



## Area Planning Committee (South and West)

**Date** Thursday 18 April 2013  
**Time** 2.00 pm  
**Venue** Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor

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### Business

#### Part A

1. Declarations of Interest (if any)
2. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2013 (Pages 1 - 4)
3. Applications to be determined
  - a) 6/2013/0028/DM - Teesdale Barnard Castle Caravan Club Site, Lartington Lane, Barnard Castle (Pages 5 - 20)  
Extension to caravan site to provide 54 new pitches, erection of toilet block and associated infrastructure
  - b) 7/2013/0087/DM - Former Tetley Distribution Depot, Unit N791, Grindon Way, Aycliffe Industrial Estate, Newton Aycliffe (Pages 21 - 32)  
Proposed change of use from general storage (B8) to general industrial use (B2) including external alterations and formation of new access
4. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

**Colette Longbottom**  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
10 April 2013

To: **The Members of the Area Planning Committee (South and West)**

Councillor M Dixon (Chair)

Councillor E Tomlinson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors D Boyes, D Burn, M Campbell, K Davidson, P Gittins,  
J Gray, G Holland, G Richardson, J Shuttleworth, P Taylor, R Todd,  
J Wilkinson, M Williams and R Yorke

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**Contact: Jill Errington**

**Tel: 03000 269703**

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**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Area Planning Committee (South and West)** held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Spennymoor on **Thursday 21 March 2013 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:**

**Councillor E Tomlinson (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Armstrong, P Brookes, D Burn, M Campbell, K Davidson, P Gittins, J Gray, G Richardson, R Todd and M Williams

**Also Present:**

Councillor Sam Zair

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Boyes, Dixon, Holland, Shuttleworth, Wilkinson and Yorke.

**2 Substitute Members**

Councillor J Armstrong substituting for Councillor D Boyes and Councillor P Brookes substituting for Councillor M Dixon.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to the resolution under Minute No. 7, the Chairman informed the Committee that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs meeting had been postponed and the matter would be discussed at the next Chairs and Vice-Chairs meeting.

**5 Applications to be determined**

**5a 3/2013/0019 - Land at Barrington Street, Toronto, Bishop Auckland**

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an outline application for the erection of two dwellings on land at Barrington Street, Toronto, Bishop Auckland (for copy see file of Minutes).

A Inch, Principal Planning Officer, gave the Committee a detailed presentation on the application which included photographs of the site. Members of the Committee had visited the site earlier in the day and were familiar with the location and setting.

Councillor S Zair, local Member and representative of Bishop Auckland Town Council, addressed the Committee to speak in opposition to the application. Councillor Zair referred to the Phase 1 Habitat Assessment of the site which had been carried out and asked why no further Assessments had been undertaken, especially when the habitat of the site was suitable for bats and breeding birds. He referred to access difficulties to the proposed properties which could be experienced in winter conditions as the access road was on a steep bank. Councillor Zair informed the Committee that the application site was prone to standing water and expressed concern about drainage issues should properties be constructed on the site. He asked why a previous application for the site made in 2006 for the erection of 12 dwellings was subsequently withdrawn.

The Principal Planning Officer responded to the issues raised by Councillor Zair. The Phase 1 Ecology Survey of the site had identified no bat roosts or anything to require a further survey to be undertaken. Referring to drainage issues, the Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that, due to the topography of the site, surface water from it would not flow onto Barrington Street and added that Northumbrian Water had advised that surface water from the development could be accommodated by the existing surface water drainage network. The 2006 planning application for 12 dwellings was withdrawn because of access issues and because the site was identified as a greenfield site. Changes in planning policy since 2006 had shifted the emphasis away from recommending a sequential approach to development towards considering the sustainability of a location. A Glenwright, Principal DM Engineer informed the Committee that Barrington Street, although on an incline, was not significantly steep. The application included the provision of a turning head at the end of the street for use by all residents and this would be a beneficial gain.

Mr A Burnett, agent for the applicant, addressed the Committee. This was an outline application to focus on the principle of development of the site which was identified for only two dwellings. All issues which had been raised had been addressed and there were no objections from council officers or statutory consultees to the application.

**Resolved:**

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

**5b 7/2013/0021/DM - Rosewood Grange, Chilton**

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an application for the demolition of Rosewood Grange, Chilton and the erection of 25 bungalows (for copy see file of Minutes).

A Inch, Principal Planning Officer, gave the Committee a detailed presentation on the application which included photographs of the site. Members of the Committee had visited the site earlier in the day and were familiar with the location and setting.

Councillor Todd informed the Committee that the application would be a welcome development for the area and would provide much needed 2-bedroomed accommodation.

**Resolved:**

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

**5c 7/2012/0427/DM - Grayson Grange, Grayson Road, Spennymoor**

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an application for the demolition of Grayson Grange, Grayson Road, Spennymoor and the erection of 12 dwellings (for copy see file of Minutes).

A Inch, Principal Planning Officer, gave the Committee a detailed presentation on the application which included photographs of the site. Members of the Committee had visited the site earlier in the day and were familiar with the location and setting.

**Resolved:**

That the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

**6 Appeal Updates**

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer which gave an update regarding the following appeals which had been allowed;

- Appeal Ref: APP/X1355/D/13/2190709  
LPA Ref: 3/2012/0430  
Appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the erection of two storey pitched roof extensions to the front, including central glazed extension, incorporating a study within the roof space and detached double garage to the front of 13 Etherley Grange, Bishop Auckland.
- Appeal Ref: APP/X1355/D/12/2188713  
LPA Ref: 7/2012/0266/DM  
Appeal against the refusal of planning permission for replacement windows at 13 Rectory Row, Sedgfield.

**Resolved:**

That the decisions be noted.

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## Planning Services

# COMMITTEE REPORT

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### APPLICATION DETAILS

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<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	6/2013/0028/DM
<b>FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:</b>	Extension to caravan site to provide 54 new pitches, erection of toilet block and associated infrastructure
<b>NAME OF APPLICANT:</b>	The Caravan Club
<b>SITE ADDRESS:</b>	Teesdale Barnard Castle Caravan Club Site, Lartington Lane, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 9BD
<b>ELECTORAL DIVISION:</b>	
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b>	Adam Williamson 03000 260826 adam.williamson@durham.gov.uk

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

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#### The Site

1. The application site comprises a field, approximately 1.8 hectares in area, to the west of the existing Lartington Lane Caravan Club Site. The site falls within an Area of High Landscape Value. Deepdale Wood, a steeply sided heavily wooded valley lies immediately to the south of the site. Beyond Deepdale Wood is Deerbolt HM Young Offenders Institution. To the north of the site is the main highway (B6277), with open agricultural land beyond. The site lies approximately 1,2km northeast of Barnard Castle and approximately 2.2Km southeast of Lartington. There is a large 'lay- by' to the north of the site, with an area of dense planting separating the lay by from the highway. Lartington Hall (Grade II\* listed) and its registered historic park and garden lie approximately 1.5 Km west of the application site. There are no immediately neighbouring residential properties to the site.

