

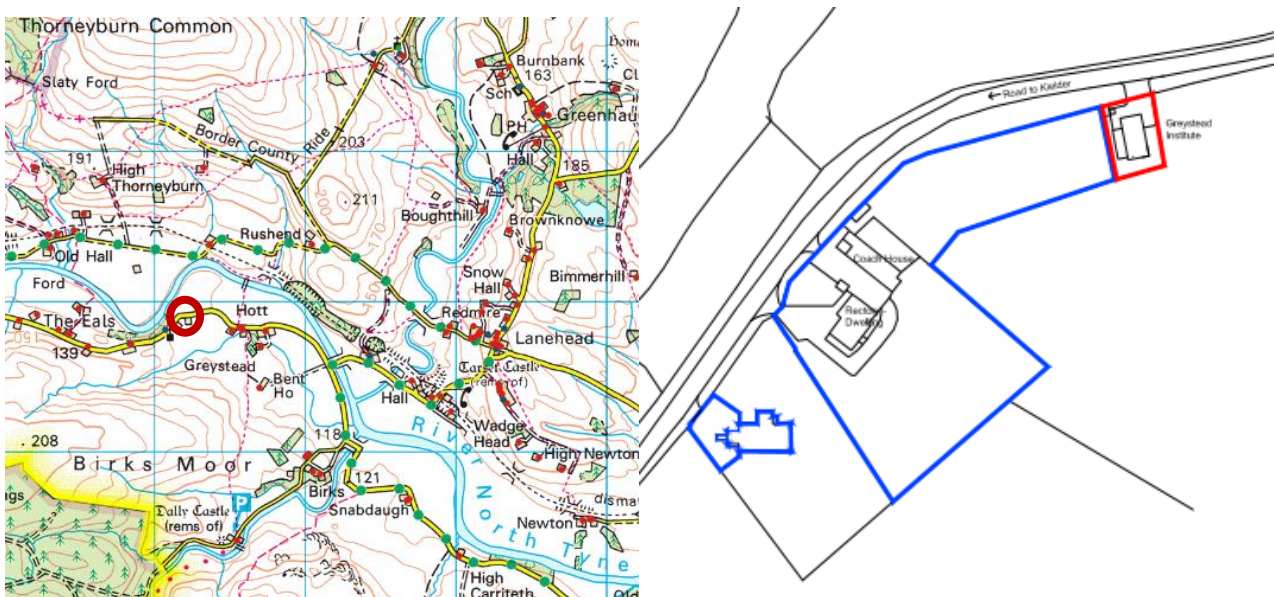


**DELEGATED DECISION REPORT**

<b>Application Reference Number</b>	21NP0003
<b>Description / Site Address</b>	Change of use from holiday accommodation to principal residence housing at Greystead Institute, Tasset Hexham Northumberland NE48 1LE
<b>Expiry date of publicity / consultations</b>	8 February 2021
<b>Last date for decision</b>	11 March 2021

**Details of Proposal**

The application seeks approval for a change of use of Greystead Institute, a former church hall located at the edge of the hamlet of Greystead, from a holiday unit to principal residence housing. The application site is located to the south of the River North Tyne and approximately 2km to the west of Lanehead. The hamlet comprises Greystead Institute together with Greystead Rectory, Greystead Cottage and Greystead Old Church.



**Figure 1: Site Location**

The Institute is a late Victorian stone building with slate roof, dating to 1895. Formerly a Church of England Hall, it stood empty and derelict from 1975 until 2017 when planning permission was granted for the change of use and extension of the Institute to provide holiday accommodation. This application seeks a further change of use from holiday accommodation to principal residence housing. The supporting documentation indicates that the proposals would not involve any internal or external alterations to the property and that the change of use is being sought due to the owner's personal and economic circumstances



## 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 ST5	<i>New Housing</i>
Policy DM6	<i>Conversion of Buildings</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

**17NP0061** Change of use of former church institute building to holiday accommodation and construction of extension. *Planning permission conditionally granted 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017*

### Consultation/Representations

**Tarset and Greystead Parish Council: No objection**

**NCC Highways: No objection:** No issues arise from the proposals.

The application has been advertised by means of a site notice displayed at the site on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021. No representations 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;



- Impact on National park special qualities;
- Highways
- Other

## **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 presumption 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. Of particular relevance to this application is part a) which relates to making the National Park a high quality place to live and work.

