

GEORGE F. WHITE

RESIDENTIAL . COMMERCIAL . RURAL . DEVELOPMENT

Planning Statement

The School House
Lucker
Northumberland

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Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 George F. White (Planning, Architecture and Development) have been instructed by Mr Johnson (the 'Applicant') to submit a full planning application for the conversion of an existing restaurant currently Use Class E(b) into tourism accommodation under Use Class C1.
- 1.2 Having regard to section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this planning statement considers the application's conformity with the Development Plan, relevant national planning policy and other material considerations.
- 1.3 In addition to this statement, the application also comprises the following;
 - Site Location Plan
 - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
 - Existing and Proposed Site Plans
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Ecological Checklist

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site ('the Site') is located in the centre of the village Lucker, and comprises of an existing restaurant, associated hardstanding and access.
- 2.2 The site is detailed on the submitted Location Plan.
- 2.3 The site is bound by:
 - Trees and vegetation to the north.
 - An unclassified road, residential dwellings and a restaurant to the south and west.
 - Grassland and trees to the east.
- 2.4 The village of Lucker is located to the north of Northumberland and is located 13.2 miles to the north of Alnwick and 18.9 miles to the south of Berwick upon Tweed.
- 2.5 The Environment Agency flood risk map for planning illustrates the site is partially located within flood zone 3, and as such is at risk of flooding.
- 2.6 A review of the Coal Authority interactive map identifies the site is not located within a coal mining reporting area.
- 2.7 The Northumberland County Council Public Rights of Way map shows there is a public footpath located adjacent to the site.
- 2.8 The Historic England map has identified that the Lucker Mill (Grade II Listed Building) is located approximately 25 meters to the south of the site.
- 2.9 The Northumberland Constraints Map has highlighted the site is located in the Lindisfarne Nutrient Neutrality Catchment Area.
- 2.10 MAGIC Map has identified no other environmental designations of concern on or adjacent to the site.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 The Northumberland Planning Portal has identified the following planning history on the site.

- 17/03869/VARYCO | Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) pursuant to planning permission 17/01072/FUL - (Relocation of entrance door to roadside elevation, extend entrance lobby to allow relocation of disabled w.c, extend rear storage area to maximise available space. | The Apple Core Hill Top Lucker NE70 7JL –Permitted December 2017
- 17/01072/FUL | Proposed rear flat roof storage area extension and side single storey pitched roof bar and entrance extension | The Apple Core Hill Top Lucker NE70 7JL – Application Permitted May 2017
- 14/02971/NONMAT | Non-material amendment relating to planning permission 14/00806/FUL (Proposed extension alteration and change of use from former nursery building to create a bistro dining establishment) | The Old School Hill Top Lucker Belford Northumberland NE70 7JL - Permitted October 2014
- 14/00806/FUL | Proposed extension alteration and change of use from former nursery building to create a bistro dining establishment | Lucker Day Nursery, Old School Hill Top Lucker Belford NE70 7JL –Permitted August 2014
- 13/01986/FUL | Change of use of former school/nursery (D1) to Residential (C3) | The Old School Hill Top Lucker Belford Northumberland NE70 7JL –Permitted September 2013
- N/02/B/0254 | Erection of single storey extension; alterations to facilitate provision of office/staffroom at first floor level. | Lucker Private Day Nursery Old School Building Lucker Belford –Permitted July 2002

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 This application is in full and includes all necessary supporting information.
- 4.2 The proposed development is for the change of use of an existing restaurant to tourism accommodation (Use Class C1).
- 4.3 The proposed development principally relates to the change of use with some changes to the elevations, such as the installation of new entrance doors, ramped access and rooflights.
- 4.4 The land to the east adjacent to the School House will be used for relocating the existing car park which will ensure sufficient car parking is provided in compliance with Northumberland County Councils parking standards.

PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 Planning law (section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released the new National Planning Policy Framework in July 2018 (The Framework), with further alterations in February 2019 and July 2021. The Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.
- 5.3 The Government have confirmed that the Framework is a material planning consideration and should be taken account of when making decisions. It is therefore anticipated that the planning application will be considered against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with regard being had, where relevant, to the statutory development plan.

Statutory Development Plan

- 5.4 The statutory development plan for the site consists of the Northumberland County Council Local Plan (adopted 2022). It is anticipated that the following policies would be considered in the determination of this application:
 - Policy STP 1: Spatial Strategy
 - Policy STP 3: Principles of Sustainable Development
 - Policy ECN 1: Planning Strategy for the Economy
 - Policy ECN 15: Tourism and Visitor Development
 - Policy QOP 1: Design Principles
 - Policy QOP 2: Good Design and Amenity
 - Policy QOP 4: Landscaping and Trees
 - Policy TRA 2: The Effects of Development on the Transport Network
 - Policy ENV 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - Policy WAT 3: Flooding

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Based upon an assessment of the planning policy and material considerations, this section will assess the following key issues:
- Principle of Development
 - Ecology and Nutrient Neutrality
 - Design and Amenity
 - Heritage Impact
 - Highways
 - Flood Risk and Drainage

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The proposed development is for the conversion of The School House, to tourism accommodation under Use Class C1 in the village of Lucker, Northumberland.
- 6.3 As per Appendix A of the Northumberland local plan Lucker is classed as a small village, a location where services and facilities will be supported and which can support a proportionate level of development.
- 6.4 The proposed development consists of the change of use of an existing restaurant to tourism accommodation. The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with Policy ECN 1 (b) and (f). ECN1(b) highlights that development proposals which support existing and new business will be supported as this delivers economic growth in Northumberland. In addition part f) supports and promotes tourism development and the visitor economy. The proposed development therefore complies with this ECN1 of the Local Plan as the existing building consists of an existing hospitality business, seeking change of use of the building will also provide facilities for tourists and visitors in the area.
- 6.5 The applicants currently own and operate The Apple Inn and School House. Whilst during peak seasons both properties are in regular use, the businesses do not reach prime occupancy for a significant proportion of the year. The use of the existing business heavily relies upon visitors from Lucker and the surrounding settlements. Given the two properties within close proximity to one another the applicant is seeking to ensure the future of the School House and thus is seeking a change of use. In addition, it is considered the reuse of the building and consolidation of restaurant services into the Apple Inn will ensure job retention and business vitality.
- 6.6 Whilst the existing building is currently in use as a restaurant the applicant is seeking to safeguard the use of the building to prevent it becoming redundant and disused. It should be noted policy ECN 15 illustrates that Northumberland will be promoted and developed as a destination for tourists and visitors, achieving this through the development of new visitor facilities and accommodation. Whilst the site is not located in the open countryside, it is considered in accordance with the intentions of Policy ECN 15(d) which highlights that visitor accommodation should re-use existing buildings that are structurally sound.
- 6.7 In light of the above information, the principle of development can be considered acceptable and in accordance with ECN 1 and ECN 15, ensuring the sustainable future of an existing business.

Ecology and Nutrient Neutrality

- 6.8 It is both a national and local requirement that development proposals consider the potential impact on protected species or their habitats. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF clarifies the requirement for planning decisions to minimise impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Policy QOP 4 highlights that development proposals should ensure there is no loss of existing trees which are valuable in terms of amenity, biodiversity or the landscape. The importance of preventing biodiversity being negatively affected by development proposals is outlined in Policy ENV 2. Policy ENV 2 seek to ensure that developments must minimise their impact wherever possible through their location and/or design, as well as securing appropriate mitigation where possible.
- 6.9 It has been identified that there are trees located to the north, east and west of the site. The proposed development is limited to the reuse of the existing building and as such will have minimal impact on the adjacent trees or habitats. It is noted that the site is located within a Coastal Mitigation Service Zone, however the applicant is happy to enter into an agreement with the council to ensure the necessary contributions are secured.
- 6.10 As of March 2022 Lucker is within the Lindisfarne Catchment area and is therefore subject to Natural England's Guidance on Nutrient Neutrality. A Nutrient Budget Calculator has been submitted in support of the application. The calculation when viewed in isolation advises the development would result in 3.9kg TN/yr. However it is considered further discussions with the county ecologist will be required regarding a bespoke calculation for the site. At present the development is served by an old septic tank therefore if this system is upgraded as part of the development it is likely there will be an overall reduction in nutrient output.
- 6.11 The proposed development therefore complies with policy ENV 2 and Policy QOP 4

