



DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	21NP0019
Description / Site Address	Erection of 2no. agricultural sheds for the storage of machinery, Woolaw Farm, Rochester, Northumberland, NE19 1TB
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	22 April 2021
Last date for decision	18 May 2021

Details of Proposal

This application is seeking approval for the demolition of two existing machinery sheds, to be replaced with two new machinery storage sheds within the same footprint. The site is a farm, consisting of a residential property with agricultural sheds. The site is located in an open countryside location north-west of the named settlement of Rochester. The site is located to the south of the A68 by approximately 300m. The site is located directly to the south of the banks of the River Rede.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan

The applicant seeks permission to install two agricultural sheds for the purpose of storing machinery. The first shelter would be 18.2m in depth and 7m in width. The building would consist of a mono-pitched fascia boarding roof and green profiled steel cladding.

The second building would be 13.7m in depth and 7.6m in width. The building would consist of a dual pitched roof and would also be constructed in green profiled steel cladding.



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 DM7	<i>Rural Economy and Diversification</i>
Policy DM8	<i>Agricultural Development</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 Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)

Relevant Planning History

02NP0039	Use of farmland for quad biking tours and siting of storage container, Woolaw Farm, Rochester, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE19 1TB, <i>Planning Permission Granted Conditionally 26 August 2002</i>
97NP0056	Use of existing static caravan for residential purposes, Woolaw Farm, Rochester, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE19 1TB <i>Planning Permission Granted Conditionally 7 November 1997</i>
88NP0062	Conversion of agricultural buildings to provide additional bed and breakfast accommodation, Woolaw Farm, Rochester, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE19 1TB, <i>Planning Permission Granted Conditionally 18 January 1989</i>

Consultation/Representations

Rochester with Byrness Parish Council: No objection: The Parish Councillors have had a chance to review the paperwork and have no objections.



It was noted that one shed has asbestos and the Councillors assume all appropriate equipment and actions are to be taken to safely remove it, especially given the relatively close proximity to the residential property.

NNPA Ecologist: No Objection: From the information and photographs provided, I agree with the conclusion that there is little possibility of bats being present and affected by the demolition of these 3 buildings. There were also no signs of barn owls in the wooden barn.

I therefore have no objections to this application if the wooden barn is demolished outside the bird breeding season or it is checked for breeding birds before demolition.

NNPA Historic Environment Officer: No Objection: Owing to the siting of the buildings and their position below the higher ground where the closest heritage asset, the Scheduled hut circle settlement, is situated, the impact upon the setting of the Scheduled Monument is likely to be neutral.

Public response: site notice displayed on the 30 March 2021. No comments were received.

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 a) of Policy ST1 is of specific relevance as it supports proposals that '*make the National Park a high-quality place to live and work- including improving and supporting the use and retention of existing services, infrastructure and facilities (including the housing stock and workplaces)*'. The degree to which the proposals accord with these qualities is discussed throughout the report.

Location of Development

Although the site is in close proximity to the named settlement of Rochester, it is not considered to fall within the boundary of the settlement and is therefore considered to be within the open countryside. Within the Open Countryside, Local Plan Policy ST4, Paragraph 2, Part b) permits proposals where there is an essential need for the development to meet the needs of farming. The proposed agricultural shed is considered an essential form of infrastructure as it would house



machinery that is considered essential for use within the farm. As can be seen in Figures 2 & 3, the two existing machinery sheds are in a poor condition and are no longer serving their purpose. As a result of this, it is considered reasonable to replace the buildings.

Policy DM8 relates to agricultural development. The policy requires new agricultural development to demonstrate a functional need for the building to sustain existing primary agricultural activity and the scale of the development should be commensurate with that need. The applicant has confirmed that the proposed agricultural shed would be used for the purpose of housing machinery. As the proposal involves the creation of two buildings to replace two existing buildings the development is considered commensurate with the farm's needs.

Policy DM7 is supportive of proposals for new sustainable rural economic development that are compatible with and subsidiary to an existing farming activity. As the proposals relate to the provision of an agricultural development within an existing farmstead for which there is an identified need, the proposals are considered to be in accord with the requirements of Policy DM7.

