

Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2

Date: 31 January 2022

Our ref: 65871/02/NWO/ASl/26091047v1

Your ref:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Application for Full Planning Permission - Haggerston Castle Holiday Park

On behalf of our client, Haven Leisure Limited (“Haven”), please find enclosed an application seeking planning permission for the “*erection of low ropes course and boundary enclosures*” at Haggerston Castle Holiday Park, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2PA. Haven is a subsidiary of Bourne Leisure Limited (“Bourne Leisure”).

The application, submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-11777217) comprises this cover letter along with the following:

- 1 Completed application form and notices prepared by Lichfields;
- 2 Land ownership certificate;
- 3 Arboricultural Implications Assessment prepared by Woodsman Arboricultural Consultancy (Resubmission from ref. 22/02160/FUL);
- 4 Ecological Appraisal prepared by Tyler Grange (Resubmission from ref. 22/02160/FUL);
- 5 Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Lichfields (Resubmission from ref. 22/02160/FUL); and
- 6 Application drawings (Annex 1 of this letter) prepared by NBDA Architects

Payment of 1,404.00 to cover the Council’s application fee has been made by BACs. The application fee has been calculated based on the site area (5,168 sqm).

Background

Haven, part of Bourne Leisure, was recently acquired by Blackstone. Since the acquisition, there is a significant drive to deliver enhancements for the benefit of the guests and local communities. Haven’s development programmes for the maintenance and

enhancement of its sites are to ensure that the facilities provided are adapted to respond to changes in the tourism market.

At a time when the tourism industry is looking to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, it is more important than ever that holiday parks can enhance and expand their facilities to meet changing demands and customer expectations. The increasing demand for higher grade has been recognised and experienced by Bourne Leisure in recent years. The Company aims to meet the new levels of demand, with improved accommodation, park services, entertainment, eating establishments, and other facilities.

These proposals are pursued in the spirit of this, seeking to ensure that Haggerston Holiday Park continues to remain an attractive proposition to its guests.

The Site and Surroundings

The Haggerston Castle Holiday Park is located to the east of the A1, approximately 10km to the south of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. The park accommodates both static and touring units. It also includes a large lake and entertainment complex comprising a swimming pool, a range of sporting and leisure activities, amusement arcades, a show bar, shops, and restaurants. Sporting activities are located throughout the site, including a golf course, tennis courts, a boating lake, and children's play areas.

The developable area site comprises approximately 0.5ha of raised ground with small groups of trees. Until recently, the site was covered by a denser group of trees that filled much of the site, but there has been significant tree loss across the site in recent years which has been exacerbated by recent storms. This position was highlighted by application ref. 22/02160/FUL.

At the point of submission of ref. 22/02160/FUL for 'Sky Trail' high ropes equipment, the proposals for the 'Sky Tykes' low ropes had not yet been finalised. This application seeks to broaden the accessibility of the facility so it can be enjoyed by younger guests at the park.

Planning History of the Application Site

The holiday park has an extensive planning history. The only directly relevant planning history for this specific site is as follows:

- Ref. 22/02160/FUL - Erection of ancillary activity sheds (retrospective) and erection of Sky Trail high ropes course – Approved 25 November 2022

The Proposal

The manufacturer, Sky Tykes, describes the adventure equipment as a junior ropes course, manufactured specifically for children, with participants hooked into the patented safety systems. A unique feature is the ability for helpers (such as a parent) to accompany the child while they negotiate the rope course.

The specification of the equipment is provided with this submission and demonstrates that it will be a maximum height of 2.85m, length of 12.20m and will have an overall area of c. 203 square metres. The equipment will be finished in a mix of greens, blues and browns (see specification for the specific colours).

Policy Context

This section outlines relevant planning policy and guidance, identifying the key considerations which should be taken into account when determining the planning application.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) sets out the overarching policy priorities for the planning system. The NPPF is a material consideration in the assessment of this application.

Local Planning Policy

The Council's Statutory Development Plan is the Northumberland Local Plan 2022 and associated Policies Maps. The adoption of this plan in March 2022 superseded the saved Local Plan policies of Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan (1999). The following policies of the Local Plan are of relevance to the Holiday Village:

- Policy STP 1 Spatial strategy (Strategic Policy): Seeks to deliver sustainable development which enhances the vitality of communities across Northumberland, supports economic growth, and which conserves and enhances the County's unique environmental assets.
- Policy ECN 15 Tourism and visitor development: Northumberland will be promoted and developed as a destination for tourists and visitors while recognising the need to sustain and conserve the environment and local communities.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The NPPF recognises the importance of tourism for the rural economy and states that development should enable "sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside" (paragraph 84. C)

Policy STP 1 Spatial strategy (Strategic Policy) supports development where it is for the sustainable growth and expansion of an existing business. It also supports proposals for sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments.

