

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO:	6/2011/0301/DM
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Provision of 30no. pitches for touring caravans and camping with associated toilet and shower block
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Mr Paul Stabler The Countryman Public House Dunwell Lane
ADDRESS:	Bolam Nr Darlington County Durham DL2 2UP
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Barnard Castle East ED
CASE OFFICER:	Paul Martinson paul.martinson@durham.gov.uk 03000 260823

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

The site

1. The application site is an enclosed field located to the rear of the Countryman Public House, Bolam. The land is currently laid to grass with the boundaries to the north, south and east defined by a hedgerow interspersed with several mature trees. The pub and associated beer garden are located to the west of the application site with the edge of the beer garden being delineated by a 2m high close boarded fence. Open agricultural land borders the site to the north, south and east. The closest residential properties are located to the south west of the site.
2. The application site abuts the boundary of the Bolam Conservation Area, and the whole site is located within the Area of High Landscape Value. The Countryman Public House is set back from the main road through the village with a large car park located to the front. There are two public footpaths to the south of the site, one of which provides access to Leggs Cross, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed structure which is located north east of the application site adjacent to the cross roads junction with the B6275.

The proposal

3. The application seeks planning permission for the provision of 30no. pitches for touring caravans and tents in the existing field to the rear of the Public House. This would involve the creation of a surfaced access road through the centre of the field, siting of a toilet and shower block and water treatment plant to the south west,, installation of 2no water points and landscaping and native planting around the perimeter of the site.

4. The proposed pitches would be sited in two rows to the north and south of the proposed access road. The proposed toilet and shower block would consist of a flat roofed pre-constructed demountable building measuring 5.08m x 2.9m x 2.57m high with two doors located in the south elevation. The water treatment plant would be sited in the far south western corner of the site to the south of the proposed toilet block. A landscape impact assessment accompanies the application and proposes perimeter planting adjacent to the existing field boundaries in order to provide screening of the site.
5. The application is reported to Committee at the request of Councillor James Rowlandson who requested that Members discuss the impact of size of the development on the conservation area and the access to the proposal.

PLANNING HISTORY

6. The pub has previously received planning permission for two single storey extensions and in 2010 planning permission was granted for the erection of a bedroom block in the existing beer garden to the rear. The bedroom block would occupy the majority of this area and would be physically detached from the public house. This permission has yet to be implemented and expires in February 2013.
7. The field to the rear of the site is currently used on a seasonal basis for up to 5 caravans operating under a licence outside of planning permission as part of Schedule I of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY:

8. *Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development* sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.
9. *Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment* sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment.
10. *Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation* sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.
11. *Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13): Transport* sets out the objectives to integrate planning and transport at the national, strategic and local level and to promote more sustainable transport choices both for carrying people and for moving freight.
12. Furthermore, the emerging NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development to encourage economic growth and to achieve sustainable development.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

13. *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 RSS sets out the region's housing provision and the priorities in economic development, retail growth, transport investment, the

environment, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. Some policies have an end date of 2021 but the overall vision, strategy, and general policies will guide development over a longer timescale.

14. In July 2010 the Local Government Secretary signalled his intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies with immediate effect, and that this was to be treated as a material consideration in subsequent planning decisions. This was successfully challenged in the High Court in November 2010, thus for the moment reinstating the RSS. However, it remains the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies when Orders have been made under section 109 of the Localism Act 2011, and weight can now be attached to this intention. The following policies are considered relevant;
15. *Policy 2 – Sustainable Development*
Planning proposals should support sustainable development and construction through the delivery of environmental, social and economic objectives.
16. *Policy 16 – Culture and Tourism:* Promotes culture and tourism and supports the development of a vibrant rural economy that makes a positive contribution to regional prosperity.
17. *Policy 32 – Historic Environment:*
Planning proposals should seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment
18. *Policy 33 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity:*
Proposals should ensure that the Region's ecological and geological resources are protected and enhanced to return key biodiversity resources to viable levels.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY: (Teesdale District Local Plan 2002)

