

Design and Access, Planning and Heritage Statement for planning application at Units 2 and 3 and 7, South Acomb Business Park, Bywell, Northumberland



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Design and Access, Planning and Heritage Statement for Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications at Units 2, 3 and 7 South Acomb Business Park, Bywell

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been written by Ludman Planning Ltd. on behalf of Mr Ian Jackson and Ms Onal to accompany a planning and listed building consent application at Units 2, 3 and 7, South Acomb Business Park, Bywell. This statement includes an assessment of the scheme against planning policy, and a Heritage Statement.
- 1.2 Mr Jackson and Ms Onal own and manage a successful furniture sales business in Corbridge (Jasmine and Lilah) and have recently expanded their business to include a sales and showroom area at South Acomb Business Park, in Units 2 and 3 with a café. The business has been a success over the last two years, since planning permission was given for the change of use of the buildings to retail and café uses in 2019.
- 1.3 The café on the site (known as Bywell Coffee Shop) has been very successful and has grown beyond an 'ancillary' use to the main business and is a business in its own right. Although visitors to the café do, in the most part, also look around the showrooms, the extent of the café is such that it is now no longer ancillary to the main retail use at Units 2 and 3. The café is not only used by visitors, but by other businesses in the business park. Allendale Estates are also promoting a 'business hub' at the site for flexible business use, and one of the benefits of the site for this purpose is the existence of the café on site.
- 1.4 On 1st September 2020, the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) was further amended to introduce a new 'Class E' use, which encompasses a number of uses that were previously in separate classes. As such, the uses at the application site (on Units 2 and 3) all now fall within Class E use which includes restaurants and cafes, and retail uses (amongst others). However, as the café is no longer ancillary to the furniture and lighting showroom, it is considered that it now falls beyond the scope of what was originally approved in 2019.
- 1.5 The applicants wish to further expand the interior decorating side of the business and use Unit 7 as a combination of office, showroom and interior design consultancy.
- 1.6 This application therefore is to seek a blanket planning permission for Class E use throughout Units 2, 3 and 7 at South Acomb Business Park and to carry out works to the listed building (partially retrospective), including the provision of paving externally, the fixing of CCTV cameras to the walls of the buildings, and some minor internal alterations to remove (modern) stud walls and ceilings to create an open plan showroom arrangement.

2.0 Site and description of proposals

- 2.1 South Acomb Business Park is situated off the B6309 (Bywell Road) approximately 3 miles from Stocksfield. It is a mile from the A69 and less than 3 miles from the train station in Stocksfield. It is a small business park consisting of 12 units converted into office and other uses and is owned by Allendale Estates with the units being rented out to separate businesses. More information about the business park can be found on the website: <https://www.allendale-estates.co.uk/south-accomb-business-park/>
- 2.2 To the north of the business park are two residential properties known as South Acomb Cottages. The relationship between the business park and these residential Units is shown later in this report.
- 2.3 Part of Units 2 and 3 are already in use as showrooms for the applicant's business known as

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Jasmine and Lilah; a luxury furniture, lighting and accessories retail business. This use already has planning permission. Due to the success of the business (and the coffee shop), the applicants wish to extend their business to include Unit 7, which was until recently, used as an antiques shop (although planning permission was never sought for the retail use).

- 2.4 Unit 3 is a listed building and was originally the farmhouse for South Acomb Farm. Unit 2 is not listed, although it is a curtilage building and attached to Unit 3 and therefore treated as a listed building. Unit 7 is also curtilage listed and attached. These buildings to the rear of Unit 3 are described as not being of significance in the listing for Unit 3 (this is covered in more detail in the Heritage Statement).
- 2.5 Products such as furniture, lighting, accessories and fabrics are showcased in the rooms at Units 2 and 3, and then ordered and delivered direct to the purchasers' address. Smaller items are sold on site.
- 2.6 The attached plans show the internal arrangement of showroom/café areas, and the proposed works to Unit 7 (and works undertaken in Unit 2 to remove a stud wall). The existing kitchen and WC areas will remain as they are, and the applicants propose to retain some ancillary office space for the business.
- 2.7 An outdoor area is already provided outside Unit 3 (see photographs below). This was required due to the Covid pandemic, and restrictions on inside eating. All structures in the outside the café are moveable (i.e. not fixed permanently to the fabric of the building). In order to make the seating area safe for users, the applicants paved the external area with Indian Sandstone slabs. The proposal is to also pave the area leading up to Unit 7 with similar slabs and provide further outdoor seating space.
- 2.8 The two current businesses on the site (Jasmine & Lilah, and Bywell Coffee Shop) employ 3 full time and 10 part time staff. If planning permission is given for the change of use of Unit 7 to be in the same Class E use, then it is anticipated that 3 further full-time jobs will be created.
- 2.9 The business currently operates between 10am and 5pm 7 days a week and the applicants do not propose at present to extend those opening hours.
- 2.10 South Acomb Business Park has enough parking for at least 70 vehicles (although this number of spaces has never been used). The parking is not allocated to specific units, and not demarcated. Indicative parking spaces are shown on the site plan to show how much parking there is at the site. It is worth noting that there have never been any issues with regard to parking since the original application was approved for Units 2 and 3 in 2019. The proposal is not to expand significantly the coffee shop business, rather, it is to get retrospective permission for what is there (due to the fact that it is no longer 'ancillary' to the business). The use of the proposed Units will be 'Class E' use, which includes retail and food and drink uses.

