

**Proposed new house on part of former Cricket Ground, Harbottle
for
Mr and Mrs Searro**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is for a new family house on the edge of Harbottle village within Northumberland National Park.
- 1.2 The applicants have a long-standing relationship with the National Park and would like to move back to provide more immediate support to family to facilitate their ongoing residency within the village (see Appendix A). The site under consideration is immediately adjacent to the bungalow occupied by the applicant's mother.
- 1.3 The applicants require a 3-4 bedroom house to accommodate their family but as the National Park is an environment which they care very much about, the brief was for a house which responds sensitively to the wider landscape setting and the site which it occupies. Given the scale of the required accommodation, careful manipulation of the building form and the natural topography of the land has allowed us to bed the building into the site; to take advantage of the environmental benefits associated with building orientation, but also to respond positively to the historic scale and pattern of development within the village.

2. SITE OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Harbottle village is relatively modest in scale, principally constructed in the 19th Century and laid out either side of a single main road running East-West, overlooked by the ruins of its Grade I Listed, and Scheduled, 12th Century castle to the North.
- 2.2 The site under consideration is located on the South side of Harbottle village and is part of a former Cricket Ground. It is accessed off the main road by a steep driveway serving The Old Mill which sits immediately to the North of this plot.
- 2.3 The Old Mill is currently occupied by the Applicant's mother and the Applicant owns the existing bothy immediately to the West of The Old Mill, across the shared driveway. The small two-storey, stone-built bothy is used jointly by the Applicant and her mother for storage.
- 2.4 The gated field access is located between these two buildings at the southern end of the existing driveway. Beyond the gate, the site, of rough grassland, falls gently towards a wooded Southern boundary and small watercourse beyond, enclosed by stock fencing.
- 2.5 The site is relatively low-lying, sitting in the valley between Harbottle village to the North and Harbottle Wood to the South. The level of the site, coupled with the woodland located beyond the site boundary to the East, largely conceals the site from view on approach to the village. See Appendix B for photographic references.

- 2.6 The landscape around Harbottle is classified by Northumberland National Park Authority's Landscape Supplementary Planning Document as Sandstone Upland Valleys, of which the key characteristics are listed as follows:
- *'Sinuous shallow valleys and narrower, incised tributaries set within the sandstone uplands;*
 - *Valleys enclosed by distinctive, gently convex sandstone hills with acidic vegetation; Strong topographic, vegetation and land use patterns;*
 - *Meandering rivers that are hidden within the landscape, but lined with alders;*
 - *Steep bluffs clothed in pine and other conifers flanking the valley floor;*
 - *Shelterbelts and clumps of Scots pine and mixed woodland on lower slopes and valley floor;*
 - *Sandstone-built historic villages on lower slopes;*
 - *Rich archaeology including rig and furrow, motte and bailey and fortified bastle houses – the heart of reiving country;*
 - *High degree of tranquillity away from major roads and settlements.'*
- 2.7 The proposals for a new house have been the subject of 2no. Pre-Application Enquiries. The first was submitted early in 2018, ref. 18/0003, but included very limited information about the proposed development. This provided useful guidance on Policy and confirmed that the principle of development in this location would be acceptable. A further Pre-Application Enquiry was submitted in March 2019, ref. 19/0024. The scheme submitted here is largely unchanged from that submitted for the subsequent Pre-Application Enquiry, with the exception of the minor amendments suggested in the comments received. Again, the principle of development was supported with no major concerns raised about the proposals. Given the sensitivity of the site, the Historic Buildings Advisor was consulted but concluded that *'the proposed dwelling takes a modern approach and is of high quality in terms of its design and materials. It sits well within its landscaped setting and responds well to its surroundings.'*

3. RELEVANT PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

The following is a list of policies which we consider relevant to this submission for Planning Approval.

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework, revised July 2018

2. Achieving sustainable development

Paragraph 8 sets out three primary objectives for achieving sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

*'a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'

This development does not have a direct economic dimension to it but strongly supports those social and environmental objectives.

Social

As has already been stated, this development will provide accommodation for Applicants who already have close links to the National Park and for whom links will need to be closer still in years ahead in order to support family in remaining within the National Park. In doing so, the existing local community will be supplemented by a new generation of an established Harbottle family to contribute to, and further support, the local economy. This is supported by Policy 10 of the 'Northumberland National Park Authority Local Development Framework, Core Strategy & Development Policies: March 2009' (see Section 3.2).

The *Historic Village Atlas 9: Harbottle*, prepared for Northumberland National Park in 2004, identifies that 'hopes for the future tend to be centred on tourism or an influx of commuters to the villages whose incomes are derived from sources outside the valley, but whose spending may cause an upturn in the local economy.' With limited opportunities to generate a self-supporting local economy, this development would at least increase the opportunity for local spending from an increase in population.

Environmental

Development is often considered to be directly opposed to the objective of protecting the environment. While there may always be some degree of compromise, this development is intended to touch as lightly as possible on its setting; bedding the building down allows for the management of its visual impact on its landscape setting, but orientation, selection of renewable sources of heat and power, ensuring the building is well insulated, reinforcing or enhancing the biodiversity of the site and making informed choices about materials will all mitigate against the potential any development has for negative environmental impact.

With regard to the built and historic environment of Harbottle, protection is offered through the careful management of scale and massing to respond to, but not replicate, those key design features of the local vernacular. This development is evidently of today, but the selection of darker materials will reduce the visual impact of this new addition within its hinterland setting between the wider natural landscape and the village itself. This will also

ensure that it does not compete with, or crucially, detract from the historic plan form of the village.

We are mindful of the historic and potential archaeological sensitivity of this site. According to *Historic Village Atlas 9: Harbottle*, this site falls within an area thought to have been subdivided originally as medieval burgage plots and later into wider field enclosures in the early 19th Century:

'the area of long tofts stretch down to Back Burn to the south and south east of the village also represents an important component of the borough, requiring the active engagement of the National Park Authority to ensure that, as far as practicable, significant alterations to any of the field boundaries are avoided.'

There is no intention to alter or obscure any of the existing boundaries. While we are unable to be definitive about the exact location of the narrower medieval burgage plot demarcation, the current West boundary against which this development is proposed appears to correspond with the boundary between land allocated to Thomas Clennell and land allocated to Thomas Selby in the 1817 enclosure map of Harbottle Common. The interpretive plan of medieval Harbottle included as *Fig. 53* in the *Historic Village Atlas 9: Harbottle* suggests that this boundary is likely to correspond with an earlier medieval plot boundary, see Appendix D. Siting the building along the boundary, as with the buildings immediately to the North of it, will add further definition to this linear demarcation and the historic plan form of the village.

Refer to '16. *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*'.

5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

With regard to rural housing, paragraph 77. of the *National Planning Policy Framework* states:

'In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.'

