

**MINUTES OF THE
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday 23rd January, 2019 10:15 – 11:03

Northumberland National Park Authority Headquarters, Eastburn, Hexham, NE46 1BS

In the Chair: Cllr S Bolam, Development Management Committee Chairman

Present: Mr M Bell, Ms J Davidson, Cllr V Gibson, Cllr J Morrison-Bell, Ms P Ross and Cllr J Wilson

In attendance: Mrs S Buylla (Head of Development Management); Ms R Adams (Planning Officer), Ms Z Franks (Legal Advisor) and Mr T Gates (Chief Executive [National Park Officer])

PART ONE

Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Foster and A Murray.

DMC2019-01 Declarations of Interest: Cllr J Morrison-Bell declared an interest as Chairman of Tasset and Greystead Parish Council but assured the Chairman that he was attending the meeting with an open mind.

Amendment (2019.02.13) - Cllr J Foster asked for the minutes to note that she and Cllr A Murray did not attend the meeting due to a conflict of interest, both being Northumberland County Councillors and the applicant being Northumberland County Council. The Chairman agreed to the amendment.

DMC2019-02 Minutes of Previous Meeting: 12th December, 2018

It was proposed that the Minutes of 12th December, 2018 Development Management Committee meeting be approved and signed by the Development Management Committee Chairman.

Proposed by Ms J Davidson and seconded by Mr M Bell.

The Members who had attended the previous meeting voted to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December, 2018 and there being no further issues Members

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Development Management Committee meeting held on 12 th December, 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Development Management Committee Chairman.
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DMC2019-03
18NP0104

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Construction of replacement single storey flat roofed extension to western elevation to provide additional teaching space at Greenhaugh First School, Greenhaugh, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1LX

Planning Officer's Report

Ms R Adams, Planning Officer, introduced her report to the Committee, informing them that a second response had been received from the Ecologist who has no objections to the amended planning application, as presented.

The Planning Officer showed photographs of the rear of Greenhaugh First School and the area around the proposed development, including the adjacent site that has conditional planning permission for the construction of 1 no. detached two storey dwelling.

The Planning Officer summarised the objections received from members of the public and Tasset and Greystead Parish Council, and reviewed areas of concern, such as the materials used in construction, drainage and the absence of a disabled w/c.

Members were recommended to approve the application subject to the conditions set out in the Planning Officer's report.

Public Speaking

10:35 - The Chairman outlined the procedure for public speaking and invited Ms Tanja Smith (Agent) of Gradon Architecture to speak in support of the application. Ms Smith was accompanied by Mr M Elliott and Ms S Aviston (both Northumberland County Council) who would be happy to answer any questions.

Ms Smith addressed the Members and provided a background to the application that in her opinion will replace a poorly performing structure with a more energy efficient building as well as providing more space. Several meetings have been held with the school and the results of these meetings have been incorporated into the proposal before the committee today. Ms Smith also spoke of the cost constraints with this application and mentioned that the proposed flat roof would be a cheaper alternative to a pitched roof and would be coloured to mimic slate whilst the render would match the current stonework. They proposed to re-use the existing stonework on the conservatory and apply it to the plinth area.

The majority of the elements raised in the objections had been amended, for example, the drainage would be diverted as required and the colour of the rendering changed and therefore the siting of the extension would have a low visual impact.

10:40 – Cllr John Riddle thanked the Members and introduced himself as having been a Councillor in the Bellingham Ward for 30 years, and was here today to represent his electorate.

Whilst Cllr Riddle supports investment in schools, the site is a sensitive area for planning, being in the National Park. In his opinion the budget was adequate and Members should not be swayed on costs. There is a similar scheme to an approved planning application to a school near to Otterburn that has an identical design. The stone plinth was unacceptable and the extension should all be stone not render. It is a flat roof which is visually unacceptable in the National Park.

Cllr Riddle stated that Greenhaugh School is a nice building but the proposed development would be a carbuncle.

10:44

Questions of Fact

The Planning Officer was asked if a scheme had been put forward for a complete stone façade, and replied that the Authority had not received such a proposal.

A Member asked how much involvement had the Head Teacher and staff had in the design. The Planning Officer replied that she had spoken to the Head Teacher, but the Chair of Governors had written in to object.

A Member stated that he was aware of only minimal conversations with the Governors and members of staff and asked if there were any means to improve the visual impact of a very dull exterior, for example, pitched roof and stone up to the eaves.

Ms Aviston, School Capital & Organisation Manager, spoke of her experience in developing school extensions and that all factors had been taken into account. The palette of materials proposed are considered appropriate to this extension and are an improvement on the current conservatory. Ms Smith commented that the roof was pitched to 3° to avoid collision with the current solar panelling.

