

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO:	DM/15/03402/FPA
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Conversion and extension of existing equestrian and agricultural buildings to form 9 dwellings, a replacement bungalow and erection of new garage blocks
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Mr I Brewis
ADDRESS:	Sheraton Hill Farm, Sheraton, Hartlepool, TS27 4RE
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Blackhalls
CASE OFFICER:	Chris Baxter Senior Planning Officer 03000 263944 chris.baxter@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

The Site

1. The application site relates to land and buildings at Sheraton Hill Farm, situated to the south of Bellows Burn Lane to the east of the A19 dual carriageway. The farmstead comprises a large group of agricultural storage buildings and equestrian buildings, including livery stables and a large indoor riding arena.
2. There are four existing dwellings at the farm. These include the main two storey brick farmhouse situated to the south west corner of the farm grouping and a brick bungalow to the south east. There are two further bungalows located amongst open land, approximately 100 metres to the west of the main farm grouping and are accessible via the existing farm track.
3. The site is accessible via a farm track from Bellows Burn Lane. The surrounding land is mainly agricultural in character although some of the open fields are used for the grazing of horses in conjunction with the existing livery use.

The Proposal

4. Planning permission is sought for the conversion and extension of existing equestrian and agricultural buildings to form 9 dwellings, a replacement bungalow and erection of new garage blocks
5. This application is referred to the Planning Committee as it constitutes a major planning application.

PLANNING HISTORY

6. No planning relevant to the determination of this application.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY:

7. The Government has consolidated all planning policy statements, guidance notes and many circulars into a single policy statement, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), although the majority of supporting Annexes to the planning policy statements are retained. The overriding message is that new development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay. It defines the role of planning in achieving sustainable development under three topic headings – economic, social and environmental, each mutually dependant.
8. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF requires local planning authorities to approach development management decisions positively, utilising twelve 'core planning principles'.
9. The following elements are considered relevant to this proposal;
10. *NPPF Part 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes.* The Government advises Local Planning Authority's to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.
11. *NPPF Part 7 – Requiring good design.* The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, with good design a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning
12. *NPPF Part 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.* The Planning System should contribute to and enhance the built environment by protecting and enhancing valued heritage assets.

The above represents a summary of the NPPF considered most relevant the full text may be accessed at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

District of Easington Local Plan

13. *Policy 1 (General Principles of Development)* states consideration should be considered of whether a proposal would accord with the principles of sustainable development together with many benefits to the community and the local economy.
14. *Policy 35 (Design and Layout of Development)* requires the design and development to conserve energy where possible, reflect the scale and character of adjacent buildings, provide adequate open space and have no serious impact on the people living and working in the vicinity.
15. *Policy 36 (Design for Access and the Means of Travel)* states that new development shall ensure good access and encourage alternative means of travel.

16. *Policy 37 (Design for Parking)* states that the design and layout of new development should seek to minimise the level of parking provision.

RELEVANT EMERGING POLICY

The County Durham Plan

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF says that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: the stage of the emerging plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and, the degree of consistency of the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF. The County Durham Plan (CDP) was submitted for Examination in Public and a stage 1 Examination concluded. An Interim Report was issued by an Inspector dated 18 February 2015, however that Report was quashed by the High Court following a successful Judicial Review challenge by the Council. In accordance with the High Court Order, the Council has withdrawn the CDP and a new plan being prepared. In the light of this, policies of the CDP can no longer carry any weight. As the new plan progresses through the stages of preparation it will begin to accrue weight.

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

17. *County Highways Authority* has not raised any objections to the proposed scheme. The passing place along the private access track is welcomed however a further four passing places would be required along Bellows Burn Lane. A condition is therefore recommended for these passing places to be constructed prior to occupation of the properties.
18. *Northumbrian Water* has not raised any objections having assessed the proposed scheme.
19. *Drainage* has not raised any objections the proposed scheme.
20. *The Coal Authority* has confirmed that the application site does not fall within a development high risk area.
21. *Highways England* has not raised any objections to the proposed scheme.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

22. *Environmental Management (Contamination)* has not raised any objections to the proposed development. A condition is required for further contamination assessments to be undertaken.
23. *Environmental Management (Noise/Odour/Dust)* have no objections to this application.
24. *Ecology* has not raised any objections. A condition is recommended for the mitigation detailed in the ecology survey to be adhered to.
25. *Archaeology* supports the reuse of historic buildings and bringing the non-designated heritage asset back into use. Conditions are recommended in relation to archaeology works.

