

**From:** [Robert Mayhew](#)  
**To:** [DC Consultation](#)  
**Cc:** [Colin Godfrey](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Planning Application Consultation 20NP0035 Land north west of Hethpool Cottages, Kirknewton, Wooller, Northumberland, NE71 6TW  
**Date:** 04 August 2020 01:18:42

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Application Reference Number: **20NP0035**

Proposed Development: **Demolition of existing hay shed and erection of new general purpose agricultural building on land north west of Hethpool Cottages, Kirknewton, Wooller, Northumberland, NE71 6TW**

Dear Colin,

Thank you for consulting me on the above proposed development. I would like to make the following observations with respect to the landscape, tree and Dark Sky Park implications for the National Park, of the proposals as set out in the applicant's documentation.

Located in the [Cheviots](#) National Landscape Character Area and Upland Burn Valleys Valleys Landscape Character Type, specifically the [College Valley Landscape Character Area](#) (LCA), guidelines for development within this LCA stipulate that:-

- New buildings and conversions should respect the local surroundings in terms of choice of building material and scale of development;
- The introduction of new farm buildings should take care not to affect the unity of traditional vernacular and buildings styles which are a cohesive element of this landscape;
- Any lighting should be kept to a minimum and installed effectively to protect dark skies;
- Consideration should be given to the mobile nature of the watercourses and risk of flash flooding.

The Cheviots NCA **Statements of Environmental Opportunity** identify the following points:-

#### **SEO1**

- Working with farmers to ensure that grazing levels are appropriate to the site to maintain and enhance the condition of habitats: reducing stock levels in some areas, increasing numbers in others, and promoting grazing with hardy cattle, particularly on the extensive areas of grass fell. This should create a patchwork of habitats that will contribute to supporting and enhancing populations of upland waders, ring ouzel and black grouse.
- Minimising damage to semi-natural habitats and preserving the open vistas, sense of tranquillity and remoteness by carefully considering the impacts of any proposed built structures and tracks on the landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity and dark night skies.

#### **SEO2**

- Conserving and interpreting the historic landscapes which often contain evidence of multi-period occupation, recognising the exceptionally high potential in this area for identifying further archaeological evidence of settlement and use, and encouraging further research to identify these.
- Encouraging the restoration of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, historic buildings such as

bastles, traditional farm buildings and drystone walls, using local building materials and techniques where possible, and ensuring that new and re-developments respect the historic settlement patterns and reflect the local farmstead vernacular in terms of building materials, scale and location.

### **SEO3**

- Promoting land management practices that reduce or prevent water pollution, such as updating sheep-dipping facilities and managing flocks to minimise pollution from sheep dipping, managing stock movements and, where appropriate, fencing watercourses to reduce erosion of banks.

### **Additional Opportunities**

- Supporting farmers, craftspeople and other primary industries to make and market high-quality products that reflect local identity, bringing socio-economic benefits to local communities.
- Ensuring that the remoteness, tranquillity and dark night skies are maintained by avoiding inappropriate development of built structures, incorporating careful lighting design in developments both in this and adjacent NCAs, and removing redundant structures.

The fact that this building is being proposed to replace the existing stock handling pens that lie adjacent to the Elsdon Burn to the north is in keeping with Statement of Environmental Opportunity 3 above and in terms of protection of the water course, addresses an issue that has been identified by Natural England for many years now.

I understand that the proposed development will consist of the main agricultural shed with an open-sided lean-to on one side. The main span will be 18m x 30.5m and the lean-to 9m x 30.5m, with an overall building footprint of 27.1m x 30.5m. Whilst this will be a modern building of a substantial size, I believe that in terms of scale within the landscape, associating this agricultural shed with the existing buildings and tree planting at Hethpool, will minimise the effect that it could have upon the wider open landscape setting. Hethpool itself is a mixture of residential buildings, the location of the estate offices and also hosts a range of existing agricultural buildings. The choice of materials identified in the application are in keeping with agricultural farm buildings of a similar nature found elsewhere in this landscape character area and are in line with the 'Guidelines for Development' mentioned above. (See image below).



The Staw agricultural buildings seen from the College Valley road south of West Newton.