### Location of new development

Strategic policy ST4 provides the framework for the location of new development within the National Park with the focus being a suite of '*named settlements*'. As the application site does not fall within ones of the '*named settlements*' it would be classed as falling within the '*open countryside*'.

In the open countryside, new development will only be allowed where it meets with one or more of the criteria detailed under Part 2) of policy ST4. Of relevance to this application is Part 2 a) which states that development will be permitted where it '*re-uses a building in a way that supports an economic use or meets the need for principal residence or affordable housing, and is also in accordance with Policy DM6*' and Part 2 d) which states '*Where the proposal is supported by other relevant Local Plan policies*'.

### Principle of development – new housing

Local Plan policy ST5 sets out the Authority's approach to new housing in the National Park. Part 3b relates to new housing within the open countryside and allows for principal residence occupancy where a building is being converted in accordance with Policy DM6. The degree to which the application meets with the requirements of Policy DM6 is assessed below.

### Principle of Development – Conversion of Buildings

Local Plan policy DM6 part 2 details a number of criteria (a-f) against which any proposal for the conversion of a building in the open countryside will be assessed to determine acceptability. The criteria are considered in turn below.

- a) The building makes a positive contribution to the landscape and special qualities of the National Park*



Although not listed, the building is a traditional stone and slate property which is a key building within the hamlet of Greystead and the wider landscape of this part of the National Park. It is therefore considered to make a positive contribution to the special qualities, notably cultural heritage, of the National Park;

- b) The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding, as demonstrated by a suitably qualified structural engineer's report;*

The building has already been converted and extended to a high standard to allow use as holiday accommodation. No structural survey would therefore be required;

- c) The building is of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant alterations, extensions or other new buildings;*

The building was extended as part of planning approval 17NP0061 under which the building was converted to holiday accommodation. There is no proposal to extend the building, or provide additional buildings, as part of this application;

- d) The proposal is of high quality design which retains existing features which contribute significantly to the character of the building or its setting.*

The building, while having no formal listing, is a traditional stone and slate building which makes a positive contribution to the hamlet of Greystead and the wider setting of this part of the National Park;

- e) The proposed use does not lead to changes in the building's curtilage or the creation of any new vehicular access or parking area that would unacceptably affect the character and appearance of the building or the surrounding landscape;*

No external works are proposed as part of this enquiry either to the building itself or within the wider curtilage;

- f) The requirements of Policy DM14 are also met;*

Policy DM14 relates to historic landscape assets and built heritage and the need to ensure that these features are conserved and enhanced. As the proposals would result in no physical changes to the building or surrounding landscape, it is considered that the requirements of Policy DM14 would be met.

On the basis of the above it is considered that the proposals are in accord with the requirements of Part 2 of Local Plan policy DM6. In addition to the above, Part 3 c) of Policy DM6 identifies principal residence housing as an acceptable use for converted buildings subject to meeting the requirements of a number of criteria, each of which is considered in turn below.



- i. The building is located within an existing group of buildings that have close physical and visual relationship to each other and also include an existing residential unit within that group;*

Greystead Institute is part of the small hamlet of Greystead which also includes Greystead Rectory, Greystead Cottage and Greystead Old Church. It is understood that these buildings are in a mix of residential / holiday use.

- ii. The building is redundant or disused and the conversion would enhance its immediate setting;*

The building is not redundant or disused and the proposals would not enhance its immediate setting. The information submitted in support of the enquiry states that Greystead Institute is one of three 5\* and 4\* self-catering cottages located within Greystead. While the property is owned by the applicant, it is managed on their behalf by Greystead Holiday Cottages.

