

N&N Planning Submissions

Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) Planning Submissions – November 2023

Application Reference	Application Type	Location Details	Proposal
23/04329/FUL	Full Application	Shoreston Hall Seahouses Northumberland NE68 7SX	Refurbishment works to provide five apartments, replacement of potting shed with dwelling, refurbishment of The Crow's Nest to dwelling and refurbishment of office building to dwelling.
Planning Officer	James Hudson		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) supports grant of planning approval for this application.</p> <p>Shoreston Hall is a prominent landmark within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Although not directly on the coast, it is a feature of the coastline between Seahouses and Bamburgh and as such is a sensitive development. The Society notes that a pre-application enquiry in April 2023 included two new dwellings and we are pleased that the current development has removed these dwellings in response to the objections of the Built Heritage and Design Officer. The application is now a respectful renovation of the overall site, recognising that Shoreston Hall is not listed but nonetheless is a building of stature and quality with many valuable original features which are retained where possible.</p> <p>The N&N also supports the retention of the majority of the trees and a significant amount of the gardens, we are equally pleased to see the thorough Ecological and Arboricultural impact assessments. We believe the application is an exemplar of sustainable development with the use of rubble stone, slate, zinc and timber. This sustainability theme continues with the installation of a green roof on the Crow's Nest development, we understand that this will be made up of native grass species. In addition, we very much welcome the inclusion of a high degree of insulation and the use of air-source heat pumps. Where possible, the N&N seeks to encourage consideration of roof mounted photovoltaic panels, this technology is developing very quickly and we understand options are available that would be in keeping with the building. The use of low-level estate railings and hedging as plot boundaries is also welcomed as a sensitive feature.</p> <p>In summary the Society is pleased to see such a well-thought out and sensitive development of part of Northumberland's heritage to enable it to continue to be a feature in the 21st century. We recommend the Planning Committee to approve this development.</p>		
23/04233/FUL	Full Application	Land South Of Butley Ben Morpeth Northumberland	Construction of three detached houses
Planning Officer	Ryan Soulsby		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) submits the following generic comment in respect of this application.</p> <p>It is the Society's understanding that the site subject of this application has outline planning approval for 9 houses. Notwithstanding the outline approval, we are disappointed that this application represents yet another attempted incursion into the previously attractive rural northern edge of</p>		

N&N Planning Submissions

	<p>Morpeth. Outwith the land allocated for new housing in Policy STP1 of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, we believe this site should be treated as open countryside, where development can only be supported in exceptional circumstances, none of which appear to apply to this site.</p> <p>Although the site is adjacent to land that has been developed, the high visibility of this green corner site, and the contribution it makes to the Morpeth approach, makes it a crucial site to retain undeveloped. Left as it is, the mature planting is very effective in screening and softening the impact of the new housing estates behind it from A192. As well as retaining an attractive approach for visitors to Morpeth exiting the A1 from the north, it provides attractive visual amenity for local residents as they enter and exit their locality. It therefore has an importance disproportionate to its plot size and the potential loss of valuable green space to unnecessary housing development is a matter of great regret.</p>		
23/04015/FUL	Full Application	Land West Of Laundry Cottages Warkworth Northumberland	Conversion of existing agricultural building to create a single dwelling with integral garage, installation of sewage treatment plant, improvements to access track
Planning Officer	Stephanie Forster		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) submits the following generic comment in respect of this application.</p> <p>The Society has recently seen multiple schemes seeking approval for change of use from purpose built agricultural buildings to dwellings which indicates that such proposals are likely to proliferate in Northumberland. We understand this scheme was subject to a Prior Notification under Permitted Development Class Q. It appears that since 2015 it has been permissible in principle to convert any agricultural building to a dwelling, subject to conditions. Our interpretation of the rationale for this permitted development was that it was intended to support agricultural businesses to provide affordable accommodation for people engaged in such businesses and to bring beneficial use back to farm buildings that would otherwise fall into disuse and decay. The existing building subject of this scheme would appear of a type that has a relatively short design lifespan as a temporary structure specifically intended for agricultural use.</p> <p>As a general principle the Society supports repurposing of unused buildings as dwellings where this is reasonable and appropriate. Notwithstanding this, we are profoundly concerned at the potential for this specific Permitted Development Class Q rule to be misused. Given the predominantly rural environment of Northumberland there is a real risk this will open the 'floodgates' for inappropriate applications, often in remote locations. The Society acknowledges it may not be in a position to challenge the principle of this change of use, and in fact would broadly support the concept given our generic belief in renovating vacant buildings, however, we are deeply concerned this could lead to substantial harmful outcomes.</p> <p>It is our belief that all such schemes should be subject to rigorous examination of justification criteria and sustainability credentials regarding transport, levels of insulation and renewable energy provision. In this scheme whilst the design of the elevations remains somewhat subjective, one would hope that the best endeavours were being used to achieve as subtle and understated proposal as possible.</p>		

