



DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	20NP0083
Description / Site Address	Change of use of tack room to a two-bed holiday unit at Catcleugh Farm, Catcleugh, Northumberland, NE19 1TX
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	10 November 2020
Last date for decision	14 December 2020

Details of Proposal

This application relates to the conversion and extension of a redundant farm building at Catcleugh Farm to provide a single self-contained unit of holiday accommodation. The application site is located to the immediate north of the A68 and Catcleugh Reservoir. The building to which the application relates is bounded by rising land and woodland to the north, the main farmhouse to the west and farm buildings to the south-east. Trees are scattered throughout the site.

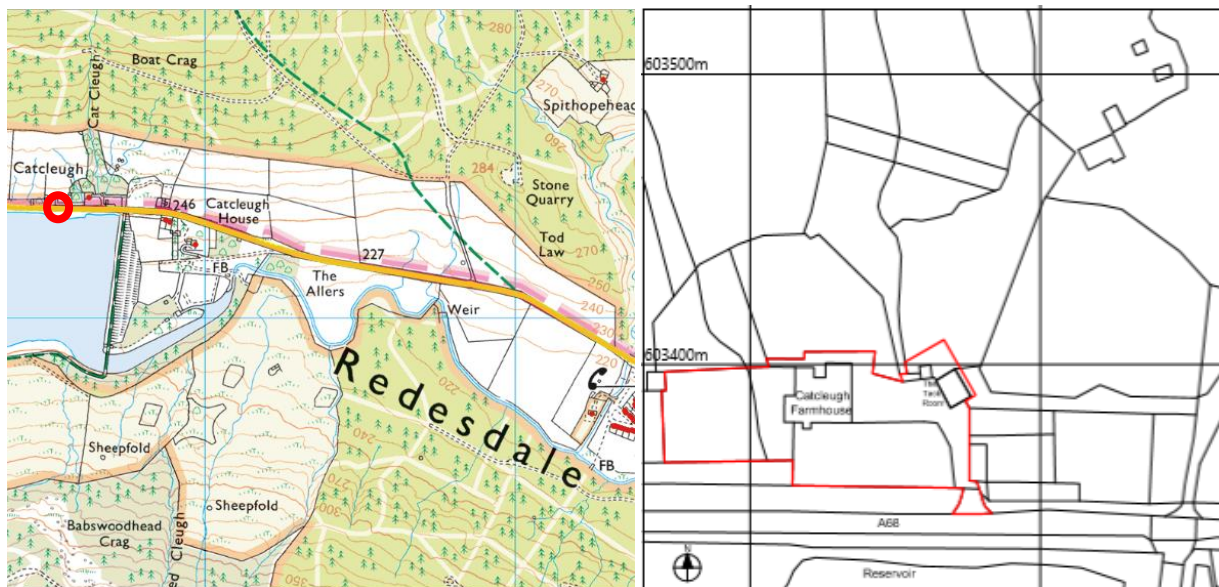


Figure 1: Site Location

The building to be converted is single storey and of traditional stone and slate construction with full length timber / glazed units across most of the front (west) elevation. These are to be replaced with new units which are of similar appearance and finish to the existing (painted joinery) but upgraded to improve durability and energy efficiency to accord with current Building Regulations. It is also intended to install three conservation style roof-lights in the roof slope to the eastern elevation.

In addition to the conversion, it is also proposed to extend the property by means of a single storey extension to the north (side) elevation. The extension would have a width of 4.5m and would be set slightly back from both the west (front) and east (back) elevations of the existing building. It would be constructed from a combination of timber cladding with an oak frame, sitting on a natural stone plinth and have a natural slate roof. The north elevation would incorporate folding / sliding



aluminium doors which would lead on to an area of amenity space in the form of decking incorporating a timber balustrade with glass infill panels.

The proposed conversion / extension works would provide for a combined living / kitchen / dining, a hall, two bedrooms (one en-suite) and a separate bathroom. The intention is for the building to be used as a self-contained holiday let.

Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Northumberland National Park Local Plan

Policy ST1	<i>Sustainable Development</i>
Policy ST2	<i>General Development Principles</i>
Policy ST4	<i>Spatial Strategy</i>
Policy DM6	<i>Conversion of Buildings</i>
Policy DM7	<i>Rural Economy and Diversification</i>
Policy DM10	<i>Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>
Policy DM11	<i>Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies</i>
Policy DM14	<i>Historic Landscape Assets and Built Heritage</i>

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)

Relevant Planning History

13NP0080 Proposed conversion and change of use of redundant farm buildings into 7 no. residential units for holiday letting with car parking and landscaped areas and including retrospective application for creation of new drainage pond. *Planning permission conditionally granted 26/02/2014.*

05NP0064 Conversion of farm building to four holiday cottages. *Planning permission conditionally granted 13/07/2006.*

Consultation/Representations

Rochester Parish Council: No response



NCC Development Management: No objection

NCC Public Protection: No objection: Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions and informatives relating to water supply and contaminated land;

NCC Highways: No objection: subject to appropriate conditions relating to car parking / cycle storage and refuse collection and informatives reminding the applicant not to store materials / equipment or deposit mud / debris / rubbish on the highway.

NNPA Ecologist: No objection: Subject to the mitigation detailed within the report being made a condition of any approval which may be issued.

The application has been advertised by means of notice displayed at the site on 29th October 2020. No comments have been received in response.

Assessment

The main issues to be taken into consideration in the assessment of this application are:

- The principle of the development;
- Design and amenity
- Impact on National park special qualities;
- Highways
- Water supply
- Contaminated land

The principle of the development

Sustainable Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places emphasis on a presumption in favour of sustainable development to guide decision making. Policy ST1 of the Local Plan adopts a similar assumption in favour of sustainable development and defines the qualities and criteria which are deemed to represent 'sustainable development'. The degree to which the proposals accord with these qualities is discussed throughout the report.

Location of Development

Local Plan policy ST4 seeks to direct new development to a series of settlements named within the policy. As Catcleugh is not located within one of the named settlements, it would be considered to fall within the open countryside. In the open countryside, amongst others, policy ST4 states that development will be permitted where it '*is supported by other relevant Local Plan policies*'. Part 2 of ST4 allows for development which '*reuses a building in a way that supports an economic use..*' and is '*also in accordance with Policy DM6*'. While the design requirements of policy DM6 are



considered in detail below (Design and amenity), the policy does identify holiday accommodation as an acceptable new use for converted buildings.

Policy DM7 relates to Rural Economy and Diversification. This is a comprehensive policy which is supportive of proposals for economic development, including tourism, which are able to be accommodated without adversely impacting National Park special qualities. Specific support is given to proposals which make use of existing buildings and allow people to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

On the basis of the above, subject to consideration of the impact of the development on the special qualities of the National Park and all other material considerations as assessed in detail below, the principal of the development is considered to be acceptable and in accord with the relevant requirements of Local Plan policies ST1, ST4 and DM7. However, as the proposals are located within the open countryside where there is a general presumption against new housing, it is considered reasonable to attach a condition ensuring that the converted outbuilding is only used as temporary holiday accommodation and not a permanent residential dwelling.

Design and Amenity

Design

Amongst other, strategic policy ST1 is supportive of development which '*Protects or enhances the landscape character of the National Park through use of high quality design, appropriate landscaping and removal of unsightly development*' with strategic policy ST2 requiring proposals to be of a '*high quality design that will make a positive contribution to the National Park's special qualities and the local environment incorporating high quality construction materials and design details that reflect or complement the local vernacular*'.

Policy DM6 which relates to the conversion of buildings states that, amongst others, conversion in the open countryside will be permitted where '*the building makes a positive contribution to the landscape and special qualities of the National Park*'; '*the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding..*'; '*the building is of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant alterations, extensions or other new buildings*' and '*the proposed use does not lead to changes in the buildings curtilage or the creation of any new vehicular access or parking area that would unacceptably affect the character and appearance of the building or surrounding landscape*'.

While the building does not have any statutory listing, it is considered to make a positive contribution to local landscape character and its retention by means of an appropriate and viable end use is considered to be desirable. In relation to the existing building, while the application has not been supported by a structural survey report, the Design and Access Statement notes that '*An external and internal visual inspection revealed no significant structural defects*' with the Planning Officer satisfied with this assessment following a site visit.



