



DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	19NP0058
Description / Site Address	Proposed conversion of existing barn and byre to form 2no. holiday units at High Stokoe Farm, Falstone, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1AG
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	12 th July 2019
Last date for decision	8 th August 2019

Details of Proposal

This application seeks approval for the conversion of agricultural buildings at High Stokoe farm to provide two holiday units. The property 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.

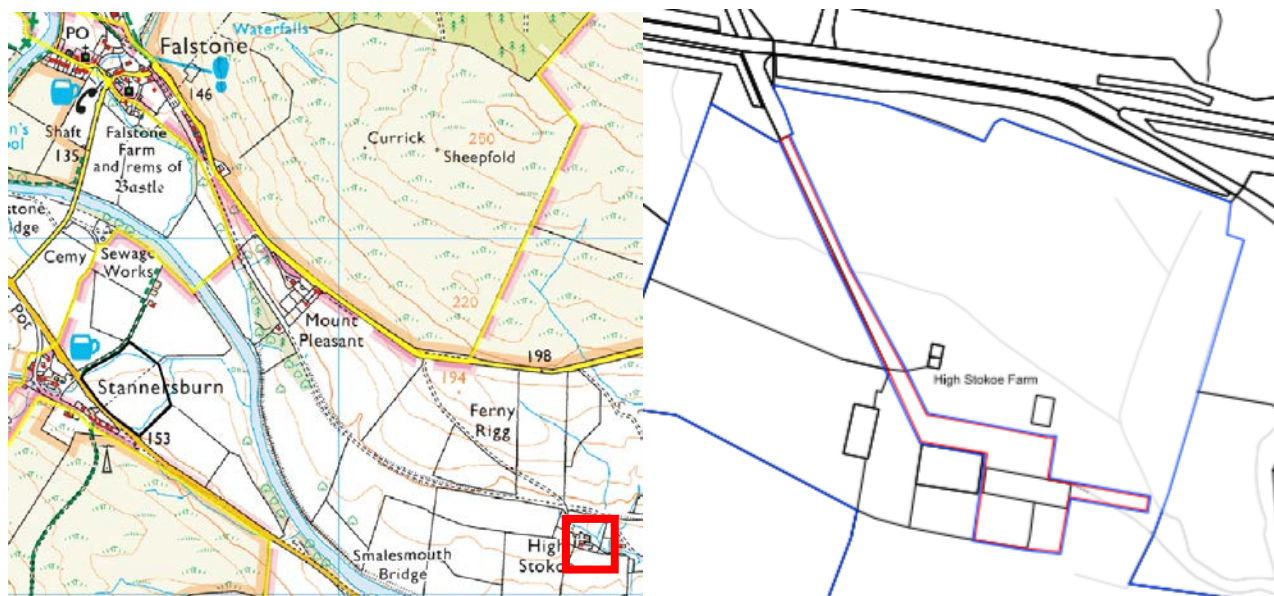


Figure 1: Location Plan

The proposals relate to the conversion of an existing barn and byre to provide two holiday units. Unit one is to be two storey, providing a kitchen / diner and lounge to the ground floor and an ensuite bedroom to the first floor. Unit two is to be single storey and will provide for a kitchen, lounge and ensuite bedroom. The proposals will largely retain the existing form of the building, the only extension being a single storey offshoot to the north which will allow for the creation of a separate entrance to each unit. The offshoot will have a footprint of 2.7m x 3.5m with a height to eaves of 2.4m and height to ridge of 3.4m. It is to be constructed from grey stained larch timber cladding with a slate roof.

Other alterations to the buildings involve the provision of new doors and windows to existing openings. New windows are to be anthracite grey aluminium framed double glazed units. Some of the new doors are also to be aluminium to match the windows with the remainder constructed from hardwood. Stainless steel flues are also to be installed to serve the log burners which are to be provided within each unit. It is understood that the buildings have recently been reroofed with solar



panels installed on the roof above unit one. Solar panels to match the existing are also to be installed to unit two. The western end of the barn, closest to the existing farmhouse, is to be retained as a hay store.

