



Northumberland County Council

Conservation-Ecology-Archaeology

To : Katherine Robbie, Senior Planning Officer

From: Val Robson, Building Conservation Officer

Date: 27/06/2019

Reference: 19/00247/FUL

Address: Land At Cold Law Kirkwhelpington Northumberland

Proposal: Construction of a publicly accessible landmark, commissioned to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth.

Comments/Significance

The proposed landmark is to be located on the top of Cold Law hill which is a prominent landform in the landscape within this attractive area of open countryside. The sculpture is approximately 56 metres in height and will be formed of Corten steel, which weathers to a rich orange/red finish. It will be supported on a simple reinforced concrete beam spanning the rock slot at the hilltop. The proposal also includes a small car park and pathways accessible to walkers and cyclists.

Legislative Framework and Policy

In providing comments on applications Building Conservation has regard to Section 16 (2) and Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which advise that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses..

In addition, the NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental), which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The

environmental objective is to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 8).

Section 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the 2018 NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application.

Paragraph 190 advises that Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 192 advises that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 194 advises that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 195 advises that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 196 advises that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition) 2017 should also be taken into consideration in the assessment

of this proposal.

Assessment of Development Proposals

The objective of the proposal is to produce a contemporary landmark and cultural tourism destination at Cold Law Hill, celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's services to the country and the Commonwealth. The Planning Statement submitted as part of this application describes it as an angled form of approximately 56m in height, to equal the summit of the adjacent Hepple Heugh crag. Its upper curved surface will match the topographical form of the hill, precisely following its curved profile. The under surface will be flat. Angled lateral fins, between the upper and lower flanges, will change in pitch and frequency as they rise up the wing form, accentuating the sense of perspective and movement.

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 5m wide access track running on the line of the proposed footpath
- temporary assembly area to the east of the proposed monument 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 the 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 proposed materials for the landmark feature and the rock slot and for the surfacing of the footpaths, seating, cycle parking and the car park are all considered to be sympathetic to this prominent countryside location. There is no proposed illumination but if in the future any lighting is proposed the guidance received from the Northumberland National Park in their consultation response dated 14 February 2019 should be implemented.

There are no Conservation Areas within the vicinity of the site. The information which has been submitted as part of the application in the form of a desk top survey indicates that there are approximately 14 grade II listed buildings within a 5km radius, the nearest being Harewells, which lies approximately 1.5kms to the north, Furnace House at Ridsdale iron works which lies approximately 2.1kms to the west and Chairford Bridge, Townfoot farm, Middle Woodburn House and the Church of All Saints which lie in the vicinity of East Woodburn between 3km-4km from the site. The desk top survey indicates that whilst the structure may be visible from these heritage assets it is not considered that any significant harm will be posed to these

assets or their setting. The individual nature and scale of most of the buildings and their siting within the landscape aids in diminishing the potential for impact.

CONCLUSION

Building Conservation consider that the proposed landmark feature and its associated facilities will not cause any significant harm to the setting of the surrounding listed buildings as identified in the above report. It is considered that conditions should be added regarding hard and soft landscape details and any associated seating, cycle racks etc.. to ensure that such additions to the existing natural environment will be complementary to this and not cause any harm. Similarly, whilst no illumination is proposed at this stage, details of any illumination if proposed in the future or as the scheme develops should be submitted for consideration in line with the advice given by the Northumberland National Park to ensure that there would be no harmful effect upon the tranquility and intrinsically dark character of the area.

Val Robson

Building Conservation Officer