The proposed works to the existing section of the building would largely be retained in its current form, although the existing timber / glazed units to the front elevation will be replaced with similar but more durable and energy efficient units. Three conservation style roof-lights are to be inserted in the rear roof slope. As such, it is considered that the works to the existing building are acceptable and comply with relevant plan policy.

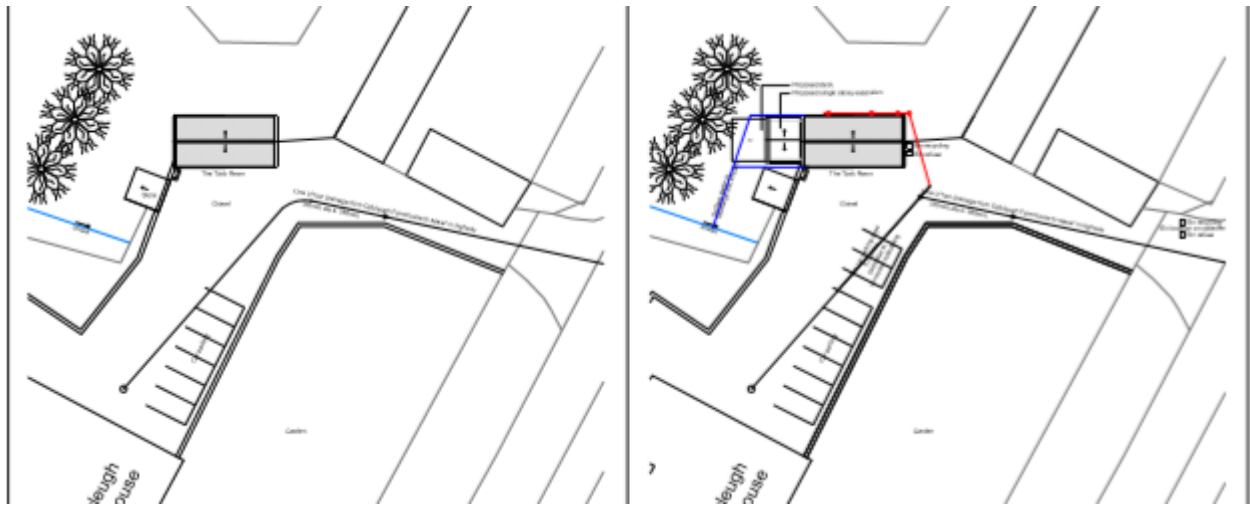


Figure 2: Existing (left) and proposed (right) site plans

As noted, policy DM6 requires the building to be of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without *'the need for significant alterations, extensions or other new buildings'*. To allow for the creation of a viable scheme, it is proposed to extend the property to the north by virtue of a single storey extension to the north (side) elevation. The extension would have a width of 4.5m and would be set slightly back from both the west (front) and east (back) elevations of the existing building. It would also have a slightly lower ridge height than the existing and its width would be approximately a third of that of the existing building.

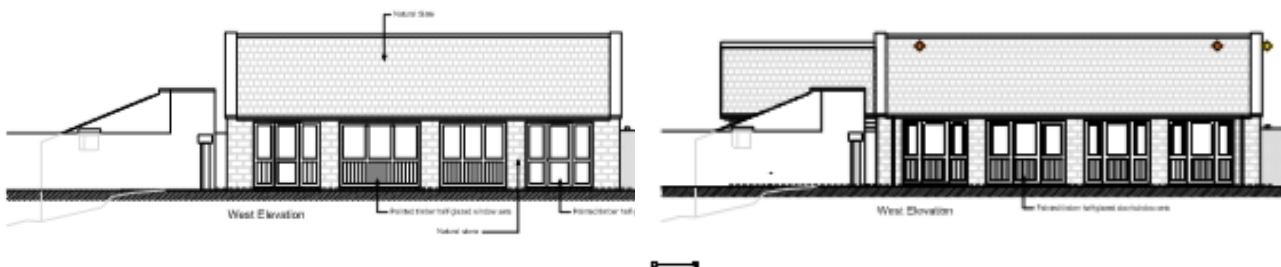


Figure 3: Existing (left) and proposed (right) front (west) elevation

The extension would be constructed from timber cladding with an oak frame, sitting on a natural stone plinth and have a natural slate roof. While the use of timber cladding would introduce a new element to the building, it is considered that this would help to identify the extension as a modern addition. By stepping in the extension to both the front and rear and having a lower ridge height than the existing building, the extension will appear subservient to the main building. The visual impact of the development would be also reduced by virtue of the extension being dug in to the



slightly higher ground to north (as would the proposed decking) which would help to bed it into its setting. While it is intended to provide two dedicated parking spaces to serve the property, these would be located immediately adjacent to the existing parking provision and would have little impact on the character of the building or wider landscape.