#### The Proposal.

2. Planning permission is sought to extend the existing caravan site into the adjacent field by providing 54 all weather touring pitches, a new internal tarmac circulation road, and the erection of a new toilet block. The proposal would increase the number of touring pitches from 76 to 126 pitches in total (4 existing pitches would be lost in order to gain access to the extended field, and to enable the arrivals area to be extended deeper into the present site). The new toilet block would be built of stone and natural coloured cedar panelling under a red tiled pitched roof to match the existing amenity building. It would measure 19.3 metres in length by 8.2 metres in width, and 5.2 metres to the ridge.

3. The scheme also involves internal reorganisation at the existing site entrance onto the B6277 to enable the entrance to be chamfered to allow cars with caravans to turn more easily. The entry lane would also be widened in front of the reception and the barrier moved to allow 6 instead of 3 cars and caravans to queue inside the outer entrance gate.
4. It is important to note that the applicant has reached agreement with the County Highways Authority to lay a geosynthetic material along the verge on the northern side of Lartington Lane from a point level with the site's eastern pedestrian gateway, to the Estate's eastern entrance near the bottom of the hill just above Deepdale House. This is to provide an all weather surface to the pedestrian route along the highway verge to Barnard Castle.
5. This application has been reported to Committee as the site measures more than 1 hectare in size and also at the request of Cllr Bell who raises concerns in respect of the impact on the countryside and highway safety.

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## **PLANNING HISTORY**

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6. The existing site was approved at the South West Area Planning Committee in 2009 under application 6/2009/0057. This approval permits the siting of 76 touring caravans between the period 1 March to 31 October in any one calendar year.

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## **PLANNING POLICY**

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### **NATIONAL POLICY**

7. On March 27th 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This supersedes all previous PPS and PPG documents. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
8. The NPPF states that local authorities should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages.
9. It also states that local planning authorities should seek to protect and enhance valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and that when considering applications that may affect heritage assets, that any possible harm is weighed against potential public benefits.



10. In addition, the Dept for Communities and Local Government published a Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism, which replaced PPG21 and is not one of the documents cancelled by the NPPF. It therefore remains a material consideration. This publication recognises the value of tourism as a vital component in the national economy.

#### **REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

11. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East (RSS) will be revoked on 15 April 2013 and therefore the RSS policies carry no weight in the determination of this application.

#### **LOCAL PLAN POLICY:**

12. The following saved policies of the Teesdale District Local Plan are considered to be consistent with the NPPF and therefore relevant in the determination of this application:
13. *Policy GD1 (General Development Criteria):*  
All new development and redevelopment within the District should be designed and built to a high standard and should contribute to the quality and built environment of the surrounding area.
14. *Policy BENV3 (Development Affecting Listed Buildings)*  
Development which would adversely affect the character or the setting of a Listed building will not be permitted.
15. *Policy ENV1 (Protection of the Countryside):*  
Within the countryside development will be permitted for the purposes of agriculture, forestry and other appropriate uses. To be acceptable proposals will need to show that they do not unreasonably harm the landscape and wildlife resources of the area.
16. *Policy ENV3 (Areas of High Landscape Value):*  
The Proposals Map defines an area where the distinctive qualities of the countryside are worthy of special recognition. Development will be permitted where it does not detract from the area's special character.
17. *Policy ENV8 (Protected Species)*  
Development which would significantly harm any animal or plant species afforded special protection by law, or its habitat, either directly or indirectly, will not be permitted.
18. *Policy TR3 (Camping, Caravans and Chalet Development):*  
Within the countryside permission will be granted for camping, and/or caravan sites and chalet development where, the proposal does not harm the character of the area; is adequately screened; scale design and materials are appropriate to locality; services designed to suit the location; is served by adequate infrastructure; does not adversely affect residential amenity; and the proposal is not at risk of flooding.

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## **CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES**

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### **STATUTORY RESPONSES:**

19. *Lartington Parish Council* have objected to the scheme. In a detailed response concerns have been raised about highway & pedestrian safety, adverse landscape impact, potential disturbance to wildlife in Deepdale Wood, and insufficient consideration of the potential impact on the historic environment. Reservations have also been expressed on the benefits to the local economy.
20. *Cotherstone Parish Council* have also objected to the scheme as a neighbouring Council on the grounds of road safety.
21. *The County Highways Authority* has no objection to the scheme.

### **INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:**

22. *The County Landscape Section* has no objection to the scheme.
23. *The County Tree Officer* has no objection to the scheme, but suggests that the 'Dog Walk' footpath adjacent to the Oak tree should be constructed above ground avoiding the severance of major roots by conventional construction methods. It is also advised that the areas to be planted (buffer zones) are protected from machinery and construction encroachment from the very start of the project.
24. *The County Ecology Section* has no objection to the scheme.
25. *The County Public Rights of Way Section* has no objection to the scheme.
26. *The County Design and Conservation Section* has no objection to the scheme.
27. *The County Archaeology Section* suggests the submitted details in relation to designated and non designated heritage assets do not provide enough discussion on their significance, settings and the impact to them by the proposed development. The justification for impact on heritage resources is considered to be weak.

### **PUBLIC RESPONSES:**

28. A site notice was posted at the site and the application was advertised in the local press. 15 letters of objection and 2 letters of support have been received.
29. The main points of objection highlight concerns about pedestrian and road safety. In particular, concerns are raised about the number and safety of pedestrians using the highway verge to go from the site into Barnard Castle, as well as the impact on the capacity of the roads and potential queuing into the site

from the increased number of vehicles using the site. Concerns have also been expressed about the visual impact of the additional caravans on the character of the countryside and nearby historic parkland. Some of the objections have questioned the degree of benefit to the local economy.

30. The letters of support suggest the increased numbers of visitors will benefit local shops, services and tourism activity. It is felt that concerns about the safety of pedestrians using the highway verge are unfounded, particularly if improvements to the walking surface of the verge are carried out and the site is considered to be well screened.

#### **APPLICANTS STATEMENT:**

31. Caravan Club members of staff have personally been familiar with Teesdale for upwards of 40 years. We are therefore mindful that it is common to see pedestrians walking in the road and often on blind bends and on far narrower sections of highway. As such, this is a feature of the local area and motorists are fully accustomed with encountering pedestrians on the highway almost anywhere in the Dale. The width of this section of the B6277 and length of sight lines it enjoys are quite exceptional. Owing to the hill and proximity of the bend at the bottom it is most unlikely for the small amount of traffic using Lartington Lane to be exceeding 50mph let alone the 60mph speed limit. We have often walked along Lartington Lane ourselves and have felt entirely safe at all times even when walking in the road. As a matter of practice, we have been interested to note that even without pedestrians walking in the road, traffic travels at least a distance of 1m from the verge and there is ample room to do so even when passing vehicles travelling in the opposite direction. This has been the situation for a good many years dating from well before the opening of the touring site. The fact that pedestrians have the facility to walk along the highway verge – as happens in practice – provides an even safer alternative. Nevertheless, we are grateful to David Stewart (County Highways Authority) for confirming in his email of 7<sup>th</sup> March the basis upon which we have reached agreement with the County Highway Engineers and doubtless he will have since confirmed that despite the acknowledged lack of scope and relevance offered by circular 11/95 we have provided the Council with full funding to provide the geosynthetic surface to render the route along the verge on the northern side passable in all weathers and that, on a goodwill basis, we have actually done so in advance of our present planning application being determined.
32. Questions have been raised in respect of our occupancy data which is a matter of fact as is the basis upon which we calculate the benefit to the local economy. We have quoted the existing and projected number of pitch nights and applied the £50 which visitors themselves tell us they spend locally for each pitch night excluding VAT, fuel sales and pitch fees. This is therefore representative of how much is spent locally and it is a standard economists approach to apply a compounding factor to give a more reliable assessment of the touring site's overall worth to the local community. We have conservatively adopted a multiplier of 4 which does indeed produce the overall benefit of the Caravan Club's presence of being at least £3.2m each and every year.
33. This economic effect is felt in local businesses which employ local people and is recognised by the Council's planning policies which favour responsible tourism of a nature facilitated by the Caravan Club. Whilst we freely admit the touring site

