



Design & Access Statement

Ford Castle, Berwick-upon-Tweed

STATEMENT

This document sets out the general design, access and conservation principles included in this planning application to erect an outdoor activity centre as part of the redevelopment of Ford Castle.

PROJECT / CLIENT DESCRIPTION

PGL Travel Limited are the UK's leader in outdoor education for young people and their teachers/ party leaders in addition to adventure holidays for both children between 7-17 years and families. PGL are well known for their use of spectacular historic properties making use of their heritage assets to create unique opportunities for a variety of users.

The objective of this application is to place a variety of activity equipment and features within the designated playing field of the estate to cater for a wide variety of outdoor activities for all ages.

NBDA Architects

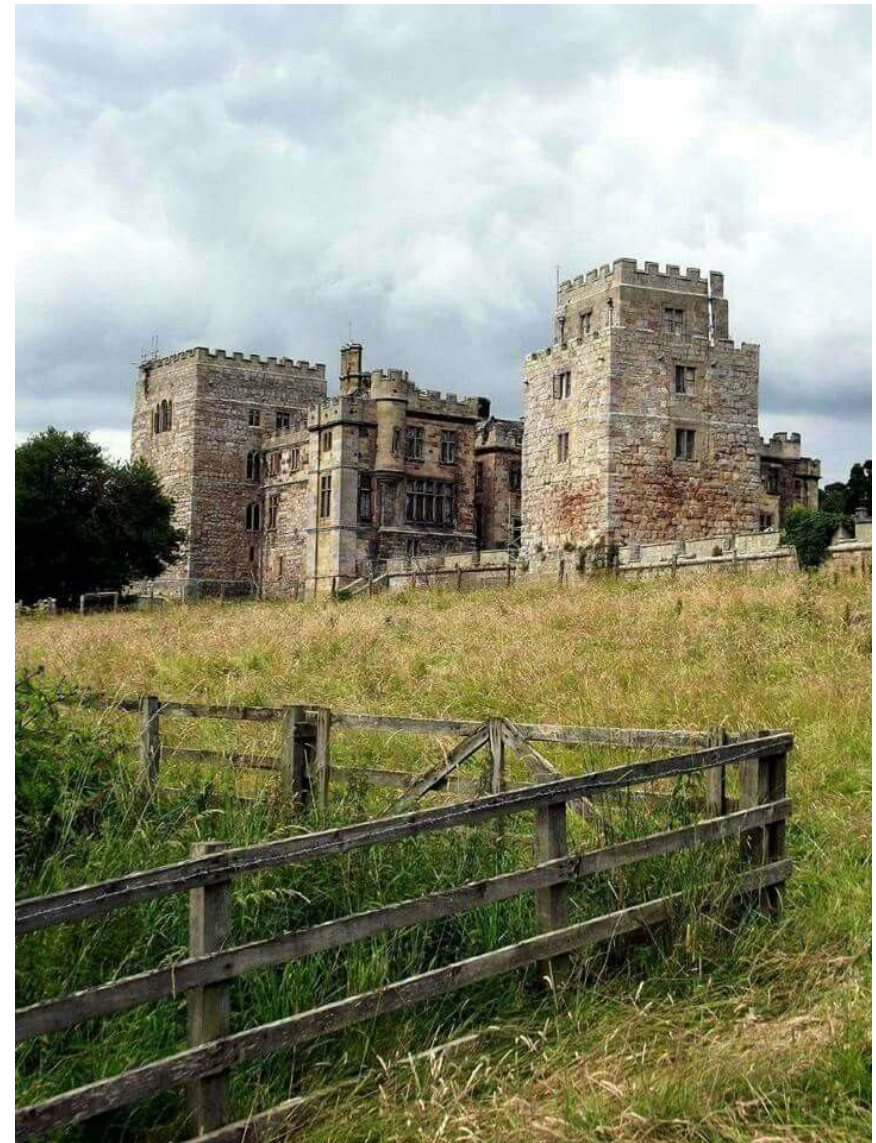
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INTRODUCTION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Authorship & Purpose

1.01

This design and access statement has been prepared by NBDA Ltd to accompany the Planning and Listed Building Applications submitted to Northumberland County Council by SLR Consulting on behalf of PGL Travel Ltd.