On the basis of the above it is considered that the proposed extension, decking and parking area are acceptable and can be accommodated without an undue impact on the character of the existing building or its wider setting. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies ST1, ST2 and DM6 in relation to design.

Amenity

Amongst others, Policy ST2 states that development will be permitted where '*The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of occupiers*' with Policy DM2 seeking to ensure that new householder development '*does not unacceptably affect the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers or result in adequate levels of amenity for the existing dwelling*'.

In this instance the proposals relate to the extension and change of use of a building to provide tourist accommodation. As the proposals relate to development within the curtilage of an existing building located approximately 200m from the nearest neighbouring property, it is not considered that the proposals would lead to any material impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents over and above those associated with the existing arrangements. Similarly, given the location of the building within the application site, over 25m from the main house, it is not considered it would materially impact on the living conditions of the residents of this property. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Local Plan policy ST2 in this respect.

Biodiversity

Local Plan policy DM10 states that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, habitats and sites of geological interest within the National Park will be given great weight with all development aiming to '*Maintain and where appropriate enhance features of ecological value and recognised geodiversity assets*'.

The proposals relate to the conversion and extension of a traditional stone and slate building. As such, the application has been supported by a 'Bat Survey' Report and the NNPA Ecologist has been consulted on the proposals. Having considered the information provided the Ecologist has noted that two small common pipistrelle bat roosts were detected in the building that is the subject to this application and will be lost as part of the development.

When a planning application is likely to have implications for European protected species, explicit consideration must be given to the three tests enshrined in Regulation 53 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Ecologist has noted that the proposed works will be covered under a Bat Class Licence (low impact). Even though Natural England oversee these class licences, as the competent Authority the National Park Authority must evaluate the three tests to determine if such a licence is likely to be suitable before granting planning permission.



The 3 tests are:

- The proposal must be required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety
- There must be no satisfactory alternative to the proposal
- The proposal will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of the species in its natural range.

As the proposals are considered to comply with the Local Plan policy, the LPA are satisfied that the first two conditions have been met. The third test is examined in terms of the mitigation proposals submitted by the applicant. After looking at the documents provided, the Ecologist has noted that the mitigation and compensation listed in the report includes erection of 2 bat boxes on site prior to work commencing and the incorporation of 2 bat slates in the roof and a wall mounted box on the altered building.

Natural England standing advice states that the type and function of replacement roosts should perform the same function as those which they replace. In this instance the Ecologist considers that the provision suggested should be sufficient to perform the same function as the roosts to be lost. The species recorded will use the bat boxes to be provided while work is on-going, and these are suitable for smaller roosts. The provision of the permanent access and box on the converted building will also provide replacement roosting habitat for the lost roosts. The methodology suggested for the works seems acceptable to prevent physical harm, including checking prior to work commencing. The location of the bat slates and wall mounted box are shown on Dwg No 616:102.

In Northumberland low impact class licences can be used for up to three roosts for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. These proposals will affect two roosts of common pipistrelle, therefore it would seem the class licence is appropriate.

The Ecologist has concluded that that the mitigation suggested is sufficient. The numbers of bats likely to be impacted on are low, important only at the local level. If the mitigation is put in place and work carried out in line with the bat report and the submitted plans it is likely to be successful given the other details provided. The third test will be met as the proposals are unlikely to detrimentally affect the conservation status of the bat species present on site.

On the basis of the above, subject to a condition being attached to the permission to ensure that the mitigation measures detailed within the Bat Survey Report are delivered, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Local Plan policy DM10, the Habitat Regulations and the NPPF.