19. The following policies of the Teesdale Local Plan are considered relevant in the determination of this application:
20. *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.
21. *Policy BENV3 (Development Affecting Listed Buildings)*
Development which would adversely affect the character or the setting of a Listed building will not be permitted.
22. *Policy BENV4 (Development Within or Adjacent to Conservation Areas):*
Requires new development to respect the quality and character of conservation areas. Proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a conservation area or the views into or out of the area will not be permitted.
23. *Policy BENV11 (Archaeological Interest Sites):*
Before the determination of an application for development that may affect a known or potential site of archaeological interest, prospective developers will be required to undertake a field evaluation and provide the results to the planning Authority. Development which would unacceptably harm the setting or physical remains of archaeological sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not, will not be approved.
24. *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.

25. *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.
26. *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.
27. *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.

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.durham.gov.uk/pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=6619>

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

28. *The Highway Authority* offers no objections to the proposal subject to the submission of further details relating to the circulatory movements of vehicles to and from the site. It is requested that separate accesses for vehicles leaving and entering the site are installed.
29. *Bolam Parish Council* acknowledge the need for diversification and the importance of tourism in the area but raise issues regarding the size of the caravan park which could create a disproportionate balance within the village. The Parish Council also raise the issue of health and safety and the danger of tourists entering the adjacent fields with livestock. It was considered that, if approved, the proposed infrastructure should be in place prior to the development being implemented.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

30. The *Landscape* section objects to the proposal as the whole of the application site lies within an Area of High Landscape Value and within the setting of the Conservation Area. It is not sufficiently well screened to avoid detracting from the landscape quality of the area, contrary to Policy ENV3 or to avoid detracting from the character of the area, contrary to Policy TR3. Furthermore TR3 requires the site to be screened by "local topography or existing tree cover" and this is clearly not the case. The landscape is valuable not just in its own right but as the setting of the Leggs Cross Scheduled Ancient Monument the Conservation. It is therefore sensitive to inappropriate development and caravans and tents would be highly visible. The native hedgerow planting mitigation proposed does not follow the DCC Guidelines and would not achieve adequate screening. This is contrary to Planning Policy ENV3 and TR3 and the County Landscape Strategy.

31. The *Design and Conservation* section objects to the proposal on the grounds of the harm to the character, appearance, setting and significance of the Bolam Conservation Area and the Grade II* Listed and Scheduled Ancient Monument of Leggs Cross. The proposal would be highly visible in the landscape setting of Bolam which is identified as of key importance to the significance of the Conservation Area. It would also affect views from Leggs Cross, which form part of the character and significance of the Grade II* Listed structure and Scheduled Ancient Monument. .
32. The *County Ecologist* objects to the proposal on the grounds of potential harm to Protected Species, specifically great crested newts. The Risk Assessment that accompanies the application is not compliant with the recognised Risk Assessment process for ponds which may have great crested newts. The application should have included a Habitat Suitability Index assessment carried out by a licensed great crested newt ecologist. It is noted that there are three ponds within 500m of the caravan site and all should at least have been mentioned in the risk assessment.
33. The *County Archaeologist* objects to the proposal on the grounds of the impact on the significance of designated heritage assets. The site lies within a historic landscape with evidence of rig and furrow in the surrounding fields and within the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed structure of Leggs Cross. The proposal would contribute to cutting Leggs Cross off from the traditional and historic context of the fields and cultivation terraces of Bolam village.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

