



DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

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| Application Reference Number | 20NP0102 |
| Description / Site Address | Installation of 6no. additional external lighting bollards, The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre, Bardon Mill, Hexham Northumberland NE47 7AN |
| Expiry date of publicity / consultations | 01/02/2021 |
| Last date for decision | 01/03/2021 |

Details of Proposal

This application is seeking approval for the installation of 6no. additional external lighting bollards at The Sill, National Landscape Discovery Centre and Youth Hostel Building. The building is located to the south of the B6318 Military Road and is 2 miles north of Bardon Mill. The building is located within the World Heritage Site 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire'. The application site is also located within the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park

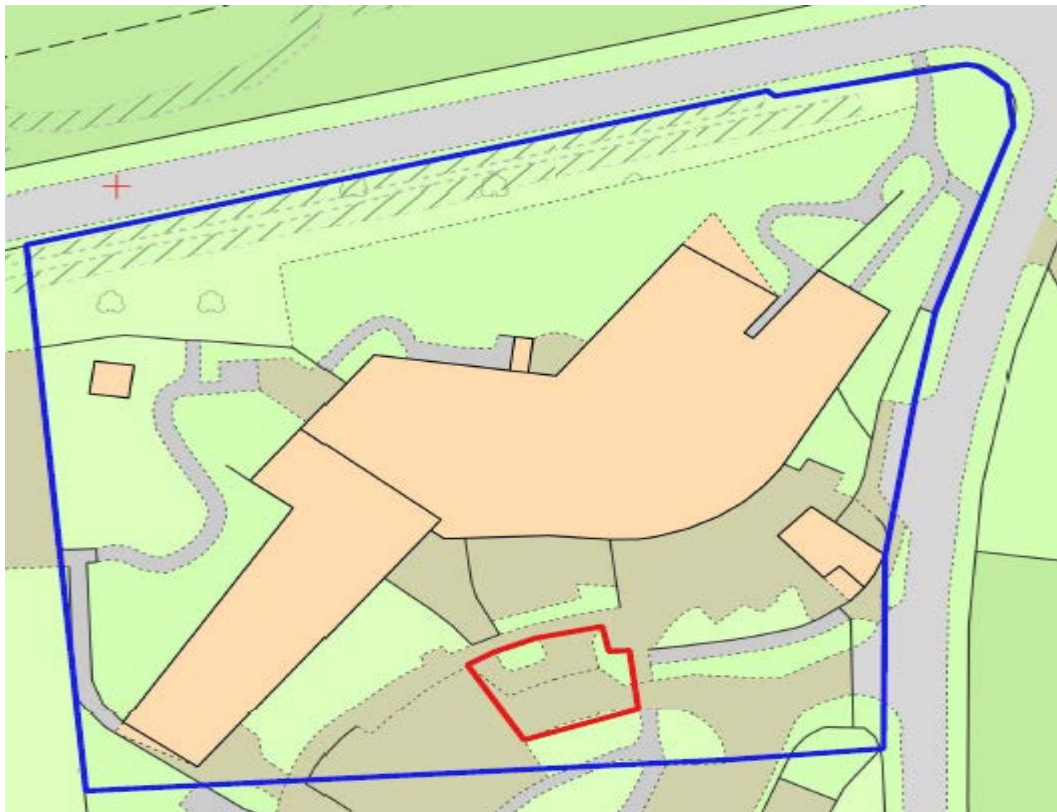


Figure 1: Site location

The applicant seeks permission to install 6no. Erco Castor Bollard Luminaires in close proximity to the existing bus stop adjacent to the entrance of the building. The proposed bollards would be 900mm in height and would be constructed in powder coated aluminium.



The proposed purpose of the additional bollards would be to reduce the risk of trips and falls within the pick-up/ drop off area at The Sill due to poor lighting. The provision of 6 additional bollards would help mitigate the risk of future accidents/injuries occurring at this site.

Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Northumberland National Park Local Plan

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| Policy ST1 | <i>Sustainable Development</i> |
| Policy ST2 | <i>General Development Principles</i> |
| Policy ST4 | <i>Spatial Strategy</i> |
| Policy DM7 | <i>Rural Economy & Diversification</i> |
| Policy DM10 | <i>Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i> |
| Policy DM11 | <i>Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies</i> |
| Policy DM15 | <i>Archaeological 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

- 19NP0001** Approval of details reserved by condition no. 21 (external lighting) *Approved April 2019*
- 18NP0056** Alterations to existing overflow car park incorporating installation of access track and relaying of the green mesh system and creation of new pedestrian access. Construction of 11no. additional car parking spaces in the main car park and installation of additional drainage throughout the site *Approved September 2018*
- 18NP0053** Approval of details reserved by condition no. 21 (external lighting) of planning permission 15NP0087. *Approved July 2018*
- 17NP0054** Works at the north and west of The Sill development incorporating realignment of northern garden footpath and gate, alteration to events space position, addition of seating, infill railing section, 7 no. condenser units and extra gabion basket screening adjacent to bin store, and construction of section of dry stone retaining wall to the northern boundary of the site. *Approved July 2017*



- 17NP0053** Approval of details reserved by condition 21 (external lighting). *Approved May 2017*
- 17NP0016** Advertisement Consent - Non illuminated external signage. *Approved April 2017*
- 17NP0005** Approval of details reserved by condition 20 (car parking payment systems and associated infrastructure) of 15NP0087. *Approved March 2017*
- 15NP0087** Variation of conditions 2, 9 and 12 of 15NP0061 (variations to plans, construction & storage areas). *Approved April 2016*
- 15NP0085** Approval of details reserved by conditions 19, 24 and 25 of 15NP0087. *Approved May 2016*
- 15NP0061** Variation of condition 28 (energy measures) of 14NP0038. *Approved September 2015*
- 14NP0038** The demolition of existing National Park Visitor Centre (D1), Offices (B1), Cafe (A3), Retail (A1) and 79 bed Youth Hostel (Sui Generis) and associated car parking, and redevelopment of site as new Landscape Discovery Centre incorporating Exhibition Space (D1), Cafe (A3), Offices (B1) and Retail (A1) and 86 bed Youth Hostel (Sui Generis) together with 87 No. permanent car parking spaces, 93 No. overflow car parking spaces, associated landscaping, substation and crossing point across the B6318 Military Road, pedestrian ramp within the roadside ditch and formation of pedestrian refuges and route within wooded copse. *Approved October 2014*

Consultation/Representations

Henshaw Parish Council: No Response received

Northumberland County Council Highways: Initial objection to the proposals as the proposed block plan shows illuminated bollards being located within the 'drop-off' bay which would obstruct any vehicles from using this bay. The bay should either be relocated, or the bollards being relocated before the scheme can be considered acceptable in highway terms.

The applicant subsequently revised the previously mentioned drawing, moving the proposed bollards onto the public footway. This was considered an appropriate alteration and addressed all of the concerns raised by the highways officer.

NNPA Historic Environment Officer: No Objection Received

NNPA Visitor Development Officer: No Objection: The Visitor Development Officer made a number of suggestions for appropriate lighting. Two of the options were for lighting from a previous scheme which are not covered under this application and are therefore not relevant.



The Visitor Development Officer suggested the use of a 500mm high version of the Erco Castor Bollard with the 16w/1680 lumen 3000k bulb.

The applicant subsequently responded agreeing to include the proposed bulb. However, the applicant intended to retain the proposed height of 900mm in order to reflect the existing height of the bollards onsite and retain the ground illumination required for health and safety purposes.

Public response: The application has been advertised by means of a site notice displayed on the 13 January 2021. 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

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'. Paragraph H) is especially relevant ensuring proposals *'improve public access to, and enjoyment of, the National Park's Special Qualities*. The degree to which the proposals accord with these qualities is discussed throughout the report.

Location of Development

Policy ST4 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan seeks to direct development to a series of settlements named within the policy. As The Sill 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 there is an essential need for development to meet the needs of...tourism'*. The applicant has explained that the additional bollards are deemed essential as the bus stop area is currently poorly lit, which can lead to trips and falls. The provision of 6 additional bollards is essential to mitigate the risk of accidents and injuries occurring within the pick-up/drop off point.