Landscape

Policy DM11 states that the natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive landscape change. To achieve this, new development will need



to ensure that *'the visual impact of the development in its immediate and wider setting is minimised through high quality design that reflects local landscape character with particular regard to scale, siting, materials and colour'* and *'the cumulative and /or sequential landscape and visual effect of development do not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park..*

As the building to be converted / extended is located within a largely enclosed site impacts on landscape character and visual amenity are likely to be extremely localised and of slight magnitude. From outside of the site the only views of the building are likely to be those experienced by users of the A68 as it passes the site entrance. From here the building would be viewed as part of the wider development on the site with the proposed extension partly screened by the existing building and also the small outbuilding to the immediate south. On this basis it is considered that any impact on wider landscape character or visual amenity would be minimal and the proposals are considered to accord with the relevant requirements of Local Plan policy DM11.

Tranquility

The site is in a sensitive location within the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. No detail of any external lighting which may be required in connection with the proposed development has been submitted as part of the application. However, given the sensitive open countryside location, it is considered reasonable to attach a condition requiring details of any external lighting to be installed as part of scheme design to be first submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority to ensure it is appropriate for use in the Dark Sky Park and to protect the tranquility of the area. Subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition relating to external lighting, the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of Local Plan policy DM11 in respect of tranquility.

By virtue of the scale, nature and location of the proposals, it is not considered that the proposed development would detrimentally impact upon the tranquillity of the surrounding area in terms of noise or traffic. Similarly, it is not considered that there would be any impact on the cultural heritage of the National Park over and above those discussed in relation to design (above).

Highways

Amongst other, Policy ST2 is supportive of proposals which *'ensures the proportionate creation of an accessible, safe and secure environment for all potential users with appropriate cycling facilities and car parking provision and without compromising highway safety, the local road network or public rights of way'*.

The information submitted in support of the application shows the provision of two dedicated parking spaces to serve the property adjacent to the existing parking area used to serve the wider site. Secure cycle storage is also shown in the adjacent outbuilding which is to be retained. Northumberland County Council Highways have been consulted on the proposals. Highways have confirmed that they have no objection to the proposals as they do not consider that the proposals will have an adverse impact on highway safety and they also consider that the proposals provide for sufficient car parking / cycle storage. Highways have however requested that conditions are attached to any permission which may be issued to ensure that the car parking / cycle storage is



implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved plans and that refuse is not stored outside of the premises other than on collection day. They have also recommended that informatives are attached reminding the applicant not to store building materials or equipment or deposit mud / debris / rubbish on the highway.

Subject to the imposition of the recommended conditions / informatives it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Local Plan policy ST2 and the NPPF in relation to highways safety, car parking and cycle provision.

Water Supply

Part k) of Local Plan policy ST2 states that development will be permitted where the proposal *'ensures the provision of appropriate and proportionate services and infrastructure to meet the needs of the development.'* In relation to water supply, the Design and Access Statement indicates that:

'Catcleugh Farmhouse (run in part as a holiday let) is served by a private supply. Water for human consumption purposes is supplied, in factory sealed bottles, by the owner for the benefit of holiday makers. The same system of supplying bottled water will be continued for the new development'

NCC Public Protection has been consulted on the proposals. While raising no objection, they have advised that the provision of bottled water is not acceptable and noted that the Local Authority (Northumberland County Council) is required to carry out an inspection (risk assessment) of the supply and undertake monitoring (water sampling) in order to ensure that the supply does not present a potential risk to human health prior to the first occupation of the dwelling. As such, Public Protection have requested that a condition be attached to any permission which may be issued requiring, before first occupation of the accommodation, a scheme for the provision of a sufficient and wholesome supply of water to the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Subject to the imposition of a suitably worded condition to ensure that a sufficient supply of wholesome water is available to serve the property, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirement of Local Plan policy ST2 in relation to water supply.

Contaminated land

Amongst others, part m) of Local Plan policy ST2 states that development will be permitted where *'The proposal will not give rise to unacceptable risks from contaminated or unstable land.'* As the application relates to the conversion of a former tack room to provide holiday accommodation, the application has been supported by a contaminated land screening assessment and NCC Public Protection have been consulted.

Having considered the information provided, Public Protection have noted that the applicant has submitted a contaminated land screening assessment which indicates that the site is suitable for the proposed use. They have however advised that it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure



that issues of land contamination are appropriately considered, that remediation takes place (where necessary) and that the land is safe and 'suitable for use' i.e. the site is appropriate for the proposed end use.