Policy ECN 15 Tourism and visitor development advises that proposals will be supported where they improve and diversify the County's tourist offer and be located as close as is practicable to existing development.

The Holiday Park is sited within the open countryside. The proposals relate directly to tourism uses within an established holiday park and will be integrated into the park's surroundings. The increasing demand for higher-grade accommodation and park facilities has been recognised by Bourne Leisure in recent years.

The Company aims to meet the new levels of demand with improved accommodation, park services, entertainment, eating establishments, and other facilities. The proposal reflects the need for the leisure industry to continually review the nature and quality of its facilities, taking into account customer

expectations and feedback. As outlined above, the ‘Sky Tykes’ low ropes equipment is directly associated with the approved high ropes equipment (for older children) and seeks to provide facilities for younger children.

On this basis, the proposals are in accordance with the NPPF as well as local policies STP 1 Spatial strategy (Strategic Policy) and Policy ECN 15 Tourism and visitor development.

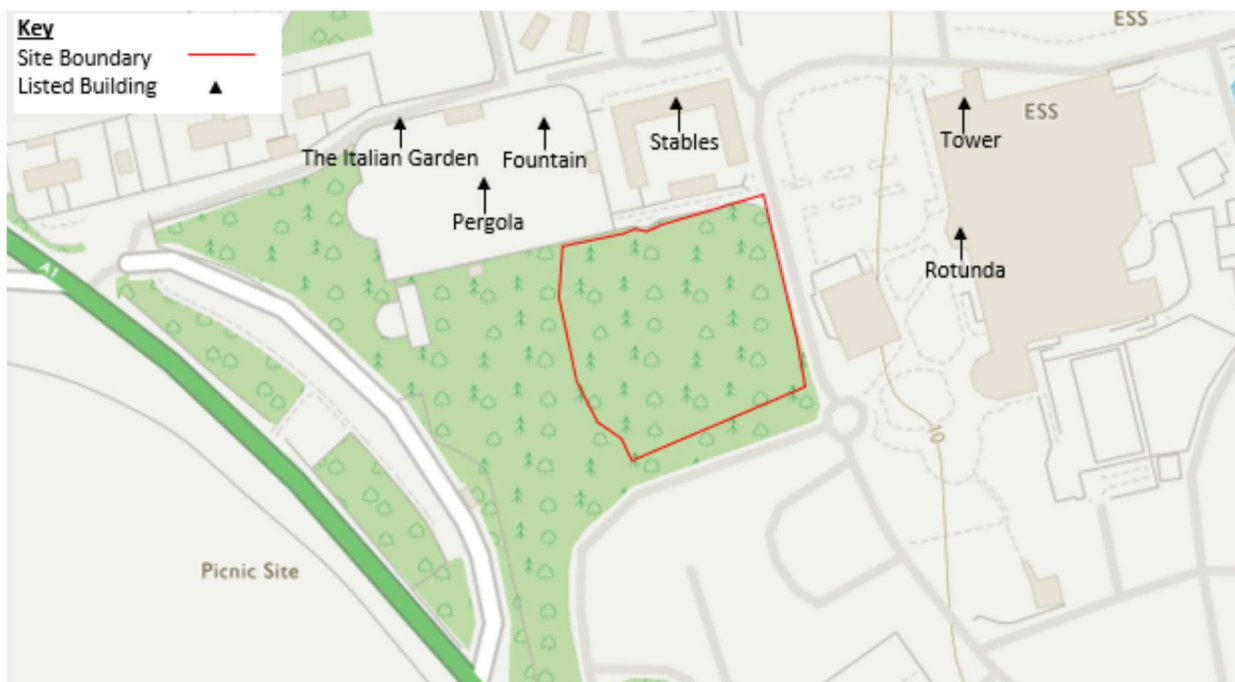
Heritage

The NPPF states that *“when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance”*.

The application site is adjacent to several heritage assets, namely the Italian Garden (Grade II) and Stables (Grade II) to the north of the site. A Heritage Impact Assessment had been prepared for the immediately adjacent high ropes application (ref. 22/02160/FUL) and this considered the entirety of the recently cleared area, where the low ropes are also proposed. The assessment considered the impact of the high ropes on the surrounding heritage assets, of which identified 6 assets of relevance.

The report concluded that the demolition of much of Haggerston Castle, combined with extensive development within its setting has significantly altered its historic context and it is now very difficult to appreciate the structures on the site as part of a grand country mansion.