The application(s) relates to the assembly of a variety of outdoor activity equipment within the castle grounds in order to revitalise the use of the estate as an outdoor education centre.

The purpose of this statement is to describe the proposed scheme of which the planning consent is sought.

1.02

PGL Travel is leading the way in outdoor education within the UK for young people and their teachers/ party leaders. PGL Travel operates from several sites containing heritage assets which includes both listed buildings and protected landscapes. They take the responsibility of working around these historic places very seriously and thrive on their ability to make use of such characteristic locations.

1.03

SLR Consulting provide environmental and heritage consultancy. SLR have undertaken assessments of the proposed site and prepared the relevant report and documentation, as references throughout the design and access statement, to support the application(s).

1.04

Northern Building Design Associates Ltd is a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. It was originally founded in 1968 and has since had a focus on creating UK holiday destinations in a variety of settings.

2.0 Application Site

APPLICATION SITE

Ford Castle | Berwick-upon-Tweed

2.01

There is evidence of settlement on the Estate of Ford Castle since Anglo-Saxon times. In the 13th Century the land was granted to Odinel de Ford, who was first to build a manor house on the grounds. Over the years the Estate has been passed through many hands creating history along the way, and in 1859 the Estate was inherited by Lady Louisa Waterford who began restoring and modernising the castle, which is thought to be the last historical renovation of the castle.

The Estate was eventually sold to the Joiceys family in 1907 where it continued to be a family home, but during the Second World War, in the years of 1941-46, the Castle became a hospital by the British Red Cross and St John's Ambulances.

2.02

The site has most recently been used as an outdoor activity centre for children and school groups since 1956 but since closed in 2020 due to the pandemic. PGL Travel were granted a lease of the Castle and part of its grounds in Autumn 2021 to revitalise the existing centre to its former use, bringing life and energy back to the castle.