3.0 Planning history

- 3.1 South Acomb Farm's redundant farm buildings were converted to office and storage use in 1994 under planning reference T/940102.
- 3.2 In 2019 planning permission was given for the change of use of Units 2 and 3 to retail and ancillary café use. Since that time, the café has grown as a business in its own right (now known as Bywell Coffee Barn) to an extent that it is no longer ancillary to the showroom

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business.

4.0 Local Planning Policy

4.1 Planning decisions are determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Northumberland County Council is in the process of producing a Local Plan for Northumberland. This Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation and therefore carries significant weight in decision-making as set out in paragraph 48 of the NPPF.

Northumberland Local Plan (emerging) – Rural Economy policies

4.2 The emerging Northumberland Local Plan (shortly due to consult on proposed modifications) has policies on rural economic growth (ECN12) and meeting rural employment needs (ECN13). Policy ECN 12 remains unchanged following the examination, and the proposed modifications to policy ECN13 are very minor. These policies can be afforded significant weight.

4.3 Both policies support growth in the rural economy. Policy ECN12 states that the growth of the rural economy will be encouraged through *inter alia* ‘...within constraints, facilitating the formation, growth and up-scaling of businesses in rural locations.’ It is considered that this proposal is exactly the type of development that policy ECN12 is seeking to support. The supporting text to Policy ECN12 states (in paragraph 5.64): ‘Rural areas need to generate adequate wealth to support local services and more sustainable communities – part of the Plan’s vision. Encouraging young people to stay in Northumberland is challenging – but especially when they have grown up in rural areas. This means that the plan must seek to add to the diversity of job opportunities in rural areas for young people to access.’

4.4 As stated previously, this business already provides a significant number of jobs, and the proposal to change the use of Unit 7 to Class E use will generate another 3 full-time positions. This brings the total number of people employed at the businesses to 16 (10 p/t and 6 f/t posts). If the business is not allowed to grow, and the current uses are not allowed to continue, then there would be a loss of these jobs.

4.5 Policy ECN13 states that in the countryside, development that will generate employment opportunities proportionate to the rural location will be supported where existing buildings are re-used, and the proposal is related as closely as possible to the existing settlement pattern, services and accessible places.

4.6 Policy ECN13 states: ‘The role of rural locations in providing employment opportunities, to meet the needs of those living in such areas is recognised. Therefore, in the countryside, development that will generate employment opportunities, proportionate to the rural location, will be supported where all of the following apply: a) Existing buildings are reused or, where this is not possible, extensions or new buildings that contribute positively to local landscape character and, where applicable, local building traditions; b) The proposal is related as closely as possible to the existing settlement pattern, existing services and accessible places; c) it will not have an adverse impact on the operational aspects of local farming or forestry.’

4.7 This proposal complies with all the criteria set out in part 1 of Policy ECN13. Part 2 then goes on to state areas where particular support will be given. An additional criterion has been added into the proposed modification consultation and states that particular support will be

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given to 'proportionate well related development, necessary for the continued operation in situ of an existing rural business.'

- 4.8 The proposed development both for the coffee shop business and the furniture/accessories sales business complies with criteria set out in Policy ECN13, and in particular the additional criterion proposed. The coffee shop business also supports other businesses in the business park by providing a valued facility saving the need to travel and also attracting clients to the business park.
- 4.9 Turning to the Policies Map supporting the Northumberland Local Plan; South Acomb Farm is allocated under policies ECN6 and ECN8. Policy ECN6 allocates the site at South Acomb Farm as general employment land. Part 4 of the (draft modified) Policy states that the 'range of land uses that will be supported within these general employment areas will be either the main employment uses only, in accordance with Policy ECN7, or a wider range of employment-generating uses, in accordance with Policy ECN8. 'Wider employment -generating uses' is defined in the glossary of the draft modifications as 'Land uses generating permanent on-site employment'. The proposed use at Unit 7 will generate additional employment in the area. The existing coffee shop, although no longer ancillary to the applicant's business, does form an ancillary unit within the wider business park; indeed, it is advertised in the Allendale Estates Brochures as an attraction for businesses wishing to relocate to the South Acomb Farm business hub and other office units.
- 4.10 Overall, it is considered that this proposal would not conflict with the aims of employment policies in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Policies within the Tynedale Local Plan and Tynedale Core Strategy are now quite out of date and not in full conformity with the NPPF.