only operates from March to October this restricted season is entirely consistent with Council policy, minimises the visual effect of the site's operational use and whilst concentrating the local economic benefits during the main season should thus help local businesses to continue to operate throughout the quieter times of the year.

34. Each of the new buildings were not only constructed in local stone but this was actually recycled thus making this choice of materials particularly sustainable. The use of vertical untreated cedar on the other elevations was regarded as being consistent with the aim of giving the new structures an appearance similar to that of local agricultural buildings especially as the timber has already mellowed to a light grey. Moreover, we intend to mirror this use of materials when constructing the proposed single additional building (notwithstanding this will effectively be completely screened from outside the site by virtue of its topography and the provision of considerable quantities of planting).

*The above represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file which can be viewed at <http://82.113.161.89/WAM/showCaseFile.do?action=show&appType=planning&appNumber=10/00955/PA>*

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## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

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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 in this instance relate to the principle of development; landscape impact; affect on designated heritage assets; conservation of protected species and highway safety.

### Principle of development

36. Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development, and that local planning authorities should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, particularly to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations.
37. Significant weight should therefore be given to proposals which encourage rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses and communities in rural areas.
38. Policy TR3 of the Teesdale local plan is consistent with the NPPF in this respect and is permissive of caravan development in the countryside where the impacts on the surrounding area are acceptable.

39. This site would support the expansion of an existing caravan park that currently makes a contribution to tourism by providing a particular type of touring caravan accommodation in an attractive setting, close to the main service centre of the area (Barnard Castle). While a number of objections have expressed reservations about the potential benefits to the economy, this is a proposal that would support and expand an existing tourist site, as well as bring further visitors to this area. The Caravan Club say the existing caravan site is its most successful site to be developed over the last 10 years. Provision of the new facilities would cost several million pounds and although these are not primarily geared towards wealth generation they would have direct and indirect economic implications associated with construction work and the employment of staff on the site in the longer term. The proposals would also link into the wider tourism and regeneration aspirations and initiatives being promoted regionally and locally. Further contributions to the local economy would be linked to construction related investment associated with on site works (estimated at £1.8 million) direct/ indirect purchase of supplies and services and visitor spend in the local area that is expected to increase because of the increased capacity and attractiveness of the site.
40. The extension of existing sites is always preferable to establishing new sites and the positive socio-economic benefits of this scheme arising from the level of investment would be a welcome boost to the physical and economic regeneration of the area and carries significant weight in accordance with the provisions of the guidance contained in the NPPF and Tourism Good Practice Guide.
41. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to satisfying detailed development management criteria in respect of the impact on the surrounding area, heritage assets, ecology and highway safety.

#### Landscape Impact

42. The site lies within an area designated as an Area of High Landscape Value (ALV). The site is typical of the local landscape as identified in the Local Landscape Character Assessment (Vale farmland, Wooded pasture), consisting of rolling pastoral farmland with a rural character, enclosed by a combination of woodland and Hawthorn rich hedgerows.
43. Policy ENV1 and ENV3 of the Teesdale District Local Plan seek to protect and enhance the open countryside and ALV, and Policy ENV1 in particular supports tourism and recreation related activities in the countryside where the proposal conforms with other relevant policies in the Local Plan. Policy TR3 specifically is permissive of caravan development in the countryside where the impacts on the surrounding area are acceptable. In considering the proposed development particular attention must therefore be paid to the siting and design of buildings, caravan pitches, road, services and the context of any landscaping proposals.
44. The approach to the siting and design of the building, pitches, road and services has been informed by an assessment of the quality and location of landscaping within and surrounding the site, and the Council's Landscape Officer has been involved in detailed pre and post application discussions. Existing landscaping has been identified which has the potential to immediately screen the development and the inclusion of significant amounts of additional planting

around the site perimeter would ensure the expansion could be accommodated with limited visual disruption.

45. Specifically, close views of the site from the north are restricted from those attained from Lartington Lane when approaching from the east and the west, where the site is initially screened by the existing hedgerow. Other potential views from the north are heavily screened by the mature tree belt between Lartington Lane and the lay by that adjoins the northern boundary, restricting any further views of the site from the north.
46. Views from the east are restricted from those attained directly from the existing caravan site from where the site and its boundaries are clearly visible.
47. Close views of the site from the south are not possible due to the dense vegetation contained within the steep sided woodland dene of Ray Gill and Deepdale Wood, where public access is limited to a Public Footpath running along the base and southern side of the valley.
48. From the west there are limited opportunities to view the site from public vantage points due to the disposition of existing farmland and the lack of public footpaths and roads.
49. The screening provided by the mature woodland along Ray Gill/ Deepdale Wood and the mature tree belt to the north of the site limits the ability to view the site from long distances.
50. Long distance views of the site are possible from the southern most buildings contained within the HM Young Offenders Institution although these are heavily filtered by the intervening vegetation in Deepdale Wood.
51. Further to the east of the site on the edge of the Registered Park and garden at Lartington Hall, the land falls away gently from the site towards the gardens, and the extent of intervening vegetation, in particular the tree belt immediately to the north of the site, means that the site is not visible.
52. It should be noted that the permission on the existing site relates to a conditioned consent for use in a specific period from 1st March to the 31st October in any one year and the extended site should be subject to the same restriction. Therefore, the site and proposed extension are most visible in the winter months when caravans will not be present, leaving just the existing and proposed service buildings and road. The proposed building would be similar to the existing amenity building in scale and appearance and it is noted that the existing building has a limited visual impact on the surrounding area, even in winter months. The proposed new building is similarly unlikely to have any harmful visual impact on the surrounding area because of its location, design and the existing and proposed screening of the site. A 4m wide internal road would serve the 54 new pitches, but neither the proposed road, nor pitches would be highly visible from the nearby main road as the topography of the site, falling away into the valley, and the proposed planting, will naturally screen the development. Minor services in the form of bin stores, water/electricity access, bollard lighting would all be of limited scale, commensurate with the needs of the site and similarly well screened within the site.