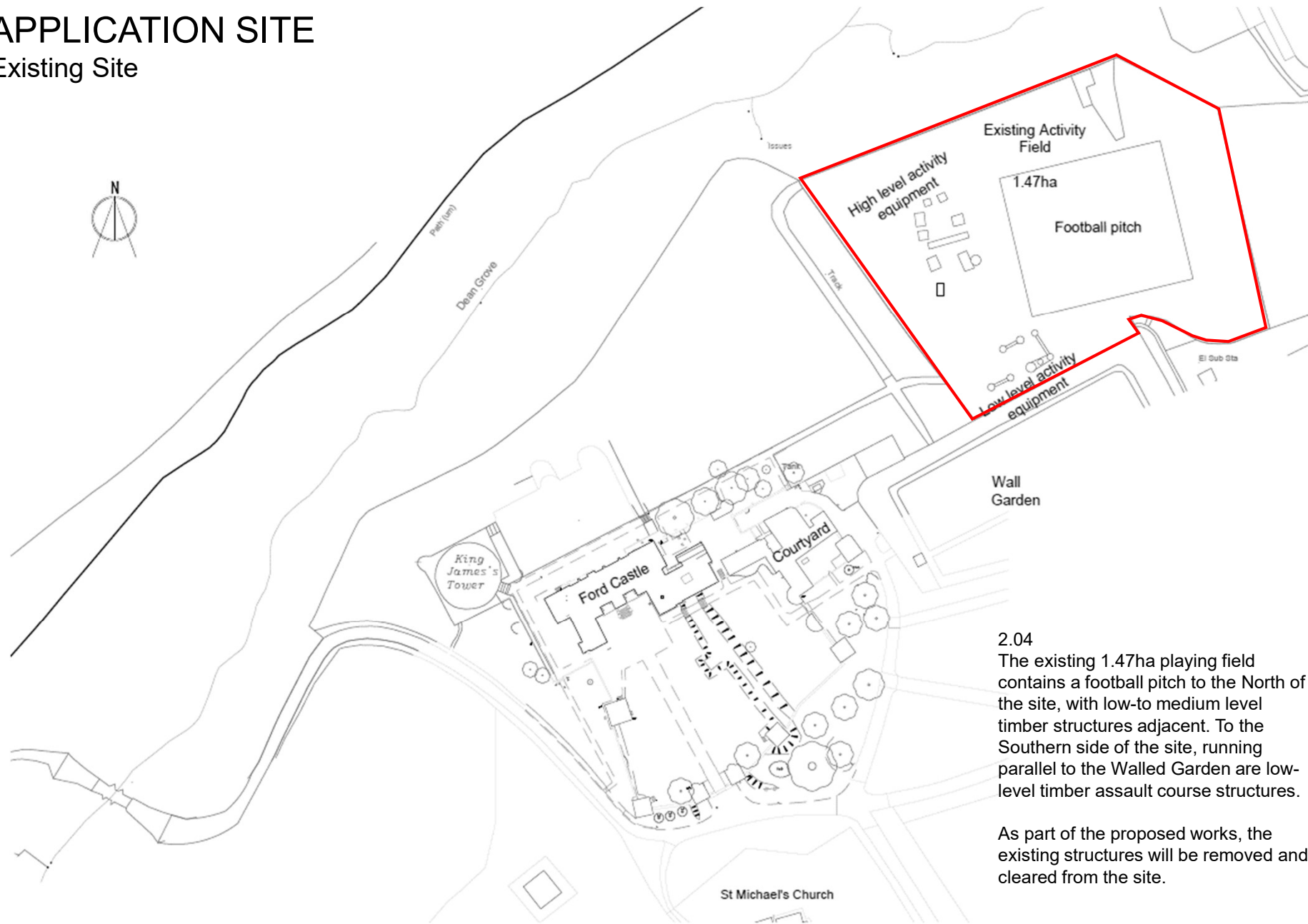
2.03

The significance of the Ford Castle Estate stems from its significance and far-reaching historical presence on the border between England and Scotland. As a base camp for various Kings and important families, the Estate has been highlighted throughout British History.