Northumberland Local Plan (emerging) – Parking and Access policies

- 4.11 The emerging Northumberland Local Plan sets out indicative parking requirements for different use classes in Appendix E (proposed modifications). Class E is divided into 'shops up to 1000sqm' and 'food and drink'. Based on a calculation of room areas below, it would be necessary to provide in the region of 27 parking spaces for this business (with its current and proposed mix of coffee shop, office and retail).

Office/storage use: Unit 7: 21.6sqm (FF) + 19sqm (GF) = 40.6sqm
Unit 2: 42sqm (FF)
Unit 3: (none)

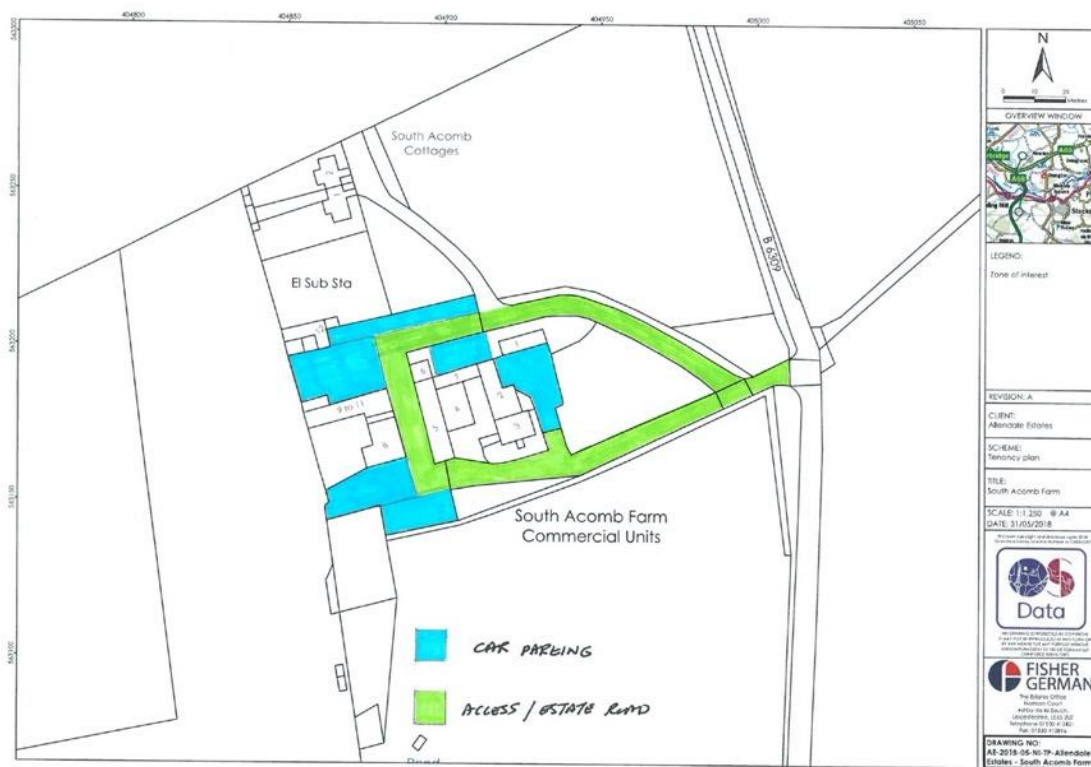
Retail use: Unit 7: 49sqm (GF)
Unit 2: (none)
Unit 3: 41.02sqm (GF). Mixed with café 15sqm (50% of 31.25) (GF)
75 sqm (FF)

Café use: Unit 7: (None)
Unit 2: 42sqm (GF)
Unit 3: Mixed with retail: 15sqm (50% of 31.25 mixed use)(GF)
External: 80sqm (front of Unit 3) 64sqm (area in front of Unit 7)

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Total uses: Café: 201sqm. Office: 82.6sqm Retail/showroom: 173sqm

- 4.12 Appendix E of the proposed minor modifications for the Northumberland Local Plan sets out the proposed parking requirement for development within Class E. Shops up to 1000sqm need to provide 1 space per 50sqm. Food and drink establishments should provide 1 space per 10sqm, and offices should have 1 space per 30sqm. Based on this, the proposed development should demonstrate that there are 20 spaces for the café element of the site, 3 spaces for the office elements of the site, and 4 spaces for the retail element of the site. This brings the total required spaces to 27.
- 4.13 As stated previously, there are at least 70 parking spaces available at the site, although a small number of these will be used by the other businesses. Other businesses are mostly office use, with some units being presently empty. The diagram below was provided by Allendale Estates and which shows the extent of the parking areas (in blue) at South Acomb Farm.