Paragraph 78. goes on to state that:

'to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.'

The Northumberland National Park Authority C Local Development Framework, Core Strategy & Development Policies identifies Harbottle as a *Local Centre*. This will be considered in more detail in Section 3.2 but, as such, Harbottle is considered to have the infrastructure to support residential development. Accordingly, this development would meet the national objectives outlined above.

12. Achieving well-designed places

The issue of what makes good design can be hard to define and is largely subjective, however it is recognised as having a vital role to play in the creation of successful environments. The National Planning Policy Framework does not define what makes 'good design' but advises on what needs to be considered in order to achieve it. Paragraph 124. states:

'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.'

This section goes on to state that developments should be:

'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change'

The scheme submitted here has been guided entirely by the local environment; mindful of its sensitive setting within the National Park and on the periphery of a village where relatively little physical change has occurred since the suggested 'rebuilding of much of the village' during the 19th Century; a suggestion originally made by John Grundy in his *'Historic Buildings of The Northumberland National Park: A Report to the National Park Authorities'*, 1988, and later referenced in the *'Historic Village Atlas 9: Harbottle'*. This would explain the consistency in date and appearance of much of the village's historic buildings, despite it being a much older settlement. It is important that the clarity and legibility of this development is retained and modern development must be legible as such to avoid diminishing it.

15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The site is not protected by any specific ecological designations but it obviously falls within the National Park and we are advised that it is designated as a greenfield site. The National Planning Policy Framework states that:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.'*

This proposal does not constitute 'major development' and is sensitively located to meet a recognised need to support the existing community and local economy. Investigation into the local property market and land availability in this area has demonstrated that there are no alternative opportunities to meet this need locally which would better satisfy the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The existing bothy within the applicant's ownership, located adjacent to the site is used jointly between the applicant and her mother for storage. The development of this property was considered in the early stages of this project but the limited scale of this building does not readily lend itself to conversion to family accommodation. It was considered that the scale of extension required to achieve a workable family home for this applicant was likely to dominate this modest building and therefore have a detrimental impact. The very close proximity to The Old Mill was also a consideration in this regard.

Located on the edge of rough grassland, the application commits to not altering that landscape much beyond the building perimeter or 'urbanise' the landscape context. Where modification is required, indigenous species will be used to enhance the existing biodiversity of the site, enhancing it wherever possible in accordance with the guidance offered in the Ecology report which accompanies this application. The arboricultural report which accompanies this application recognises the poor quality of the trees which line the Western boundary and there are proposals to remove some of these specimens. Where trees are removed, they will be replaced with native specimens, located to provide them with unobstructed space to meet their full growing potential.

Though located close to the boundary to extend the perceived pattern of development, the building has been positioned to avoid impact on the root protection zones of the trees which lie within the ownership of the neighbouring property. This has required 'cutting back' the corner of the building at its lowest level (Level 0.5). This allows us to 'tuck' the building in to the corner, thus extending the building line and avoiding encroachment on the views of the wider landscape available from The Old Mill.

16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

This requires that the context in which any development is proposed is assessed to ensure that whatever makes it significant is identified and

therefore protected. Without understanding the essential qualities of what makes, in this case the village of Harbottle, significant, it is impossible to understand how any proposal will impact on it.

Policy 18 of the 'Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies: March 2009' deals with the issue of Cultural Heritage and recognises that this understanding is not static. However, the same document recognises Harbottle as one of eight 'Local Centres' where new development is to be focussed to meet local needs. This designation has been awarded on the basis of the knowledge presented by the 'Historic Villages Atlas 9 : Harbottle', and the Historic Environment Record and, as such, providing we are doing nothing to disturb the archaeology or detract from the cultural, natural or historic environment of the village, the proposed development cannot be considered to be impacting negatively on its significance. In fact, this document recognises that without development, the significance of some of these 'Local Centres' may actually be at risk through ever-changing economic, social and working patterns within this rural context.

NPPF Paragraph 185 states that:

'Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.'*

Local Plans are formed on the basis of this National Guidance and as such, the proposals will be reviewed in more detail against the specifics of local policy in the following section.

However, in summary, this development is intended to highlight itself as different from the historic context of the village centre but its massing and the choice of materials is intended to acknowledge a degree of subservience to that context, thereby enhancing the historic rather than confusing it with pastiche.

3.2 Northumberland National Park Authority Local Development Framework, Core Strategy & Development Policies (March 2009)

This document provides an overarching spatial planning policy for the National Park to promote and protect the special qualities identified therein, whilst ensuring that it offers opportunities to sustain local communities and support the local economy.

In order to do this, this document sets out a series of Policies to support some key objectives.

Policy 1 is entitled Delivering Sustainable Development but the sustainability criteria more applicable to this project are outlined under

Policy 3 General Development Principles

This states that development will be permitted if it meets the three criteria detailed as follows:

- 'a. The special qualities of the National Park will be conserved or enhanced;*
- b. The proposal demonstrates high quality sustainable design and construction, which protects and enhances local character and distinctiveness through careful integration with the existing built form. This includes but is not restricted to ensuring:*
 - materials are appropriate to the site and its setting;*
 - residential extensions are subservient to the main building and do not substantially increase its size;*
 - development is sympathetic to existing buildings in terms of scale, height, massing, siting, form, materials and colour; and*
 - the protection of open space which contributes to the amenity, character, and setting of a settlement;*
- c. The proposal supports the wellbeing of local communities by ensuring:*
 - amenity is not adversely affected in terms of visual impact, pollution, noise and waste;*
 - the development will not have any detrimental effects on highway safety or the rights of way network;*
 - the creation of a safe and secure environment;*
 - the provision of appropriate community facilities to meet the needs of the development; and*
 - that appropriate services and infrastructure are capable of being provided without compromising the quality of the landscape.'*

The scheme proposed here meets all of the relevant criteria outlined above, most specifically those listed under b. which are concerned with building construction.

It is a matter of interpretation about what constitutes a 'sympathetic' response. We would suggest that it is more appropriate to make a positive design response which prioritises context and environmental criteria rather than attempting simply to replicate the materials and form of the existing built

environment. This *'protects and enhances local character and distinctiveness'* far more than imitation, which only ever serves to reduce clarity about the historical development of local towns and villages.

Section 4 of this document outlines the principles of the design approach adopted in this application.

Policy 5 General Location of New Development

Harbottle is recognised as a 'local centre' and as such it is considered suitable for 'new local needs development'. It is one of only eight such centres identified within the National Park.

This section of the document refers to national and regional planning policy objectives of seeking to locate new development within or close to established service centres so that they might support one another.

Paragraph 6.17 of this document states:

'The National Park Management Plan clearly establishes that the survival of viable communities is a vital component of the living landscape of the Park. If this is to be realised, some additional employment and housing development will be required within the Park to meet local needs. The policies within the Core Strategy also reflect and strengthen the important role of the gateway settlements in supporting the needs of the National Park communities.'