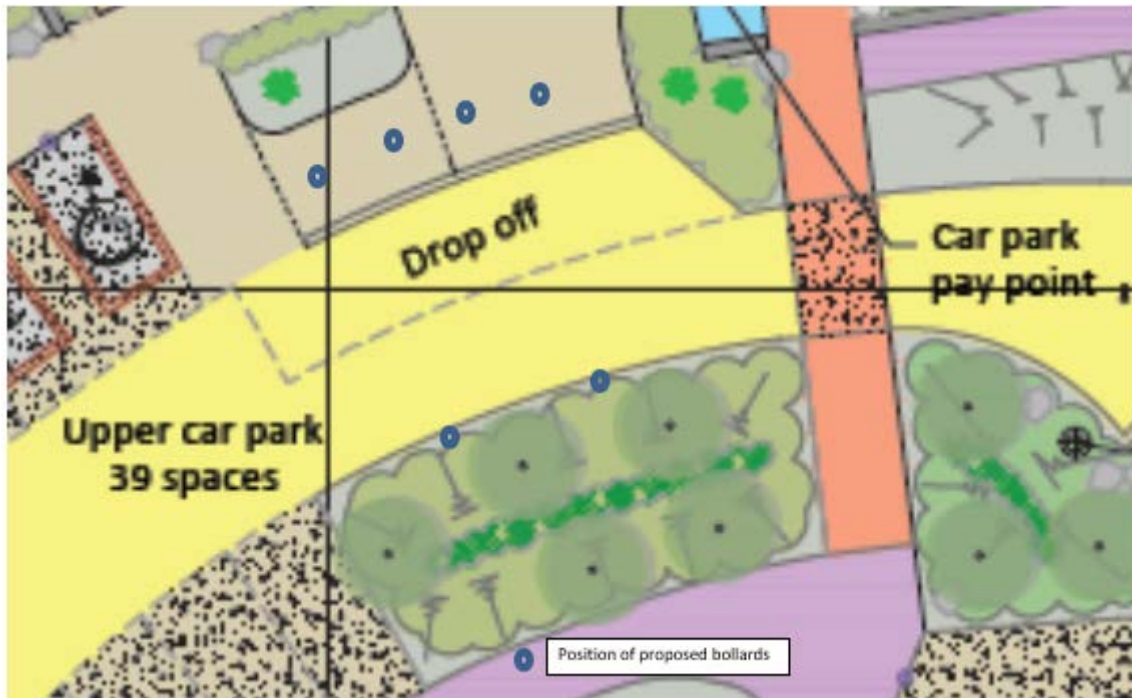


Figure 2: Diagram highlighting location of bollards

Whilst additional lighting structures need to be considered carefully in a Dark Sky location, the principle of a small number of additional lighting is considered acceptable. The proposals comprise a relatively minor alteration within the context of a large, established site in order to improve its functionality. As a result of this, the introduction of additional bollards would constitute an essential form of development and thus the principle of development is acceptable and would meet with the requirements of Policy ST4.

Design and Amenity

Design

Local Plan policy ST2 places an emphasis on ensuring new development is of 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.

The proposal involves the introduction of 6no. additional external bollards at The Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre. The bollards would be located directly adjacent to the bus stop area. The bollards would be 0.9m in height and would be constructed in powder coated aluminium.

The proposed design and finish of the proposed bollards are of a high quality. This would reflect the modern, contemporary design of the host building and its immediate surroundings.



Bollards of a similar height, design and finish are already in place on site. This confirms that the proposal would reflect the local vernacular that it would form part of.



Figure 3: Existing bollards of similar design on site

Bollards of this style are typical features of drop off/pick up points. A development of this kind would be commonplace within a setting of this kind and would not result in an alien feature.

The proposed alterations are relatively modest in scale and as a result would not lead to a material impact in terms of design. As a result of this, the proposal satisfies the requirements of policy ST2 of the Local Plan.

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*'

In this instance as the proposals relate to the provision of six additional bollards in excess of 225m from the nearest neighbouring property outside the ownership of the applicant, it is not considered that the proposals would have any material impact on residential amenity. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Local Plan policy ST2 in this respect.



Impact upon National Park Special Qualities

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 proposal is not located within an ecologically sensitive area and consists of the provision of 6 bollards to a previously developed site. On the basis of the above it is not considered that there would be any material impacts to the biodiversity of the surrounding area they form part of. It is considered that the proposals satisfy the requirements of Policy DM10 of the Local Plan.

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..'*

The proposals involve the creation of 6 additional bollards. Given the small-scale nature of the proposals, it is considered that any impact on landscape or visual amenity would be restricted to the immediate area and limited to those discussed in relation to design (above). It is therefore considered that any impact on wider landscape or visual amenity would not be of a magnitude which would warrant refusal of the application and the proposals are not considered to conflict with the requirements of Local Plan policy DM11 or the NPPF in relation to landscape.



Figure 4: Location of proposed bollard

Tranquillity

Local Plan policy DM11 requires amongst others that ‘*The level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development during construction and thereafter is minimised and dark night skies maintained*’ and ‘*All development proposals should avoid external lighting where possible. Where external lighting is necessary its design should avoid all unacceptable adverse impacts, or as a last resort mitigate them to...avoid adverse impacts on tranquillity, dark skies.*’.