26. *Design and Conservation* have stated that there are no heritage or design objections to the proposed development.

27. *Public Rights of Way* have not raised any objections.

28. *Sustainability* have indicated that they cannot support the scheme due to the isolated location of the development.

29. *Landscape* considers that the proposals from a landscape and visual impact potentially to be limited to the immediate adjoining countryside.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

30. The application has been advertised in the local press and a site notice was posted close to the site. Neighbouring properties were also notified in writing. No letters of public representations have been made however the Campaign to Protect Rural England have raised some concerns regarding the sustainability credentials of the proposed development.

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

31. The proposals principally relate to the sensitive conversion of a non-designated heritage asset (the main building) to provide for a viable use that secures its long-term conservation. The conversion of the adjacent agricultural building for residential use and the replacement of the existing bungalow with a further residential unit helps to ensure a viable development scheme is delivered. The principle of the proposals is therefore in accordance with Paragraph 126 of the NPPF and Policy 35 of the emerging County Durham Plan.

32. In design terms, the proposals make efficient and effective use of the existing buildings subject to conversion without the need for substantial alteration or disproportionate extension. The proposals are sensitive to the character of the buildings and, together with the demolition of a number of larger agricultural buildings within the site, would result in a significant enhancement of the visual amenity of the site and its immediate landscape setting, in accordance with Policy 55 of the NPPF.

33. The proposals make use of the existing vehicular access which is of a reasonable standard of construction. Due to the replacement of the existing livery and agricultural uses, the proposals would result in fewer vehicle movements to the site and would result in a less-intensive use of the access overall. The Applicant has worked with the Council to secure improvements to the existing access and is willing to accept a condition for the provision of passing places on Bellows Burn Lane, linking the site to the A19.

34. The planning application has addressed all detailed issues relating to design and layout, car parking, ecology and flood risk and there are no outstanding issues that preclude approval of the application. The Applicant submits that the proposed development is in conformity with current policy advice regarding the re-use of rural buildings and would result in economic benefits that will provide a boost to the local economy.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

35. Having regard to the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the relevant Development Plan policies, relevant guidance and all other material planning considerations, including representations received, it is considered that the main planning issues relates to the principle of development; visual impact and impact on heritage assets; residential amenity; highway considerations; and ecology.

Principle of development

36. A material consideration in determining the principle of development for this proposal is the requirements of paragraph 55 of the NPPF which state that new isolated homes in the countryside can be permitted where development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

37. It has been identified that the main building (proposed to be converted into 8 properties) on the application site was originally an agricultural building which is unique in the context of agricultural architecture within County Durham and is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. The conversion details of this building will be fully detailed in the section below however it is noted that the Design and Conservation Team consider this building worthy of retention and conversion. Given the proposals would be for the conversion of a building which would help secure the longevity of this important heritage asset, it is considered that the principle of development can be accepted in this instance. It is acknowledged that the building is not disused, as it is being used as part of the existing livery business, however the conversion of the building to residential would ensure that the architectural qualities of the building are retained and secured.

38. The proposals also include the conversion of a barn into a single residential unit and the demolition of an existing bungalow to be replaced by another bungalow. It is accepted that the barn proposed for conversion may not have any architectural merit however structurally it is capable of retention. The conversion of this barn would positively impact on the setting of the non-designated heritage asset and can be considered acceptable in this instance. The existing bungalow on the site is a small residential unit and it was originally proposed to extend this property. In order to provide a balanced design which would fit in with the overall development scheme, it was considered that a replacement bungalow would be visually more appropriate. In principle the replacement of this bungalow is considered acceptable.

