish shall not be deposited on the highway.

Background Papers

Application File 20NP0010

EIA Screening Report

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer	<u>C Godfrey</u>	<u>17/03/2020</u>
Head of Development Management	<u>S Buylla</u>	<u>17/03/2020</u>