The site is in a sensitive location within the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. As the proposal involves the installation of external lighting it is essential that the lighting proposed is appropriate and would not lead to an unacceptable increase in light pollution.

The proposed Erco Castor Bollards benefit from downlighter hats which prevent uplighting from occurring. The low lumen count also ensures that the area to be illuminated will be a radius of 1.5m. This ensures the proposal would not result in unacceptable light pollution.

The applicant has also confirmed that the bollards will be set on a timer which will ensure the lights are switched off at 8pm each night. This ensures that the proposal will reduce the impacts of light pollution when the night sky is at its most visible.

The Authority’s Visitor Development Officer was consulted on the proposals. It is noted that part of the Officer’s response referred to previously developed external lighting on site that does not form part of this application. The officer confirmed that the Erco Castor Bollard is an appropriate choice for use within the Northumberland Dark Sky Park but suggested a warmer 3000k bulb and a lower height model of 500mm. It was also suggested to reduce the light splay from 360 degrees to 180 degrees with the light solely focused on the road surface. These suggestions would help to reduce the impacts to the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park.



The applicant subsequently agreed for the use of the warmer bulb. The applicant did not agree that the height should be reduced as this would restrict the overall light splay and compromise health and safety.

The applicant also agreed to use 180-degree splay bollards for the two bollards located within the planting area to the opposite side of the road. However, the four bollards located within the pedestrian area should remain as a 360-degree splay in order to provide the best visibility for pedestrians. This is considered a reasonable compromise that will help prevent the impact to the dark sky park without compromising health and safety on site.

The bulb and light splays will be secured by an appropriately worded condition attached to the final decision notice.

As a result of this, the proposals would be in accord with the requirements of Local Plan policy DM11 and the NPPF in relation to tranquility.

Cultural Heritage

Policy DM14 of the Local Plan requires '*development affecting historic landscape assets of the National Park to conserve and enhance landscape quality and character by taking into consideration the elements which contribute to its significance*'.

The application site is located within the setting of the '*Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall*' World Heritage Site. The site is also directly adjacent to a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments including '*The Vallum*'. As a result of the sensitivity of the site, the Authority's Historic Environment Officer was consulted on the proposals.

The Historic Environment Officer confirmed that due to the scale of the proposals and the fact that the area has already undertaken significant built development, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any material impact to any designated heritage assets within the surrounding area.

Highways

Policy ST2 Paragraph j) requires an accessible, safe and secure environment for potential users and without compromising highway safety. As the proposal involves alterations within close proximity to a public bus stop, Northumberland County Council Highways have been consulted on the proposals.

The Council's Highways Officer initially raised concerns over the location proposed in the visual plan of the proposed bollards. The plan highlighted the bollards within the area in which buses currently stop to pick up/drop off passengers. This error was subsequently addressed by the applicant. The visual plan now clearly highlights the bollards located within the pedestrian area of the site.



The proposals would not compromise the safety of road users and raises no material impacts in terms of highways safety. As a result of this, the proposal satisfies the requirements of policy ST2 of the Local Plan.

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 14 December 2020;
- Design & Access Statement received 14 December 2020
- Erco Castor Bollard Luminaire Technical Specification Brochure received 14 December 2020
- Additional lighting site plan Dwg no: SIL-GK-00-ZZ-DR-L-8400 received 14 December 2020
- Plan with lamp examples Dwg No10078218 received 14 December 2020
- Revised Location Plan received 4 January 2021
- Revised detail plan received 2 February 2021
- Email from applicant providing justification of additional lights received 4 February 2021

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, DM2, DM10 and DM11 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. The exact model of the four proposed bollards within the pick up/drop off area should be 'Erco Castor Bollard luminaire 5000mm 3000k CRI 97 with a 360 degree light splay unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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 Northumberland National Park Local Plan Policies ST2 and DM11 and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.



4. The exact model of the two bollards located within the planting area opposite the drop off/pick up point should be Erco Castor Bollard luminaire 5000mm 3000k CRI 97' with a 180-degree light splay unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

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 Northumberland National Park Local Plan Policies ST2 and DM11 and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

5. The bollards hereby permitted shall be operated in line with the measures set out in the design and access statement. This includes the lighting shall be operated on a set timer so they are off when the building is unoccupied, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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 Northumberland National Park Local Plan Policies ST2 and DM11 and paragraph 180 of 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.



Background Papers

Application File 20NP0102
EIA Screening Report

| | Signature | Date |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Planning Officer | A Ewart | 09/02/2021 |
| Head of Development Management | <i>Susannah Buylla</i> | 09/02/2021 |