Figure 1 Map heritage assets considered in the HIA



Source: Lichfields

As shown in Figure 1, the HIA identified 6 assets of relevance. A summary of their importance, effect on setting and effect on significance is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Summary of effects on the setting and significance of the surrounding heritage assets

No	Ref	Name	Asset	Grade	Importance	Degree of effect on setting	Degree of effect on significance
1	1154632	Stables at Haggerston Castle	Listed building	II	Medium	Neutral	Nil
Group: Italian garden and associated features							
2	1042244	The Italian garden Including Walls and Features	Listed building	II	Medium	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
3	1042245	Pergola in the Italian garden	Listed building	II	Medium	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
4	1303727	Fountain in the Italian garden	Listed building	II	Medium	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Group: Haggerston Castle							
5	1154644	Tower at Haggerston Castle	Listed building	II	Medium	Neutral	Nil
6	1042246	Rotunda at Haggerston Castle	Listed building	II	Medium	Neutral	Nil

Source: Lichfields

The HIA for the high ropes concluded that the development would preserve the significance and special architectural and historic interest of the affected designated heritage assets, except for the group of listed buildings associated with the Italian garden which would experience minor adverse effects on their setting and significance.

Whilst the report was completed for the high ropes application, as these proposals are immediately adjacent to the approved and of a smaller scale, we consider the conclusions of this report still valid. On this basis, the Heritage Impact Assessment has been resubmitted for information.

Transport Statement

There will be no change to the main access road into the Holiday Village. Given that the proposed development is to be located within the existing holiday park, there are no implications for traffic movements, especially as these facilities are for use by guests already staying at the park.

On this basis, a Transport Statement is not required, as the development will not attract additional traffic to the holiday park.

Landscape/Amenity Statement

As outlined in the previous application, the application site until recently was covered by a denser group of trees that filled much of the site, but there has been significant tree loss across the site arising from recent storms.

Alongside the high ropes application, Arboricultural Implications Assessment was submitted which sought to retain those existing trees on the site which are worthy of retention. It highlights that 29 of 39 remaining on site were unsuitable for retention due to poor condition and should be removed regardless of development. These works have now been completed and the high ropes implemented on-site. The Arboricultural Implications Assessment has been resubmitted for information.

The low ropes application also includes boundary enclosures for both the wider area, as well as the two sets of equipment. This is to ensure the safety of the users and will be viewed in the context of the equipment within the area.

Flood Risk and Drainage Statement

NPPF states that “*strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment and should manage flood risk from all sources. They should consider cumulative impacts in, or affecting, local areas susceptible to flooding, and take account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management authorities, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards*” (Paragraph 160).

Policy STP 4 Climate change mitigation and adaptation (Strategic Policy) states that proposals should incorporate the use of sustainable drainage systems, to minimise and control surface water run-off. The importance of sustainable drainage systems is emphasised in Policy WAT 3 Flooding which states that development should ensure that built development proposals, including new roads, separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, using Sustainable Drainage Systems.

A review of the Environment Agency map confirms that the site's flood risk from rivers, sea, and surface water is very low. Meaning that each year this area has a chance of flooding of less than 0.1%.

As the site area will not be paved, the rainwater falling on the site will soakaway into the ground as existing. The proposal will not increase the level of flood risk at the site or to neighbouring sites, in accordance with national policy guidance and Local Plan policies STP 4 and WAT 3.

Ecology

The County Ecologist during the consultation of the high-ropes application requested the submission of an ecological assessment. Upon the submission of this document, no objection was raised to the proposals subject to suitable mitigation.

The Ecological Appraisal was prepared for immediately adjacent high ropes application (ref. 22/02160/FUL) however as with the Heritage Impact Assessment, it considered the entirety of the recently cleared area, where the low ropes are also proposed. Therefore, we propose the same mitigation as set out in this document and consider its findings still valid. The report has been submitted for information.

We note that the report makes recommendations for the event that the small ornamental pond on site is cleared. We can confirm this was installed by the applicant post-submission of the previous application. It is intended this pond remains therefore the recommendations need not apply.

Summary and Concluding Comments

The proposed development will play a vital role in the continued investment at Haggerston Castle Holiday Park to improve and enhance the facilities at the park. The proposals relate directly to the approved high ropes application and will provide play equipment for children of all ages.

Overall, it is concluded that the application is in accordance with the adopted Local Plan and national guidance. Accordingly, we trust that the Council will be able to support the application. We look forward



to receiving confirmation that the application has been validated. If you require any further information in the meantime, please contact me.

Arabella Stewart-Leslie
Senior Planner

Copy Haven Leisure Limited

Annex 1: Application Drawings

Drawing Ref.	Name
2149-HC-001	Location Plan
2149-HC-002	Existing Site Plan
2149-HC-003	Existing GA Plan
2149-HC-010	Proposed Site Plan
2149-HC-011	Proposed General Arrangement
2149-HC-012	Proposed fences and CCTV post details