53. The site is therefore considered to benefit from a good level of existing screening and together with the proposed landscaping scheme and control of the operating period by condition, would ensure the development would not be harmful to the landscape character of the area and ALV. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Teesdale Local Plan policies ENV1, TR3 and ENV3.

#### Impact on Heritage Assets

54. In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

55. The application site is not within a conservation area and there are no designated heritage assets within the site. Some objections, as well as comments from the Council's Archeology section, have however raised concerns about potential impact on the nearby historic parkland and Grade II\* listed Lartington Hall, the conservation area of Lartington, as well as potential impact on earthworks which may have been associated with medieval field systems and which are evident elsewhere around Lartington Parish.

56. The site lies approximately 1.6 Km from Lartington Hall and the conservation area, and 1km from the edge of the registered historic park. There is no immediate inter-visibility between the site and the historic park, or Lartington Hall because of topography and mature vegetation. Therefore, notwithstanding the objections received in this respect, the site is not considered to fall within the setting of Lartington Hall, or the historic park, and the development would not therefore harm the settings or significance of those designated heritage assets. The County Design and Conservation Section, whose remit this issue falls under, has no objection to the proposal in this respect.

57. The application is accompanied by an archaeological assessment which acknowledges the presence of Lartington Hall, the historic parkland and evidence of ridge and furrow earthworks in fields throughout the area. Other sites of significance in the wider area are noted. Comments from the Council's Archeology Section and Parish Council have criticised the lack of mention of archaeological sites further afield at Towler Hill, but the submitted assessment is considered to be proportionate to the scale and nature of development proposed, particularly because it involves extension of an existing caravan site rather than a new site, and the existing site, permitted just 4 years ago, was not subject to such stringent archaeological assessment.

58. The application site is likely to consist of historic field system with some identified earthworks linked to ridge and furrow, however these are not as pronounced, or of the same quality as those within Lartington Hall's parkland and others in the area. The site represents just a small fragment of Lartington's historic agricultural field patterns. The significance of the earthworks on the site is therefore not considered to be high and the limited significance of the field in the context of the wider field pattern has already been diminished by development of the existing caravan site on the adjacent land. The potential for further deeper archaeological remains on site is considered to be low and in any case, apart from the construction of foundations for the new amenity building, the construction works

associated with the new road and pitches would not be highly invasive. Considering the lack of significance of the earthworks, the minor impact from the development would in this case be clearly outweighed by the local economic and tourism benefits the proposal would deliver and therefore this is not sufficient reason to refuse the application. The existing site was not subject to any conditions requiring further archaeological work to be carried out and therefore, given it is considered that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the significance of archaeological heritage features, it would be inconsistent and not proportionate for a smaller development on the same area, a short time apart, to be subject to any archaeology conditions requiring further work. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in respect of the impact of heritage assets and in accordance with Teesdale Local Plan policies ENV1 and BENV3, as well as the guidance in the NPPF.

### Conservation of Protected Species

59. The presence of protected species is a material planning consideration. The species protection provisions of the Habitats Directive are covered by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Under the requirements of the Regulations, it is a criminal 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.
60. Notwithstanding the licensing regime, the Local planning authority (LPA) must discharge its duty under Regulation 9(5) when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a development which could harm an EPS.
61. The site is not subject to any specific designations covering nature conservation; however, sections of Ancient Woodland bound the site to the south. There are also a number of watercourses and varied habitats within the site which have the potential to contain species protected by law.
62. The application was accompanied by a comprehensive assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the development on nature conservation interests within the site and in the wider context. From the survey work it was concluded that the development would not have a significant impact upon any internationally or nationally protected species. This is a view that is shared by the Council's Ecologist.
63. Once the construction phase is complete, it is considered that the development would have a neutral to positive impact on protected species, with the improvement and creation of habitats. As such the proposals are considered to be acceptable in accordance with policy ENV8 of the local plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

### Highway Safety

64. Most of the objections to the proposal have highlighted highway safety concerns in respect of the safety of pedestrians walking along the highway verge to/from Barnard Castle. Other concerns have been raised about the increase in vehicles from the site and potential queuing of cars and caravans at the main site entrance.



65. Many of these concerns relate to the existing site and regard can only be given to the extent that the proposed extension may increase any impact to an unacceptable degree. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF says that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.
66. The Highways Authority has been involved in the site since 2009 when the existing site was given permission, and has been involved since in pre application discussions and during consideration of this proposal. Despite the objections received, the Highways Authority has no objection to the proposal.
67. It is accepted that since the site's opening users walk between the site and Barnard Castle upon the B6277 verge, and sometimes the B6277 carriageway itself. The latter naturally creates some highway safety concerns, but is already associated with the existing site rather than being a new activity resulting from the proposed development. The proposed site extension is likely to lead to increased pedestrian traffic between the site and Barnard Castle, but agreement was reached at pre-application stage for a 'geosynthetic' overlay matting to be laid upon the highway verge, between the eastern pedestrian entrance to the park and Deepdale House, to provide an all weather surface and encourage walkers to remain on the verge. Grass would still grow through the matting and the green coloured product is considered more sympathetic to the rural roadside setting than a kerbed tarmac footway alternative. This would represent an improvement over the existing situation and therefore it cannot be said that the cumulative residual impact on highway safety would be severe in this respect. In order to secure these works it will be necessary to impose a grampian condition requiring the works to be carried out prior to the new development being brought into use. It is felt that this would meet Circular 11/95 tests because agreement has been reached with the Local Highway Authority and the land is Council owned.
68. In respect of concerns expressed about queuing vehicles creating an obstruction on the B6277, this is not a concern shared by the Highways Authority, but nevertheless, the proposal includes improvements to the main site access to make it easier for cars and caravans to turn into the site, as well as doubling the space available for cars and caravans to wait off the highway. Although there would be an increase in vehicles entering and exiting the site, the proposed improvements again mean that the cumulative residual impact on highway safety would not be severe.
69. The B6277 is a classified B road capable of accommodating significant traffic flows. The road was considered to be capable of accommodating the existing site and whilst there would be some localised increase in traffic on the B6277 and other local roads associated with the proposed site extension, this would not be to the extent that the capacity of the road network would be exceeded.
70. It is therefore considered that the proposed site extension would not be detrimental to highway safety and is in accordance with Local Plan policies GD1 and TR3.