34. Occupiers of the neighbouring properties were notified in writing of the proposals and a site notice was posted. The application was also advertised in the local press. 25 letters of objection and 5 letters of support were received.
35. The letters of objection are summarised as follows:
 - i.) The proposal would lead to additional noise and disturbance to the neighbouring properties which is already a problem from the existing 5 no caravan pitches and the pub itself.
 - ii.) The proposal would harm the character of this unspoilt village with its historic rural setting.
 - iii.) The proposal would lead to additional problems with parking in the village with no additional parking area proposed.
 - iv.) The proposal would result in a significant increase in the amount of traffic within the village, which is likely to be particularly problematic with a large number of vehicles using the cross roads which are notoriously dangerous with a blind summit which limits visibility. There are also likely to be problems with the vehicles driving past the Countryman and reversing as it is located around a tight bend.
 - v.) Holidaymakers using the caravan park could potentially trespass on neighbouring land, allowing their dogs to worry livestock. The additional noise and disturbance would also cause stress to livestock
 - vi.) There is some confusion over the proposed 'site rules' that accompanied the planning application. These relate to Camping and Caravanning sites of 5 caravans and under and not the proposed large 30 caravan site over which the Camping and Caravanning Club have no jurisdiction. Consequently the site appears to have no rules. It is suggested that any proposed rules are agreed before issuing any approval.
 - vii.) The water treatment plant would be sited too close to neighbouring residential properties and could create cause smells and noise through the employment of a generator to pump water uphill.

- viii.) The caravan park is too large for the village, doubling its population which at present is around 60. This is not taking into account the proposed bedroom block at the rear of the Countryman which was recently approved.
- ix.) Bolam is an inappropriate location for a new caravan park as it has no other services apart from the pub and this would mean any tourists would have to access facilities outside of the village, increasing the number of car journeys.

36. The letters of support including 2 from employees of the pub are summarised as follows:

- i.) There is concern about the loss of employment at the pub if the application is not approved.
- ii.) There is not experience any excessive noise associated with the existing use of the pub.
- iii.) The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety and the example of another caravan site in a similar location is referred to.
- iv.) It is considered that the proposal would have an economic benefit.
- v.) The Countryman is outside of the Conservation Area boundary.

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

37. The Countryman is proposing to increase its certified 5 caravan site to a 30 caravan site. My 5 van site is situated on 3 acres of land to the rear of the pub. The site is very popular and attracts many tourists from all around. I do know from working with Visit County Durham how important tourism is and I know I have their full support with this application. I also attend local council meetings that which are again working to attract more tourism to the region. The Countryman has letters of support from residents of Bolam and also the chairman of Bolam Parish Council who all believe that it is important to encourage tourism to the area. I also have the support of Chief Executive Melanie Sensicle of Visit County Durham and was very interested in the proposals for a larger site. I also have been granted planning permission for a larger bedroom block to the rear of my property. The revenue from the caravan site can assist me in the development of my rooms. I have also had a couple of rallies up to 15 vans and they were hardly noticed by residents. My site will and does have restrictions and rules for arrival and departure from the site and these are always adhered to.

As I am a pub in the countryside my aim is for my business to succeed as many pubs have been forced to close. I believe that the proposed extension of my site will bring visitors and extra trade and also increase employment. As there is an increase in caravanners looking for a quality site to stay on, my site is in a beautiful quiet field, with lovely countryside surroundings. The site has been a success with many visitors recommending us to family and friends. I have tourists who come into our pub and pick up leaflets on the area. In the long run I can predict more tourists visiting our area and visiting my site which can only be a good thing for this country. On attending council meetings and working with Visit County Durham I know that this country has and still is struggling to attract tourists to the area and that is why it can only be a good thing to have more larger sites like may own which is close to Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle and Shildon Museum and many other attractions and walks for tourists.

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://teesdale.planning-register.co.uk>. Officer analysis of the issues raised and discussion as to their relevance to the proposal and recommendation made is contained below

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

38. 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 the development; landscape impact; affect on designated heritage assets; residential amenity; conservation of protected species and highway safety.