As stated in the Introduction, the applicants have close links with the National Park and are keen to embed themselves further within the local community. Offering support to family members who already reside in the park will enable them to stay rooted within that community. Given these established connections, and the objectives of the planning policy to strengthen local centres such as Harbottle, the proposal for new development in this location should be broadly supported.

Policy 6 The Sequential Approach

In order to identify suitable sites for development, they are prioritised under this Policy. This aims to ensure that those sites classified as most appropriate for development are considered first:

- 1. Previously developed land and buildings within the identified settlements;*
- 2. Other suitable sites within the identified settlements;*
- 3. Previously developed land and buildings adjacent to the built-up area of the identified settlements;*
- 4. Other suitable sites adjacent to the built-up area of the identified settlements.'*

In this case, a review of the available land and property for sale in this area reveals that there are no equivalent opportunities for the Applicants. A key consideration is proximity to existing family for longer term support; the neighbouring location of this site leaves it unrivalled by any other accommodation available in this area. The distribution of the relatively small population within the National Park means that the options for alternative

accommodation are more limited. This site does not constitute previously developed land, other than in its former use as a cricket ground, and is on the periphery of the settlement. It is, however, in very close proximity to the village and is therefore able to utilise and support the existing services. This suggests that, at the very least, it can be categorised as a type 4 site. Having ruled out the availability of types 1-3 inclusive, this proposal must therefore be considered appropriate under this Policy.

Policy 9 Managing Housing Supply

Though there are no targets in terms of numbers given the special conditions of the National Park, this Policy states that all housing development will be directed towards the most sustainable settlements. Harbottle has already been identified as a 'local centre' for such development.

Policy 10 New Housing Development

This Policy stipulates that new housing development should be restricted to meet local needs, as defined within this section of the document. The applicants in this case would fall broadly into category ii of this definition as *'people who do not live in the National Park but have a current and long standing link to the local community including a previous period of residence'*. Having been raised here, and given that one of the main reasons that the Applicants wish to reside here is to provide long term support for a parent to facilitate their ability to remain within the National Park, the development must surely be considered acceptable under this Policy. This Policy goes on to stipulate that new housing development will only be allowed in settlements supported by, or with close links to, adequate service provision. As stated above, Harbottle is acknowledged as one such settlement, and is explicitly named as such in paragraph 7.14.

Policy 17 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

This site is not protected by any specific ecological designations but, in accordance with this Policy, every effort will be made to ensure that the species and habitats which currently exist on this site are retained and, wherever possible, enhanced.

This application is accompanied by a Phase 1 Habitat Survey; an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site. The Ecological Appraisal identified 5no. broad habitat types but no impact is anticipated by this development. The site is believed to offer very limited opportunities for protected species but, in accordance with this Policy, every effort will be made to encourage wildlife and enhance existing habitats for native species.

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment was commissioned to inspect the scattered trees along the Western boundary and the group which occupy the North-West corner of the site. Of the one group and ten individual trees surveyed, three trees were identified as unsuitable for retention and six plus the group were considered of low quality. The one remaining tree was considered to be of moderate quality. As this is actually situated on

neighbouring land we have modified the proposals to try to ensure that there is no impact on the root area of this tree and we will be following the advice of the Arboriculturalist with regard to mitigation.

As the trees offer screening between properties, as well as contributing to the landscape character and wildlife habitats of the National Park, it is proposed to supplement the retained trees with additional native species, guided by the Ecology consultants, to enhance the biodiversity of the site as far as possible.

Policy 18 Cultural Heritage

This Policy supports the conservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of the National Park. Though not in immediate proximity to the Grade I Listed Harbottle Castle, the village has a historic value in its own right. The proposals have therefore been carefully considered to ensure that they do not detract from the integrity of the village and have been carefully sited to take account of the historic plan form of the village.

See comments made in reference to the National Planning Policy Framework, 2. *Achieving sustainable development*, in Section 3.1 of this document.

Policy 19 Tranquillity

Paragraph 10.1 states that *'tranquillity, freedom from noise and visual disturbance, is a key component of experiencing the National Park'*. There is recognition that this is hard to define but the introduction of a single dwelling should have relatively little, or indeed no, discernible impact on the tranquillity of this setting.

Lighting is recognised as an issue as the site lies within the designated boundaries of the Northumberland Dark Sky Park and rooflights have been largely omitted, with the exception of the boot room and entrance lobby. Both of these spaces are unlikely to be lit except when in use and can be separated off from the main living areas. All other windows can be shrouded by curtains and blinds to limit light permeation into the wider environment.

There are no proposals to incorporate external lighting, other than a single external light at the main entrance which will operate on a sensor. This will only trigger on approach or departure from the building and a timer will ensure that the light is only operational when required. This light will be fitted with a cowl to stop light being directed upwards.

Policy 20 Landscape Quality and Character

'The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change. All proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape character and sensitivity as defined in the Landscape Supplementary Planning Document. Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape will not be permitted.'

The intention of these proposals is to touch lightly on the existing landscape, as described under Section 3.1 in response to the NPPF's section 15, *conserving and enhancing the natural environment*.

The domestic curtilage is defined by a ha-ha to the South, wrapping around to the East side of the garden. This is a traditional landscape feature which utilises the existing slope of the land to separate the house and its immediate garden area from the broader landscape without a visual barrier, creating the impression that the house sits within the natural landscape, rather than an urbanised one. The provision of garaging and driveway to the North side of the house represents the smallest expansion possible to the existing hard landscaping which connects this site to the main road. If the building is glimpsed from the wider landscape to the South, the intention is that it will appear to have grown out of the landscape it inhabits, rather than have been imposed on it. Simple post and wire fencing, an extension of that currently found on site, will bound the East elevation. The existing fences to the West and North will be retained to demarcate the extent of the domestic curtilage.

The careful choice of planting, limited in extent and palette to local species, coupled with the minimal use of visual boundaries will ensure that the quality and character of this landscape are retained.

Policy 25 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

The National Park recognises that large scale renewable energy development does not sit comfortably with many of the other planning objectives it has set for itself. The integration of relatively low-key technologies in a domestic context must therefore be welcomed. This scheme proposes the use of photovoltaic panels on the roof to generate power and geothermal technology to provide heating. High levels of insulation are proposed the building is orientated to take full advantage of solar gain; designed intentionally with large areas of glazing on the South side and smaller openings to the North.

The rural location of this development does not lend itself to the most efficient construction process but it is hoped that materials can be sourced relatively locally; selected for their environmental credentials as well as their sensitivity to context.