Design and Amenity

- 6.12 Policy QOP 1 highlights that planning applications will be assessed against the design principles provided in this policy as well as having regard to the Northumberland Design Guide. The external design of the building will largely remain as existing apart from a small number of alterations.
- 6.13 The proposed alterations consist of a ramped access and new entrance door to apartment 7 being installed replicating appearance of main front doors, including the use of buff sandstone walling to match existing. Removal of rear fire exit and blocking up in buff sandstone to match existing and a new rear fire exit door is also proposed to be installed. To the rear of the property there are also new rooflights to be installed to match the existing.
- 6.14 Policy QOP 2 highlights that developments are required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development and not have an adverse impact towards the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area. There will also be no proposed extensions involved in the proposed conversion, therefore not creating any overshadowing or visual intrusion to neighbouring dwellings. The proposed development will have no adverse impact towards the privacy or amenity of the area.
- 6.15 The proposed development therefore complies with both Policies QOP 1 and QOP2.

Heritage Impact

- 6.16 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that when assessing the impact of a proposal on heritage assets, the significance of an asset to be affected including any contribution made by their setting, should be considered. Similarly, Policy ENV 7 highlights that development proposals affecting heritage assets will be determined based on a sound understanding of the significance of that heritage asset and the impact of a development proposal upon its significance.

- 6.17 While the building is not listed, there is a Grade II Listed building located to the south of the site. However due to the listed buildings location compared to the site, it is expected that there will be limited impact from the proposed development. In addition to this, with the lack of external alterations to the existing building, the impact is to be kept at a minimal, thus complying with Policy ENV 7.

Highways Considerations

- 6.18 Para 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on the highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the highway network would be severe. Policy TRA 2 considers the effects of development on the transport network to ensure the safe access and egress to and from the development site, and to avoid any significant negative impacts on the surrounding highway network.
- 6.19 The proposed conversion is expected to have a minimal impact towards the traffic network. The proposed development is anticipated to see a reduction in vehicular movements when compared to the current use. In addition the applicant is seeking to ensure sufficient parking is provided within the village, to serve both the proposed development and visitors of the Apple Inn. At present there is a small number of parking spaces associated with the Apple Inn and School House, therefore to ensure sufficient provision new parking spaces are to be provided on the adjacent land as illustrated on the proposed site plan.
- 6.20 As per Northumberland County Councils Car Parking Standards a minimum of 7no. Parking spaces are required for the proposed development, and 39no. should be available for the Apple Inn. The illustrated car park will therefore provided the required number of spaces required for the proposed conversion and additional parking increasing provision for the Apple Inn. As such the risk of visitors parking on verges during peak times will be reduced.
- 6.21 This therefore shows that the proposed development complies with Policy TRA 2 and the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.22 Policy WAT 3 highlights that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources. As identified earlier, the site is partially located in food zone 3 and as such may be at risk of flooding. Notwithstanding this the site has a detailed planning history which has considered the flood risk present on site, concluding the building whilst in a flood zone is at a raised level and as such is unlikely to experience flooding.
- 6.23 In addition the site consists of the reuse of an existing building and as such is unlikely to result in an increase in flood risk.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The planning application documentation demonstrates that the proposed development is an acceptable form of development and is in accordance with the development plan.
- 7.2 The proposal consists of the change of use of an existing restaurant to tourism accommodation (Use Class C1). On this basis, it is considered that the proposed development complies with both national and local planning policy and this application should therefore be found to be acceptable.