Principle of the Development

39. PPS7 supports the development of caravan and static sites in the countryside but seeks a balance between providing adequate facilities and sites and the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites. This is reiterated by the Tourism Good Practice Guide. PPS4 supports diversification for business purposes that are consistent in their scale and environmental impacts with their rural location. Policy TR3 of the Teesdale Local Plan also supports the principle of the development of camping and caravan sites in situations where it does not detract from the character of the area; is adequately screened by local topography or existing tree cover; is served by adequate infrastructure; site services are limited to site occupants only; and does not adversely affect the amenities of the neighbouring properties. The Countryman is a rural enterprise and diversification of this facility is therefore encouraged however this needs to be considered against the potential landscape impact of the proposal.
40. The existing 5 caravan site overseen by the Camping and Caravanning Club operates outside of planning permission under an exemption as part of Schedule I of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. The existing pitches therefore have therefore not yet been considered against the key considerations below such as landscape impact and impact on the setting of the Conservation Area..

Landscape Impact

41. The application lies wholly within the Area of High Landscape Value and within the setting of the Conservation Area, the boundary of which passes through the western part of the site. Policy ENV3 of the Teesdale Local Plan states that development will be permitted where it does not detract from the area's special character, and pays particular attention to the landscape qualities of the area in siting and design of buildings and the context of any landscaping proposals such development proposals should accord with policy GD1.
42. Policy TR3 requires proposed caravan sites to be screened by local topography of existing tree cover. The site is in a relatively exposed location and as the adjacent highway (Brownside Lane) is located at a slightly higher level than the field itself, the existing topography actually increases the prominence of the site. The site would also be visible from two public footpaths to the north and one to the south and a further footpath to the east which links Bolam with Leggs Cross a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed Structure. The Landscape Impact Assessment submitted with the application categorises the proposal's impact on views from the footpaths to the east and south as having a 'major negative impact'. The views from the two footpaths to the north are categorised as 'minor negative impact'. It is considered that these assessments are accurate.
43. Touring caravans are usually white in colour and tents can be in highly visible colours which would further increase the site's prominence. The existing field

boundary is defined by a hedgerow that provides little in the way of screening, particularly along the northern boundary where it is sparse and maintained at a relatively low height. There is also little evidence of evergreen species being present in the hedge and the level of screening is even less substantial in the winter months. The caravan site's prominence would therefore increase further during this period. This is of particular relevance as tourism is now a year round activity, as recognised by the Tourism Good Practice Guide, and the site would be likely to be used during holidays particularly during Easter when there would still be insignificant foliage to provide effective screening.

44. It is considered overall that the lack of existing screening and unhelpful local topography would result in caravans and tents on the site being highly visible from the main road into Bolam and the public footpaths to the north and south of the site, This would have a significantly detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape, harmful to the special qualities of the Area of Landscape Value and contrary to policies GD1, TR3 and ENV3 of the Teesdale Local Plan and the Council's adopted Landscape Strategy.
45. The applicant has submitted a Landscape Impact Assessment which includes planting mitigation that is intended to provide screening. Policy ENV3 of the Teesdale Local Plan requires landscaping proposals to pay particular attention to the existing landscape qualities of the area. The proposed landscaping scheme does not follow the Durham County Council planting guidelines, despite what is argued in the Assessment, and is considered unacceptable both in species density and species mix. The Council's Landscape officer have advised that the proposed tree and shrub planting, will not achieve adequate screening as a double or staggered row and as there is little evergreen material in the mixes, any screening would be ineffective before mid April. In the event of an appropriate landscaping scheme being submitted, it would take some time to establish and provide a sufficient level of screening of the caravans which would in the interim be highly visible and harmful to the surrounding landscape.