3.3 Northumberland National Park Authority Local Development Framework, Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (September 2011)

This document is a Supplementary Planning Document associated with the Core Strategy outlined under Section 3.2 of this document. It is principally connected to Policies 1 and 3 of the Core Strategy; concerned with sustainability and general development principles.

Section 5 sets out the design considerations for sustainable design, each of which is expanded upon within the document but whose headings alone are listed here:

- 5.1 Conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the National Park*
- 5.2 Making efficient use of land, materials, and infrastructure*
- 5.3 Providing opportunities for all to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park*
- 5.4 Promoting the local community's economic and social well-being and their ability to access services*
- 5.5 Reducing the causes and impacts of climate change, particularly by maximising renewable energy generation and energy efficiency in buildings*
- 5.6 Demonstrating high quality design and sustainable construction*
- 5.7 Promoting accessibility via public transport, cycling, or walking*
- 5.8 Conserving scarce resources*
- 5.9 Conserving water resources, air, and soils*
- 5.10 Reducing the amount of waste produced and increasing the amount recycled*
- 5.11 Preventing inappropriate development in areas which are at risk of flooding or which contribute to the risk of flooding'*

The proposals submitted here for consideration adhere to all of the relevant criteria, most of which have been addressed in earlier sections of this document.

Sub-section 6.1 of Section 6 is concerned with the design principles for new development. The design considerations are further subdivided into 'Open Countryside' and 'Within Settlements':

'Design Considerations - Open Countryside

- Care should be taken to consider the wider views both into and out of the development site;*
- Development should sit comfortably within the landscape and take care not to harm views through appropriately coloured materials, including changes in colour due to weathering;*
- Reflect the form of the surrounding landscape and buildings i.e. creating a linear form with ridge lines following the horizontal aspect of the landscape in valleys;*
- Skylines are particularly important to distant views : care should be taken not to break the skyline as this would result in a very dominant building;*
- Boundary treatment and landscaping should avoid a suburbanising affects.*

Design Considerations – Within Settlements

- Look at the rhythm and form of existing buildings and how your proposal will fit within this;*
- Carefully consider the height, scale and massing in relation to surrounding buildings;*

- *Refer to any relevant village appraisals such as conservation area character appraisals or Historic Village Atlas documents to inform the approach;*
- *Appropriate boundary treatments and landscaping can often help to anchor the development into the wider setting as well as creating habitats/ managing an area for wildlife purposes;*
- *Consider opportunities for creating new habitats e.g. roosting or nesting spaces.'*

Arguably, this development falls between the two categories, being on the periphery of the village. However, both of these categories provide relevant design considerations, all of which are met by this proposal. Within its wider landscape context, this building responds to views both into and out of the site through orientation and material choices; it sits down into the landscape to root itself firmly into the topography and avoid interruption of the skyline, and its boundary treatment is as unimposing as possible. Within the context of the neighbouring settlement, the historic plan form of the village has informed the choice of location for the building within the site and height, scale and massing have all been key considerations in the design.

3.4 Northumberland National Park Authority Local Development Framework, Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (September 2011)

The *Key Characteristics* of the Sandstone Upland Valleys of which Harbottle is part were stated at the beginning of this document under item 1.6. Within this document the *Guidelines for Development* of this area state that:

- *'Recreational development on the edges of settlements should not extend urbanising influences or uncharacteristic vegetation patterns into open countryside;*
- *Man-made vertical structures which detract from the valley landform, create visual clutter or adversely affect the unfettered skylines which form the distinctive setting to these valleys should be resisted;*
- *Within the wider character area further extensive extraction of sand and gravel outside the National Park at Caistron should take into consideration the impact of such development on views¹⁵ from the National Park.'*

The proposals submitted here for consideration make no impact on the essential characteristics of this landscape. Care has been taken to bed the house down into its landscape, sitting low into the valley, and therefore avoiding any interruption of the skyline. Siting the building close to the existing boundary trees as backdrop, using dark materials to help camouflage the building and break down its visual massing, along with a strategy to avoid urbanising the landscape, will all help to limit the impact of this proposal.

4. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 From within the village, locating the development in the North-West corner of the site will ensure it is only really visible from the top of the shared driveway (see Appendices B and C). The denser collection of trees in this corner will also provide visual separation from neighbouring property 'The Wilderness' to the North-West and offer privacy to the new development. Though some of these trees have been identified for removal, the intention is to replace any losses with native species to enhance biodiversity as well as privacy.
- 4.2 Though principally a linear development along both sides of the road, expansion has historically extended Southwards following the natural slope of the land. This again, is predominantly linear in nature, following driveways and vennels between the properties which front the main road. Locating the new property in the North-West corner of this site will ensure that the historic plan form of the village is retained as far as is practicable, extending the run of buildings along the shared Western boundary of this and The Old Mill site; the aforementioned bothy, a stone dovecote and outbuildings to the North.
- 4.3 Initial proposals were to maintain the linear nature of this building line and create a shallow, building along the Western boundary. However, reflecting on the wider pattern of development within the village, it was considered that this would extend the building line too far South. Retaining a linear element along this boundary but extending a wing of the building Eastwards references this linearity but retains the footprint of the development within the broader 'built-up' context of the village. It also enables the proposals to take greater advantage of the site orientation in terms of solar gain and views. Care has been taken to avoid extending too far East, and associated encroachment on the existing views from The Old Mill. The garage is therefore located in an offshot to the main building to the North. Use of the existing gateway and an extension to the existing driveway will facilitate access without significantly increasing the amount of hardstanding in this hinterland setting between village and wider landscape.
- 4.4 The proposals are intended to reflect the principal design features of the local vernacular architecture; pitched roofs with prominent chimneys, 'heavy' buildings firmly bedded into the natural topography of the landscape, punched openings in thick walls offering protection from the worst extremes of the local climate. However, this is not a building of the late 18th/early 19th Century and as such, we are proposing to reference these features in a way which clearly reflects the more contemporary nature of the development. Roofs are steeply pitched, but the asymmetry clearly identifies them as different from those of neighbouring properties; window openings are principally vertical but are here combined with much larger openings and corner windows take maximum advantage of solar gain and views across the site. Allowing the First Floor to over sail the large opening in the South elevation of the living room provides shading to this expanse of glazing and cover to an external balcony where the extensive views can be best appreciated. A prominent chimney at the East end, located on the gable, again makes reference to local vernacular. This 'modern approach' was broadly supported by the Conservation and Planning Officers in the Pre-Application comments.

