

**Greystead Old Church
Change of Use
Accompanying Statement**



Greystead Old Church

January 2021

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Introduction

Greystead is a hamlet and civil parish in Northumberland, along the banks of the river North Tyne about 5 miles west of Bellingham. The population as of the 2011 census was less than 100. It shares a parish council with the adjacent civil parish of Tarncliffe (Tarncliffe and Greystead).

The hamlet of Greystead consists of a cluster of four buildings: Greystead Rectory, Greystead Old Church, Greystead Cottage, and Greystead Institute.

Greystead Rectory

Grade II Listed Building. The Rectory is now a private house. It was constructed in 1818 to the designs of H.H. Seward, a pupil of Sir John Soane, for the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital and is of ashlar with graduated Lakeland slate roof.

Greystead Old Church

The former St. Luke's church is a Grade II Listed Building dating to 1818 by H. H. Steward. It formed one of a group of four new churches erected to serve new parishes created from outlying parts of the medieval parish of Simonburn, which originally stretched from Hadrian's Wall to the Carter Bar (the other churches in the group are Wark, Humshaugh and Thorneyburn). In 1998 St. Luke's was closed as a place of worship. Planning and Listed Building approval was granted in 2012 for the conversion of the church to provide four-bedroomed holiday accommodation, and the building was restored and converted to holiday cottage use in 2013, opening as a holiday cottage in September 2013.

Greystead Cottage

A detached Georgian Coach House by H.H. Seward, dating to 1818, with 1930s extension, this sits within the grounds of the listed Old Rectory, and has been converted from the former Coachman's house and stables.

Greystead Institute

This late Victorian stone building with slate roof, dating to 1895, was formerly a church of England hall used for church and other functions. It stood empty and derelict from 1975, when it was sold by the Church of England, until 2017.

Following the sale of the building in 2017 to the present owners, planning approval was granted in 2017 to convert the Institute into a two-bedroomed holiday let, and from 2018-19 the building was restored and converted to holiday cottage use, opening in May 2019

Proposals

Our client runs three high-quality 5* and 4* self-catering cottages at Greystead. Following many successful years providing self-catering accommodation for large and medium-sized parties of mixed households, our client has made the decision that they wish to reduce the size of their enterprise. This change has been driven by economic and personal circumstances:

COVID-19 has significantly impacted on the capacity of both Greystead Old Church and the other holiday cottages at Greystead. Typically, groups of friends or two or more households would occupy the building. However, due to extended Government restrictions on groups of people meeting, it has recently been impossible for our client's guests to enjoy the building, resulting in a significant loss of bookings.

The additional requirement for sanitising properties due to Covid-19 is extensive, Greystead Old Church is a vast space, with it taking well over 6 hours x two cleaners (so 12-13 hours in total) to carry out the necessary procedures between change overs. The requirements to clean and sanitise are significant impacts on the business model. These additional measures impact upon bookings and financial viability, as a whole day needs to be allocated purely to clean and sanitise each building ready for its next guests. Our client anticipates that this situation will continue to reduce bookings and economic potential for the foreseeable future.

In addition, our client is now elderly and in poor health, another key reason making it difficult to run the business effectively in this situation. Our client therefore wishes to reduce the burden of the building in its current use whilst ensuring that their hard work converting the Church is retained to ensure that it does not fall back into disrepair.

This application is for the change of use of Greystead Old Church from holiday accommodation into permanent residential use.

The proposals include no works to the buildings or any landscaping works.

Greystead Old Church: The building - as converted



Open plan living areas and kitchen are over two floors



Twin bedroom



Greystead Old Church: Listed building statement

Listing description:

GREYSTEAD GREYSTEAD NY 78 NE 31/18 Church of St. Luke

Parish church. 1818 by H.H. Seward for the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital. Ashlar with graduated Lakeland slate roof.

West tower, nave and chancel in one, and north vestry.

Tower is also porch with pointed-arched doorway in broad chamfered surround. Small lancet above and bell stage of 3 tall close-set lancets. Castellated parapet.

3-bay church with tall Y-tracery windows in broad chamfered surrounds. Concave cornice. East end has 3-light window with intersecting tracery; also, in the gable, a round window. The gable has a solid corniced parapet with a niche and a cross at the apex.