39. It is noted that concerns have been raised from the Council's Sustainability Officer and the Campaign to Protect Rural England in terms of the sustainability credentials of the development. However given the main building on the site has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset worthy of retention and conversion, it is considered that the proposed scheme is acceptable in principle and is in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

Visual impact and impact on heritage assets

40. This application seeks permission for the conversion and extension of existing equestrian and agricultural buildings to form residential dwellings. Also included is the erection of a new replacement bunaglow, erection of garage blocks and associated infrastructure and landscaping. At the centre of the development is a range of buildings which on closer inspection and the greater understanding provided by the submitted heritage statement are considered to be non-designated heritage assets, their retention, enhancement and improvement is therefore welcomed. The attention to detail in the proposed conversion and extension coupled with the attention to detail in the new build elements arranged appropriately around a series of spaces have all come together to create a development with a real sense of place and quality creating a pleasing environment in which to live.
41. The farmstead comprises a large group of agricultural storage buildings and equestrian buildings, including livery stables and a large indoor riding arena. The buildings include a traditional timber framed building to the centre of the steading which was originally an agricultural building but now accommodates a large number of DIY livery boxes. This building was originally designed on an E-shaped plan but has since been extended. It has been identified that this building is unique in the context of agricultural architecture within County Durham and is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset.
42. The submitted heritage statement reinforces original suspicions about the importance of the main structure on the site adequately identifies the significance as follows:
- “The building at Sheraton Hill Farm is a well-preserved example of a planned, ‘model’ farm development at the end of the Victorian period. It is unusual in that it is of such a late date, representing a stage of development rarely found in an area where planned farm developments are usually of a time at least decades, and often a century, earlier. It is significantly different from the planned farms of Enclosure times, which usually consist of ranges of relatively low buildings set around a rectilinear yard. Although, unfortunately, no architect has yet been identified it has been possible to reconstruct a basic historical context for its creation. The farm at Sheraton Hill is an important link in the landscape, economic and demographic development of the area. The building may therefore be said to have a considerable historic significance, and to be worthy of preservation for this reason.”*
43. The proposed scheme presents a well detailed, creative and imaginative reuse scheme for the site. It has real potential to create a sense of individual place based on the character and quality of the retained buildings and their landscape context. New development along with ancillary structures and the creation of a series of interlinked semi public spaces all combine to enhance the setting of the main building. Although small, the scheme is considered to address various strands of best practice to create quality development. The impact of the proposal whilst changing the use of the building and thus eroding some of the historical context is overall, considered to be positive. It better reveals the original plan form, restores important features and perhaps most importantly secures a long term sustainable and viable use for the buildings without compromising their setting with excessive inappropriate development; this in turn will ensure appropriate maintenance.
44. Overall, it is considered that the proposed scheme is acceptable in design terms and would not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with policies 1 and 35 of the local plan.

45. The general principles in regard to materials are considered to be acceptable. It is recommended however that conditions are imposed for full details to be submitted for approval. Conditions are therefore recommended in relation to external materials and finishes including colours, hard and soft landscaping and hard standing areas. In order to protect the significance of the non-designated heritage asset and its setting a condition for the removal of permitted development rights is also recommended. Details have been submitted in relation to boundary treatment. A mixture of post and pole fencing, post and wire fencing and brick walls are to be used to define boundaries. These details are considered acceptable and would respect the setting of the site and buildings.

Residential amenity

46. The application site is within a fairly isolated location with the nearest residential property being the main farm house located to the south of the site. There is sufficient separation distance between the proposed buildings and the existing neighbouring properties to ensure there would be no loss of privacy or any adverse impacts in terms of overbearing or overshadowing effects. Each proposed property would have some garden area to be utilised as amenity space.

47. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of surrounding neighbouring properties. Future occupiers of the proposed residential units would also have adequate levels of amenity. The proposals would be in accordance with policies 1 and 35 of the local plan.