N&N Planning Submissions

	<p>We note the extensive provisions that apply to Permitted Development Class Q and would expect that all the conditions of this legislation are thoroughly observed and referenced in this application accordingly.</p> <p>Finally, we would ask that Northumberland County Council gives careful consideration to defining specific local policy in respect of this issue.</p>		
23/03812/FUL	Full Application	Builders Yard Ship Inn Main Road Wylam Northumberland NE41 8AB	Demolition of disused building and creation of two bedroomed Passivhaus dwellinghouse.
Planning Officer	Stephanie Milne		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) supports grant of planning approval for this application.</p> <p>As a general principle the Society is opposed to demolition of existing buildings, however, we do recognise where compelling justification is provided that a pragmatic approach is required. We believe this scheme provides sufficient justification for the proposed demolition and we note the outline planning approval referenced within the Design and Access statement (D&A).</p> <p>This is a brownfield site within an established settlement and is both suitable and desirable as a residential development. The proposals are without doubt an improvement on the existing use of the site and demonstrate good green credentials.</p>		
23/03735/LBC	Listed Building Consent	Tower Martin Farmhouse Wooler Northumberland NE71 6QW	Convert barn to living space, replace rear extension with larger footprint connecting barn to house including partial demolition of existing extension and internal alterations.
Planning Officer	Katie Lois		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) supports grant of planning approval for this application.</p> <p>The Society notes this is a well-researched application with considerable attention to detail demonstrated within the submission. As a general principle we expect to see compelling justification for demolition of structurally sound buildings. We believe the interventions of this scheme are reasonable and appear respectful of this important heritage asset.</p>		
23/04205/CLEXIS	Certificate of Lawful Development	Burnlaw Common Bank Allendale NE47 9NT	Certificate of Lawful Development of existing use and development of land for residential purposes and business purposes
Planning Officer	Rachel Campbell		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) supports grant of planning approval for this application.</p> <p>The N&N Society supports this application. The applicant has demonstrated the continuous use of the property as a residence since 2005 and the business use on site is in keeping with the rural nature of the surroundings. The applicant's contribution to the community is apparent as well as the development of a number of businesses as examples of sustainability and woodland management. We note the buildings themselves are in keeping with a sustainable lifestyle including having a</p>		

N&N Planning Submissions

	living roof and composting toilet. It is hoped that the applicant will also explore the use of sustainable energy options in the future.		
23/04183/FUL	Full Application	Land South Of The Gut Riverside Park Amble	Development of Independent Supported Living Apartments (58no.) (Use Class C2), residential housing (40no.) (Use Class C3),
Planning Officer	Jon Sharp		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) supports grant of planning approval for this application subject to the following comments.</p> <p>The Society understands this site was subject of a previously approved application for a superstore, carpark and 46 houses that was never constructed, clearly setting a precedent for the current application. Notwithstanding this, whilst the previous scheme has lapsed, we accept in principle the site is suitable for housing development and a local need for the proposed residential use exists. It is evident the proposal is contentious, we note there have been 40 objections from local residents lodged, together with one from Amble Town Council.</p> <p>As far as the specifics of this scheme are concerned, we have a number of observations that we would ask the planning authority to carefully consider and as appropriate, impose conditions. First, as the location is nearby to water courses we share concerns regarding potential flooding both on and from the site, thus requiring a bespoke flood risk mitigation plan. Second, as the proposed access is via an existing cul-de-sac off the main road, the junction with which is on a bend we concur with concerns over the width of this road, likewise its capacity for construction traffic and ongoing residents' and service access. We note this access differs from the previous scheme which had an alternative access across the Braid, with a bridge over the Gut. It appears that both the flood risk and road access issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of the various consultees and the solutions identified should be subject of relevant conditions.</p> <p>The designs of the supported living flats are entirely unimaginative, in layout, appearance and facilities, we feel this is a lost opportunity to create a real sense of place for these residential units and this element of the scheme should be revised accordingly.</p> <p>We welcome the provision of good pedestrian and cycling links to the town centre at the eastern corner of the site, also we were pleased to note solar panels shown on the houses.</p> <p>Finally, given the attractions of the Northumberland Coast to second home owners, we suggest conditions are required to avoid extended periods when dwellings are unoccupied.</p>		
23/04101/FUL	Full Application	Barn At South Fens Stamfordham Newcastle Upon Tyne Northumberland	Conversion of stable building to 2 no. residential dwellings.
Planning Officer	Ben MacFarlane		
Comment	The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) submits the following generic comment in respect of this application.		