- 4.5 The most immediate neighbours of this proposal are The Old Mill and The Wilderness. Both of these properties are of more modern construction than the Bothy and Dovecote which stand on the boundary between them, and the properties which line the main road, several of which are Listed. The Old Mill is believed to have been constructed in the 1980s on the site of a former sawmill. The Old Mill is of stone construction, though very evidently different in style to that of the older stone buildings adjacent. The Wilderness is rendered with pantile roof and brick detailing, dating to the mid 20th Century.
- 4.6 The immediate context therefore offers little precedent to guide the elevational treatment of this proposal. The choice of material is largely based on a response to the sensitivity of the wider environment and the desire to make as little visual, as well as physical, impact on the National Park as possible. Though largely concealed from view, the materials are deliberately intended to disguise the property both from its neighbours and from its wider landscape setting. Materials are used in a fairly raw form to mirror the natural environment surrounding them and the 'secondary' location of the building; mirroring the informality of materials used in neighbouring 'backland' properties away from the main street frontage. Burnt cedar cladding and darkly coloured standing seam metal cladding made up in varying widths will break-up the scale of the facades. The metal cladding will be extended to form the roof covering to the Western wing of the building, subservient to the more visible slate roof of the North wing. Natural stone will anchor the building to the site and reference the historic palette, extending up from the basement to form a plinth; more fully exposed on the South side as the landscape falls away.

The use of natural stone is a change to the Pre-Application submission in which bush-hammered concrete was proposed. The Conservation Officer expressed a preference for stone and the proposals have been amended accordingly. The windows will be aluminium, powder coated in a dark colour to match the cladding, also as requested. It was suggested that the roof covering to the West wing should be changed to slate but we have retained a metal finish here as we feel it is a more contemporary response, in keeping with the rest of the building. Being concealed from view, this differentiates it from the North wing, where slate is proposed, as this will be visible from the site entrance and references the surrounding buildings.

- 4.7 The scale of accommodation needed has required careful consideration of massing and form, despite its discreet location. The two principal wings of the house are offset by half a storey to step the building down the slope; maximising this opportunity by positioning of the property into the steeper North-West corner of the site. This has enabled us to bring the overall height of the property down; to better relate it to the neighbouring bothy and The Old Mill and the reduce its visual impact when glimpsed from the main road above. This facilitates a closer relationship between the building and its site, providing access to the outside from different internal floor levels and providing a building which is very much designed around, and sensitive to, the existing landscape context. It was intended from the outset that this development should avoid 'urbanising' the plot; to provide a scheme which sits comfortably within the transition between village and wider landscape. As mentioned above, hard landscaping is kept to a minimum and where planting is introduced, it is proposed to utilise species native to the site, thus

expanding the existing wildlife habitats. The demarcation of an area of managed garden space is handled through discreet post and wire fencing and a haha to make as little visual impact as possible.

- 4.8 The main living accommodation is located within the North wing on the same level as the main entrance (Level 1). Level access is obtained from the driveway into an entrance lobby, incorporating boot room and WC. Living, Dining and Kitchen are located to take best advantage of the panoramic views to the South; sliding glazed screens and covered balcony area providing connectivity to the wider landscape beyond. To the West, a Utility room and adjacent stair provides access to a Guest Bedroom/Study with neighbouring Bathroom off the half landing (Level 0.5); down again a full storey height to the Basement Playroom, Store and WC with Plant Room beyond (Level 0).
- 4.9 The Bedroom accommodation is located across Levels 1.5 and 2. The Master Bedroom occupies Level 1.5 with associated en-suite and views out to the South and West. The children's Bedrooms, 2 and 3, each have an en-suite and are similar in scale in the interests of maintaining harmonious sibling relations!
- 4.10 Window openings are located to avoid overlooking but take maximum advantage of the surrounding views and solar gain. Smaller window openings on the North side more closely replicate the scale of openings of the 19th Century buildings they face and minimise heat loss on the North side of the building. Photovoltaic panels are proposed for the Southern roof slope, allowing the Applicants to generate their own electricity and reduce their environmental impact as far as possible. They are also proposing the use of a ground source heat pump, archaeological and wider environmental considerations permitting, to provide heating for the new development.

5. ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 As has been stated previously, there is a significant difference in ground level between the main road and the South side of the proposed building. The existing driveway slopes steeply down to the existing gated site access; here extension to this driveway will offer level access into the Ground Floor (Level 1) of the new house. Unfortunately, given the existing topography, it will not be possible to facilitate an acceptable gradient for wheelchair access from road level to the site.
- 5.2 The house is organised over a number of levels in response to the site and the desire to minimise the impact of this development on the local environment. Though it is acknowledged that this prevents access to all areas by wheelchair users, access around the largely open-plan Living, Dining and Kitchen areas will be possible, extending out to the covered balcony area to the South. Doors throughout will be generous in width to facilitate ease of movement and the WC in the entrance area will exceed the dimensional requirements of the Building Regulations Approved Document M, Volume 1, Category 1 for Visitable Dwellings making all of the principal habitable rooms accessible for visiting wheelchair users.

APPENDIX A

The Applicant was asked to provide details of their longstanding association with the National Park to meet the requirements of Core Strategy 10 and associated S106 Agreement. The Applicant supplied the following in response:

'The association with the National Park is a strong bond both current and historic commencing from being born in Rothbury and living in Snitter and Rothbury through and into adulthood. My grandfather and father lived and worked all their lives in the Coquet Valley, running their business from Rothbury. Both my mother and brother remain in the valley - my mother, residing in Harbottle, is an avid participant in the local community and our desire to build will be to assist her during her later stage of life.'

APPENDIX B

See full size drawing associated with this application. Note photograph references relate to Context Photographs in Appendix C



APPENDIX C
Context Photographs



View from site looking North up steep driveway access



View looking North-West towards proposed plot from wider site



View looking West from same location towards proposed plot



View looking South from middle of Northern site boundary



View from same location looking South-East towards road



View looking East from same location; road is not visible



Glimpsed view furthest West along road [A]; dovecot in centre (distant) can be seen in the photograph above



Approaching site entrance from the West; rear of dovecot and bothy visible [B]



View looking South towards proposed plot from main road at head of driveway [C]



View looking towards plot from road, East of the driveway entrance [D]



Glimpsed view between buildings does not provide sight of proposed house [E]



View looking towards proposed site from most recent houses on village outskirts [F]



View North-East on approach to village. Site located beyond trees to left of picture; not visible from here [G]



Longer range view of approach to village; site still not visible due to topography and existing landscape features [H]

APPENDIX D

Maps of Harbottle extracted from Historic Village Atlas 9: Harbottle, September 2004 to show historic site boundaries

**NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE ATLAS PROJECT 2004:
HARBOTTLE**

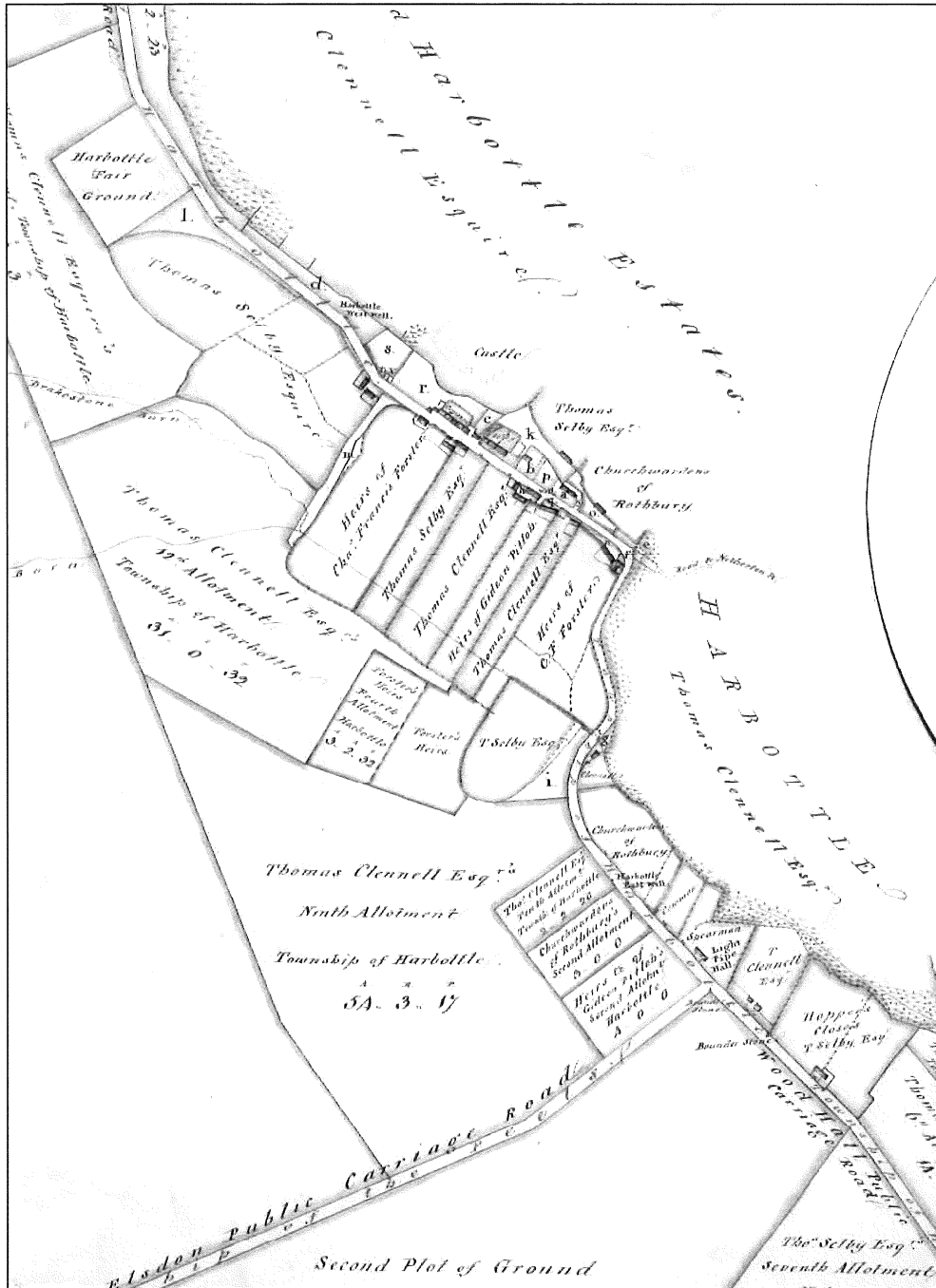


Fig. 18: Enclosure map of Harbottle Common, 1817 (HBT_M&D 032)

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE ATLAS PROJECT 2004:
HARBOTTLE

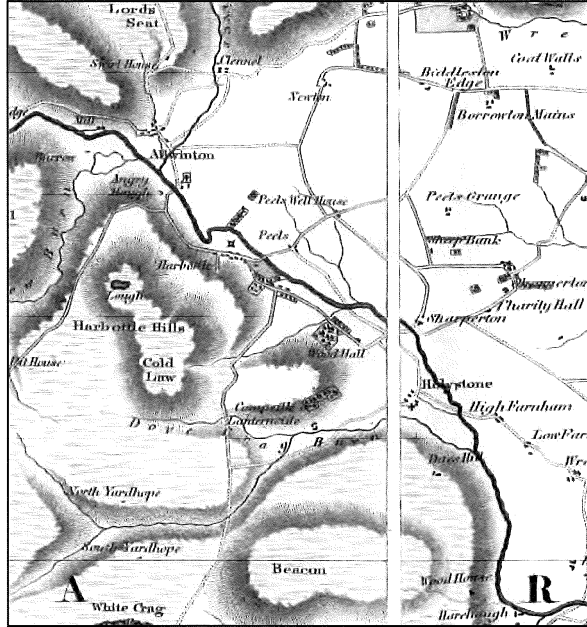


Fig. 19: Harbottle shown on the Fryer Map of 1820

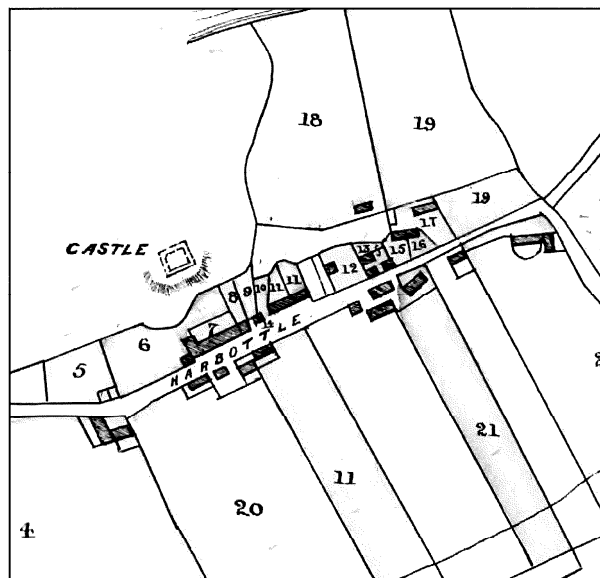


Fig. 20: A Tithe Map of Harbottle Village surveyed in 1843
(award 1844) (HBT_M&D 018)

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE ATLAS PROJECT 2004:
HARBOTTLE

