

From: [REDACTED]
To: [DC Consultation](#)
Cc: [Colin Godfrey](#)
Subject: RE: Planning Application Consultation 21NP0035 Kidlandlee, Harbottle, Northumberland, NE65 7DA
Date: 04 August 2021 01:55:48
Attachments: [Pic1 - Kidlandlee aerial prior to 2017 felling \(1\).jpg](#)
[Pic2 - Kidlandlee aerial post 2017 felling.jpg](#)
[Pic3 - Kidlandlee aerial prior to 2017 felling enlarged.jpg](#)
[Pic4 - New ForestTrack.jpg](#)

Application Reference Number : 21NP0035

Proposed Development : Erection of 4no. proposed holiday lodges at Kidlandlee, Harbottle, Northumberland, NE65 7DA

Dear Colin,

Having looked at the documents provided by the applicant I would like to make the following comments with respect to the possible effects of such a development on the landscape character, views, setting, trees and Dark Skies Park status of this part of the National Park.

From a landscape perspective, the Kidlandlee site lies in [The Cheviots](#) (NCA); Rounded Hills Landscape Character Type (LCT) and specifically the Cheviot Rounded Hills Landscape Character Area (LCA). Details and characteristics of this LCA are set out in the Northumberland National Park [Landscape Character Assessment](#) and Northumberland National Park [Landscape Supplementary Planning](#) Document (SPD).

Statements for environmental opportunity from the NCA document that I believe are relevant to this application include:-

Statement of Environmental Opportunity 1

- 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.

Statement of Environmental Opportunity 4

- Encouraging access to and appropriate recreational uses of forests and woodlands and extending access into new areas where appropriate

Additional opportunity

- 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.

Relevant guidelines for development from the Landscape Character Assessment and SPD include:-

- Ensure that tourism development sensitively utilises the landscape resource and brings socio-economic benefits to local communities; and
- Any lighting should be kept to a minimum and installed effectively to protect dark skies;

Having attended the Kidlandlee site and read through the application documents it is evident that the site in question lies deep within Kidland Forest, a long established productive conifer forest that is 2,100 hectares in size and was planted between 1953 and 1987. The development site which is approximately 0.69 hectares in size has recently seen its mature crop of Sitka spruce clear felled (Felling licence application 22/150/16-17) and replanted with young oak trees still emerging within their tree tubes.

My first observation would be that in the intervening period of clear felling the site and restocking with oak, a new forestry track has been created covering approximately 10% of the site area. This would be regarded as open ground within the restocking proposals and yet, as it would appear that crushed stone has been brought in to create this, I believe that this track construction has been undertaken within the last three years without prior notification being sought. Image 1 attached shows the site prior to harvesting the Sitka. Images 2 and 3 identify that the access track was not present post harvesting and has thus been constructed recently. Irrespective as to whether this application for four holiday lodges is approved or not, retrospective planning permission for this track ought to be sought or possibly included as part of this application since it is this track that is intended to be used to access the holiday lodges? As can be seen from Pic4 attached, this new track has started to green over and the revegetation helps reduce its visual impact on the surrounding environment. From a landscape perspective, so long as the vegetative cover is retained, I would not regard this track being visually prominent or out of place within the forest setting, particularly since the application site lies adjacent to an existing forest road and an existing forest quarry used to source the crushed road stone form. The image on page 18 of the Design and Access statement would give me cause for concern from a landscape perspective as the proposed access road and parking areas appear too formal and visually prominent for this forest environment.

The principle publicly accessible receptor site from which this proposed development would be viewed from is Alwinton public footpath 31 that lies approximately 100 metres to the north of the site. When walking in an easterly direction, the proposed holiday lodges would initially be screened by an existing block of Sitka spruce the footpath passes through. On leaving this conifer compartment, walkers would have the existing Kidlandlee buildings lying immediately in front of them to the east and the proposed development would lie to the south across an open agricultural field. Due to topography, it is likely that only the roofs of the northerly most lodges would be visible as the southern two lodges would lie below the ridge and out of sight.

Using a construction design of timber walls with slate roofs, the lodges in my view would be in keeping with similar forestry lodge developments found in and adjacent to the National Park. However, I do have concerns with respect to the use of larch which, as the applicant says, will weather to a silver grey colour and in so doing, will, in my view, lead to the lodges becoming visually prominent in the landscape when lit by full sunlight. The lodges are set within a landscape canvas that is predominantly dark green conifer plantation with the dark browns that accompany this forest environment. So as not to stand out from a distance I would suggest that the exterior timber cladding of the lodges is actually stained a deeper, timber colour to minimise the risk of them becoming visually prominent. I am familiar with the off-grid limitations of this site and appreciate the need for solar panels on the roofs of the lodges. Whilst this should help reduce the carbon footprint of running the lodges, solar panels again could cause a solar glare problem in circumstances. Whilst there is little option to re-orientate these without affecting their efficiency, this issue can be reduced by selecting units that have a rough glass surface or a

multi-layer anti-reflective coating rather than a smooth glass service.

From a tree perspective, I note that several of the newly planted oak trees will be affected by the footprint of the holiday lodge units and car parking areas associated with them. Whilst there will be no notable trees lost as a result of this proposed development, so as to ensure that there is no net loss of trees resulting from the proposals, I would recommend that the affected oak saplings are relocated during an appropriate time of year and an additional 50% of trees/woody shrubs are also planted on the Kidlandlee site so as to ensure that there is no net loss of trees arising from these proposals. Should this application be approved and prior to development commencing, a landscape plan should be submitted to the Authority identifying the location of trees to be retained on site so that the health of these can be monitored in the future. As the applicant stipulates within the Design and Access Statement, the oak trees will help screen the lodges from public view as they mature.

I could not find any detail relating to external lighting requirements but in situations such as this, should the application be considered for approval, I would recommend that a condition be placed on this development requiring any external lighting to be submitted for approval to the Authority to ensure that it is in keeping with the Northumberland National Park [Exterior Lighting Master Plan](#).

In conclusion, I have no objections to the proposed development but would request that the following points and conditions are considered should this proposal be considered for approval.

- Retrospective planning permission is sought for the new forest road that has recently been constructed. This should stipulate that this road will be maintained with a vegetated sward cover on its surface so as to minimise its visual impact on the surrounding landscape.
- A condition be placed requiring a landscaping plan, identifying which oak trees are to be retained and which will be relocated along with an additional 50% of other tree and woody shrub species that should be planted on the Kidlandlee holding so as to avoid any net loss of trees as a result of this proposal.
- Any exterior lighting should first be approved by the Authority to ensure that it is dark skies compliant.
- The larch timber should be stained a darker colour so as to blend in better with the forest setting and to avoid the lodges standing out when lit by direct sunlight.
- The solar panel units should have an anti-glare surface.

If you have any questions with the points raised above please do not hesitate to get back in touch.

Regards

Robert Mayhew

Head of Conservation & Environment
Northumberland National Park Authority



From: DC Consultation <mailto:DC.Consultation@nnpa.org.uk>

Sent: 28 June 2021 11:08

To: Robert Mayhew [REDACTED]

Subject: Planning Application Consultation 21NP0035 Kidlandlee, Harbottle, Northumberland, NE65 7DA

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=21NP0035>

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