



Northumberland County Council

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Building Conservation-Ecology-Archaeology MEMORANDUM

To: Jay Smith, Planning Officer

From: Val Robson, Building Conservation Officer

Date: 19/9/2019

Reference: 19NP0056

Proposal: Construction of fairytale rustic tree house (holiday accommodation) and installation of package treatment plant.

Address: Hesleyside Hall, Bellingham, Hexham, NE48 2LA

Comments

Hesleyside Hall is an important grade II * listed country house which dates from 1719 with later additions and alterations, although it is centred on a 14th century Pele Tower. It is constructed from ashlar stone with a Lakeland slate roof. The Hall sits within parkland which is identified as being grade II on the Historic England Historic Parks and Gardens register for its special historic interest. The formal landscape was laid out in 1715 although it has earlier origins. The walled garden dates from about 1770 and the landscaped parkland from about 1776. Considerable alterations and additions were undertaken to the Hall and gardens in the mid 19th century.

Legislative Framework and Policy

In providing comments on applications Building Conservation has regard to Section 16 (2) and Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which advise that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

In addition, the NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application. Section 12 of the 2018 NPPF is about achieving well-designed places.

Paragraph 124 of section 12 advises that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of section 12 advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

In addition, Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the 2018 NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 194 advises that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 195 advises that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 196 advises that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets 2015 should also be taken into consideration in the assessment of this proposal.

Assessment of Development Proposals

The treehouse is to be constructed from timber with a timber shingle roof. It is to be located to the south of the avenue of trees lying either side of the eastern entrance drive of the Hall, tight to the southern edge of the mid 20th century conifer plantation at the very eastern edge of the

formal parkland. The proposal cannot be viewed from the Hall or from the C200 public highway.

CONCLUSION

Building Conservation do not consider that the proposed development will cause any harm to the important heritage assets of the Hall and the historic parkland.

Val Robson

Building Conservation Officer