In addition to the works to the buildings, it is also proposed to create a small area of stone paving to the south of each of the units along with an associated garden area. The area of garden will have the same rearward projection as that serving the existing farmhouse. A new post and wire fence is to be provided between the two units and also between unit one and the retained hay barn. To the eastern end of the building(s) the existing stone boundary wall is to be repaired and extended. Parking for two cars is to be located to the direct north of the buildings to be converted along with an oil tank and bin store. A new package treatment plant to serve the development is to be located in a field to the east of the building. On visiting the site it was noted that refurbishment of the buildings had commenced.

Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

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 7	<i>Conversion of Buildings outside Settlements</i>
Policy 9	<i>Managing Housing Supply</i>
Policy 10	<i>New Housing 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>
Policy 25	<i>Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency</i>

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)



Relevant Planning History

- 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 Public Protection: No response

NCC Highways: No objection: Subject to conditions and informatives.

NCC Development Management: No objection;

NNPA Ecologist: No objection: subject to a condition assurance adherence to the proposed mitigation measures;

NNPA Visitor Development Manager: No objection: Although would prefer lights to be fully shielded.

The application has been advertised by means of a site notice displayed on 21st June 2019 and letters sent to two neighbouring properties. No representations have been received in response.

Assessment

The key material planning considerations are:

- The principle of the development;
- Design and amenity;
- Impact Upon National Park special qualities
- Highway safety, parking and access
- Foul drainage and utilities;
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy provision.



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 seeks to ensure that development proposals will conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park. The effects of the proposed scheme on these qualities are discussed in more detail later in this report.

Location of New Development

The site is situated in an open countryside location, approximately 1.7km to the south-east of the local centre of Falstone. Core Strategy Policy 5 limits development in the open countryside to the reuse of existing buildings, except in exceptional circumstances. As the proposal would make use of existing farm buildings, it is considered to accord with Policy 5 in principle.

The proposed development relates to the provision of tourist/holiday accommodation only. It is therefore considered appropriate that any planning approval be subject to a condition restricting the occupancy of the accommodation to holiday use only, as permanent residential accommodation in this location would conflict with Core Strategy policies 9 and 10 and would require a Local Needs restriction in accordance with Core Strategy policy 10.

Conversion of Buildings within the Open Countryside

Core Strategy Policy 7 supports the change of use of existing buildings outside identified settlements to employment use (including tourism) where:

- The building is capable of conversion
- The building contributes to the Park's special qualities
- The building is of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant alterations and extensions that would detract from its character

The proposal meets all of the above tests. The structural Appraisal Report indicates that the buildings have recently been reroofed with a visual inspection of the external walls recording no evidence of any structural defects in the form of crack damage or distortions. While the proposals would require the removal of the existing concrete floors, no significant excavation works which could potentially undermine the foundations would be required. It is therefore considered that the buildings are capable of conversion.

The buildings are traditional farm buildings of stone and slate construction and while they have no formal listing, they do make a positive contribution to local landscape character with the scheme likely to secure their long term viability. Although it is intended to erect a single storey offshoot to the rear, by virtue of the size and design of the extension, it is not considered to detract from the character of the buildings. It is therefore considered that the conversion of the buildings to form holiday accommodation would accord with Policy 7 in principle.



Employment / Tourism Uses

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 83 seeks to support economic growth in rural areas by requiring planning policies to take a positive approach to sustainable new development, highlighting in particular the need for planning policy to:-

- Support sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas through both the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; and
- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside

NNPA Core Strategy Policies 14 and 15 also 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. In order to recognise the varied roles of agriculture within the National Park, Core Strategy policy 21 also provides support for appropriate development proposals which enable farm diversification.

In this regard, the Design and Access Statement indicates that the provision of holiday accommodation will allow further diversification of the applicants business and would be compatible with their existing alpaca walking business, Ferny Rigg Alpacas. Having regard for the information submitted and the nature of the scheme as a conversion which will allow further diversification of the applicants business, it is considered that the proposals would accord with NPPF Paragraph 83 and Core Strategy policies 14, 15 and 21.

Design and Amenity

Core Strategy policy 3 seeks to ensure that new development is sympathetic to its setting both in terms of choice of materials and its relationship with existing buildings. The NNPA Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) notes that successful extensions '*not only respect character, but are subservient to the existing building in terms of height, scale and massing*'.