APPLICATION SITE

Existing Site



2.04

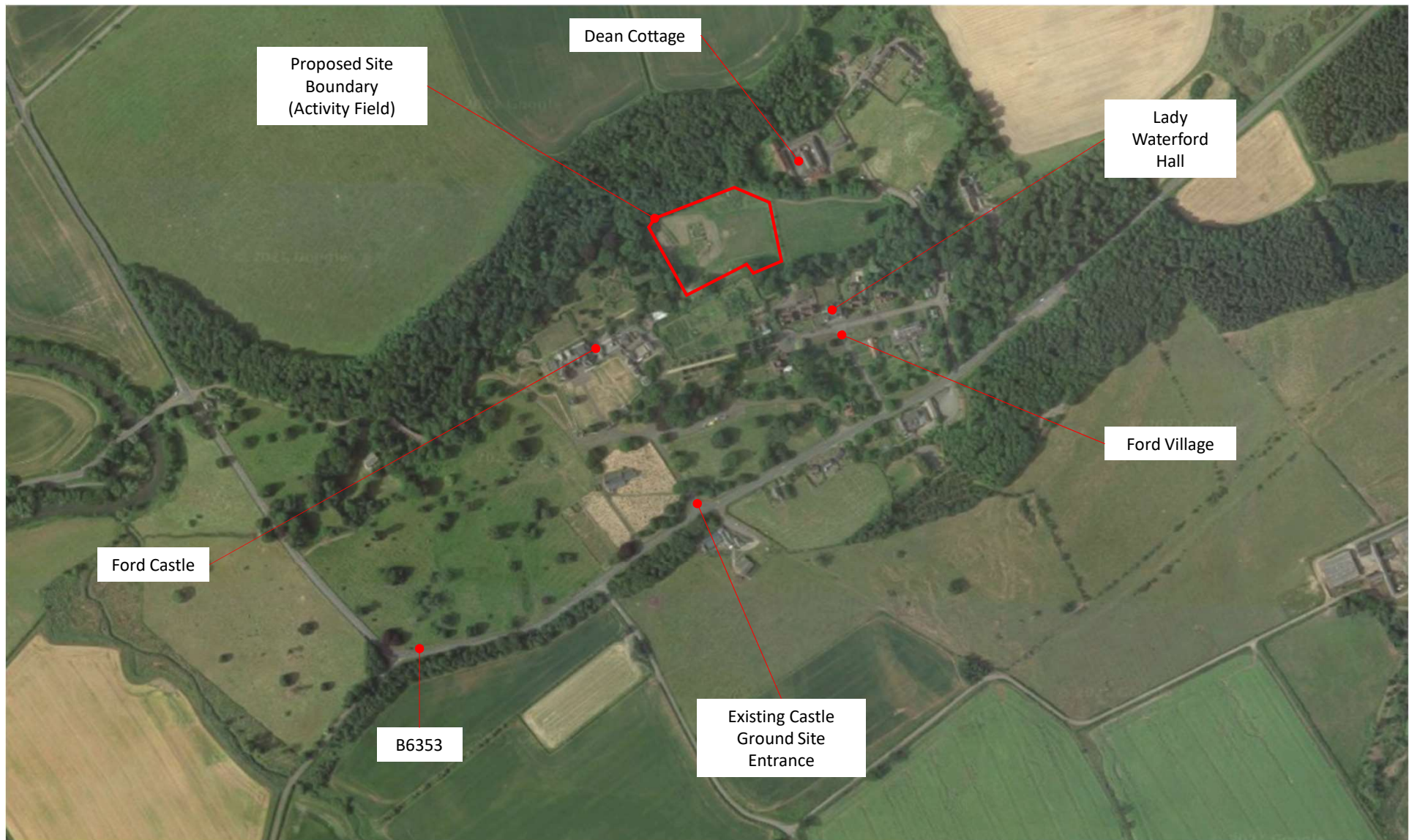
The existing 1.47ha playing field contains a football pitch to the North of the site, with low-to medium level timber structures adjacent. To the Southern side of the site, running parallel to the Walled Garden are low-level timber assault course structures.

As part of the proposed works, the existing structures will be removed and cleared from the site.

3.0 The Proposal

THE PROPOSAL

Site Location in Context



THE PROPOSAL

Activity Field



3.01
 The design intends to enhance, by replacement, the existing assault course which is in poor condition. The proposed activity equipment has been carefully selected to cater for children of all ages, with progressive learning opportunities as they proceed through each of the courses. The objective is to encourage independence, confidence, self-esteem and teamwork whilst providing enjoyment within a fabulous and historic setting.

High Ropes Linear
 Maximum height from ground 14m
 Framework to be finished as illustrated below to reduce visual impact. High Ropes also benefits from screening created by the existing tree line



Zipwire
 Maximum height from ground 9.5m
 Approximate length of Zipline = ~ 137m

Lake for raft building and testing. Maximum depth 1.5m

Aeroball
 20. Aeroballs have been positioned away from the stone walls to reduce visual impact



Challenge Course
 1000. activities in total
 Rope swing with low all aboard is the tallest piece of equipment at 4.1m high.

Air Rifle Range
 20. units in total.
 Air Rifle range has been moved away from the Walled Garden to maintain key vistas when entering the field, which allows guests to appreciate the the stone walls.



THE PROPOSAL

Scale and Land Relationships

3.02

In order to minimise the impact on the natural and historic environment, the proposed activity equipment has been located on the existing playing field. The old timber structures will be removed, and the site will be revitalised, with a new offering of adventure courses.

3.03

The lowest point on the site is to the Northern boundary, with the site sloping up towards the Southern boundary. By utilising the site topography, the new equipment has been carefully positioned to reduce visual impact to neighbouring properties, the Castle, and the setting of which it sits.

3.04

To the North of the site, a new activity pond is proposed which will accommodate activities such as raft building. The pond will have a maximum depth of 1.5m with gradual sloping banks around it's perimeter. The lowest point of the site around the pond will be raised using the excavated material of the pond to provide a small embankment and screening area. All excavated material is proposed to be re-used and will remain on site.