Highway considerations

48. The application site is accessed along single track lane, Bellows Burn Lane, which meets the junction with the A19. The Highways Officer has indicated that for this lane to be utilised as the access for the residential development then four passing places are required to be constructed along Bellows Burn Lane. The applicant has agreed to these passing places and a condition is therefore recommended for these passing places to be constructed prior to occupation of the properties. It is also noted that a passing place is proposed along the private access track and this is welcomed by the Highways Officer.

49. The proposed scheme provides each property with a garage and parking spaces. The Highways Officer has indicated that the proposed parking provision is acceptable.

50. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in highway terms and highway safety would not be compromised. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies 36 and 37 of the local plan.

Ecology

51. The presence of a European Protected Species (EPS) is a material planning consideration. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 have established a regime for dealing with derogations which involved the setting up of a licensing regime administered by Natural England. Under the requirements of the Regulations it is an offence to kill, injure or disturb the nesting or breeding places of protected species unless it is carried out with the benefit of a licence from Natural England.

52. Notwithstanding the licensing regime, the Local Planning Authority must discharge its duty under the regulations and also consider these tests when deciding whether to grant permission for a development which could harm an EPS. A Local Planning Authority failing to do so would be in breach of the regulations which requires all public bodies to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions.
53. An Ecology Survey of the site has been submitted with the application. This survey concludes that the proposed development would not incur an impact to a bat roost and the disturbance impacts to foraging and commuting species can be minimised through mitigation. The submitted survey has been analysed by the County Ecologist. The County Ecologist has confirmed that there are no objections to the findings of the survey. Subsequently it is not considered that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on protected species or their habitats and would be in accordance with part 11 of the NPPF. Notwithstanding the above, a condition will be required which would ensure care is taken during construction in accordance with the recommendations in the submitted habitat survey. Subject to this mitigation, it is considered that the proposals would be in accordance with part 11 of the NPPF.
54. Overall it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on protected species or their habitats. The proposal would be in accordance with part 11 of the NPPF.

Other issues

55. The County Archaeology team have not raised any objections to the proposed development. To ensure that the development does not impact on any potential archaeology remains, a condition is recommended for further investigation works to be undertaken. A condition is recommended accordingly.
56. The Council's Contamination team have not raised any objections to the proposed development. To ensure that the future occupiers of the proposed residential properties are not adversely affected by potential contaminants, a condition is recommended for further investigation works to be undertaken. A condition is recommended accordingly.
57. The Council's Drainage Officer, Northumbrian Water and the Coal Authority have not raised any objections to the proposed development. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have any adverse impacts on drainage, flooding or land stability.

CONCLUSION

58. The proposed development would secure the retention of a non-designated heritage asset and ensure the longevity of the heritage asset. The principle of residential development can therefore be considered acceptable and in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF as the development would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.
59. The proposed building has been suitably designed and would not appear visually intrusive within the surrounding area. It is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse visual impact on the appearance of the area and would not compromise the landscape character of the surrounding area. The proposals would be in accordance with policies 1 and 35 of the local plan.

60. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of surrounding neighbouring properties. Future occupiers of the proposed residential units would also have adequate levels of amenity. The proposals would be in accordance with policies 1 and 35 of the local plan.
61. Suitable access would be provided to the proposed development and adequate parking provision would be included. Highway safety would not be adversely compromised and the proposals would be in accordance with policy 36 and 37 of the local plan.
62. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact on protected species or their habitats. The proposal would be in accordance with part 11 of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions;

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans:

Plan Ref No.	Description	Date Received
788-11 B	Proposed Site Layout	17/08/2016
788-12 B	Proposed Boundary Treatment	17/08/2016
788-LP A	Location Plan	29/06/2016
788-22	Proposed Passing Place	29/06/2016
788-18 A	Proposed Plan Layout and Elevations – Detached Bungalow	29/06/2016
788-17 B	Proposed Plan Layout and Elevations – Detached Barn Unit 11	29/06/2016
788-14 A	Proposed Plan Layout – Main Barns	12/11/2015
788-13	Proposed Plan Layout – Main Barns	12/11/2015
788-20	Proposed Plan Layout – Garages	02/11/2015
788-16	Proposed Plan Layout and Elevation – Detached Barn Unit 9	02/11/2015
788-15	Proposed Elevations – Main Barn	02/11/2015

Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with Policy 1 and 35 of the Easington District local Plan 2001.