The only extension proposed is a new offshoot to the northern elevation which would allow for the creation of a new entrance and boot store to serve each unit. The extension would have a dual pitched roof with a ridge height significantly lower than that of the existing building. While the introduction of a dual pitched roof would add a new element to the building, given the modest size of the extension as a whole, which would clearly be subservient to the main building, it is considered that an offshoot of the size and form proposed could be accommodated without an undue impact on the existing character of the building. Similarly, while the use of grey stained larch



cladding would introduce a new material to the building, it is considered that this would both complement the existing building while also clearly marking the offshoot as a modern extension.



Figure 2: North elevation as existing

In addition to the extension, it is proposed to install new doors, windows and stainless steel flues. Doors and windows would make use of existing openings and would be of simple design, which it is considered will help to retain the agricultural feel of the building. The flues would have minimal impact on the existing character of the buildings.



Figure 3: North elevation as proposed

It is also proposed to create a patio / amenity area (Figure 5) to the south of the building and car parking area to the north (Figure 4). The new amenity area is already currently fenced and while currently in agricultural use is relatively small – mirroring the extent of garden serving the rear of the farmhouse – and would lend itself to residential curtilage without having any undue detrimental impact on local landscape character. Similarly, the proposed parking area is within an already

enclosed area which it is again considered could lend itself to the proposed use with minimal impact on the existing character of the property.

A new bin storage area and oil tank are to be located just to the east of the existing wall which adjoins unit two to the north. A new gated entrance will be created in the wall to allow access to the store / tank. Given the location of these elements close to an existing wall and in a location where they would not be visible from any public vantage point, it is considered that there will be no negative impact on the character of the property from this element of the scheme. It is therefore considered that, in relation to design, the proposals accord with the requirement of Core Strategy policy 3.



Figure 4: Proposed parking area to north of buildings – bin store and oil tank to be located behind the wall



Figure 5: Rearward extent of proposed amenity / garden area



As the application site is in excess of 60m to the west of the nearest neighbouring property, Low Stokoe Bungalow, and as there is an area of woodland between the two, it is not considered that there would be any impact on the residential amenity of the occupiers of this or any other dwelling.

Impact upon National Park Special Qualities

Impacts upon the National's Park's ecology and biodiversity, tranquility and landscape character are to be considered as part of this application for planning permission. No issues surrounding cultural heritage have been identified which require consideration.

Biodiversity

Core Strategy policy 17 states that the National Park will '*protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity and geological conservation interests across the National Park*'. The information submitted in support of the application indicates that the building is used by roosting bats. As such, the National Park Ecologist has been consulted on the proposals.

The Ecologist has advised that when a planning application is likely to have implications for European Protected Species, consideration must be given to the three tests enshrined within Regulation 53 of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. As the proposed development is in accordance with relevant Core Strategy policy, it is considered that the first two tests are met. In relation to the third test, it must be considered whether '*the proposal will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of the species in its natural range*'.

The Ecologist has considered the information submitted in support of the application. It has been noted that most of the work to re-roof and alter the fabric of the building has already taken place under a previous Natural England bat mitigation licence (2018-35873-EPS-MIT). The Ecologist considers that if the works are undertaken in accordance with the mitigation detailed in the current Bat Survey Report, then an amendment to the original Natural England licence is likely to be issued. The amendments to the original mitigation proposals involve changing the crevice roosts originally located in building 3 (the most eastern of the two buildings to be converted) and replacing with the crevice roost sites and bat box shown on drawing 19HSF (GA) 04. Additional mitigation involves avoiding pointing and demolition in the hibernation period and adhering to appropriate working methods. On the basis that the proposed mitigation is made a condition of any approval which may be issued, the Ecologist has raised no objection and advised that the proposals will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of the bat species present, as required by the third test.

As such, it is considered that the requirements of the three tests have been met, and, subject to a condition ensuring the works are undertaken in accordance with the mitigation strategy detailed within Section H of the '*Bat Survey High Stokoe Farm Barns, March 2019 Final E3 Ecology Ltd*' Report and shown on Drawing 19HSF (GA) 04, the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy policy 17.



Landscape

Policy 20 states that *'The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved whilst being responsive to landscape change'* and *'Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape will not be permitted'*.