N&N Planning Submissions

	<p>The Society has recently seen multiple schemes seeking approval for change of use from purpose built agricultural buildings to dwellings which indicates that such proposals are likely to proliferate in Northumberland. It appears that since 2015 Permitted Development Class Q has provided for permission in principle to convert any agricultural building to a dwelling, subject to conditions. Our interpretation of the rationale for this Permitted Development was that it was intended to support agricultural businesses to provide affordable accommodation for people engaged in such businesses and to bring beneficial use back to farm buildings that would otherwise fall into disuse and decay. The existing building subject of this scheme would appear of a type that has a relatively short design lifespan as a temporary structure specifically intended for agricultural use.</p> <p>As a general principle the Society supports repurposing of unused buildings as dwellings where this is reasonable and appropriate. Notwithstanding this, we are profoundly concerned at the potential for this specific Permitted Development Class Q rule to be misused. Given the predominantly rural environment of Northumberland there is a real risk this will open the ‘floodgates’ for inappropriate applications, often in remote locations. The Society acknowledges it may not be in a position to challenge the principle of this change of use, and in fact would broadly support the concept given our generic belief in renovating vacant buildings, however, we are deeply concerned this could lead to substantial harmful outcomes.</p> <p>It is our belief that all such schemes should be subject to rigorous examination of justification criteria and sustainability credentials regarding transport, levels of insulation and renewable energy provision. We note the extensive specific provisions that apply to Permitted Development Class Q and would expect that all the conditions of this legislation are thoroughly observed and referenced in this application accordingly.</p> <p>Finally, we would ask that Northumberland County Council gives careful consideration to defining specific local policy in respect of this issue.</p>		
23/04056/FUL	Full Application	Land South East Of West Mains House Beal Northumberland	Proposed 15no. unit glamping park, comprising of 11no. woodside cabins and 4no. shepherds huts
Planning Officer	David Love		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) objects to grant of planning approval for this application.</p> <p>The Society understands this site has been subject of previous applications and as a generic principle we believe it is appropriate for development. Notwithstanding this generic principle of development, the specific challenges of the site require careful consideration and demand a thoughtful approach.</p> <p>In our assessment this scheme lacks sufficient quality in the content of the submission and in the proposed treatment of the site. We were disappointed with the Design and Access statement (D&A) as the proposals are not presented clearly and we feel some elements are not credible. The application indicates the glamping accommodation units are purpose designed shepherds’ huts and cabins, whereas the drawings suggest otherwise.</p> <p>The proposed layout of the site is congested with insufficient distance between the units giving a feeling of overdevelopment. For this reason we</p>		