3. No development hereby permitted shall commence until details of all external materials including colour finishes have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the non-designated heritage asset and to comply with part 12 of the NPPF.

4. No development hereby permitted shall commence until details of all hard standing areas have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the non-designated heritage asset and to comply with part 12 of the NPPF.

5. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a scheme to deal with contamination has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include the following in writing:

Pre-commencement

- (a) A Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment (Desk Top Study) shall be carried out by competent person(s), to identify and evaluate all potential sources and impacts on land and/or groundwater contamination relevant to the site.
- (b) If the Phase 1 identifies the potential for contamination, a Phase 2 Site Investigation and Risk Assessment is required and shall be carried out by competent person(s) to fully and effectively characterise the nature and extent of any land and/or groundwater contamination and its implications.
- (c) If the Phase 2 identifies any unacceptable risks, remediation is required and a Phase 3 Remediation Strategy detailing the proposed remediation and verification works shall be carried out by competent person(s). No alterations to the remediation proposals shall be carried out without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority. If during the remediation or development works any contamination is identified that has not been considered in the Phase 3, then remediation proposals for this material shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and the development completed in accordance with any amended specification of works.

Completion

- (d) Upon completion of the remedial works (if required), a Phase 4 Verification Report (Validation Report) confirming the objectives, methods, results and effectiveness of all remediation works detailed in the Phase 3 Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority within 2 months of completion of the development.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risk to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with NPPF Part 11.

6. Prior to any development commencing a scheme showing passing places to be introduced on Bellows Burns Lane must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The passing places on Bellows Burns Lane must be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to the buildings being occupied.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to comply with policy 36 of the District of Easington Local Plan.

7. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of the programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been approved in writing by the local planning authority as follows:
 - i. Methodologies for a Historic England-style building record prior to any conversion works or stripping out of fixtures and fittings.
 - ii. A timetable of works in relation to the proposed development, including sufficient notification and allowance of time to ensure that the site work is undertaken and completed in accordance with the approved strategy.
 - iii. Monitoring arrangements, including the notification in writing to the County Durham Principal Archaeologist of the commencement of archaeological works and the opportunity to monitor such works.
 - iv. A list of all staff involved in the implementation of the strategy, including sub-contractors and specialists, their responsibilities and qualifications.

The development shall then be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To comply with paragraphs 135 & 141 of the NPPF because the site is of archaeological interest.

8. Prior to the development being beneficially occupied, a copy of any analysis, reporting, publication or archiving required as part of the mitigation strategy shall be deposited at the County Durham Historic Environment Record.

Reason: To comply with paragraphs 141 of the NPPF which ensures information gathered becomes publicly accessible.

9. No development hereby approved shall take place unless in accordance with the mitigation and recommendations detailed within the Ecological Appraisal by Naturally Wild Consultants Ltd dated 26/03/2015.

Reason: To conserve protected species and their habitat in accordance with criteria within the NPPF.

10. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or in any Statutory Instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no development falling within Classes A to H of Part 1, Class A of Part 2 and Classes A, B, H and I of Part 40 of Schedule 2 of the said Order shall be carried out on the site without an application for planning permission having been first made to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