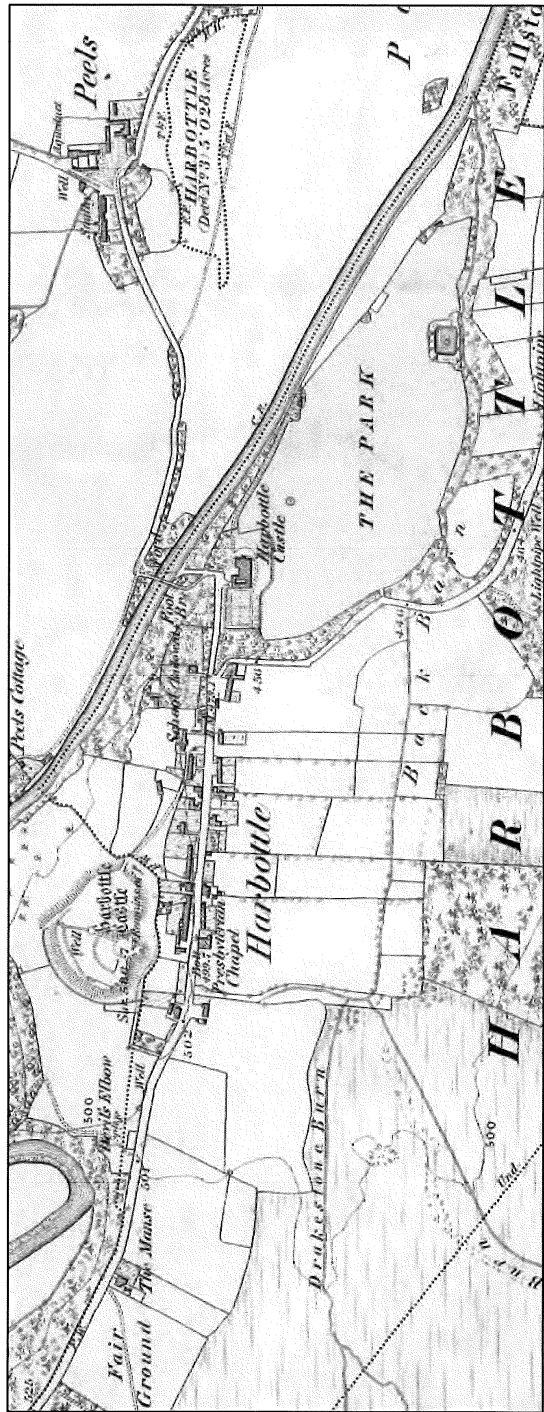


Fig. 23: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Harbottle, 1865 (HBT_M&D 022)

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE ATLAS PROJECT 2004:
HARBOTTLE

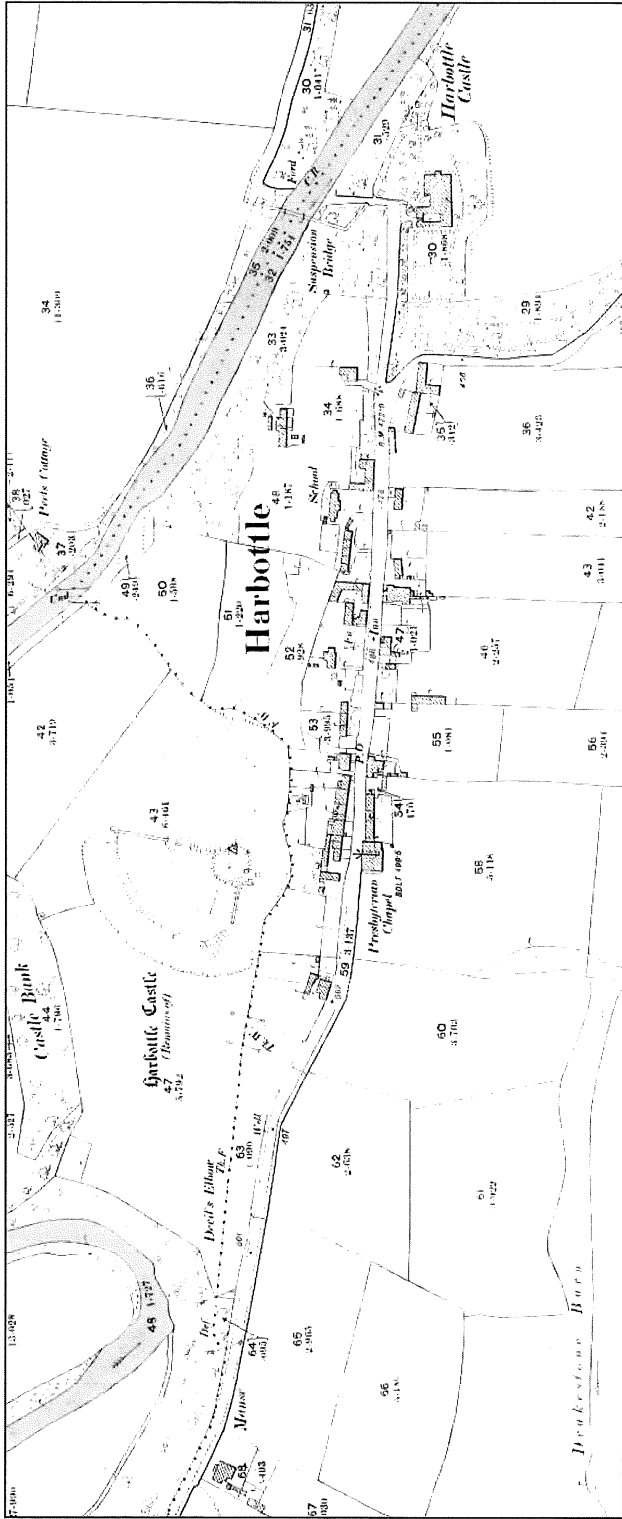


Fig. 24: Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Harbottle, 1899 (25" scale) (HBT_M&D 023)

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE ATLAS PROJECT 2004:
HARBOTTLE

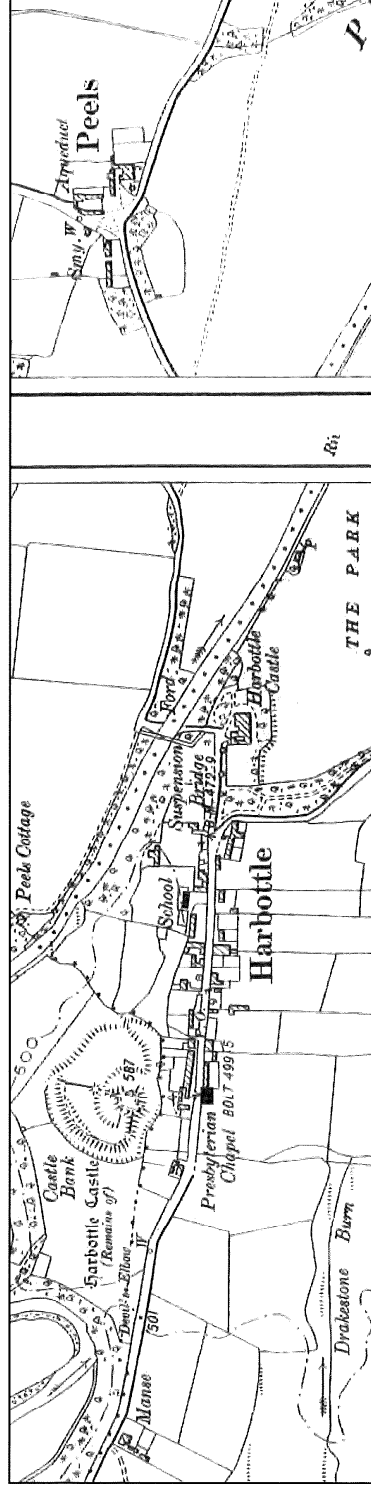


Fig. 25: Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Harbottle, 1899 (6" scale) (HBT_M&D 024)