## Other matters

71. The proposal does not raise any concerns in respect of the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, given there are none in the immediate vicinity of the site that could be regarded as immediate neighbours. This accords with Teesdale Local Plan policy TR3.
72. The site does not lie in an area at risk from flooding, however management of surface water runoff would manage any potential localised effects of runoff from the site. The pitches would be formed with permeable free draining crushed stone and it is suggested that the SUDS drainage system present on the existing site is replicated on this site. These measures would ensure the proposal adequately meets the criteria of Teesdale Local Plan policy TR3 in this respect.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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73. Lartington Lane Caravan Park is now an established, well used tourism and leisure facility providing touring caravan based accommodation for holiday makers. The proposed scheme would upgrade and expand the facilities that are available on the site to better cater for visitor demand and needs and would involve significant capital and social investment in the site and surrounding area, which would in turn lead to wider potential benefits from off site spending in support of businesses and activities in the locality, particularly in Barnard Castle.
74. The proposal would be in scale with the needs of the site and could be adequately absorbed into the landscape without causing harm to the Area of Landscape Value and would not have an unacceptable impact on the significance of nearby heritage assets or historic site features.
75. The proposal would increase the numbers of people using the site and whilst there would be some localised increase in pedestrian and vehicle traffic, this would be balanced by improvements to the surface of the highway verge and site entrance and therefore the overall impacts of the development on the surrounding road network would be acceptable.
76. The development would not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties, would be served by adequate infrastructure and does not raise concerns over flooding.
77. Subject to appropriate conditions the proposal would accord with the relevant policies of the Teesdale Local Plan and the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

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

### **Conditions:**

1. The development shall not be begun later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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

<b>Plan Ref No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Received</b>
	Site Location Plan	01.02.2013
TBC-L=2013-501	Landscape proposal plan	01.02.2013
TBC-STD-2013-401	Service Point with CCEP	01.02.2013
TBC-R-2013-200	Store Improvements	01.02.2013
TBC-S-2103-115	Gated Entrance into site	01.02.2013
TBC-S-2013-105	Proposed site fencing layout	01.02.2013
TBC-TB-2013-301	Proposed toilet block plans and elevations	01.02.2013
TBC-S-2013-120	Traffic Management Plan	01.02.2013
TBC-S-2013-110	Lighting layout	01.02.2013
TBC-2013-S-102	Site layout	01.02.2013

3. The landscaping shown on the approved Landscape Proposal Plan shall be carried out within the first available planting season and any trees or plants which within a period of 10 years of the date of the planning permission die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next available planting season with others of the same size and species.
4. This permission shall permit the use of the land for the siting of touring caravans only between the period 1 March to 31 October in any one calendar year.
5. There shall be no siting or storage of caravans on the land outside the dates specified in condition no. 4 above.
6. No development shall take place until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is brought into use and thereafter maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details. The scheme shall also include details of how the scheme shall be maintained and managed after completion.
7. The total number of caravans on the site hereby approved shall at no time exceed 54 in number and the caravans shall not be stationed other than in the positions shown on the approved plans.
8. Any on site vegetation clearance shall avoid the bird breeding season (March to end of August) unless a suitably qualified ecologist undertakes a checking survey

immediately prior to clearance and confirms in writing to the local planning authority that no breeding birds/active nests are present.

9. No development shall take place until details and plans of protective measures for existing trees, hedgerows and areas of new planting have been submitted, inspected after erection, and approved by the Local planning authority. Measures must be agreed and installed prior to any vehicle or machinery access to the site. The measures must only be removed once the road and amenity building hereby approved have been satisfactorily completed.
10. No development shall take place unless in accordance with the recommendations detailed within Section 4.0 Discussions and Recommendations within "Ecological Appraisal Teesdale Barnard Castle Caravan Club Site" by CSA Environmental Planning dated August 2012.
11. No development shall take place until full details of the revised position of the vehicle barrier within the site and gate arrangements leading from the B6277, together with details of associated times when such gates shall be kept in an open position, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by Local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
12. The development shall not be brought into use until the 'geosynthetic' overlay matting to be laid upon the highway verge of the B6277, details of the type and location of which shall have been first submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, has been installed.

**Reasons:**

1. Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained.
3. To safeguard the rights of control by the Local planning authority in these respects and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies GD1, ENV1 and ENV3 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
4. In the interests of visual amenity and to avoid permanent occupancy of the caravan site in accordance with policies GD1, ENV1, ENV3, H6 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
5. In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies GD1, ENV1 and ENV3 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
6. To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, improve habitat and amenity, and ensure future maintenance of surface water system in accordance with policy GD1 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.

7. In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies GD1, ENV1 and ENV3 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
8. To prevent disturbance to nesting birds in accordance with policy GD1 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
9. In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies GD1, ENV1 and ENV3 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
10. To conserve protected species and their habitats in accordance with policy ENV8 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
11. In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy GD1 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.
12. In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy GD1 of the Teesdale District Local Plan.

## **INFORMATIVES**

Planning permission does not absolve you from the need to comply with the relevant law in respect of protected species, including obtaining and complying with the terms and conditions of any licences required as described in Part IV B of the Circular. You may need to contact Natural England in order to obtain any necessary licences prior to commencing works, and your ecologist should be able to advise you in respect of this issue.

Under Part I of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird or disturb (Schedule 1), damage or destroy the nest whilst it is in use or being built, or take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

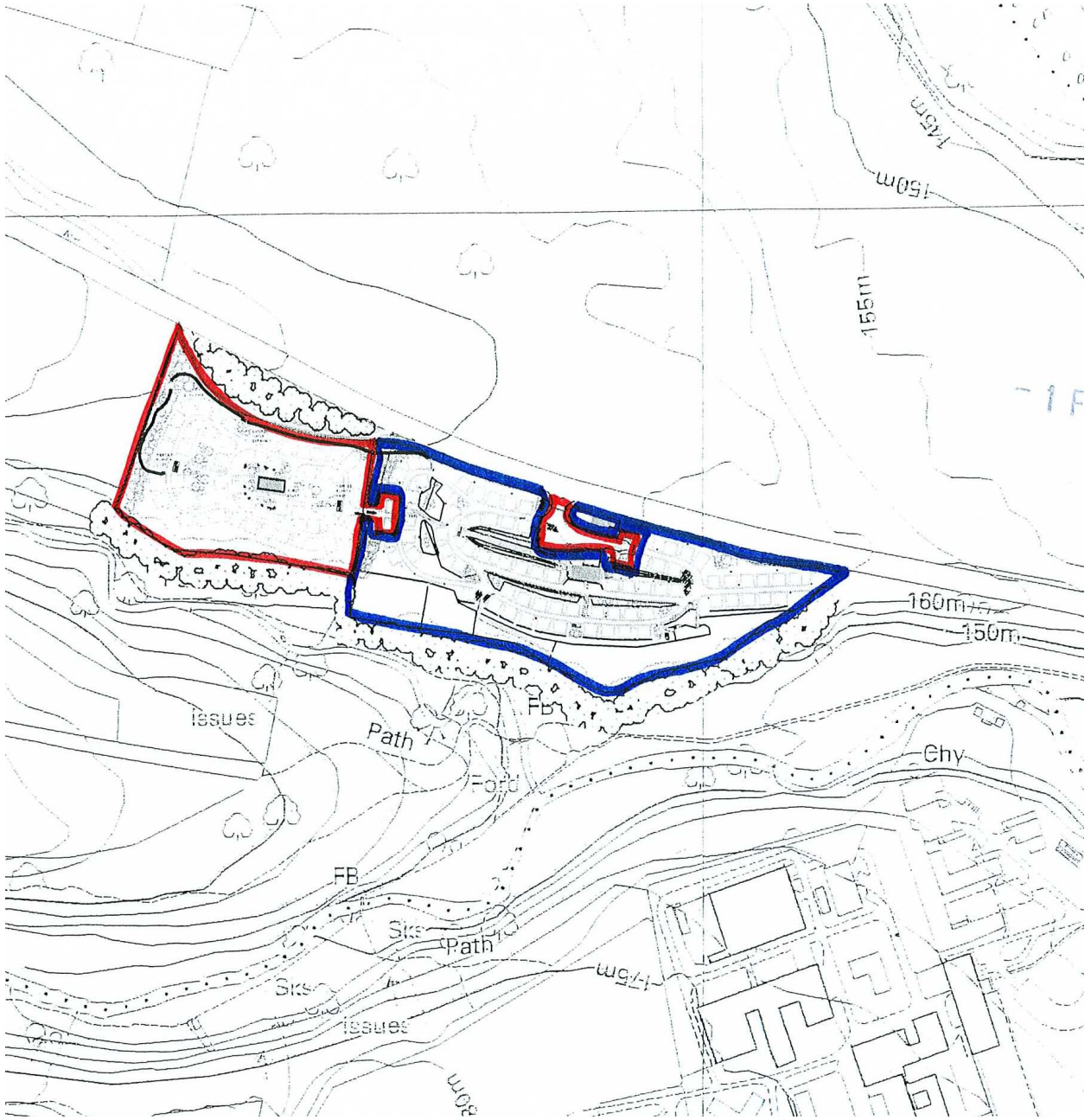
It is proposed that the B6277 'lay by' is utilised for construction access purposes. This is acceptable in principle however prior to commencement of any construction activity the applicants must contact Stephen Jones, DCC Traffic Engineer, tel 03000 263691, to discuss the Highway Authority's operational requirements.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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Submitted Application Forms, Plans and supporting documents  
National Planning Policy Framework  
Teesdale District Local Plan 2002  
Consultation responses



