

PLANNING STATEMENT

HANGING STONES PROJECT

'THORN HOUSE'

DAVID ROSS FOUNDATION



Rural Solutions

PLANNING STATEMENT

LOCATION

THORN HOUSE, ROSEDALE

PROPOSAL

PROPOSED SCULPTURE (THORN HOUSE)

APPLICANT

DAVID ROSS FOUNDATION

ISSUE DATE

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I. INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

- 1.1: This planning statement has been prepared by Rural Solutions Ltd on behalf of the David Ross Foundation ('the applicant') in support of an outline planning application for a proposed sculpture on land to the north east of New Road, Rosedale Abbey (see Figure 2.1 – Site Location at Page 9).
- 1.2: The proposal is one of ten interconnected pieces of art which together make up the Hanging Stones Project, an ongoing venture by artist and sculptor Andy Goldsworthy OBE, of which 4no. sculptures are already complete and a further 1no. sculpture has planning permission.
- 1.3: Once complete, the Hanging Stones Project will be a world-class sculpture walk comprising of ten sculptures located across the valley of Northdale in the North York Moors National Park. The Project is first and foremost designed for the purposes of public enjoyment.
- 1.4: The works, as shown in Figure 1.1, will be connected by a six-mile walk, which will take in the beautiful and enchanting scenery the Northdale valley has to offer. The walk itself and landscape encountered between the sculptures is intended to form as much a part of the artwork as the sculptures themselves.
- 1.5: The proposals are a joint venture between the applicant, owners of the Rosedale Estate, and Goldsworthy, a highly acclaimed British sculptor known for creating site-specific and landscape inspired sculptures around the world.
- 1.6: Art and culture are a fundamental element of adding value to landscapes. The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') recognises that cultural well-being has a role to play in the planning system and the Hanging Stones Project, once complete, will provide a unique asset of international importance, providing a high quality attraction for locals and visitors to the National Park.
- 1.7: Inspiration for the Project has been taken from the rich agricultural history of the Northdale valley, including its strong iron mining past, which formed Rosedale Abbey (being the nearest village to Northdale) into the place it is today.
- 1.8: The chosen sites are a fundamental part of Goldsworthy's overall vision for the Hanging Stones Project, with each site and proposal arising from years' worth of research and dialogue between Goldsworthy and the Rosedale landscape.
- 1.9: A total of five planning applications, relating to five different sculpture sites, are submitted for the North York Moors National Park Authority's ('NYMNP' or 'the Authority') consideration. They follow the approval of 2no. applications in 2015 and 3no. applications in 2017, all relating to similar sculpture proposals. Whilst works are still underway to implement some of these consents, the

completed sculptures (Hanging Stone House, Hither House, Job's Well and Redwall) have to date been highly praised by visitors¹.

- 1.10: This application, along with the accompanying applications, forms the final step in realising the full and necessary potential of the Hanging Stones Project. It is essential that **all** of the vitally connected art forms are provided in order for the **whole** scheme to come together and provide the public benefits this statement will go on to detail.

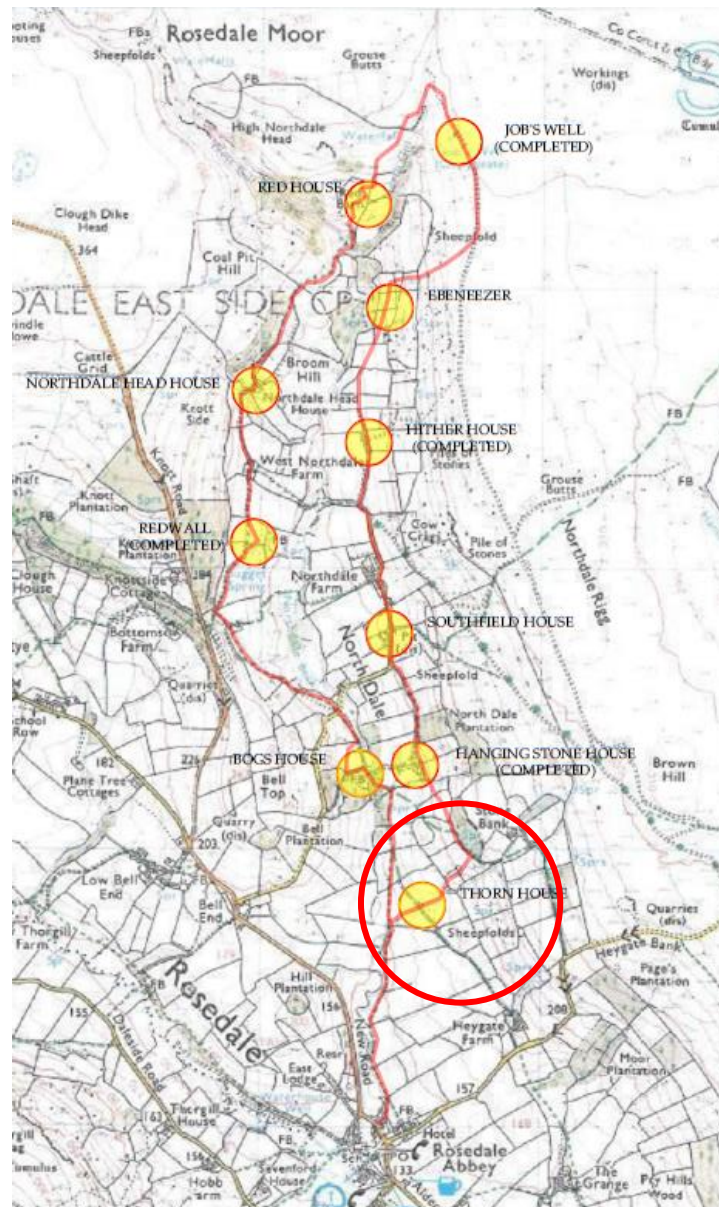


Figure 1.1 – Hanging Stones Project – Full Route showing location of ‘Thorn House’

¹ Members of the NYMNP committee visited the completed ‘Hanging Stone House’ in March 2019.