3.05

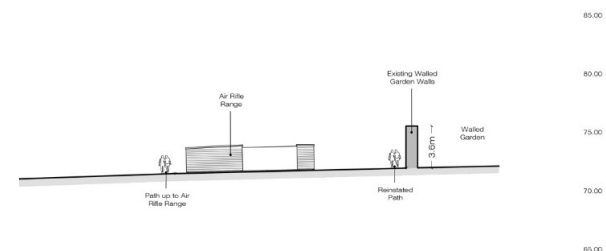
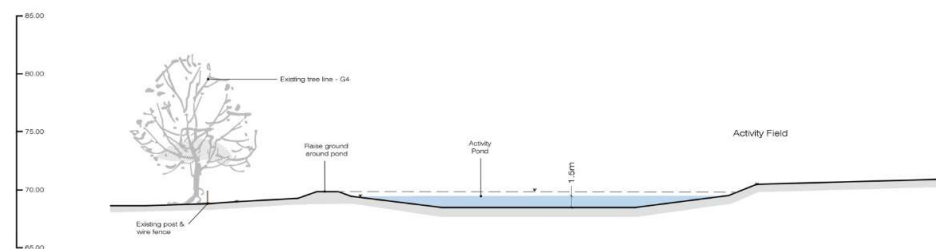
Our desktop study discovered a historic and removed path to the Southern side of the site which originally connected the Castle and Ford Village via the playing field. The connecting gates within the boundary fence are still present today. As part of this proposal, the existing path will be re-instated to acknowledge the sites history, whilst also serving as a buffer between the existing Walled Garden and the Air Rifle Range.

The buffer provides an uninterrupted area where children can observe and appreciate the presence of the existing Grade II listed Victorian stone / brick walls which boarder the Walled Garden.

3.06

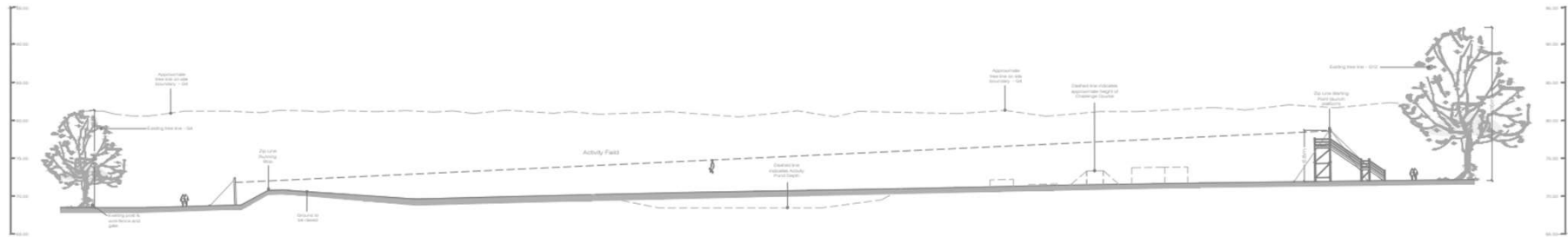
The proposed activity equipment can be separated into two general categories: Low small-scale equipment such as the Challenge Course, Aero-Ball and the small wooden shelters for each of the activities and the Air Rifle Range; and higher lightweight structures such as the lightweight frames for the Zipwire and High Ropes Linear Course, consisting of posts, wires and ropes.

Details of the proposed equipment have been appended to this application. The following page demonstrates scale and massing of the activity equipment against it's adjacent surrounds.