Interior is a single space with panelled dado and moulded dado rail. Flat ceiling. Simple but of pleasing proportions.

Listing NGR: NY7707585812

Historical context and character

Greystead Old Church (the former St. Luke's) dates to 1818, and is one of a group of four new churches erected under an Act of Parliament in 1811 to serve outlying parts of the vast medieval parish of Simonburn, which stretched from Hadrian's Wall to Carter Bar, following a decision to divide this "Great Parish" into seven. The four churches were paid for by the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital, Patrons of the Living and Lords of the Manor. The Commissioners used these new parishes to provide livings for retired chaplains in the Royal Navy, and this remained the case until the 1920s, when preferments to the livings were transferred to the Diocese of Newcastle, and the buildings were transferred to the care of the Church Commissioners.

St. Luke's was designed by Greenwich Hospital architect Henry Hake Seward. At the same time as the church, and others in the group, were erected, the ancient chapel-of-ease at Bellingham was given a parish of its own, and shortly afterwards the chapel at Falstone was rebuilt and given a parish. Five new parishes, including St. Luke's, were formed in 1818. Seward was architect and Clerk of Works for the new churches, and the successful tenderers for the churches and parsonages at Greystead and Thorneyburn were Messrs. Rewcastle & Green of Corbridge. St Luke's was to cost £3,722; the 12 acres of land on which to build church and rectory had been purchased from a Mr. Lovett for £1,050. The living at Greystead was the 'least valuable' of the new North Tyne livings, and E.H. Locker's 1822 Greenwich Hospital report notes that it would not provide an income of more than £150 per annum. The new churches and rectories including at Greystead were completed in 1818.

Mr. Locker's 1821-2 reports on the Greenwich churches noted that they were "very well finished, and unexceptionable in design" and that the parsonages were on a modest scale. Locker also discusses the provision of new churches in a 'thinly populated district'; however he concluded that provision should be made for a 'progressively increasing population' and possible changes in church attendance.

Seward's four Northumbrian churches for the Governors of Greenwich Hospital are described as "small Gothic churches of the simplest kind", although it can be argued that the Gothic elements are restricted to windows and doorways in structures of essentially classical proportions. Their simplicity is offset by the competence of the designs and the high quality of building work one would expect from an architect who devoted much of his life to the official duties of a surveyor. St. Luke's has a simple plan of a rectangular nave-cum-chancel with West tower and North vestry.

Assessment of significance:

The main points of significance in the building are:

- On the exterior, the smooth ashlar masonry gives St Luke's and the other churches a neat, trim look typical of the more urbane work of the late Georgian period. The nave has a chamfered plinth, with three pointed windows in the South wall and two in the North, all with chamfered surrounds and Y-tracery, but no hoods. The East wall has a three-light window of the same type as the others. The vestry which occupies the space between the two windows in the North wall has a smaller Y-traceried North window. The West tower, with porch below, is of three stages; in the west face of the lowest stage is a pointed window with Y-tracery. In front of this, stone steps surrounded by iron railings run down to the boiler room below. In the South face of the Tower is the entrance door, again with pointed arch. The middle stage has a small, pointed window in each of the three exposed faces and the uppermost stage has three equal louvred lancets in each face, surmounted by a parapet without pinnacles.
- **WINDOWS** Almost all the windows (apart from the East window and the Tower windows; see below) are rectangular quarry glazing, they are not contemporary with the building of the church, so therefore most likely date to the 1880s renovations, at which time quarry glass of the kind used here was in vogue in church interiors.
- **POWELL OF WHITEFRIARS GLASS** The Whitefriars Glass Company was one of Britain's longest-running, and arguably most innovative, glassworks, dating back to the 17th century. The major church building programme of the Victorian era, in which, given the predominance of the Gothic revival style, stained glass was of particular importance, caused their business to flourish. In the late 19th century, the firm formed a close association with leading designers including Burne-Jones and William de Morgan, also, from the 1850s, producing domestic table glass. Another important aspect of the firm's production was decorative stamped or pressed 'quarry glass', used, as at St. Luke's, as a cheaper alternative to stained glass. In the early 19th Century James Crofts Powell, ran the stained-glass department of the firm, and this side of the firm's production is said in one source to have flourished into the 1920s with a demand for memorial windows. The St. Luke's memorial window of c. 1910 belongs to this later phase of Powell of Whitefriars stained glass.