Impact on Designated Heritage Assets

46. The application site lies within the setting of the Bolam Conservation Area and within the setting of the Leggs Cross Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed Structure. There is also evidence of rig and furrow earthworks in the surrounding fields which contributes to the application site's historic landscape setting.
47. The landscape and fields surrounding Bolam provide an important rural setting to the Conservation Area. The importance of the landscape setting is highlighted in the Bolam Conservation Area Appraisal. The historic field patterns and cultivation terraces add to the historic character of the village setting as well as the setting of the adjacent Grade II* Listed and Scheduled Ancient Monument Leggs Cross. The monument is located at a higher level than the application site and caravans and tents would be highly visible from this important public vantage point adversely affecting its setting and significance as well as being harmful to the setting of Bolam Conservation Area, the majority of which is visible from this location. The County Archaeologist considers that this proposal would contribute to cutting Leggs Cross off from the traditional and historic context of the fields and cultivation terraces of Bolam village. Caravans and tents are modern structures that are inappropriate in such prominent locations within the setting of the Conservation Area and within the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed structure. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies GD1, BENV3 and BENV4 of the Teesdale Local Plan as well as the guidance provided in PPS5.

48. The proposed toilet/shower block would be a modern prefabricated demountable building. This form of building is inappropriate adjacent to a Conservation Area and would have a detrimental impact on its setting contrary to policy BENV4 of the Teesdale Local Plan.

Impact on Residential Amenity

49. The application site is located to the rear of the public house and approximately 50 m from the rear of the closest dwellings Church Farm to the north and Township Farm to the south. The application site shares a boundary with the curtilage of both of these properties. The existing public house also shares a boundary with Church Farm and is located approximately 25m away from the next closest neighbour; West View. Concerns have been expressed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties that the proposal would result in them experiencing additional noise and disturbance. It is noted that these properties already experience disturbance from the public house, particularly during busy periods. Properties close to public houses can be expected to experience higher than normal level of comings and goings and the Countryman has been in operation for some time. The boundary of the caravan site is located further away than that of the public house and in reality the closest caravan would be located even further away. The access to the caravan site is adjacent to Church Farm, however no windows are located in this elevation and the edge of the curtilage is defined by a high *leylandii* hedge. It is unlikely that the access will be used late at night and therefore it is considered the impact of the access would be minimal. Consequently it is considered that the proposal would not create a level of noise or disturbance that would be harmful to neighbouring properties that would be over and above what can be expected from a public house.
50. The toilet/shower block would be approximately 55-60m away from the rear elevation of Township Farm and although people using the site would be likely to access this area on foot, it is not considered that this would generate a high level of disturbance given that the building contains only two showers and would be unlikely to be in use late at night. The water treatment plant would also not have a harmful impact on the adjacent property and if issues with smells arise, this would be a matter for the Council's Environmental Health section.
51. There have also been concerns that the proposal would be harmful to the views from the rear of the neighbouring properties. This is not a material planning consideration and cannot be given significant weight during the determination of this application.

Conservation of Protected Species

52. The applicant has submitted a Protected Species Risk Assessment which has been considered by the County Ecologist. The risk assessment is required as the proposal is considered to have a potentially harmful impact on Great Crested Newts which are protected by the Habitats Regulations 2010 and section 9(4)(b), (c) and (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended). The presence of protected species such as bats and barn owls is a material consideration, in accordance with Circular 06/05 to PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. These regulations 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 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. All public bodies to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats

Directive in the exercise of their functions so where there is likely to be a disturbance to protected species, caselaw has established that local planning authorities must consider whether the Applicant might obtain a relevant licence from Natural England. This requires an examination of the derogation provisions. However, the Planning Authority must not usurp the functions of the Licensing body in this regard. It is for Natural England to decide licensing applications, the planning authority must only be satisfied that there is a possibility of a required licence being obtained.

53. The Risk Assessment that accompanies the application is not compliant with the recognised Risk Assessment process for ponds which may have great crested newts. No Habitat Suitability Index assessment has been carried out and the Risk Assessment does not appear to have been carried out by a licensed great crested newt ecologist. It is noted that there are three ponds within 500m of the caravan site which should have been referred to in the Risk Assessment. The application site falls within an area that is known to support great crested newts with the greatest density of the species in County Durham being located in the lowland areas around Darlington.
54. Given that the area is known to support great crested newts, there is likely to be a disturbance to a protected species but from the information submitted the level of impact on the great crested newt population cannot be ascertained. Consequently, the LPA is unable to discharge its duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, contrary to policies GD1 and ENV8 of the Teesdale Local Plan and the requirements of PPS9..

