

**Greystead Institute  
Change of Use  
Accompanying Statement**



Greystead Institute

*January 2021*

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## Introduction

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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 designed by H.H. Seward, a pupil of Sir John Soane, for the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital of ashlar with graduated Lakeland slate roof, and completed in 1818.

### Greystead Old Church

The former St. Luke's church is a Grade II Listed Building by H. H. Steward, dating to 1818. It formed one of a group of four churches erected to serve new parishes formed out of outlying parts of the medieval parish of Simonburn, which 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, 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

Greystead Institute is one of three high-quality 5\* and 4\* self-catering holiday cottages at Greystead with many successful years of providing self-catering accommodation for large and medium-sized parties of mixed households within Northumberland National Park. It is a partner business of Greystead Holiday Cottages, and is owned by our clients, but managed on their behalf by the owner of Greystead Holiday Cottages. Recently however, our clients have been obliged to change the business structure of their enterprise owing to changing economic and personal circumstances:

COVID-19 has significantly impacted on the capacity of Greystead Institute. Typically, couples, small groups of friends or members of either one or two families would occupy the building. However, due to extended Government restrictions on groups of people meeting, it has recently been impossible for our clients' guests to enjoy the building, resulting in a significant loss of bookings and income, which it is anticipated will continue throughout 2021 and potentially well beyond.

The additional requirement for sanitising the property due to Covid-19 is extensive, Greystead Institute takes around 4 hours x two cleaners (so 8 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 further impact upon bookings and financial viability, as a large amount of time now needs to be allocated purely to clean and sanitise the building ready for its next guests. Our clients anticipate that this situation will continue to reduce bookings and economic potential for the foreseeable future.

In addition, our clients' do not live on site. A family member acts on their behalf as their manager, and is now elderly and in poor health, another key reason making it very difficult to run the business effectively in this situation. For all these reasons our clients are therefore now unable to run Greystead Institute successfully as a business, and they therefore wish to reduce the burden of the building in its current use whilst ensuring that their hard work converting the Institute is retained to ensure that it does not fall back into disrepair.

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

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

## Greystead Institute: The building - as converted

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The side extension to Greystead Institute was added during its conversion in 2018. The Garden Room (below) reflects the existing building, with a slate roof, stone walls, and timber windows and doors. It is located on the western elevation in the location of a previous lean-to extension, and is set back from the north 'frontage' gable wall.





Internally the standard of finish is very high, with the former balcony being opened up with the inclusion of a beautifully hand-crafted spiral stair joining the two floors, making the former derelict building a very attractive and usable space for both holiday lets (currently) and good quality permanent Principal Residence use (proposed).

## Greystead Institute: History of the building

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Greystead Institute was built in 1895 on land sited just beyond, but adjacent to, Greystead's nineteenth century Walled Garden,, after the Rector's neighbour, Peter Lockie Clark of The Hott, a neighbouring farm, gifted it to the Church of England for use as a Sunday school for local children. The surviving 'indenture' recording Clark's gift makes it clear that the aim was to provide religious instruction in the Anglican faith within the Parish: the land, and future building, were for use by the Rector as a "Sunday School or Schools for the education of children and adults or children only of the labouring manufacturing and other poorer classes in the parish of Greystead". Teachers, who had to be members of the Church of England, were appointed by the Rector or officiating minister.

As well as a Sunday School, the Institute could also originally be used for church services, for meetings of the clergy or societies with "religious philanthropic charitable or benevolent" purposes, or indeed for any meetings which had "in view the spiritual intellectual moral or social wants of the neighbouring population". These stipulations confirm the Institute's religious and charitable purposes at the time it was built.

The parcel of land which Lockie Clark gifted for building the Institute is recorded as being a "piece or parcel of land containing Four hundred and thirty eight and eight ninths square yards or thereabouts situate at Greystead in the parish of Greystead". Major donations towards building the Institute were made by local landowners, including Lockie Clark himself.

Only in the twentieth century did the Institute's role in the local community become more general, involving activities such as dances, whist drives, and – at least in one case - a wedding reception, although a minstrels' gallery suggests that musical activity was intended from the start. A very damaged scene painting was found during the 2018 restoration, suggesting that some theatrical performances were held here in the twentieth century. At least early in the twentieth century, sports were played in the farmer's fields outside, so the building was very much a focal point for residents who lived near Greystead. The Moorcock Inn, only a few doors away, also offered a convivial centre point for the parish of Greystead.

