

Keep the Wannies Wild
Fighting to protect our shared landscape

CORE DOCUMENT K.4.2

Planning appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/20/3244389

Cold Law, Stiddlehill Common, near Ridsdale, Ray Estate, Northumberland

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

Summary Planning Proof of Jean Jones MA BSc DipTP on behalf of 'Keep the Wannies Wild' (KTWW)

February 2021

1. The proposal is scattered with references to the Queen, the Commonwealth and local history but these cannot be secured through planning conditions. The Queen has not indicated approval of the scheme and symbolism related to Sir Charles Parsons is regarded as misguided by his family members. Looking objectively at the physical nature of the development will avoid being overcome by the weight of symbolism ascribed to it. Context is all-important and, whatever the quality of the detailed design, the brief has made it inappropriate for this location.
2. There would be harm to the key landscape qualities of this rural area. The development would, once and for all, destroy the sense of tranquillity, remoteness and openness that residents and visitors currently value and which contributes positively to the local economy and to people's well-being. That has been eloquently expressed in over 400 individually written representations. Compared to these the appellant's indications of support are limited, shallow and generalised. There can legitimately be different opinions on visual and aesthetic matters but it is clear that the arguments against the proposal are justified by strong evidence.
3. There is no reliable evidence that the scheme would benefit tourism or jobs and the appellant's supporting material is unconvincing. On the contrary there is reliable evidence from local business people that it would harm their existing tourist enterprises that rely on those seeking quiet outdoor recreation. If, surprisingly, it were successful in attracting large numbers of tourists then that in itself could cause problems in a rural area with no facilities.
4. Any ecological improvements are no more than would now be required for any planning application. It would not be sustainable in any of the economic, social or environmental terms used by NPPF.
5. The picture painted by the appellant might well not come to pass and planning conditions could not require most of the things that are promised - these have to be taken entirely on trust. He could enjoy the more distant view of it from his property, which is not even his main residence, while leaving a rusty 'spike' in a car park for the wider population to endure.
6. It is for the Inspector to make his own judgements after he has visited the site and surrounding area but we argue that the harm to landscape character and appearance is not outweighed by other matters and the refusal of planning permission is clearly justified. There are no material considerations outweighing this and the appeal should therefore be dismissed.