Impact on Highway Safety

55. The applicant intends to utilise the existing parking area to the front of the public house for the parking of vehicles associated with the caravan park. It is not considered that this would result in a significant increase in the numbers using this car park and would not create additional demand for parking elsewhere within the village. The Highway Authority have raised no objections and it is considered that sufficient parking is provided.
56. Concerns have been expressed in the letters of objection that the existing road network that serves Bolam is inappropriate for this form of development and the proposed caravan site, if approved would exacerbate existing highway safety issues at the Leggs Cross crossroads and the bend on Brownside Lane adjacent to St. Andrews church on the approach into the village. It is not considered that the creation of a caravan site at the Countryman would significantly harm highway safety on the road network around the site and is unlikely to create congestion given that all 30 caravans are unlikely to be accessing the site at the same time and the traffic arising from the caravan site is likely to be staggered through the day. The Highway Authority has recommended that measures to limit vehicles and entering and leaving the site to specific accesses in order to increase visibility. Subject to the enforcement of this restriction the proposal would comply with policy GD1 of the Teesdale Local Plan.

Other Issues

57. The impact of the proposed caravan site on the health of livestock in neighbouring fields is not a material planning consideration and cannot be given significant weight during the determination. However if there are concerns in relation to security, trespass or stealing of livestock this would be a matter for the local police.

58. The Tourism Good Practice Guide considers that some tourism uses such as caravan parks are inherently car dependent and for small-scale schemes, the traffic generated is likely to be fairly limited and additional traffic movements are therefore unlikely to be a reason for refusal for otherwise suitable tourism developments. As such given that the site is adjacent to a public house and Bolam is on a bus route it is not considered that the proposal would be significantly detrimental to sustainability principles.

CONCLUSION

59. Whilst there is general policy support for the diversification of rural enterprises and the development of caravan sites in appropriate locations it is considered that this proposal is deficient in a number of respects.
60. The proposal represents a significant increase on the number of pitches from the 5 pitches that are currently on the site and are exempt from planning permission. The caravans and tents and associated facilities would be prominent in the surrounding landscape and have a detrimental impact on the special qualities of the Area of Landscape Value. The proposed mitigation planting and local topography would not compensate for this and would fail to adequately screen the site
61. The proposal would also be highly prominent within the historic landscape setting of the Conservation Area and Leggs Cross, the Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed structure. It would effectively cut the Scheduled Ancient Monument off from the traditional and historic context of the fields and cultivation terraces. The proposed demountable prefabricated shower/toilet block would also be an inappropriate form of development adjacent to the Conservation Area and harmful to its setting.
62. it is likely that the proposal will result in the disturbance of a European protected species, namely great crested newts but the information submitted is insufficient in that it does not address the level of that impact, The LPA is therefore unable to discharge its duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
63. Notwithstanding that the scheme is otherwise unlikely to give rise to unacceptable residential amenity or highway safety issues, these considerations would not outweigh the overall harm that the proposal would create.