The proposals relate to the conversion and modest extension of existing farm buildings together with the creation of associated garden / amenity areas. Given the nature of the proposals it is considered that any impact on local landscape character would be limited to the immediate area and not of a sufficient magnitude to warrant refusal of the application. In addition, there will be minimal visual impact as there are no publically accessible visual receptors, such as rights of way, in the immediate area other than the private road which serves the property.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of Core Strategy policy 20.

Tranquility

Core Strategy Policy 19 states that *'Development proposals which conserve or enhance the tranquillity of the National Park will be supported'*.

The submitted plans indicate that three external lights will be located to the southern elevation of the property and two to the northern elevation, one serving each external door. The Design and Access Statement and Dwg 19HSF (EW) 01-02 show the units as Eterna 6W LED Mini Eyelid Amenity Bulkheads. However, following comments from the NNPA Visitor Development Manager that fully shielded units with a lower colour temperature would be preferable, the applicant has confirmed the substitution of the originally proposed lights for Eterna 1.8W LED Slim Eyelid Bricklight units.

These lights are fully shielded and have a lumen output of 62 lumens with a colour temperature of 4000K, fully according with the requirements of the *'Good Practice Guide for Outside Lighting in Northumberland International Dark Sky Park'*. It is however considered appropriate to attach a condition to restrict the installation of any additional / amended lighting other than the Eterna 1.8W units 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.

The proposals would be expected to result in additional vehicular movements to and from the site. However, as the proposal only provides for two one bedroomed units and as the owners already run a business from the property (Ferry Rigg alpacas), any additional vehicle movements are considered unlikely to have a detrimental impact upon the tranquility of the surrounding area in terms of noise or traffic when considered in the context of the existing use of the site.



Highway Safety, Parking and Access

The proposed holiday units would be accessed via the existing unclassified road which runs from Falstone and serves both High Stokoe and Low Stokoe. One dedicated parking space would be provided per unit with further parking available within the wider property. NCC Highways have been consulted and have raised no objection. They have however recommended that a condition is attached requiring the proposed car parking area to be implemented in accordance with the approved plans prior to occupation. This condition is considered reasonable and has been attached.

Highways have also recommended conditions requiring the implementation of cycle parking and the submission of a Construction Method Statement. However, no cycle parking has been shown as part of the application. In addition, the proposals involve little in the way of new development and the Authority considers that the site offers adequate room for the off-street storage of plant and materials. The imposition of these two conditions is therefore not considered either reasonable or necessary. It is however considered appropriate to attach the informatives request by Highways advising the applicant not to store building materials or equipment on the highway and also to avoid depositing mud / debris / rubbish on the highway.

Subject to the imposition of the above condition and informatives, the proposals are considered to be acceptable on highway grounds.

Foul Drainage and Utilities

The information submitted in support of the application indicates that foul sewage will be dealt with by means of a connection to a new Package Treatment Plant (PTP) which is to be located in a field to the east of the buildings to be converted. Planning Practice Guidance states that connection to a public sewer is the favoured option, followed by a Package Treatment Plant and then a Septic Tank. The applicant has advised that connection to the mains sewer is not feasible as the nearest mains connection is over 1.2km from the site. Due to the distances involved and the small scale nature of the development the Authority accepts that requiring a connection to the public sewer would be both unfeasible and unreasonable in this instance.

In the absence of a feasible connection to the public sewer, a connection to a package treatment plant is the preferred option. The applicant has indicated that the units will be served by a new package treatment plant. The Foul Drainage Assessment (FDA) Form and Design and Access Statement indicates that the PTP will be a Graf one 2 Clean 7PE. This unit has a volume of 4800 litres and is designed to service properties with a maximum occupancy of 6-7 residents. As the proposals relate to two single bedroom units, the Authority is satisfied that the package treatment plant would have sufficient capacity to deal with any sewage arising from the development.

The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of foul drainage, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 28 and the NPPF, subject to the inclusion of a condition requiring the connection of the visitor accommodation to the package treatment plant prior to first occupation.

The Foul Drainage Assessment indicates that water supply would be via an existing mains connection which is also considered to be acceptable.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Provision

Core Strategy policy 25 requires development to minimise the amount of energy used during construction, achieve the highest energy efficiency through the location, orientation, layout, design and insulation of development, or provide a contribution of 10% of the energy requirements through renewable technologies.