Victorian glazing in window (c. 1910)

- **CHURCH FURNISHINGS, BELL AND MEMORIALS** The bell by R. Watson of Newcastle upon Tyne (which dates to 1817), was left in situ during the 2013 restoration works and remains there today. The monument to the church's first Rector, the Revd. George Rennell, a former chaplain in the Royal Navy, a simple plain white tablet on sarcophagus-shaped black ground, is by Davies of Newcastle (1844). This was relocated to the porch as part of the 2013 works. The original altar table and one former pew c.1880 have been retained as furnishings, as have the gas lights, which were converted to electricity in 2013, and the metal coat hooks in the porch.

Minimising potential harm to the building:

The proposal will make no changes to any physical elements of the building. Previous work has been carried out by the same project team throughout, ensuring that all proposals are based on:

- Analysis of the existing building fabric and history to gain an understanding of the building and its setting
- No alteration or potential loss to any historic building fabric
- Ensuring the proposals will not cause any 'substantial harm' to the building as defined by the NPPF
- The character, legibility and integrity of the building will be maintained



The Vestry Bedroom

Design & Access Statement

Use

The proposed use of the building is for permanent residential purposes as a Principal Residence. The building is currently used for short-term residential purposes in the form of holiday accommodation.

Amount

There are no proposed changes to the floor area.

The proposal will create one high-quality four-bedroomed Principal Residence family home within Northumberland National Park.

Layout

The layout of the proposals will remain unchanged.

Scale

The scale of the proposals is entirely within the existing building with no proposed building works or change to the building's appearance.

Appearance

The appearance of the building will remain unchanged.

Access

Access will remain unchanged.

Planning history

Greystead Church

App No	Location	Proposal	Decision
13NP0038	St Luke's former CofE Church, Greystead, Tarsset, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LE	Approval of details reserved by condition No. 9 of planning permission 12NP0085 in respect of change of use and conversion of former church to four-bedroom holiday accommodation	Approved
13NP0039	St Luke's former CofE Church, Greystead, Tarsset, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LE	Approval of details reserved by conditions Nos. 4, 13 and 15 of Listed Building Consent 12NP0086LBC in respect of conversion of former church to	Approved

App No	Location	Proposal	Decision
		four-bedroom holiday accommodation	
13NP0003	St Luke's former CofE Church, Greystead, Tarsset, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LE	Approval of details reserved by conditions Nos. 4, 5 and 8 of planning permission 12NP0085 in respect of change of use and conversion of former church to four-bedroom holiday accommodation	Approved
13NP0004	St Luke's former CofE Church, Greystead, Tarsset, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LE	Approval of details reserved by conditions Nos. 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 of Listed Building Consent 12NP0086LBC in respect of conversion of former church to four-bedroom holiday accommodation	Approved
12NP0085	St Luke's former CofE Church, Greystead, Tarsset, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LE	Change of use and conversion of former church to four-bedroom holiday accommodation	Granted
12NP0086LBC	St Luke's former CofE Church, Greystead, Tarsset, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LE	Listed Building Consent in respect of conversion of former church to four-bedroom holiday accommodation	Granted
97NP0055	St. Luke's Church, Greystead, Tarsset, Hexham, Northumberland	Change of use from church to domestic storage	Granted

Planning Policy Considerations

Development Plan Policy

Northumberland National Park Local Plan 2017 -2037 Policies

- ST4 Spatial Strategy
- ST5 New Housing
- DM6 Conversion of buildings
- DM14 Historic Landscape Assets and Built Heritage

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014, as updated)

Issues for consideration

- Principle of the development
- Design and impact on the Listed Building
- Impact on residential amenity

Assessment of proposal

Strategic Spatial Objectives

The Northumberland National Park Authority Local Plan (2017-2037) sets out 9 Strategic Spatial Objectives which support the aims and objectives of the Authority's Management Plan. The Strategic Objectives which are relevant to this proposal are:

1. Support locally-sustainable development that will improve the National Park as a high quality place to live, work and visit.
2. Support development that will maintain existing services, infrastructure and community facilities or develop new ones for the benefit of local communities.
3. Support sustainable land management that conserves and enhances the National Park's distinctive natural and cultural qualities and protects its assets.
4. Support the sustainable use of ecosystem services and natural capital.
5. Encourage development that will support a growing, sustainable, diverse and resilient local economy, to help make the National Park (and its gateway settlements) a more attractive option for young adults and people of working age to live and work in.
6. Use the planning system to help deliver the statutory National Park purposes of: conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and, the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Special Qualities of the National Park by the public.
7. Encourage development in locations with the best access to existing services and facilities, and where it will not be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change or will increase resilience to it.
8. Support innovative, high-quality and more sustainable building design that complements the distinctive character of the National Park.
9. Ensure the landscape of the National Park continues to be responsive and resilient to change while at the same time conserving and enhancing its character.