RECOMMENDATION

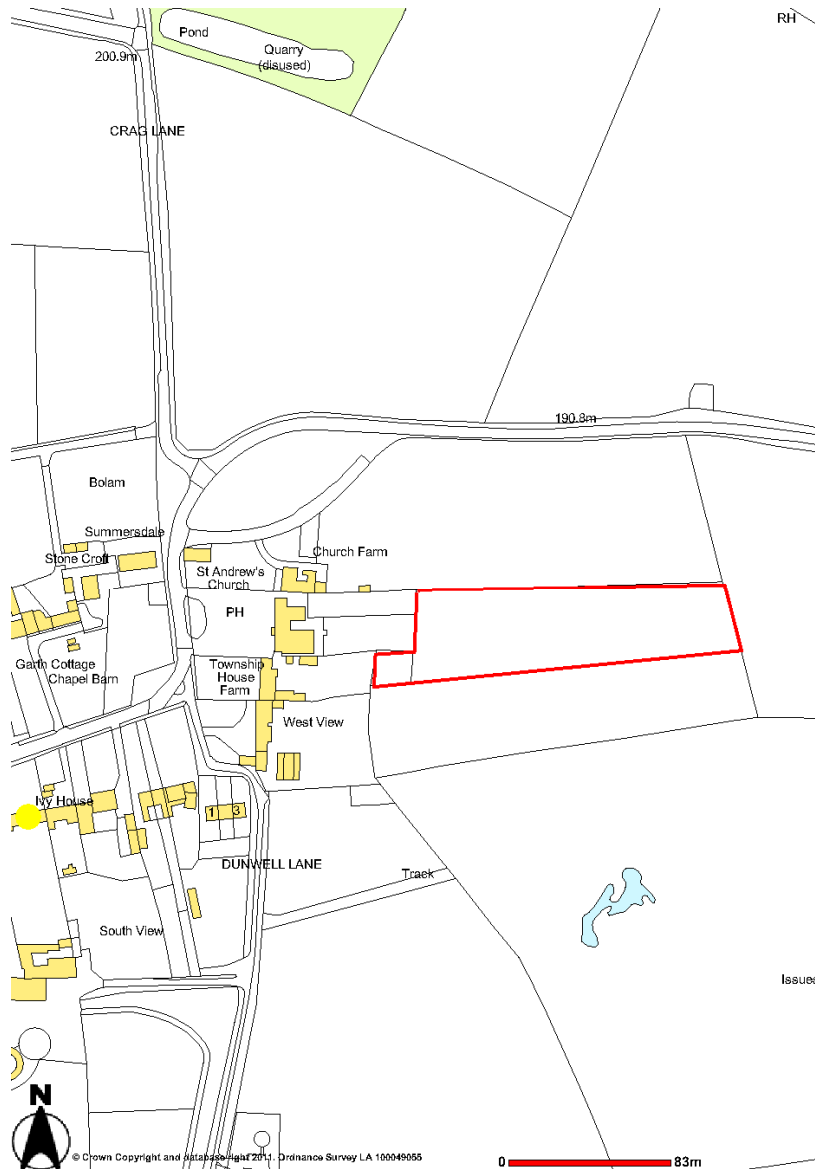
That the application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons;

1. A lack of existing screening combined with the local topography and inappropriate mitigation screening would result in caravans and tents on the proposed site being highly visible from the main road into Bolam and the public footpaths to the north and south of the site, having a significantly detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape and harmful to the special qualities of the Area of Landscape Value contrary to policies GD1, ENV3 and TR3 of the Teesdale Local Plan and PPS7.

2. The caravans, tents and amenity block would be highly prominent in views from the Leggs Cross, detrimental to the historic landscape setting of the Bolam Conservation Area and the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade II* Listed Structure contrary to policies GD1, BENV3 and BENV4 of the Teesdale Local Plan and PPS5.
3. Insufficient information has been provided to properly consider the impact of the proposal on Protected Species and consequently the LPA is unable to discharge its duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, contrary to policy ENV8 of the Teesdale Local Plan and the requirements of PPS9.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Submitted Application Forms and Plans
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Landscape Impact Assessment
- Teesdale Local Plan Saved and Expired Policies
- Planning Policy Statements/Guidance, PPS1, PPS4, PPS7, PPS9
- Tourism Good Practice Guide
- Consultation Responses
- Public Consultation Responses



Planning Services

Provision of 25no. additional pitches for touring caravans and camping with associated toilet and shower block at The Countryman Public House, Dunwell Lane, Bolam, 6/2011/0301/DM

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Comments

Date 05 December 2011

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