- 4.14 The proposed site plan submitted with the application shows the rough extent of the parking areas available:

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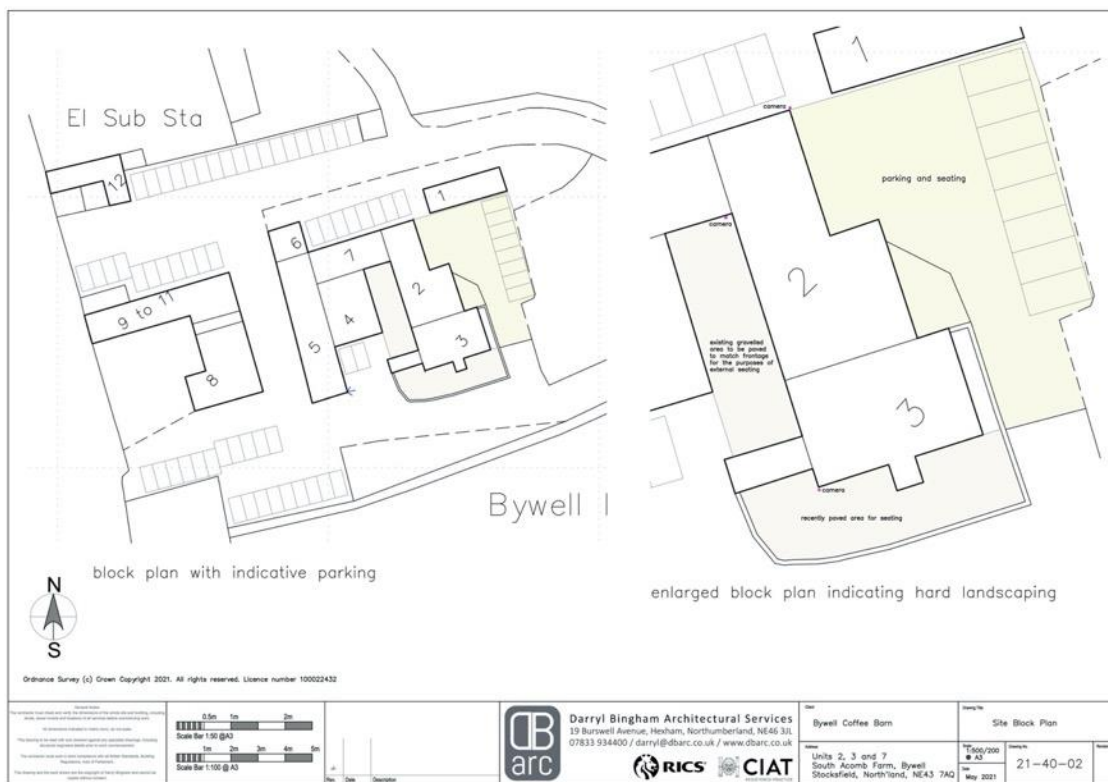


Figure 1: Site plan showing amount of car parking space available

4.15 The business is accessed using a 'one way' system; both the access and egress roads are over 4m in width, and there is excellent visibility at the site. No issues have been reported with regard to the access. The access is shared with South Farm Cottages to the north.



Figure 2: Photograph showing parking areas in north west part of the estate and access to cottages (right of photo)

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Figure 3: Parking area close to Unit 3 (south west)



Figure 4: Parking areas to the front of Unit 7 (currently works in place for drainage purposes)

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Figure 5: Proximity of South Acomb Farm Cottages from nearest parking areas at business park

Northumberland Local Plan – Policies Residential Amenity

- 4.16 Is understood from responses made to a now withdrawn application at the site, that residents at South Acomb Farm Cottages are concerned about the impact this proposal would have on their amenity. The owners have met with the residents in order to attempt to ameliorate concerns they may have. A further assessment of the scheme in terms of amenity impacts is covered later in this report.
- 4.17 Policy QOP 2 in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan is about residential amenity. In line with national planning policy, Policy QOP 2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for those existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area. Although it is accepted that there will be some element of disturbance due to visitors to the site, this is a business park, and so that use is established. It is not considered that this proposal will unduly impact further on the amenity of residents at South Farm Cottages.

Tynedale Local Plan and Tynedale LDF Core Strategy

- 4.18 Notwithstanding the very advanced stage of the Northumberland Local Plan as set out above, it nevertheless remains true that at the present moment the extant Local Development Plan is still the Tynedale LDF Core Strategy (2007) and the Tynedale Local Plan (saved policies) (2000). Policies in these documents are now quite out of date and some policies are not compliant with the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