By the 1970s, however, Greystead had long ceased to be a parish, and was now part of neighbouring Thorneyburn parish. As a result, the church Institute had fallen out of use, and in 1975 the Church of England sold the building. It was bought by two members of the local community who lived nearby, so they used it only for storage, and the building became dilapidated. Our client's family had always hoped to add the Institute to their other holiday cottages at Greystead, so when it was offered to them in 2016 by the executor of the two sisters who had owned it for forty years our client jumped at the chance to be able to purchase and restore it. By this time the Institute had become a complete time warp, filled

with old newspapers, tins for biscuits and cocoa, and other 1970s memorabilia. In early 2018 works began, and the first guests arrived in May 2019. The building retains many of the Victorian features such as the pine floor, fireplace and wooden beams, while the design of the original large open space remains unchanged.

Eleven months later, after a very successful start, Greystead Institute was closed in March 2020 for three months due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and since been permitted to open only periodically, and with restricted numbers of guests, until the beginning of November 2020. Since then, the accommodation has again been closed due to the pandemic.

### **Assessment of significance:**

Although not a listed building in its own right, Greystead Institute undoubtedly has a historic legacy and is a key building in the landscape in this area of Northumberland National Park.

The main points of significance in the building are;

- The exterior, construction and internal design of the building remains as originally planned. The inclusion of an extension in 2018 was on the footprint of a later addition to the original building and its traditional stone and slate construction is in keeping with the original building.
- Windows and doors are of timber construction and are 'like for like' replacements of the original windows and doors
- Timber features such as beams and pine floor are original and have been restored to provide attractive features.
- The fireplace is original and has been fully restored.
- The original large open space of the double height building has been retained, with the mezzanine floor replicating the minstrels' gallery, and providing access to the first floor.

### **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



## **Design & Access Statement**

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### **Use**

The proposed use of the building is for permanent Principal Residence housing. 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 two-bedroomed family home within Northumberland National Park.

### **Layout**

The layout of the proposal will remain unchanged.

### **Scale**

The scale of the proposal is entirely within the existing buildings 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

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### Greystead Institute

App No	Location	Proposal	Decision
17NP0061	Greystead Institute, Greystead, Tasset, Hexham, NE48 1LE	Change of use of former church institute building to holiday accommodation and construction of extension	Complete Granted Conditionally

## Planning Policy Considerations

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### 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
- 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 two-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, although not a designated historic asset, does contribute to the historic past 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 criteria 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 non-designated heritage asset into permanent residential use. By virtue of its heritage, 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 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 are of high quality in terms of their 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.

The proposal involves the change of use of the existing building, which had already been converted in 2018 to provide self-catering accommodation. The conversion works are of high quality, making a positive improvement to the surrounding landscape of the area. The proposals do 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 Institute was derelict until works were completed in 2019. 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 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 2017, Greystead Institute would have been converted into a residential property at that time.

Greystead Institute has catered for small groups of visitors (up to four people) who want to explore Northumberland National Park from a luxury base. 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 Institute, resulting in a dramatic loss of income. Coupled with the additional sanitising requirements between guests creating considerable extra expenditure, and our clients’ manager’s age and health, Greystead Institute is becoming a significant burden to our clients. 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 building are carried out. These factors are expected to continue into 2021 and potentially well beyond, with our clients wishing to change the use of the building into residential use to ensure that their high-quality restoration and repairs, bringing the building back into use, are kept in good order,

and that the building does not become again disused, as it was for many months in 2020, and is expected to be in 2021 and potentially well beyond, 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.

### **Impact upon residential amenity**

Due to the location and nature of the works (i.e. no changes are proposed), 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 up to two 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 to guide the work of the National Park Authority, their partners and the wider community.

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 Institute 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 highquality family-sized dwelling in the National Park therefore contributing towards objective 4.3.1.

### **Summary**

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Doonan Architects believe that this application provides the optimum solution for Greystead Institute 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 non-designated heritage asset of Greystead Institute within Northumberland National Park building 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.