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To: Katherine Robbie - Senior Planning Officer      Your Ref: 19/00247/FUL  
Date: 16/5/19  
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**Construction of a publicly accessible landmark, commissioned to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth. Land At Cold Law Kirkwhelpington**

Thank you for your consultation on this application. I have reviewed the application and can provide the following advice.

***Archaeological background***

The proposed development is located in a wider archaeological landscape containing known archaeological sites of prehistoric and later date.

The site is located c.1.5km north of the scheduled univallate hillfort on Great Wanney Crag, c.2km north-west of the easternmost of three scheduled Romano-British farmsteads and c.1.8km east of Ridsdale Ironworks.

Various known prehistoric sites are located in the wider landscape, a number of which were identified during intrusive archaeological investigation associated with Ray Windfarm to the east of this site or during detailed walkover surveys. These features included Neolithic rock art, Bronze Age possible burial cairns, clearance cairns, Iron Age enclosures, and hut circles.

Localised post-medieval activity is known in the wider area including coal shafts, a limekiln and old quarries surrounding the site, the nearest of which was located at the base of Cold Law. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey (c.1890 onwards) shows the presence of a currick on Cold Law and an old quarry and sheepfold to the west of the site. The disused Wansbeck section of the North British Railway runs across the landscape to the east of the site.

The proposed landmark is located on the top of Cold Law which is a prominent landform in the landscape. Raised ground such as this has been known to be utilised archaeologically due to its prominence and visibility within the landscape.

The site has been the subject of a detailed desk-based assessment and an archaeological evaluation. The archaeological evaluation confirmed that there was no evidence of archaeological activity in areas impacted by the proposed development.

***Policy background – historic environment***

The application has been considered in line with paragraphs 8, 11, 184, 185, 187, 189, 190, 194, 195, 196, 197 and 199 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

## **Assessment of development**

Given the scale and location of the proposed development, I have assessed both the direct (physical) impact and the indirect (visual) impact of the proposed development. I will deal with each of these issues in turn

### **Direct (physical) impact**

The proposed development comprises the construction of:

- temporary site compound measuring 75m square on the footprint of the proposed visitors' car park and SUDs
- temporary c.5m wide access track running on the line of the proposed footpath
- temporary assembly area to the east of the proposed monument c.120m long by 20m wide with 12 stable pad foundations on which the temporary support frames would be built. Temporary crane stand covering an area of potentially 60m by 15m
- the Elizabeth Monument landmark structure and rock slot
- footpath up to and around the landmark structure and rock slot
- viewing area to the west of the structure
- car park and access
- drainage and area of SUDS drainage to the north of the car park

The archaeological evaluation undertaken on this site in March 2019 involved trenching to evaluate all of the areas of construction listed above and investigate features and areas of archaeological potential identified in the desk-based assessment. The trial trenching demonstrated that there is no evidence of archaeological activity in the areas of proposed construction on this site. The features of potential archaeological origin were shown to be either of geological origin or in the case of the stones on top of Cod Law, of more recent origin.

Based on the extent and results of the archaeological evaluation, no further archaeological work is required in connection with the groundworks required for this scheme.

### **Indirect (visual) impact**

As part of the pre-application conclusion on this development (planning ref: 18/00669/PREAPP), I advised that the future application would need to provide a Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed landmark monument rather than the site in:

- Key views from the scheduled monuments towards the proposed landmark monument
- Key views towards the scheduled monuments in which the proposed landmark monument would be visible

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted in support of this application. The document has produced viewpoints from the following scheduled monuments located within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility:

- **Viewpoint 4** Romano-British farmstead 1.4km north-west of Ferneyrigg (*View north-west from road over Stiddlehill Common including a view up to Great Wanney hillfort*)
- **Viewpoint 5** View north-west from bridleway to Lake Wood including views of the two scheduled Romano-British Farmsteads and coaxial field system
- **Viewpoint 6** Romano-British farmstead, hut-circle and coaxial field system 1.3km north-west of Ferneyrigg (*View west from bridleway to Lake Wood by Homestead features*)
- **Viewpoint 9** Ridsdale ironworks (*View east from Ridsdale at junction of A68 with footpath (514/032)*)
- **Viewpoint 15** Univallate hillfort on Great Wanney Crag (*View north-west from footpath at Great Wanney Crag*)

The Landscape Visual impact Assessment focuses on the landscape character of the area and the impact of the landmark structure within that landscape rather than fully considering the impact of the

proposals on the scheduled monuments in line with Historic England's Guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets<sup>1</sup>.

For example, paragraphs 4.2.9 and 6.0.3 state that the key characteristics of the national and local landscape character areas would not be harmed because "the use of a localised hillock as a vantage point and landmark would not be out of keeping in this landscape character area given the many hillforts and other constructions at highpoints in the Northumberland landscape". It does not assess whether the introduction of a new landmark on a hillock within the landscape would impact on the setting of the hillfort at Great Wanney Crag.

I have looked at the information and viewpoints in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, in conjunction with the Historic England Guidance and a site visit on 5/3/2019, in order to assess the potential indirect impact of the proposals on the surrounding scheduled monuments.

I have concluded that the majority of scheduled monuments surrounding the site were not designed to be visually dominant within the landscape and their scale, design and location reflect their function. The intervisibility of sites of comparable date or function is of interest. The distance from and scale of the landmark structure from Ridsdale Ironworks is unlikely to impact on the setting of this post-medieval industrial site.

In relation to the scheduled Iron Age/Romano-British farmsteads and associated field systems, the proposed landmark structure is located in a position in which it does not interrupt views between the farmsteads or impact on our understanding of how the associated landscape was utilised when the farmsteads were in use.

The Iron Age hillfort on Great Wanney, positioned on the top of the crag, is however located in a visually dominant location. As a result it is important to establish, not only whether the proposed landscape structure interrupts views to and from broadly contemporary sites but also whether the visual dominance of the new structure impacts on the visual dominance of this nationally important monument. Viewpoint 4 does show that both Great Wanney hillfort and the landmark structure will be visible in wider views from the scheduled farmstead. However the structure is not interrupt views between the hillfort and the farmsteads below. In addition in views from the hillfort, the scale and position of the landmark structure means that the metal superstructure will not break the skyline to impact on wider views out from the hillfort or impact on the visual dominance of the hillfort.

As a result, I have concluded that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the setting of the scheduled monuments in the surrounding area.

### **Advice**

While located within a wider archaeological landscape, the assessments carried out in connection with this application have demonstrated that the proposed development is unlikely to have a direct (physical) impact on below ground archaeological remains or an indirect (visual) impact on the setting of the scheduled monuments in the wider area. As a result I have no objections to this application from an archaeological perspective and no further archaeological work was required in connection with this scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> Historic England, 2017. The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)