This proposal supports and contributes to these Strategic Spatial Objectives, notably Objectives 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. It will create a new permanent four-bedroomed residential unit within Northumberland National Park, thereby contributing to the mix of housing stock in the area and residents who will support local communities, services and facilities encouraging a more sustainable local economy. The proposal is entirely for a change of use from holiday accommodation to residential thereby creates no new development and no impact upon landscape or local character.

The existing building is a historic asset of the Northumberland National Park, contributing to its distinctive character. The building has been conserved in a sensitive manner and our client wishes to maintain this by ensuring that the building has a viable future.

Principle of the development

The change of use of the building is entirely domestic in nature; this is consistent with the existing use of the building.

The application site lies within the open countryside as defined by point 2 of Policy ST4 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan (2017-2037). Item a) of point 2 of the Policy gives provision for reusing buildings for a principal residence provided the proposal is in accordance with Policy DM6 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan (2017-2037). Point d) further supports this principle should the proposal be supported elsewhere by relevant Local Plan policies.

Policy ST5 point 3) b vii) identifies that new housing will be permitted in the open countryside as a principal residence subject to a number of criteria including where the building is being converted in accordance with policy DM6.

Policy DM6, point 2 identifies the criterion for which proposals to convert buildings in the open countryside should be assessed. They include:

- the building makes a positive contribution to the landscape and special qualities of the National Park; the proposal is to change the use of a Grade II Listed Building into permanent residential use. By virtue of its heritage and listed status the building can be considered to have a positive impact upon the landscape of Northumberland National Park.
- it is structurally sound and capable of conversion; the building is substantial in its construction, high quality conversion works have been carried out already, and no further works are proposed.
- it is of a sufficient size to accommodate the proposal; the building provides generous living and amenity space.
- the proposal is of a high-quality design; the works carried out is of high quality in terms of its design and execution.
- No changes to the curtilage or access are proposed; there is no proposed change to the access, curtilage or car parking that would unacceptably affect the character and appearance of the building or surrounding landscape; and that
- the requirements of Policy DM14 are met; see section below for discussion on this policy.

The proposal involves the change of use of the existing building, which had already been converted in 2013 to provide self-catering accommodation. The conversion works are of high quality, making a positive improvement to the surrounding landscape of the area. The proposal does not involve any change to the access, curtilage or car parking arrangements which are currently in place. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable with regard to Policy ST4, Policy ST5 and point 2 of Policy DM6.

Point 3 of Policy DM6 outlines the need for the proposal to fit into the surrounding landscape,

- criterion c) i) highlights that principal residence housing should be permitted so long as it is located within an existing group of buildings that have a close physical relationship to each other and also include an existing residential unit within that group. The hamlet of Greystead consists of Greystead Old Church, Greystead Institute, Greystead Rectory and Greystead Cottage (the former Coach House), the latter two having residential use. The buildings are

within a close proximity to each other, with boundaries touching to form the cluster of the hamlet, thereby conforming to criterion c) i) of point 3 in Policy DM6.

- Point ii) of part C states that ‘the building is redundant or disused and the conversion would enhance its immediate setting’. Greystead Old Church was disused in 2012 when the planning permission to convert the building into a holiday property was approved. Our client has been passionate about restoring the building, however local planning policy at that time precluded the conversion of redundant buildings into a residential use. Therefore, the only option then available to our client was conversion into a commercial use, i.e. a holiday let, rather than the preferred option of becoming a residence. If the current policy had been in operation in 2012 Greystead Old Church would have been converted into a residential property at that time.