In considering Local Plan policies ST4, DM7 and DM8, it is considered that the principal of development is acceptable.

Design and Amenity

Design

Local Plan policy ST2 places an emphasis on ensuring new development is of high-quality design. Local Plan policy DM8, which relates to agricultural development, states that development will be permitted where *'the form, height and size of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and will not have an adverse impact on the landscape and special qualities of the National Park.*

The applicant proposes to construct two agricultural sheds within the footprint of two existing sheds which would be demolished as part of the proposals. The first building (shed A) would be 18.2m in depth and 7m in width. The building would consist of a mono-pitched fascia boarding roof and green profiled steel cladding. The building would be located to the west of the farmstead.



Figure 2: Shed A as existing

The second building (shed B) would be 13.7m in depth and 7.6m in width. The building would consist of a dual pitched roof and would also be constructed in green profiled steel cladding. The building would be located to the east of the farmstead, directly adjacent to the existing farmhouse.



Figure 3: Shed B with its current use as a machinery store



As can be seen in Figure 4, the surrounding farmstead is mainly characterised by large existing agricultural buildings. The provision of two agricultural buildings within this location would be considered a typical form of development for this setting.

Policy DM8 requires buildings designed for the purpose of agriculture to use appropriate materials with subdued colours. The agricultural shed would be constructed in a mono-pitched fascia boarding roof and green profiled steel cladding. These materials are subdued and would provide a lightweight form of design that would be a typical feature of an agricultural setting.

The site forms part of an existing farmstead. The sheds would be located within the existing footprint of two agricultural buildings which would be demolished. This ensures the proposals would retain the existing built form of the area by providing a like to like replacement of the existing situation. It is considered that the proposal would reflect the agricultural character of the landscape it forms part of.

In light of the above assessment, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies ST1, ST2, DM8 and the NPPF in relation to design.



Figure 4: Woolaw Farmstead

Amenity

Amongst others, Policy ST2 states that development will be permitted where *'The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of occupiers'* with Policy DM8 seeking to ensure that new agricultural development *'does not significantly harm local amenity in terms of noise, odours or levels of activity'*.

The agricultural shelter would be located approximately 380m from the nearest neighbouring properties located on the A68. Due to the scale of the agricultural shelters alongside the significant distance between the two properties, it is not considered that the proposal would have a material impact on the amenity of neighbouring dwellings.



Impact upon National Park Special Qualities

Biodiversity

Policy DM10 of the Local Plan offers support for proposals which maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the National Park.

As the proposal would result in the demolition of two existing agricultural buildings, the application was supported by a Bat and Barn Owl Risk Assessment which assessed the two buildings for their potential to house Bat and Barn Owl habitats.

The Bat and Barn Owl Risk Assessment, conducted by GW Ecology identified that both sheds had negligible bat roosting potential with no bat roosting evidence found. No records of bats were found within a 1km search of the application site. No evidence was found of any Barn Owl use on the site either. However, the report concluded that though no disused nests were found any work should take place outwith the bird breeding season (March-August).

As a result of this, the Authority's Ecologist was consulted on the proposals. From the information and photographs provided, the conclusion that there is little possibility of bats being present and affected by the demolition of these 3 buildings is considered acceptable. There were also no signs of barn owls in the wooden barn.

The authority's Ecologist therefore raised no objections to the proposal subject to an appropriately worded condition requiring Shed B to be demolished outside the bird breeding season and that it is checked for breeding birds before demolition. This condition is attached to the final decision notice.

Landscape

Policy DM11 states that the natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to 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 construction of two agricultural sheds within the footprint of two existing sheds which would be demolished as part of the proposals. While the agricultural sheds would be located within an open landscape, the site is rural in nature. The main public vantage point would be from the Public Right of Way which runs directly through the site. Although the site is clearly visible from this vantage point, the provision of two agricultural sheds within the same footprint of two existing sheds is unlikely to lead to any additional harm when considered from the landscape level. The two new buildings would be largely similar in size to the existing built form and would be



finished in an appropriate shade to remain neutral and reflect the agricultural setting of the local landscape.