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- 4.19 The Tynedale Local Plan contains a number of policies that relate to this proposal: GD6 (car parking standards outside the built-up areas of Hexham, Haltwhistle, Prudhoe and Corbridge), RT8 (Small scale retail uses outside Commercial Areas of District and Local Centres) and RT10 (Farm shops and rural outlets outside settlements).
- 4.20 The Tynedale LDF Core Strategy contains policy on retail development in Policy RT1. The change of use to retail is already established for Units 2 and 3 through the previous permission granted on the site. The only further change is to some parts of Unit 7.
- 4.21 Policy RT8 relates to small-scale retail uses outside commercial areas and centres. The existing retail use in Units 2 and 3 and the proposed retail/showroom use in Unit 7 at South Acomb farm will be in excess of the 100sqm figure set out as being appropriate in Policy RT8. However, material considerations and in particular more recent policy in the NPPF and emerging policy in the Northumberland Local Plan do outweigh Policy RT8 which is now significantly out of date.
- 4.22 Policy RT10 repeats some of the criteria in RT8, but adds additional criteria about visual amenity, highway safety, and the development being within the curtilage of an existing group of buildings. This proposal complies with all these criteria (again with the exception of the 100sqm limit on floor area which is not in line with national planning policy).
- 4.23 The Tynedale LDF Core Strategy contains more up to date retail policy. The emphasis of the policy is to support retail in town centres, but it does allow the accommodation of 'additional floorspace for retail and other town centre uses where it would not adversely affect the vitality, historic or environmental character of Primary Shopping Areas or the main towns or local centres generally. The applicants have a busy retail Unit in Corbridge, this enterprise helps that facility continue to operate. The opportunity offered by the space at South Acomb Farm means that this rural enterprise can grow and offer additional employment in the area.
- 4.24 Policy EDT1 in the Tynedale LDF Core Strategy supports a buoyant and diverse local economy. This is further supported in the NPPF which is covered in a separate section below:

5.0 Heritage Statement

- 5.1 Unit 3 at Acomb South Farm is a Grade II listed building. The garden walls and railings are also listed in their own right, also Grade II.
- 5.2 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted. The listings for Unit 3 and for the walls and railings describe the significance of the heritage assets as follows:

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Bywell Home Farmhouse (now Estate Office) with adjacent outbuilding to West.

*'House, early C19. Squared stone front, other elevations rubble, with tooled-and-margined dressings; Welsh slate roof, except for stone slates on outbuilding. Double-span plan. Gothick front. 2 storeys, 3 bays. Central 6-paned door under C20 half-glazed porch, flanked by 12-pane sash windows with intersection glazing bars in heads, all under pointed arches. Quatrefoil window with radial glazing above door is flanked by 16 pane sashes under square heads; all openings in stone surrounds. Twin gables disguised by lining embattled parapet. Set back to left, lower wall with blocked doorway and flat coping, backed by pent outbuilding. Left return shows various sash windows including 16-pane Yorkshire sash. **Attached farm buildings to rear altered and not of interest.** Originally known as South Acomb.'* Listing Reference NGR: NZ0492263176.

Garden walls and railings to south and east of home farmhouse

'Garden walls and railings, probably C19. Squared arched piers; to left a taller wall with arched coping curves back and ramps up to link with rubble with dressings, cast iron. Low walls, with chamfered coping carrying plain railings, flank central gateway with monolithic outbuilding to west of farmhouse (q.v.); to right a similar taller wall runs alongside house past yard entrance to join north-east corner. Included for group value.'

- 5.3 The other listed building on the site is directly west of Unit 3 (now Unit 5). This building would not be affected by internal or external works to Units 2 and 7.
- 5.4 The listed descriptions show that Unit 3 is listed, but Units 2 and 7 to the rear (also subject to this application) are not of interest.

List of works (retrospective and proposed)

- 5.5 The proposed works to the listed building (some of which consent is sought retrospectively) is as follows:
- [Retrospective] Fixing of 3 CCTV cameras to the external walls of the listed building: One to the south (front) elevation of Unit 3, One on the south elevation of Unit 7, and one on the north/east elevation (corner) of Unit 2
 - [Retrospective] Removal of partition wall on first floor of Unit 2
 - [Retrospective] Installation of Indian Sandstone slabs to front elevation of Unit 3
 - [Proposed] Opening up of hemmel archway to allow disabled access into Unit 7
 - [Proposed] Removal of stud walls, removal of false ceiling and replacement of stud walls with handrail on first floor of Unit 7
 - [Proposed] Removal of gravel and installation of further Sandstone slabs to seating area to the front of Unit 7.
- 5.6 Each of the above will be described below, and an assessment of the impact on the significance of the heritage asset provided at the end.