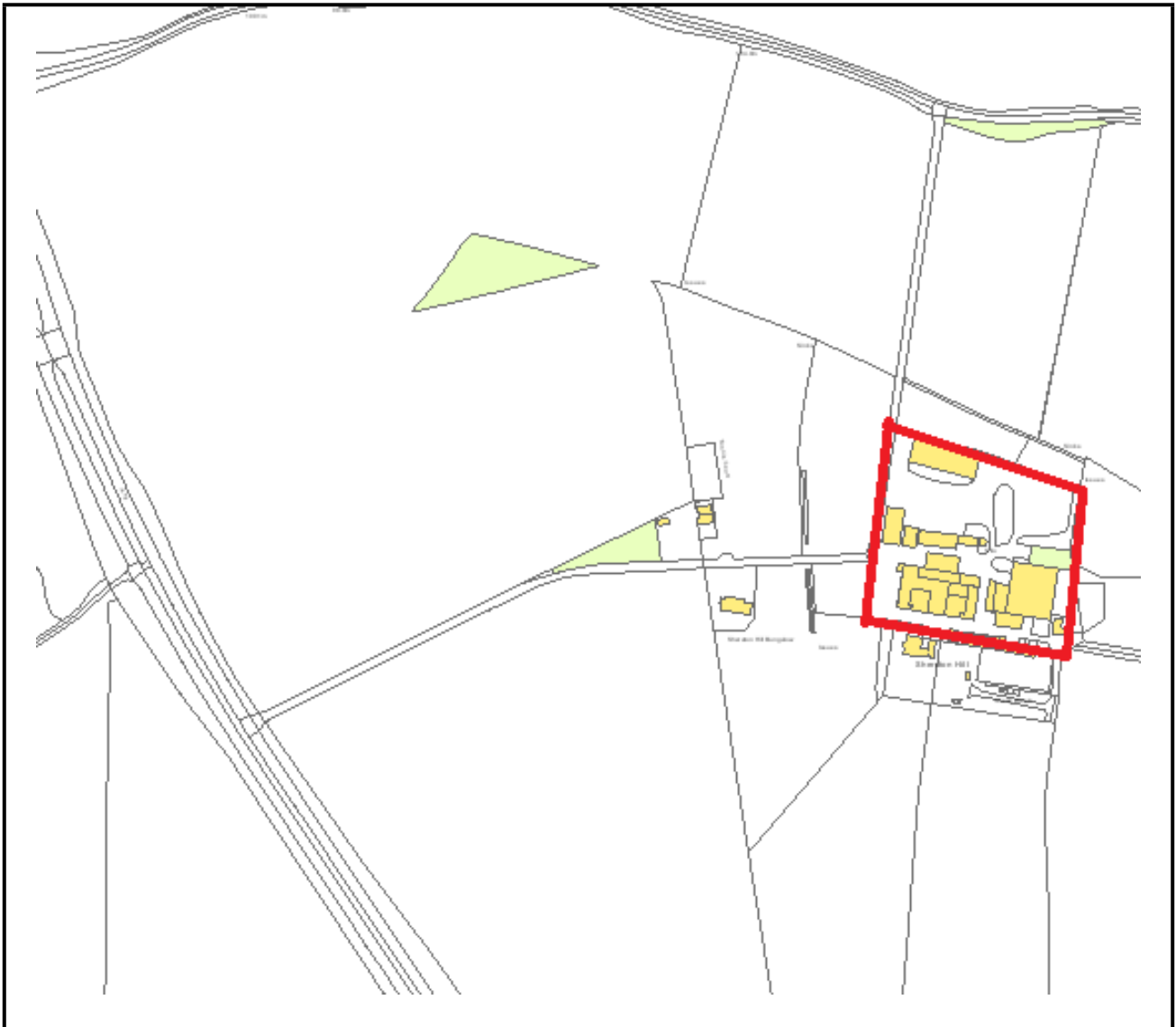
Reason: In order to minimise the impacts on the setting of the non-designated heritage asset and to safeguard residential amenity, in accordance with policy 35 of the District of Easington Local Plan and part 12 of the NPPF.

STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

In dealing with the application, the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising during the application process.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Submitted Application Forms, Plans and supporting documentation
District of Easington Local Plan 2009
National Planning Policy Framework
Internal consultee responses
Public responses
Responses from statutory and other consultees
National Planning Policy Guidance



Planning Services

Conversion and extension of existing equestrian and agricultural buildings to form 9 dwellings, a replacement bungalow and erection of new garage blocks at Sheraton Hill Farm, Sheraton, Hartlepool, TS27 4RE Ref: DM/15/03402/FPA

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13th September 2016