One query I do have related to the colour of the roofing sheets. In drawing number 5251/23 the roofing sheets are referred to as being Laurel Green in colour, BS 12 B 29. In the Heritage Design and Access Statement they are referred to as being Dark Green BS 12 B 29. A quick web search for the BS 12 B 29 number suggests that it is in fact called [Midnight Green / Juniper](#). A Laurel Green does exist in the RAL paint colour range but has a completely different shade as seen [here](#). I suggest that further clarification is sought on the actual colour of the roofing sheets should approval be considered. Given the location and presence of existing blocks of trees, I would advocate that the BS 4800/5252 12 B 29 [Midnight Green / Juniper](#) would be appropriate.

The principle publicly accessible receptor sites associated with this development would be the minor county road that passes through the hamlet of Hethpool itself, Kirknewton Byway 52 that lies to the west, a permissive path that lies to the north of the site on White Hill and an extensive area of 'Access Land' encompassing many of the surrounding hills. I also appreciate that this proposed structure is likely to have implications for residents living in Hethpool Cottages that lie just 48 metres to the east of the application site. However, when it comes to assessing the implications of such a development on private properties case law has established that there are 'no rights to a view'. With respect to cottages 3 and 4, the shed will be largely screened from view by an existing block of mature conifer woodland that lies between the cottages and the proposed development. The avenue of trees that have been planted either side of the minor county road from the Elsdon Burn corner up to Hethpool will help screen the proposed development from a distance as will the two relatively new woodland planting blocks found either side of the proposed access drive to the farm yard and shed. Again as one turns the corner towards the public car park at Hethpool there are further blocks of woodland planting between the valley road and the proposed development.

I am conscious of the importance that existing woodland blocks play in helping to both soften the proposed development within the landscape and also screen the proposed development from key receptor sites such as the valley road and this being the case, I would advocate that, if this application were successful, the estate wide woodland management plan should be updated to reflect this and specifically with respect to woodland blocks 41, to the south and 42 to the north and east of the proposed development, a practice of continuous forest cover should

be adopted. I can confirm that the 2017 estate wide Woodland Management Plan does not identify any proposed work taking place in these woodland blocks in the following ten years.

With respect to the likely effect upon views from further afield, the greatest effect is likely to be seen from access land and public rights of way found to the south and east of the development site. The proposed development is likely to be seen against a backdrop of existing trees at Hethpool when at a higher elevation in the surrounding hills looking down onto the application site, from Great Heather for example. As such the development is unlikely to be significantly intrusive due to the distances involved or seen upon the skyline but it may be prominent within the setting at Hethpool as many of the existing buildings are set amongst mature trees. As such I would recommend that some parkland standard trees ought to be planted in the lambing field immediately to the south west through to north west of the development site. These will in time provide shade to livestock in this field and will help break up the views of the proposed development when seen from receptor sites further afield.

I understand that there will be no implications for existing ancient, veteran or notable trees as a result of this proposed development, in fact the recommendations within the applicant's Environmental Statement suggest that a new screen of native trees and shrubs will be created. The same environmental statement infers that there is likely to be a need for additional external lighting as a result of this application and that this will be in line with guidance published by the Bat Conservation trust. I would advocate that any such lighting should first be approved by the local Planning Authority to ensure compliance with the Dark Sky Park status of the National Park.

In conclusion, whilst this is a development of substantial size, given the choice of building materials, design, its location on the periphery but within the curtilage of the settlement at Hethpool, on balance I do not believe that it will have a significant effect upon the landscape character or views of this part of the National Park. Existing tree planting will help minimise the visual impact from receptor sites along the valley floor but new tree planting should be considered to soften the effect from elevated receptor sites to the south and west.

I have no objections to this proposed development but suggest that if approved, a decision notice should contain conditions that:-

- Seek clarification on the colour of the roofing sheets to be used,
- Require removal of the structure should it become redundant;
- Seek Planning Authority approval of any exterior lighting needed as a result of this application, now or in the future,
- Seek additional parkland tree planting to the south and west of the development site, and
- Seek revision of the current College Valley Estate Woodland Management plan to ensure woodland blocks 41 and 42 are managed in line with a continuous forest cover practice.

If you have any questions with respect to the above or require further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks

Robert Mayhew

Head of Conservation  
Northumberland National Park Authority

**From:** NNPA Planning Consultations [mailto:dcconsultation@nnpa.org.uk]  
**Sent:** 14 June 2020 22:12  
**To:** Robert Mayhew  
**Subject:** Planning Application Consultation 20NP0035 Land north west of Hethpool Cottages, Kirknewton, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6TW

Please see the attached consultation regarding a planning application which has been received by Northumberland National Park Authority. Full details can be viewed at <http://nnpa.planning-register.co.uk/plaPlanningAppDisplay.aspx?AppNo=20NP0035>

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