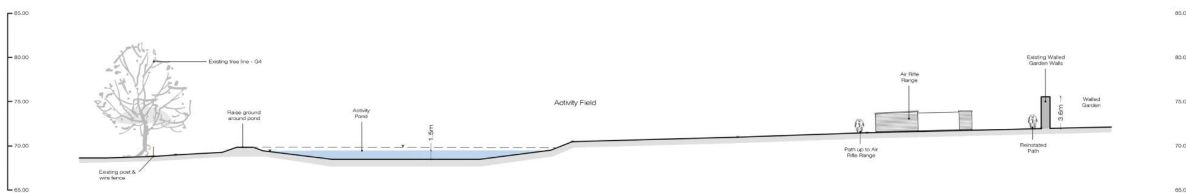
THE PROPOSAL

Scale and Land Relationships



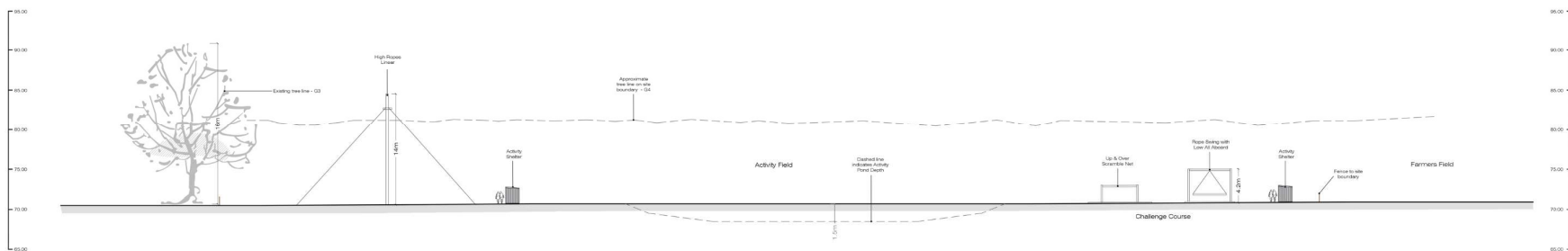
Section A – A Zipwire

3.07
Predominately the proposed activity equipment sits beneath the tree line which borders the site, with the exceptions of the East and parts of the Southern Boundary. The tallest of the activity equipment have been positioned closer to the trees in order to reduce visual impact.

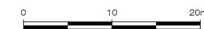


Section B – B Activity Pond & Air Rifle Range

3.08
The smallest, and therefore least impacting, piece of activity equipment has been proposed along the Eastern Boundary. The Challenge Course consists of predominately low-level structures, with the tallest being only 4.2m from the ground, which consists of posts and ropes.



Section C – C Linear High Ropes & Challenge Course



4.0 Access Statement

ACCESS STATEMENT

4.01

The Estate is accessed via the B6353, with the main entrance to the site directly opposite The Old Diary Farm. No alterations will be made to the existing entrance other than the provision of new wayfinding signage which will be covered under a separate application.

4.02

PGL Travel will be offering a similar service as the previous occupants whereby school groups staying at the Castle will be dropped off via coach(s) and / or via car. The proposed scheme will utilise the existing access routes into and through the site. No modifications are proposed to the internal network of roads and paths inside the Estate.