N&N Planning Submissions

	<p>also found it difficult to reconcile how the proposals will deliver the required biodiversity net gain and likewise environmental sustainability criteria.</p> <p>We believe this application is a missed opportunity and that it requires substantial and comprehensive revision.</p>		
23/04037/FUL	Full Application	Land East Of Railway Line At Cheswick Farm Cheswick Cottages Cheswick Northumberland	Proposed 52 space car park
Planning Officer	Stephanie Forster		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) submits the following generic comment in respect of this application.</p> <p>The Society acknowledges the dilemma that exists in balancing provision of vehicle access to the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) against protection of the AONB and its environs from excessive traffic. In recent years the attractions of the AONB have drawn substantially more visitors whom wish to experience the unspoilt beauty of these isolated places and thus more vehicles. It is evident the existing unadopted car park at this location is insufficient to accommodate demand and as a result vehicles are parked on the verge and may result in obstruction of the road access.</p> <p>We share the concerns of others on the impact of more traffic on this sensitive location and the potential of the scheme to encourage more extensive and inappropriate presence of vehicles including motorhomes. Whilst there is some logic in this scheme providing mitigation to the evident parking issues at the site, equally there must a recognition that vehicle access needs to be carefully controlled to avoid overwhelming and losing the AONB's essence and sense of place. We would expect the planning authority to rigorously examine the justification for this scheme and determine its validity accordingly.</p>		
23/04096/FUL	Full Application	Hartbank Hartburn Morpeth Northumberland NE61 4JB	Construction of two bedroom detached eco-home (self-build) with free standing solar panels
Planning Officer	Ben MacFarlane		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) objects to grant of planning approval for this application.</p> <p>The Society notes the site subject of this application is designated by Northumberland County Council (NCC) as within an Area of High Landscape Value and is defined as Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 147 - 150 provide specific direction and protections for development in the open countryside and the Green Belt including defining the 'very special circumstances' where a local planning authority may permit such development. We note this is a contentious scheme that has attracted multiple objections from local residents.</p> <p>It is evident the applicant recognises the site falls within the Green Belt and thus needs to show how it complies with 'very special circumstances'. The applicant refers to the scheme being affordable housing as the 'very special circumstances' required by the NPPF and NCC Local Plan, policy HOU 7, to justify planning approval.</p>		

N&N Planning Submissions

	<p>The Society is fundamentally opposed to development in the Green Belt unless a compelling and thoroughly justified case is made to support such development.</p> <p>The case to show 'very special circumstances' requires substantial and compelling justification set out clearly within a Design and Access statement (D&A) that is required to validate Full planning applications. As this scheme does not comply with the criteria required by the NPPF to define it as affordable housing it substantially conflicts with the NPPF and with Northumberland Local Plan policies and consequently it should be refused on those grounds. On an administrative point we note this application does not include a D&A and as a result we believe it should not have been validated.</p> <p>Looking further, it is evident the scheme also transgresses the requirements of paragraph 79 of the NPPF, and policies STP1, STP7 and STP8 of the NCC Local Plan, all of which delineate essential protections in Green Belt villages like Hartburn from harmful and inappropriate development, outside the settlement envelope and in open countryside.</p> <p>The proposal not only conflicts with specific planning requirements but is equally deficient with other significant material considerations. The location is unsustainable and reliant on car-based journeys, it contravenes paragraph 112 of the NPPF and Policy TRA 1 of the Local Plan.</p> <p>On other counts the scheme has multiple potentially harmful impacts, not least on the setting of heritage assets and ancient woodland. Of particular concern is the potential for its works to directly destabilise the steep bank topped by the Grade I listed St Andrew's Church and its graveyard. We note the county ecologist anticipates negative impacts on the Wansbeck and Hartburn Woods Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), with harmful effect on the riparian corridor and protected river wildlife. Irrespective of this, a comprehensive drainage strategy is clearly required, as one half of the site has already been identified as being at risk of river flooding.</p> <p>Finally, we understand the applicant is living unlawfully on the site, having been subject of local authority enforcement action to quit.</p>		
23/03900/LBC	Listed Building Consent	20 - 22 Priestpopple Hexham Northumberland NE46 1XH	Consent for alteration and change of use of vacant hotel and ground floor bar (Class C1 / Sui Generis) for use as 8no. apartments and ground floor commercial unit
Planning Officer	Rachel Campbell		
Comment	<p>The Northumberland and Newcastle Society (N&N) supports grant of planning approval for this application subject to the following comments.</p> <p>As a general principle the Society welcomes and supports sensitive repurposing of vacant commercial buildings in urban centres as residential space. Given this building is a registered heritage asset the respect for and retention of historic fabric are primary considerations. It appears the scheme represents a reasonable and sensitive conversion with minimal interventions and we would expect the planning authority to ensure these factors are complied with.</p> <p>Finally we note the roof faces could offer opportunities for solar PV installation and we would welcome these being included in the proposals.</p>		

N&N Planning Submissions