The Accompanying Statement notes that Greystead Institute has catered for small groups of visitors who want to explore the National Park from a luxury base. However, there has been an increase in this type of accommodation in the area and that due to COVID-19, there has been a significant downturn in bookings for the Institute, resulting in a dramatic loss of income. Additional sanitising requirements have created considerable extra expenditure, and, given the applicant's age and health, the property is becoming a significant burden to the owner. The maintenance and repair works required for the building are not insignificant; with increased costs for sanitising, and a decrease in bookings, the applicant is experiencing significant constraints which impact upon their ability to ensure that the maintenance and repair works required to the building are carried out. The Statement notes that these factors are expected to continue throughout 2021 and potentially well beyond, with the applicant wishing to change the use of the building into residential to ensure that the high quality restoration and repairs works undertaken to bring the building back into use, are kept in good order, and that the building does not become disused again, as it was for most of 2020 and the start of 2021 owing to Covid-19.

As noted above, while the building is not redundant or disused, as the proposals are otherwise in accordance with relevant Local Plan policy, based on the information provided, and as the building has already been extended and converted to a high standard, it is not considered that the proposals would be contrary to the objective of policy DM6. In addition, as the building has already been converted to a high standard and no physical works are proposed, it is not considered that there would be any further requirement as part of this application to enhance the immediate setting of the building over and above the measures already undertaken as part of the original conversion works.

- iii. It is not in an isolated location;*



The building is not considered to be in an isolated location. It is part of the hamlet of Greystead and within approximately 2km of Lanehead, one of the settlements named within policy ST4 as being the focus for new development within the National Park.

The supporting text to Policy ST5 notes that principal residence housing is a form of market housing controlled by a condition which ensures it can be lived in by anyone but only as their main residence. This is to ensure new housing permitted in the Park is not used as a second home. It is therefore considered reasonable to attach a condition to the approval to ensure the occupancy of the unit is restricted to a person's sole or principal residence in perpetuity.

On the basis of the above, subject to the imposition of a suitable condition to ensure that the property is used as the occupant's sole or principal residence, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies ST4, ST5 and DM6 and the conversion of the building to principal residence housing is acceptable.

### **National Park Special Qualities**

As the proposals only relate to the change of use from holiday accommodation to principal residence housing with no proposals for any physical change to the property or wider curtilage, it is not considered that the proposals will have any material impact on the biodiversity, landscape, tranquillity or cultural heritage of the National Park. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies DM10, DM11 and DM14 which seek to ensure the special qualities of the National Park are protected.

### **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*'.

Although the proposals do not involve any physical development or intensification of use, NCC Highways have been consulted on the proposals to ensure they consider the existing access / parking arrangements to be adequate and that the proposals will not result in any impact on highway safety. Having considered the information provided, Highways have confirmed that they do not consider that any issues arise from the proposals. There are two car parking spaces available within the curtilage which will be retained as part of this proposal. It is therefore considered that the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan policy ST2 and the NPPF in relation to parking and highways safety.

### **Other**

As the proposals only relate to the change of use from holiday accommodation to principal residence housing with no proposals for any physical change to the property or wider curtilage, it is not considered that the proposals raise any material considerations in relation to design or



residential amenity; utilities; drainage and the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies ST1 and ST2 in respect of these elements.

### **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<sup>th</sup> January 2021;
- Location Plan, Dwg no E01, Job no. 1360, received 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021;
- Existing Plans, Dwg no E02, Job no. 1360, received 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021;
- Existing Elevations and Section, Dwg no, E03, Job no 1360, received 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021;
- Greystead Institute, Change of Use, Accompanying Statement, received 14<sup>th</sup> January 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, ST5, DM6, DM10, DM11 and DM14 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. The development hereby approved shall be used as principal residence housing only and not be used as a second home.

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure the development accords with Local Plan policies ST5 and DM6

### **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 21NP0003  
EIA Screening Report

	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Planning Officer</b>	Colin Godfrey	3rd March 2021
<b>Head of Planning and Policy</b>	<i>Susannah Buylla</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2021