**Planning Services**

Lartington Lane Caravan Club Site,  
Lartington Lane, Barnard Castle, DL12 9BD

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**Comments**

Extension to caravan site to provide 54 new pitches, erection of toilet block and associated infrastructure

**Date 18/04/2013**

**Scale 1:**

## Planning Services

# COMMITTEE REPORT

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### APPLICATION DETAILS

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<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	7/2013/0087/DM
<b>FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:</b>	Proposed change of use from general storage(B8) to general industrial use (B2) including external alterations and formation of new access
<b>NAME OF APPLICANT:</b>	Tekmar
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	Former Tetley Distribution Depot, Unit N791, Grindon Way, Aycliffe Industrial Estate, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham, DL5 6NG.
<b>ELECTORAL DIVISION:</b>	Aycliffe East ED
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b>	Paul Hopper, Planning Officer 03000 263946, <a href="mailto:paul.hopper@durham.gov.uk">paul.hopper@durham.gov.uk</a>

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

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#### The Site

1. This application relates to the former Tetley Tea distribution facility which occupies a corner plot of some 1.5 hectares at the junction of Grindon Way and St Andrew's Way, Aycliffe Industrial Estate, Newton Aycliffe.
2. The site is currently vacant and contains a large steel portal frame building of around 7500m<sup>2</sup> floor area with a pitched roof to an overall height of approximately 15 metres. External walls are finished in a mix of steel cladding and block work with steel cladding to the roof.
3. The site has an existing access onto Grindon Way to the north and has an extensive area of hardstanding that incorporates parking provision for around 12 vehicles and loading areas. Boundary treatment comprises predominantly of 2 metre high chain-link fencing interspersed in places by palisade steel fencing of similar height. There is some existing tree planting to the north and east boundaries and existing industrial units bound the site to the north, south and west with open fields to the east.
4. The site benefits from planning permission for storage and distribution uses.

#### The Proposal

5. Tekmar the applicant company is engaged in the design, sales, manufacture and supply of cable protection systems for the offshore renewable energy sector and has occupied a site close by to the south at Park 2000 since 2008. Due to recent growth in the business the Company is seeking to expand its operations to increase production capacity and as such has identified the application site as a

potential location for expansion.

6. Planning Permission is sought for the change of use of the site to B2 (General Industrial) use to accommodate the Tekmar operations. The proposals would also involve a range of relatively minor works and alterations. These would include the installation of new roller shutter doors to the northern and eastern elevations of the existing building and the formation of a new vehicular access onto Grindon Way. The new access would include 2 metre high, electronically operated sliding gates and require the removal of some existing vegetation along the northern boundary. The existing access would be retained in its current form.
7. The proposal would also increase parking provision on existing hardstanding areas from 12 spaces to a total of 56 and would provide for the external storage of 16 steel storage containers (6 metres by 2.5 metres with a height of 2.8 metres). These would be double stacked and located adjacent to the eastern boundary with St Andrew's Way. In terms of vehicle movements the applicant anticipates that the proposed use would generate 45 operational vehicle visits per day from a mix of heavy goods vehicles and courier style light vans.
8. Two external smoking shelters and 3 cycle storage units would also be provided adjacent to the northern and eastern elevations of the building. These would be constructed from powder coated steel frames with Perspex cladding. In addition a small extension is proposed to the western elevation of the existing building which would cover a footprint of 7.2m<sup>2</sup> and house a compressor and electricity sub station.
9. In terms of employment opportunities the proposal would facilitate the relocation of 50 staff from the applicant's adjacent site, which currently employs 68 people. It is envisaged that an additional 12 employment positions would be created within a year as the business expands.
10. Hours of operation would typically be 08:00 to 17:00 Monday to Saturday, although the applicant has advised that at times of peak loads these would be extended to 06:00 to 23:00 Monday to Saturday.
11. The application is reported to the South West Area Planning Committee as it would comprise in excess of 5000m<sup>2</sup> of industrial floor space and as such is considered major development.

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## **PLANNING HISTORY**

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12. The application site was previously used as a distribution facility for Tetley Tea. This use ceased mid 2012 and the site is currently vacant.
13. The local planning authority is currently considering an associated application for advertisement consent to display 2 No Halo effect fascia signs in association with the proposed use.

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## **PLANNING POLICY**

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### **NATIONAL POLICY**

14. In March 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This forms a golden thread running through both the plan-making and



decision-taking process.

15. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes are cancelled as a result of the NPPF coming into force.

16. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The economic role is to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.

17. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 17 contains the 12 core land-use principles that planning should underpin decision-taking. These include:

- be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings;
- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas;
- encouraging the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value;
- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and,
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

18. The NPPF outlines in paragraph 19 that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

*The above represents a summary of the NPPF considered most relevant the full text may be accessed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>*

## REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

19. *The North East of England Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) July 2008*, sets out the broad spatial development strategy for the North East region for the period of 2004 to 2021. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East will be revoked on 15 April 2013 and therefore the RSS policies carry no weight in the determination of this application.

## LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

20. The following policies of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan as amended by saved and expired policies are relevant in the determination of this application.
21. *Policy IB1 (Type of Industry and Business Areas)* states that the Council will normally approve development that maintain in appropriate locations a range of land available for industry and business.
22. *Policy IB2 (Designation of Type of Industrial Estate)* designates existing industrial estates as prestige business parks, general industrial areas or local industrial areas.
23. *Policy IB5 (Industry in Prestige Business Areas)* states that business, general industry and warehousing will normally be acceptable and should incorporate a high standard of site layout, building design and landscaping.
24. *Policy D1 (General Principles for the Layout and Design of New Developments)* sets out several key principles for the layout and design of new developments.
25. *Policy D2 (Design for People)* requires developments to take account of personal safety and security of property, access needs of users and provision of appropriate facilities such as toilets, baby changing facilities, public seating etc.
26. *Policy D3 (Designed with pedestrians, cyclists, public transport)* aims to ensure that new developments are accessible and safe for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, cars and other vehicles.
27. *Policy E15 (Safeguarding of woodlands, trees and hedgerows)* sets out the importance of protecting area of high landscape value through retaining areas of woodland, important groups of trees, copses and hedgerow.

*The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at <http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/durham/text/00cont.htm>.*

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## CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

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### STATUTORY RESPONSES:

28. *The Highway Authority* has no objections subject to a condition requiring the submission and agreement of a Workplace Travel Plan.
29. *Great Aycliffe Town Council* offers support for any proposal to improve Aycliffe Industrial Estate and provide additional jobs but advises that replacement planting of shrubs be incorporated along St Andrews Way.

## **INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:**

30. *Environmental Health Section* has no objections to the proposals.
31. *Ecology Section* has no objections to the proposals subject to the inclusion of an appropriate condition requiring that scrub clearance in association with the proposed access be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season. If the development proceeds within the bird breeding season than a qualified ecologist shall confirm in writing to the local planning authority the absence of breeding birds prior to the commencement of these works.

## **PUBLIC RESPONSES:**

32. The application has been advertised on site, in the local press and notification letters were sent to surrounding industrial units. One letter of objection was initially received from an adjacent industrial user, citing concerns regarding a pedestrian access to the southern boundary. This was formally withdrawn upon removal of this element from the scheme.

## **APPLICANTS STATEMENT:**

33. Established in 2008, Tekmar Energy Limited is a company engaged in the design, sales, manufacture and supply of cable protection systems for the offshore renewable energy sector. It has been operating out of its current premises on Park 2000 in Newton Aycliffe since 2008.
34. Having witnessed outstanding growth during this period, the company now finds that its operations are being limited by the constraints the current building exert. Staff numbers have grown from 5 to 68 in the period, production has risen from under 10 systems to over 1000 and turnover has grown from zero to approx. £20M.
35. The company now foresees the need for further expansion of its production capacity as well as the services it offers major European clients and in readiness for the next phase of growth it is in need of additional office, factory and hard standing space.
36. In an effort to retain a presence in the area, Tekmar have identified suitable premises in close proximity to the current facility in Newton Aycliffe. It is the company's intention to acquire a lease to permit its production operation to expand into the new building. This will involve relocating approximately 50 of the current staff to the new site, with the potential of adding an additional 12 staff within one year.

*The above represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file.*

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## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

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37. Having regard to the requirements of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 development plan policies and relevant guidance, and all other material planning considerations, including representations received, it is considered that the main planning issues in this instance relate to the principle of development, the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the amenity of adjoining users, parking, access, highway safety and ecology.

## Principle of development

38. The application proposes the change of use from B8 (General Storage) to B2 (General Industrial) use at a site located within the prestige business area of Aycliffe Industrial Estate as defined by Local Plan Policy IB2. Aycliffe Industrial Estate is well established and represents the second largest industrial estate in the region, hosting a wide range of industrial uses. In this regard Local Plan Policy IB5 states that B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Warehousing) uses will normally be considered acceptable in prestige business areas. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that local planning authorities should support existing business sectors and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.
39. The applicant currently occupies an existing building close to the application site and is seeking to expand into larger premises. Saved Local Plan Policy IB5 clearly provides a policy framework supportive of B2 uses within Prestige Business Areas and the proposed use is therefore supported in principle, displaying broad accordance with the requirements of Policy IB5 and guidance contained within the NPPF. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable.

## Impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area

40. The site occupies a position adjacent to one of the main vehicular routes into Aycliffe Industrial Estate and it is framed by other existing industrial units to the north, south and west. It is relatively well screened along its eastern boundary by existing vegetation and as such does not appear prominent in the wider locality. While some of the existing vegetation along the northern boundary would be removed as part of the proposal to accommodate the new vehicular access, this would not be to an extent where it would have any unacceptable impact upon the character of the surrounding area. Great Aycliffe Town Council has recommended that replacement planting be incorporated into the scheme along St Andrew's Way, but as well established boundary planting already exists in this location it is not considered necessary to include any additional landscaping measures as part of this proposal. The proposal therefore accords with the requirements of saved Local Plan Policy D1.
41. External works would be limited and include the installation of steel roller shutter doors to the northern and eastern elevations of the existing building and the erection of 3 cycle stores, 2 smoking shelters (and an electricity sub station. External storage areas and containers would be limited in extent and height and would generally be of an appearance typically seen on a large industrial site. As such the totality of the works would not appear out of keeping with the existing industrial character of the surrounding area in accordance with the requirements of saved Local Plan Policy D1.

## Impact upon the amenity of adjoining users

42. The proposal would involve the use of a vacant industrial unit and as such some increase to existing noise levels could be reasonably expected. However, any such increase would be heard in the context of an existing and well established industrial area which already hosts a range of other industrial uses. In this regard it is considered that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable impact upon the amenity of surrounding businesses, and while one objection was originally received, this has since been formally withdrawn.

43. The nearest residential properties would be located approximately 380 metres to the north east of the site at Bickford Terrace and this is considered sufficient distance to ensure that there would not be any adverse impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of these dwellings. In addition, it is noted that in terms of statutory nuisance, the Environmental Health Section offers no objection to the application.
44. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of its impact upon the amenity of surrounding users in accordance with Local Plan Policy D1.

#### Parking, access and highway safety

45. The new vehicular access onto Grindon Way would incorporate appropriate visibility splays and junction radii to adequately ensure that there would not be any adverse impact upon highway safety. Similarly, it is considered that the anticipated 45 vehicle visits per week could be safely accommodated by the surrounding road network. Adequate parking provision is proposed when considered against the Council's Parking Guidelines and as such the Highway Authority offers no objection to the scheme subject to the inclusion of an appropriate condition requiring the submission and agreement of a Workplace Travel Plan.
46. The proposed development would therefore accord with the requirements of saved Local Plan Policies D1 and D3 in terms of access, parking and highway safety.