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Internal alterations to Unit 3 (retrospective)

5.7 All the internal alterations proposed are related to modern additions, and involve either removing them, or removing them and replacing them with slightly altered partition walls. The works that have taken place in Unit 3 were done when the initial showroom was converted. Plan reference 21-40-06D shows the location of the walls removed. An extract is shown below:

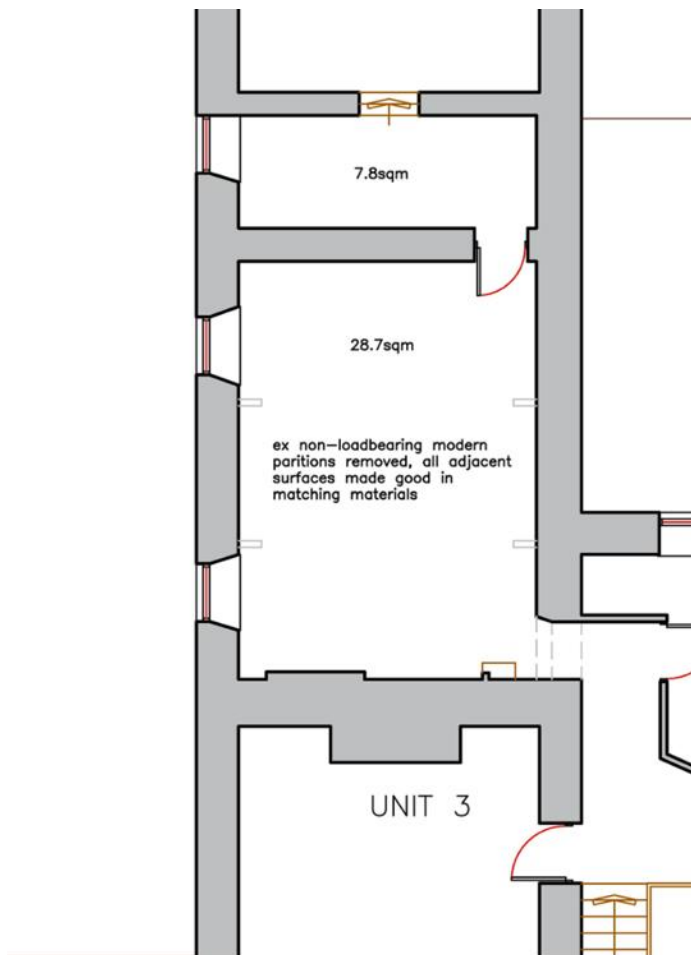


Figure 6: Room to the rear of unit 3 which has had partition walls removed

Installation of CCTV cameras (retrospective)

5.8 CCTV cameras have been installed in discreet locations on both Unit 3 and Unit 2. The positioning of the Units is high up, and they are not readily visible. It is considered that they do not impact on the significance of the historic building. Furthermore, they are easily removed, and are not permanently fixed to the building. The site plan below shows the location of each of the CCTV Units, and the photographs that follow show them as seen on the buildings.

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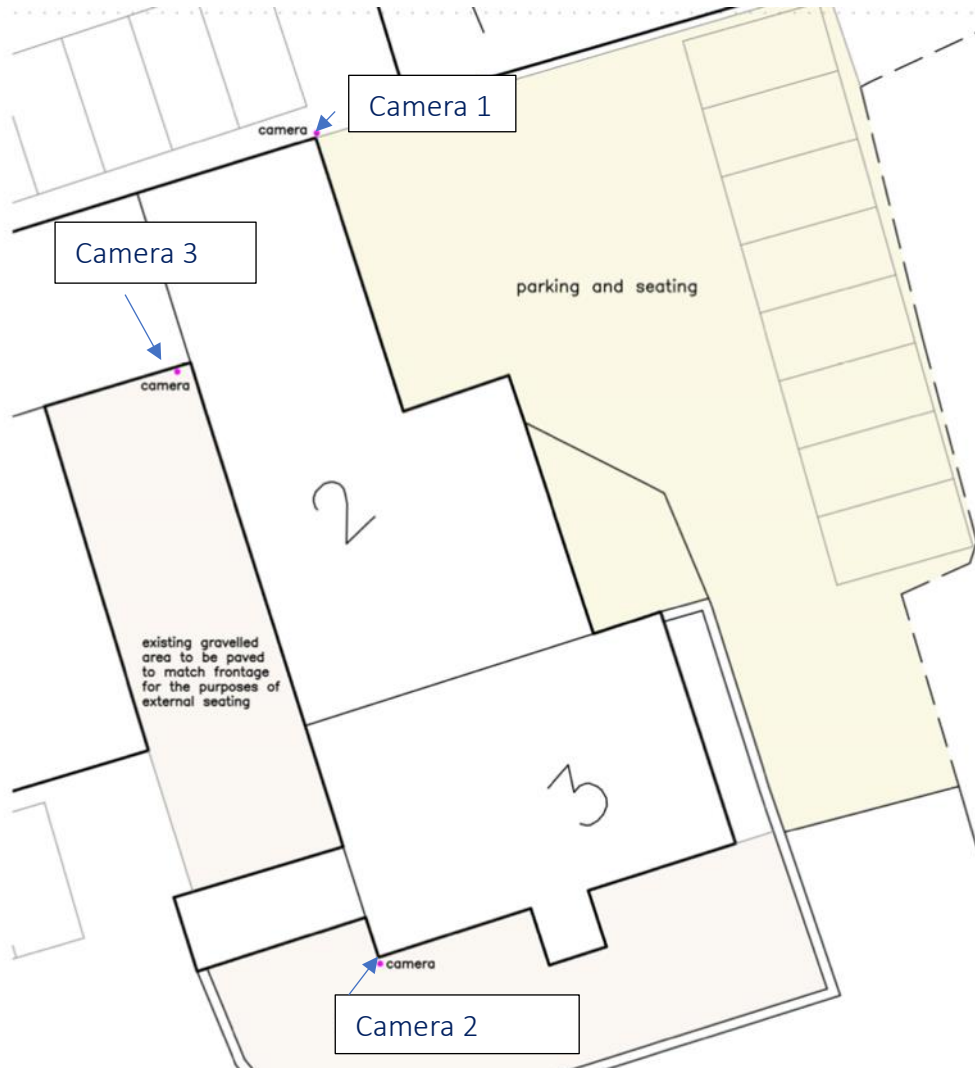