It is generally appropriate for new buildings to be located in close proximity to existing buildings to limit the spread of development and to minimise any impact on local landscape character. Given the development's existing situation nearby existing agricultural buildings, it is not considered that the proposal would result in an uncharacteristic form of development and would instead reflect the existing local landscape character.



Figure 5: Woolaw Farm when considered from A68

Given the 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.

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. No specific detail of any external lighting which may be required in connection with the proposed alterations has been submitted as part of the application. A condition restricting the installation of external lighting is considered appropriate as the proposals relate to a new building detached from any existing dwellings/ buildings.



The proposal is located in an isolated open countryside location and the volume of traffic would not be altered as a result of the proposal. It is therefore considered that the proposals are unlikely to generate significant levels of additional vehicle movements / traffic or noise. As such, subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition relating to external lighting, it is considered that 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 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 lies in close proximity to two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. As a result of this, the authority's Historic Environment Officer has been consulted on the proposals.

The Historic Environment Officer confirmed that Shed A is of late 20th century origins (as seen on historic maps) and of no historic interest. There has been a building to the rear of the original pre-1856 U-plan farmstead since the late 19th century which is presumably Shed B. However, neither the building, nor the surviving remains of the single storey U-plan byres have been designated as heritage assets.

There should be an acceptance that the demolition of Shed B will result in some harm to non-designated heritage assets, however the plan of the farmstead is much altered since 1970 and the current proposals retain this late 20th century layout. As a result of this, it is not considered likely that the works to Shed B would cause a significant impact to the existing farmhouse that would warrant a reason for refusal.

Owing to the siting of the buildings and their position below the higher ground where the closest heritage asset, the Scheduled hut circle settlement, is situated, the impact upon the setting of the Scheduled Monument is likely to be neutral. As such the proposal will accord with Local Plan policy DM14.

Highways

Policy ST2 requires proposals to ensure *'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 highways safety.'*

The site can be accessed solely by an existing private access trackway which leads from the A68 and across the River Rede.

As can be seen in Figure 4, upon arriving at the site there is a large, gravelled courtyard which serves the existing agricultural buildings and the farmhouses. There would be no alterations proposed to the existing courtyard. The two proposed agricultural buildings would still be served by the existing access from the courtyard. It is therefore considered that there is adequate space for



vehicles to access and exit the site without compromising highways safety. As such the proposal will accord with Local Plan policy DM9.

Other matters:

The Parish Council raised the issue of one of the sheds being made of asbestos. This is not a material planning consideration and would fall to be considered under separate legislation.

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 2 March 2021
- Photographs of site received 2 March 2021
- Site Plan received 6 March 2021
- Shed A Proposed Plans & Elevations received 6 March 2021
- Shed B Proposed Plans received 6 March 2021
- Shed B Proposed Elevations received 6 March 2021
- Shed B Proposed Sections received 6 March 2021
- Protected Species Report Bat & Barn Owl Prepared by GW Ecology received 18 March 2021
- Location Plan received 23 March 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, DM8 and DM14 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting associated with the development, full details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details of external lighting should include:



- The specific location of all external lighting units;
- Design of all lighting units;
- Details of beam orientation and lux levels; and
- Any proposed measures such as motion sensors and timers that will be used on lighting units.

The approved lighting scheme shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained as such thereafter, unless removed entirely.

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

4. Any site clearance/ demolition of Shed B should not be undertaken in the bird breeding season (March-August), unless a checking survey has first been undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and any birds that are found to be nesting being allowed to finish nesting before such work commences.

Reason: To ensure that nesting birds on the site are protected and for the development in accordance with Northumberland National Park Local Plan policies ST1, ST2, DM10 and Chapter 15 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 21NP0019
EIA Screening Report

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer	A Ewart	22.04.2021
Head of Development Management	<i>Susannah Buylla</i>	23/04/2021