#### Ecology

47. Local Plan Policy E15 seeks to protect areas of woodland, important groups of trees, copses and hedgerows wherever possible. Although not a hedgerow per se, the proposal would involve the removal of a small section of existing semi mature vegetation of approximately 10m in length to the northern boundary with Grindon Way. While the Ecology Section offers no objections to the proposals, it is advised that an appropriate condition be included requiring that scrub clearance works take place outside the breeding bird season, or if works are to take place within this period, that a qualified ecologist confirms the absence of breeding birds prior to the commencement of works.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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48. The proposal would enable a growing local business to expand and bring a vacant site back into productive use within Aycliffe Industrial Estate. The proposed use of the building is considered acceptable in principle and the scale, design and layout of proposed external works would be appropriate to the existing building and would not represent features that would dominate the site or the surrounding area or detract from the appearance of Aycliffe Industrial Estate.
49. Sufficient car parking provision is incorporated within the scheme to serve the proposed use and the surrounding road network could accommodate the proposed vehicle movements so that existing highway safety would not be compromised.
50. Given the sites location within an existing industrial area and the nature of surrounding uses it is considered that the proposal would not adversely impact upon nearby units or surrounding residential occupiers in terms of noise and disturbance.

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## RECOMMENDATION

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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 and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

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

<b>Drawing No:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Date Received:</b>
12.31/001	Site Location Plan	28/02/2013
12.31/007	Proposed Site Plan	26/03/2013
12.31/006	Proposed Elevations	28/02/2013
12.31/005	Proposed Floor Plans	28/02/2013
BXMW/ECC2	Ecclestone Economy	02/04/2013
BXMW/HAR	Harrowby Smoking Shelter	02/04/2013

*Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained.*

3. Prior to the bringing into use of the development a Travel Plan Coordinator shall be appointed and contact details for this person shall be provided in writing to the Local Planning Authority. Within 6 months of occupation a final Travel Plan, conforming to The National Specification for Workplace Travel Plans PAS 500:2008, Bronze Level, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: In the interests of encouraging sustainable transport, in accordance with Policies D1 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan.*

4. There shall be no pedestrian access gates or other such point of entry or exit installed at any point along the southern boundary of the site.

*Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area and to comply with policy D1 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan.*

5. The externally stored steel storage containers shown on Drawing No. 12.31/007 'Proposed Site Plan' shall not be stacked to a height exceeding 6 metres.

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character and appearance of the surrounding area to comply with the requirements of policy D1 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan.*

6. Any on site vegetation clearance should avoid the bird breeding season (March to end of August), unless the project ecologist undertakes a checking survey immediately prior to clearance and confirms that no breeding birds are present. The survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the removal of vegetation during the bird breeding season.

*Reason: To protect existing wildlife habitats in accordance with Policy D1 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan.*

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## **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

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1. The site is located on an existing industrial estate and is already developed for business purposes. The proposed use and external alterations are considered acceptable having regard to saved policies IB2, IB5 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal would not have any adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the amenity of adjacent land users or highway safety in accordance with saved policies D1, D2 and D3 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan.

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## **STATEMENT OF POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE WORKING**

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The local planning authority has acted in a positive and proactive manner in determining the application within the statutory determination period.

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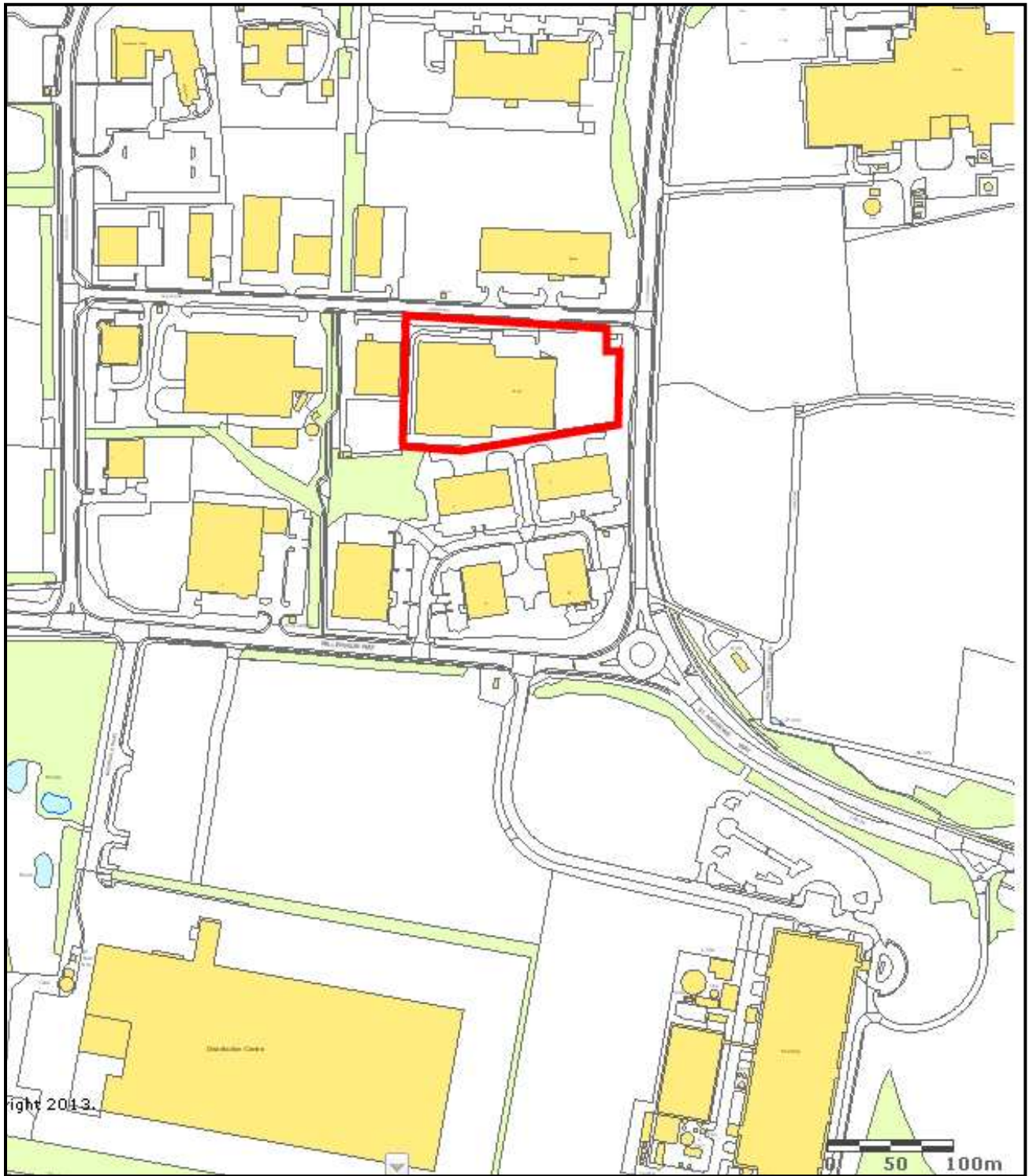
## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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- Submitted Application Forms, Plans and Design and Access Statement
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Sedgefield Borough Local Plan
- Responses from the Highway Authority and Great Aycliffe Town Council
- Internal Responses from Environmental Health and Ecology Sections
- Public Consultation Responses







**Planning Services**

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Proposed change of use from general storage(B8) to general industrial use (B2) including external alterations and formation of new access

**Comments**

**Date** 18 April 2013

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