Since its conversion in 2013, Greystead Old Church has catered for multiple groups of people who want to explore Northumberland National Park from a luxury base. It caters for groups of up to eight people. There has been an increase in such type of accommodation in the area, particularly in recent years. Due to the pandemic of COVID-19 our client has experienced a significant downturn in bookings for the Old Church, resulting in a dramatic loss of income. Coupled with the additional sanitising requirements between guests creating considerable extra expenditure, Greystead Old Church is becoming a significant burden to our client. The maintenance and repair works required for the building are not insignificant; with increased costs for sanitising, and a decrease in bookings, our client is experiencing significant constraints which impact upon their ability to ensure that the maintenance and repair works of this Listed Building are carried out. These factors are expected to continue throughout 2021 and potentially well beyond, with our client wishing to change the use of the building into residential use to ensure that their high-quality restoration and repairs in 2013, bringing the building back into use, are kept in good order, and that the building does not become again disused, as it was for most of 2020, and has been so far in 2021 owing to Covid-19.

Considering the above it is our opinion that the principle of this type of development is acceptable in accordance with Northumberland National Park Local Plan (2017-2037), and the NPPF.

Design and impact on the Listed Building

The main issue for consideration in the determination of this application falls on whether the proposal would safeguard and enhance the character and special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building of Greystead Old Church.

Policy DM14 sets out principles to conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape environment and character, point 2 identifies that the National Park Authority will seek to preserve features in situ. Given the nature of this proposal, which is to change the use from short-term residential holiday lets to permanent residential dwelling use, the proposal will retain the building as existing and make no changes to it, thereby conforming with Policy DM14 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan (2017-2037) and the NPPF.

Impact upon residential amenity

No works are intended, therefore it is considered that the proposal would not cause any adverse impact upon the amenity of the adjacent neighbouring property in terms of loss of outlook, overshadowing, loss of light, overbearing or loss of privacy as a result of the layout of the units. Indeed, it is considered that there will be a beneficial reduction in vehicular movements, with one sole family using the site as opposed to two or more family units. Additionally, the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties is likely to reduce, with holiday makers more likely to use outdoor space more frequently

than permanent residents. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal is in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and Northumberland National Park Local Plan (2017-2037).

Other Matters

Northumberland National Park Authority Management Plan

Northumberland National Park Authority's Management Plan (2016-2021) sets out its Vision and objectives and how the work that they, partners and the wider community will guide their work in order to achieve that Vision.

A Distinctive Place is Strategic Aim 2 of the Management Plan, outcome 2.1 is 'a distinctive place that will maintain a sense of inspiration and tranquility'. The outcomes are subdivided into objectives, with objective 2.1.3 setting out to 'ensure that all new development within or on the fringe of the National Park will conserve or enhance the natural and cultural qualities of the National Park.' This proposal retains the existing building of Greystead Church and ensures that the significance of the building is retained for future generations. There are no alterations proposed to the building, and no change to site.

Aim 4 of the NNPA's Management Plan is Thriving Communities 'To ensure the thriving and vibrant communities have a strong sense of place and an economy grounded in the natural and cultural qualities of the National Park.' Objective 4.2.1 seeks to ensure that there is a balanced range of housing that meets local needs, and 4.2.2 identifies the need to retain rural services. By creating a new permanent 4 bedroomed residential unit with residents who will use local services this proposal will add to those objectives. Outcome 4.3 aims for opportunities to work and live in the resilient communities in and around the National Park through more young adults and people of working age living in the National Park (4.3.1). This proposal will create a 4 bedroomed residential unit, a decent family-sized dwelling in the National Park therefore contributing towards objective 4.3.1.

Summary

Doonan Architects believe that this application provides the optimum solution for Greystead Old Church, ensuring that the building has the potential for flexibility to ensure that the future use of the building retains the high-quality conversion works already carried out by our client.

The aesthetic, social and historical features of the important historic building of Greystead Old Church within Northumberland National Park are retained, particularly ensuring that the building does not fall into disrepair. The impact upon the landscape and buildings will remain unchanged, and the proposal provides the opportunity to add to the permanent residential housing stock of the Northumberland National Park by creating one high-quality four-bedroomed Principal Residence property for permanent residential use, thus contributing to both aim 2 and 4 of the Northumberland National Park Authority's Management Plan (A Distinctive Place; and A Thriving Community) and the Strategic Spatial Objectives of the Local Plan.