A Member questioned the effectiveness of solar panels on a westerly facing roof and if they would be more suitable for a pitched roof. The Member also questioned if there should be a site visit. A further question was raised whether the County Council would consider revisiting these plans and bringing these back to the Committee as a National Park addition of excellence.

The Chairman replied that the issue of the school not being involved in the planning design is not a planning issue and reminded members that, even though there are issues with the design of the proposal, we are here to consider the application before the Committee today.

Mrs S Buylla, Head of Development Management, commented that the Committee can grant conditional permission but the school can still have further discussions pursuant to the submission of a further application.

Members asked if they were able to approve the extension in principle but not this precise scheme. The Planning Officer explained that this was not the case and that if permission were to be granted, a further application would need to come forward.

A Member asked Ms Smith what considerations the County Council would take differently in the National Park opposed to those outside of the Park. Ms Smith replied that stonework removed would be utilised in the proposed extension, as well as the development being more energy efficient and robust than the current UPVC building. The rendering will complement the stonework and the roof will appear as slate from a distance. Ms Aviston commented that a site visit, followed by design work is carried out in line with budget setting. Initially the plan was to put an extension on the front of the school but the Head Teacher asked for the extension to be at the rear.

A question was raised that should this Committee reject this application would the County Council come back with an alternative design. Ms Aviston replied that at the time of submitting the application Bellingham Middle School was closing, therefore they would now need to determine pupil movement around the area.

The Chairman clarified that Bellingham Middle School had been earmarked as a school to close and more children would have been expected to attend Greenhaugh School. However, this is not considered relevant to considering the application today.

Debate

A Member stated that they personally did not like the design of the proposed development and in their opinion no consideration had been given for a school within the National Park, and questioned the benefit of replacing the conservatory without a great deal of additional space. They re-iterated that they would have preferred a better design from the County Council, more suited to a national park.

The Members discussed at length the design and its suitability for a national park, with some members unable to recommend the proposal. They also debated the use of conditions but were advised that the colour of render was attached to condition 4 and that the windows are UPVC as shown on the plans. Members accepted that the proposal was an improvement to the conservatory, but that was the only merit.

A Member discussed the issue of consistency and if we would have the same consideration for materials in other cases, such as housing. The Head of Development Management confirmed that render and timber extensions have been approved to stone residential buildings for example, which is considered acceptable especially where they are not visually prominent.

Members debated whether they could explore a condition for the building to be constructed of stone rather than render.

Members debated the conflict with the poor design within the National Park and this caused concern, being uncomfortable with supporting such a proposal.

Ms Z Franks, Legal Advisor reminded Members that they were to determine the application in line with the Development Plan and Local Planning Policy and other material planning conditions.

Proposal of, and vote on, the Motion

Ms J Davidson proposed the motion that was seconded by Ms P Ross and the Members voted 3 in favour and 3 in opposition, the Chairman used her casting vote to go with the Planning Officer's recommendation, and

RESOLVED to grant planning permission subject to the planning conditions and informatives in the Planning Officer's report.

Approved amendment (2019.02.13)

The Chairman proposed the motion to move the content of agenda item DMC 2019-006 (P) being moved into the public domain as an amendment to the approved minute of 23rd January, 2019.

Mr M Bell seconded the motion

The Members voted unanimously and

RESOLVED that the content of agenda item DMC 2019-006(P) be moved into the public domain as an amendment to the approved minute of 23rd January, 2019.

The Chairman referred to agenda item DMC2019-003 and thanked Members for their input in a difficult application.

The Members expressed their concern on the poor quality design from the local authority that demonstrated little regard for development being proposed in a national park. The Members thanked Ms R Adams (Planning Officer) for her excellent report.

Mr T Gates (Chief Executive [National Park Officer]) suggested Members could request that they gave him authority to write to the Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council expressing their concerns on the quality of recent applications and detailing Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 that places a duty on certain bodies, including local authorities, to have regard for the purposes for which National Parks are designated.

The Members asked that the letter be cc'd to the Leader of Northumberland County Council; Cllr John Riddle, Cabinet Member, Northumberland County Council.

Mr M Bell proposed the motion that was seconded by Ms P Ross.

The Members voted unanimously and

RESOLVED that the Chief Executive (National Park Officer) is authorised to write to the Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council and the letter cc'd to the Leader of Northumberland County Council and to Cllr John Riddle, Cabinet Member, Northumberland County Council to express concern regarding the quality of the developments being proposed in the National Park

DMC 2019-04 **URGENT BUSINESS:** There were no issues of urgent business

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members are invited to consider passing the following resolution:

“That under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Items DMC 2019-05(P) of the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act”.

Proposed by Cllr J Morrison-Bell and seconded by Cllr J Wilson, the Members voted unanimously and

RESOLVED to move into Part II of the meeting.