4.03

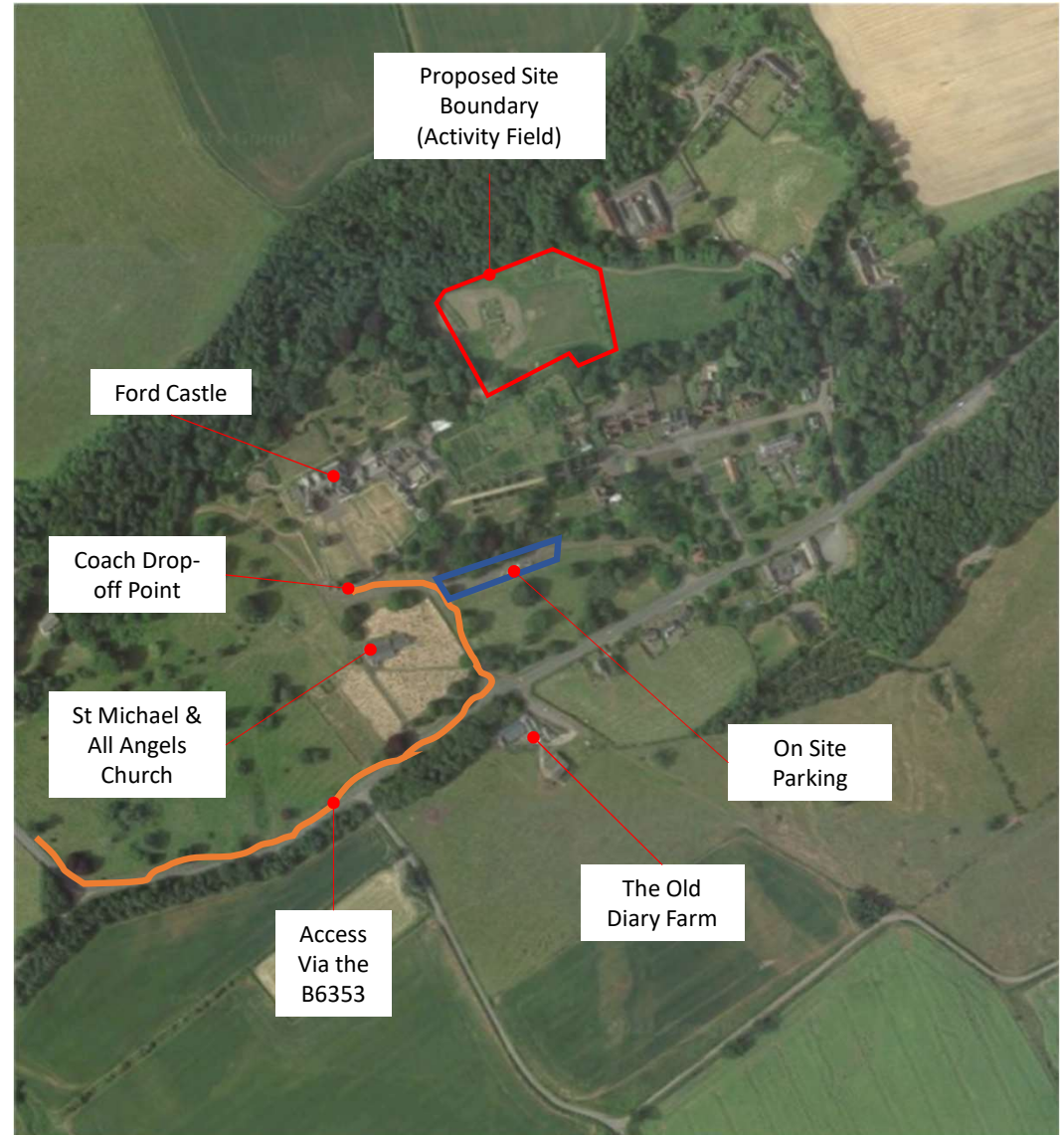
The activity equipment will only be available for private use under PGL control. No vehicular access would be required for the activity areas, with the exceptions of limited access during the construction and maintenance of the equipment.

4.04

The Estate has good pedestrian and cycle paths, and these will remain as existing.

4.05

SLR Consulting have prepared a Transport Statement of which reference should be made on highway and traffic matters.



5.0 Supporting Documentation

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Environmental & Heritage Impact

Landscape

5.01

Refer to SLR Landscape and Visual Assessment

Ecology

5.02

Refer to SLR Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment

Archaeology

5.03

Refer to SLR Heritage Statement

Transport Assessment

5.04

Refer to SLR Transport Statement, Travel Plan Statement, Construction Method Statement and Refuse Strategy Statement

Flood Risk & Drainage

5.05

Refer to SLR Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy

ARB

5.06

Refer to SLR Arboricultural Impact Assessment (TreeWorks Environmental Practice)

6.0 Conclusion

CONCLUSION

6.01

Reference should be made to SLR consulting Heritage Report for conclusion of impact.

6.02

The proposal is set out to provide, and to continue to provide, 'learning by doing' to children of all ages and to encourage confidence, self-esteem and independence. The proposed scheme will enhance the existing setup and undoubtedly bring more attraction to the Estate, enabling ongoing appreciation of the sites History.

6.03

The proposal has a sensitive approach which utilises the existing land topography, by carefully positioning the activity equipment within the site, minimising impact to the surrounding Heritage assets and the environment.