Figure 7: Location of CCTV cameras (front/side of Unit 2, rear of Unit 7 and front of Unit 3)

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Figure 8: Camera 1 – corner of rear elevation of Unit 2 as shown on site plan

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Figure 9: Camera 2: CCTV camera to front of Unit 3 (close up above)



Figure 10: Camera 3: CCTV Unit to front of Unit 7

Opening up of hemmel archway in Unit 7

- 5.9 This part of the proposal is on Unit 7; it has been established that the historic significance of Unit 7 is low. The archway will be opened up in a similar manner to other openings elsewhere at South Acomb Farm (see photograph below of similar opened entrance on Unit 10 at the business park).

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Figure 11: Unit 10, South Acomb Business Park with example of already opened arch



Figure 12: Hemmel arch in Unit 7 proposed for opening in a style similar to Unit 10 above

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Figure 13: Unit 7 internal photograph showing hemmel arch proposed for opening

Paving and seating area to front of Unit 3

- 5.10 Although listed building consent may not be required for these works, as they do not affect the fabric of the listed buildings, they would have needed planning permission. This element of the scheme is also retrospective, and the work has been carried out in order to allow the applicant to provide outdoor seating which was essential during the Covid pandemic. The pandemic means that although at this moment it is possible to sit indoors, many people will feel more comfortable sitting outdoors. The pandemic is not over, and having this area of outdoor seating will enable the applicants to adjust their offer.
- 5.11 The applicant has removed the turf lawn to the front of the building and laid Indian sandstone slabs to allow a safe and stable seating area (see photo below).

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Figure 14: Paved outdoor seating area outside Unit 3

Removal of partition walls in Unit 7 and retrospectively in Unit 2

- 5.12 Unit 7 and Unit 2 are both identified as not being of particular interest in the listing for the farmhouse building (Unit 3). All proposals internally are to remove modern stud walls and partitions/doorways. No alterations are proposed to the historic fabric of the buildings.

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Figure 15: Rafters in loft space (Unit 7) to be revealed and restored



Figure 16: Area of false ceiling in Unit 7 (first floor) to be removed to expose rafters

5.13 All stud walls to be removed throughout Unit 7 are modern partitions such as the one shown

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below. All stairways are also modern additions.



Figure 17: Unit 7 ground floor - partition wall to be removed

- 5.14 These proposals to open up some of the spaces to allow the retail business to function better have no negative impact on the appreciation of the historic building (notwithstanding that Unit 7 is not considered to be of interest and is not in itself listed).

Assessment of proposals on significance

- 5.15 In order to assess the impact of the proposals on the listed building, it is important to first consider the historic significance of the building. The listing is a good starting point with regard to significance. The listing for Unit 3 makes it clear that the attached farm buildings to the rear have been altered and are not of interest. In view of this it is clear that the historic significance of these buildings is low, notwithstanding their attachment to a building of high historic significance.
- 5.16 Paragraph 192 in the NPPF states that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- 5.17 The use of this building for displaying high quality furniture and furnishings is entirely consistent with sustaining the significance of the heritage asset. Not only will there be no harm to the asset itself, but the opening of Unit 7 will not only allow disabled access, but will also ensure that the building can continue to be used in a positive manner.

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- 5.18 Paragraph 192 goes on to state, in part b), that local planning authorities should also take account of the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality. The use of this building for a local rural business should be supported, including the fact that the use of the building for this purpose will also create additional jobs locally.
- 5.19 Paragraph 194 states that, any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require convincing justification. It is considered that **no harm** would arise from the changes that are proposed to Units 2 and Unit 7.
- 5.20 The positioning of CCTV cameras on the external elevations has a minimal impact. The cameras are small, and they are a temporary fixture that can easily be removed when no longer required. It is considered that these cameras do not harm the significance of the listed buildings.
- 5.21 The outdoor seating area does not technically require listed building consent as no works have taken place to the listed building itself. However, it is important to consider the impact that this will have on the setting of the listed building. It is considered that this outdoor seating area would not harm the significance of the building; even if less than significant harm were to be identified, it is considered that the public benefits of allowing people to sit outside to eat and drink, particularly during the pandemic, means that the public benefit does outweigh the very insignificant levels of harm. There is no harm identified to the future provision of a paved area to allow seating and access through to the rear of Unit 7.