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE ATLAS PROJECT 2004:
HARBOTTLE

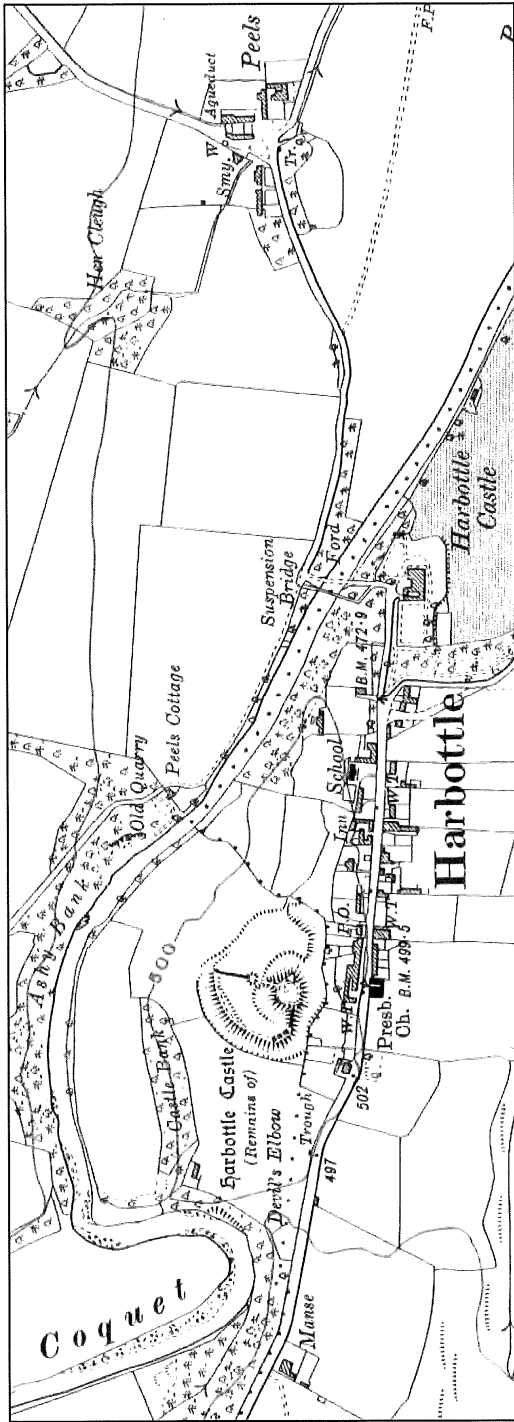


Fig. 26: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Harbottle, 1923 (6" scale) (HBT_M&D 025)

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK VILLAGE ATLAS PROJECT 2004:
HARBOTTLE

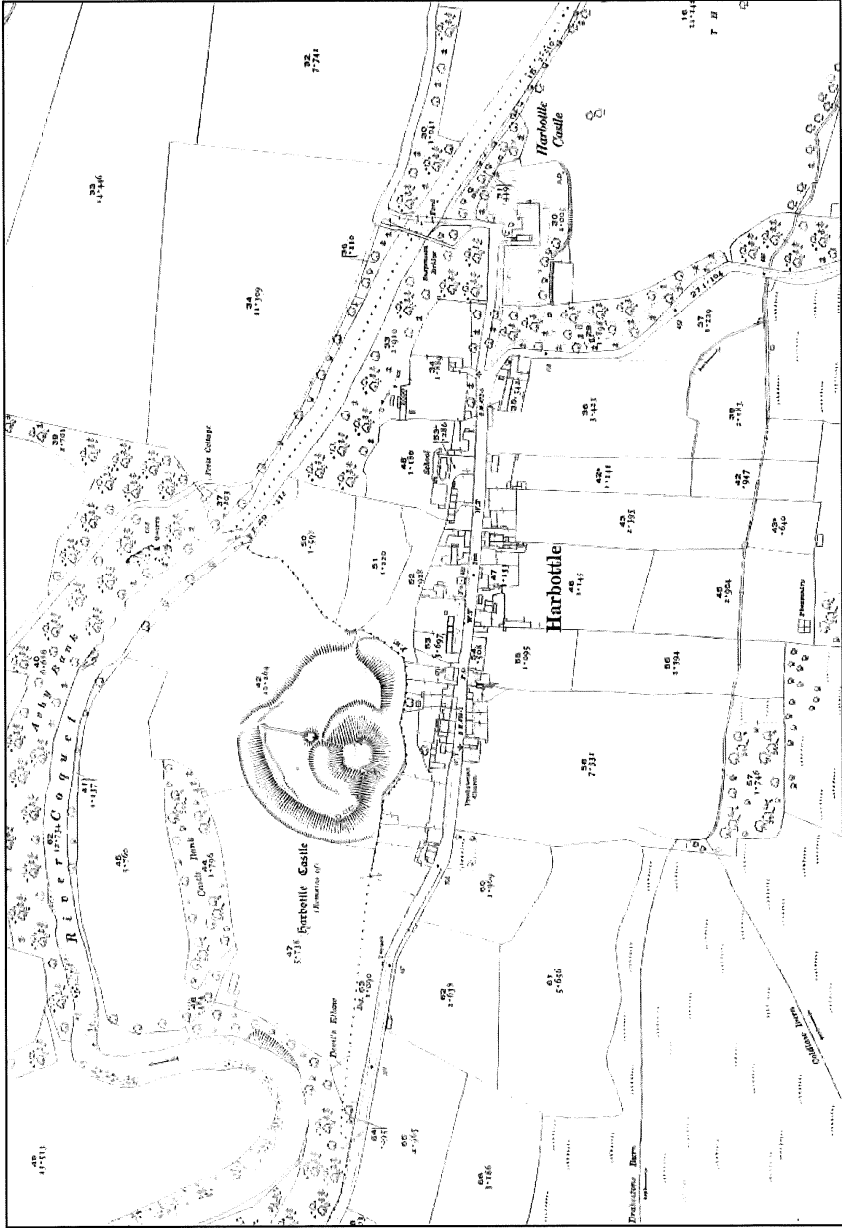


Fig. 27: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Harbottle, 1923 (25" scale) (HBT_M&D 026)