Works to reroof Unit 1 have already been undertaken and, as part of this process, roof integrated solar PV panels have been installed. It is also intended to install similar solar panels to the roof of unit 2. In addition, both units are to be heated by a log burner. While the actual percentage of energy which will be generated through renewable technologies has not been stated, it is considered that the proposals would meet the requirements of Core Strategy policy 25.



Figure 6: Solar panels to the roof of Unit 1.

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:

- Planning application form received 11th June 2019;
- Location Plan 19HSF (LO) 01, received 11th June 2019;
- Existing Ground Floor and Roof Plans, 19HSF (EX) 01-04, received 11th June 2019;
- Existing and Proposed Site Plans, 19HSF (EW) 01-02, received 11th June 2019;
- Existing Elevations 19HSF (EX) 21-24, received 11th June 2019;
- Existing and Proposed Typical Section, 19HSF (SE) A-A, received 11th June 2019;
- Proposed Ground Floor and First Floor Plans, 19HSF (GA) 01-02, received 13th June 2019;
- Proposed Ground Floors and First Floor Roof Plans, 19HSF (GA) 01-02 received 11th June 2019;
- Proposed Elevations, 19HSF(GA) 21-24, received 11th June 2019
- Proposed Roof Plan 19HSF (GA) 04 received 11th June 2019;
- Proposed Roof Plan 19HSF (GA) 04 Bat Mitigation received 13th June 2019;
- Bat Survey High Stokoe Farm Barns, March 2019 Final, E3 Ecology Ltd., received 11th June 2019;
- Graft Wastewater Treatment System One2Clean Product Specification received 11th June 2019;
- Clearline Fusion Roof Integrated Solar PV Product Specification received 11th June 2019;
- Contamination Assessment Screening Assessment Form 11th June 2019;
- Structural Appraisal Report received 11th June 2019;
- Design and Access Statement received 11th June 2019;
- Foul Drainage Assessment Form received 19th June 2019;
- E-mail dated 9th July 2019 providing revised lighting specification

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, 7, 9,10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21 and 25 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3. Notwithstanding the details contained within the Design and Access Statement and Dwg 19HSF (EW) 01-02, the proposed lighting shall be Eterna 1.8W LED Slim Eyelid Bricklight units as detailed in the e-mail of 9th July 2019. Prior to the fixing of any additional or amended lighting other than the Eterna 1.8W LED Slim Eyelid Bricklight units hereby approved, 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.

4. The development hereby approved relates to the provision of short-term accommodation only and shall not be used at any time as permanent residential accommodation. Occupiers of the approved accommodation shall occupy this for holiday purposes only and shall not occupy this as their sole or main place of residence, or as a second home. The operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all occupiers of the holiday accommodation hereby approved and of their main home addresses and shall make this information available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority

Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is used for holiday accommodation only and to control the occupancy, and because local needs housing is not being provided as part of this development as would otherwise be required for proposals for residential development, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 10.

5. Prior to first occupation, the holiday units shall be connected to the package treatment plant hereby approved and shall be retained as such thereafter, unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that reasonable infrastructure measures are put in place to accommodate foul waste generated by the development, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 28 and the NPPF.

6. The development hereby approved should be carried out in strict accordance with the avoidance and mitigation strategy detailed in Section H of 'Bat Survey High Stokoe Farm Barns, March 2019 Final, E3 Ecology Ltd' and Drawing 19HSF (GA) 04 (received 13th June 2019) in particular, attention is drawn to the need to undertake the development in accordance with the requirements in respect of:

- Timing restrictions;
- Working methods;
- Provision of external and internal crevice roost site;
- Monitoring



Reason: To ensure the development poses no risk of unacceptable harm to protected species and to ensure the development is in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 17, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended).

7. The development shall not be occupied until the car parking area has been implemented in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter, the car parking area shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans and shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles associated with the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 3 and 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 600 6400 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 19NP0058
EIA Screening Report

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer	<u>C Godfrey</u>	<u>23/07/2019</u>
Head of Development Management	<u>S Buyla</u>	<u>23/07/2019</u>