As such, Public Protection have raised no objection but requested that a condition be attached requiring a Method Statement to be submitted for approval by the LPA should any contamination not previously identified be discovered during the course of the development. This is considered to be reasonable and a suitable condition has been attached. However, Public Protection also requested that should no contamination be found, the condition should require the applicant to submit a signed statement confirming so. The LPA do not however consider it reasonable to require the applicant to discharge a condition if no additional contamination is found, and this element of the condition has not been attached.

Subject to the imposition of a suitably worded condition it is considered that the proposals accord with the relevant requirements of Local Plan policy ST2 in relation to contaminated land.

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:

- Application form, received 19th October 2020;
- Location Plan, Dwg No. 616: LP1, received 19th October 2020;
- Site Plan: Existing and Proposed, Dwg No. 616: SP1 received 19th October 2020;
- Plans, Elevations, Sections : Existing, Dwg No 616: 101, received 19th October 2020;
- Plans, Elevations, Sections : Proposed, Dwg No 616: 102, received 19th October 2020;
- Design and Access Statement, Tim Brook RIBA, October 2020, received 19th October 2020;
- Bat Survey Report, Catcleugh Farm, Northumberland, Total Ecology, September 2020, received 19th October 2020.
- Land Contamination Screening Assessment Form, received 19th October 2020.

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 ST1, ST2, ST4,



DM6, DM7, DM10, DM11 and DM14 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. 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, as the provision of housing in the open countryside would be contrary to the spatial strategy advocated by Local Plan policy ST4 and the NPPF.

4. The development hereby approved should be carried out in strict accordance with the mitigation and enhancement measures detailed within Section 6 of the '*Bat Survey Report, Catcleugh Farm, Northumberland, Total Ecology, September 2020*' Report in particular, attention is drawn to the need to undertake the development in accordance with the requirements in respect of:
 - Erection of 2 bat boxes on site prior to work commencing;
 - incorporation of 2 bat slates in the roof and a wall mounted box on the altered building;
 - Precautionary working methods;

Reason: To ensure the development poses no risk of unacceptable harm to protected species and to ensure the development is in accordance with Local Plan policy DM10, Chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended).

5. If during redevelopment contamination not previously considered is identified, then an additional written Method Statement regarding this material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be occupied until a method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and measures proposed to deal with the contamination have been carried out.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and accommodation are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to any future occupants in accordance with Local Plan policy ST2 and the NPPF.

6. Before the use hereby permitted commences, a scheme for the provision of a sufficient and wholesome supply of water to the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall specify the provisions to be made to ensure that a sufficient supply of water is available (based on an average household consumption of 146 litres per person per day or such other quantity as may be required by any non-domestic water



usage) and treatment required to ensure that the water is wholesome. Thereafter, no part of the development shall be occupied or brought into use until the approved scheme has been fully implemented.

Reason: In the interest of public health and in order to ensure that an adequate private water supply in terms of both wholesomeness and sufficiency can be provided to meet the requirement of the development in accordance with Local Plan policy ST2 and the NPPF.

7. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting associated with the development, full details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details of external lighting 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 thereafter, unless removed entirely.

Reason: In order to ensure that there is no harmful effect upon the tranquillity and intrinsically dark character of the area, including the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park through excessive light pollution, in accordance Local Plan policy DM11 and the NPPF.

8. 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 interest of highway safety, in accordance with Local Plan policy ST2 and the NPPF.

9. The development shall not be occupied until cycle parking shown on the approved plans has been implemented. Thereafter, the cycle parking shall be retained in accordance with the approved plan and shall always be kept available for the parking of cycles.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, residential amenity and sustainable development in accordance with Local Plan policies ST1, ST2 and the NPPF.

10. No external refuse or refuse containers shall be stored outside of the approved refuse storage area except on the day of refuse collection.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the surrounding area and highway safety in accordance with Local Plan policy ST2 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. 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.
4. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980 mud, debris or rubbish shall not be deposited on the highway.

Background Papers

Application File 20NP0083
EIA Screening Report



	Signature	Date
Planning Officer	Colin Godfrey	1 st December 2020
Head of Development Management	<i>Susannah Buylla</i>	01/12/2020