6.0 Main Issues for Consideration

Economic Benefits

- 6.1 The NPPF contains most recent planning policy guidance on development. The relevant section is Chapter 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy'. It states, in paragraph 80, that *'planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. **Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.***
- 6.2 Paragraph 83 is about supporting a prosperous rural economy and states that 'planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings'. It goes on, in paragraph 84, to recognise that in rural areas, sites to meet local business needs may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. It states that, in these circumstances, it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings and does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads. This policy is a shift away from older policy against which the Tynedale Local Plan and the Tynedale LDF Core Strategy were drafted, where a threshold on square metres was proposed. It is considered that this revised approach in the NPPF supercedes that in those policies.

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Access and Parking

- 6.3 Matters relating to access and parking have already been discussed earlier in this report. It is considered that the access is good, with excellent visibility both ways when leaving and entering the business park. The provision of a one-way system ensures that there is safe access and egress.
- 6.4 As has been demonstrated, there is more than sufficient land available at the site for parking.

Loss of office space

- 6.5 Prior to the occupation of Units 2 and 3 by the applicants, Allendale Estates, the owners of the Units had had the offices on the market for well over a year (through Johnson Tucker) with no interest. Since the applicants took on Units 2 and 3, the business has gone from strength to strength, with the coffee shop business proving to be popular in its own right. Not only does the coffee shop provide facilities for visitors to the business park, but also to other businesses in the park, enhancing the offer that Allendale Estates can provide to future tenants. It is understood that Unit 7 has now also been empty for some time.

Café use as a stand-alone business

- 6.6 The issues with regard to access and parking have been referred to in detail earlier. It is not considered that there are material issues arising on this matter, as there is considerable space for parking, and the access is very good for a business park of this size, with a one-way system operating effectively.
- 6.7 There are no plans to further increase the café use over and above its current level; there have been no issues with regard to parking reported by any other businesses at the business park. Residents at the cottages to the north share the access but have their own parking. There are therefore no impacts to residents in terms of the parking and access.

Amenity impacts on residents

- 6.8 There are two residential properties close to the application site. Both the applicant and Allendale Estates have met with the residents at nearby South Acomb Farm Cottages to try and ameliorate any concerns they may have, and to inform them of this proposed planning application. There were a number of issues raised by the residents, some of which were to do with other matters at the business park not related to this application. There was particular concern about visitors with dogs, and the applicants have committed to providing a dog bin in the car park to ameliorate these concerns.
- 6.9 Residents have also stated that they are concerned about noise coming from the café, particularly the areas providing outdoor seating. The areas providing outdoor seating are all to the south of the site, and the buildings at Unit 7, and Units 1 and 2 separate those seating areas from residential properties, as well as a paddock/field. It would be feasible for Allendale Estates to provide additional fencing/hedging along the boundary of the car park, but it is considered that the overall impact on residents is unlikely to require any significant intervention given the distance from the properties and the buildings that separate them.

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Figure 18: Aerial view showing distance between residential properties and application site

7.0 Principle of development

7.1 The principle of this development is considered to be acceptable in planning policy terms, and in terms of all other material considerations as surmised above. There are many examples of similar successful proposals in the local area: The Milkhope Centre is an example (albeit this scheme would not be at that scale), Bradley Gardens in Gateshead and the Vallum located on the Military Road. All of these attract a small number of visitors and are examples of successful rural businesses that provide a level of catering and valuable local employment opportunities for local people.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The proposal should be approved for the following reasons:

- The proposed use would use buildings some of which are currently vacant and have little prospect of being rented out in the near future given the lack of interest so far; The proposed use would allow a successful local rural business to continue to expand and invest in the area;
- The expanded business would offer additional employment in the local area through the

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provision of approximately 3 additional staff for the Jasmine & Lilah business.

- The café provides a valuable service to other businesses in the business park, as well as to nearby business parks. It provides employment, and an enjoyable venue for visitors to the premises;
- The café is an award-winning local business, having recently won the small business award awarded by the MP for Hexham, Tynedale and Ponteland (Guy Opperman)
- The site has excellent access and provision for parking for visitors much of which is still underused at present;
- The expansion of the business would help continue to support the existing business in Corbridge;
The proposal is in accordance with planning policy and in particular with paragraphs 80, 83 and 84.
- There would be no harm to the listed building, as a result of the minor works proposed internally; the CCTV cameras and outdoor seating would also not harm the listed building.

8.2 It is therefore hoped that this application will be approved without delay so that the business can begin to expand at what has been a difficult time for all small businesses.