STRUCTURE OF THE STATEMENT

- 1.11: Section 2 of this statement provides details on the site of the proposed Thorn House sculpture, along with a description of the sites surroundings and sets the scene for the policy assessment to follow.
- 1.12: Section 3 provides information on the sites planning history, including pre-application engagement with members of the public, the National Park Authority and other stakeholders.
- 1.13: Details of the proposed development are outlined in Section 4.
- 1.14: Section 5 assesses the key planning issues relating to the application, including a review of relevant local and national planning policy. This section includes an assessment of the national and local planning policy issues most relevant to the proposed development.
- 1.15: Finally, Section 6 presents the conclusions to the statement and summarises the public benefits of the Hanging Stones project which weigh in favour of the application.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

THE SITE

- 2.1: The site for the proposed Thorn House sculpture sits to the north east of New Road, and is accessed via a nearby public right of way (NYCC Ref: 25.130/052).



Figure 2.1 – Site Location

- 2.2: Thorn House will provide the first stopping point on the Hanging Stones walk and is located only 1km from the start of the walk in Rosedale Abbey.
- 2.3: The site comprises the ruins of an agricultural building which first appears on historical maps at some point during the early-20th century. An extract of the 1930 map can be seen at Figure 2.2 below.

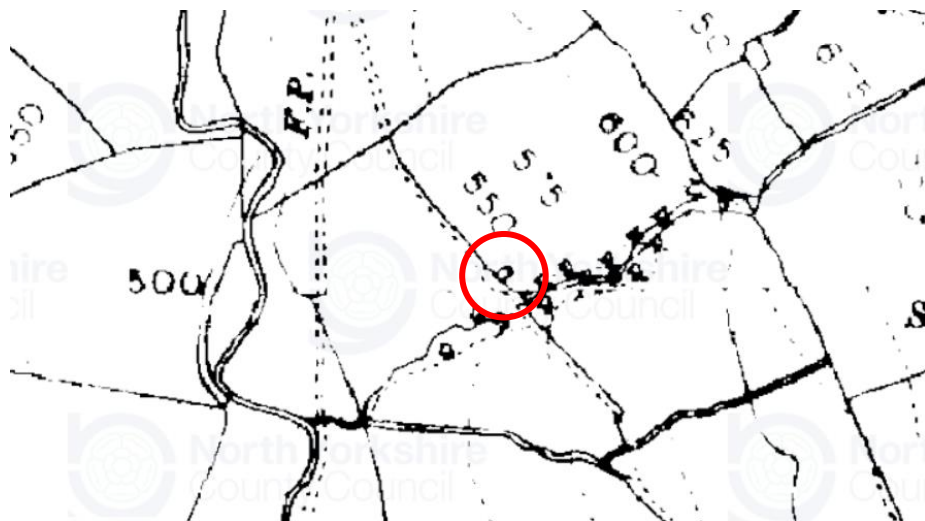


Figure 2.2 – Extract from NYCC 1930-1954 Historical Map showing location of Thorn House

- 2.4: The site comprises the remains of the building, which comprises partially collapsed walls and a collapsed corrugated steel roof. The ruin is largely hidden within trees and undergrowth which have taken over the site and most likely caused the collapse of the building (see images at Figure 2.3 below).



Figure 2.3 – Images of the Thorn House site

- 2.5: Owing to the existing undergrowth covering the site, the building is largely screened from the surrounding landscape and is only visible on approach and from short-distance views.
- 2.6: The proposal will see the re-building of the structure to provide a small-scale building on the same footprint as the existing structure. Full details of the proposals are provided in Section 4 of this report.
- 2.7: The sculpture to be located on the site will be reflective of all the other sculptures around the walk and comprising the Hanging Stones project and will be small-scale and of agricultural appearance. Importantly, the proposal will not conflict with the purposes of including land within the National Park (paragraph 172 of the NPPF). This is considered further in the appraisal contained at Section 5.
- 2.8: The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding). There are no statutory designated nature conservation sites within the red line, which currently comprises the ruins of a historical unmarked building.
- 2.9: There is no nearby Conservation Area (the nearest being Rosedale Abbey, 1.2km to the south). The nearest listed structures are located over 1km away in Rosedale Abbey. None of these listed structures or their setting is impacted by the proposed development. There are no other structures or buildings within the vicinity of the site.
- 2.10: As detailed later in this statement, the proposed development is designed to reflect the sensitivities of this location. Careful attention to detail has been taken to ensure that the proposal is of a scale, design and appearance which is wholly appropriate to the National Park landscape and this specific location.

3. PLANNING HISTORY AND CONSULTATION

PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1: The site of the current Thorn House proposal has not been the subject of any historic planning applications. The site has only recently been added to the Hanging Stones Project as the project has evolved and developed.

PLANNING HISTORY OF THE HANGING STONES PROJECT

- 3.2: As referenced earlier in this report, the Thorn House proposal forms part of the wider Hanging Stones Project. Following the Authority's earlier grant of planning permission, 4no. of the Project's sculptures are now complete (Hanging Stone House, Hither House, Job's Well and Redwall) (see Figure 3.1 below), with a further 1no. sculpture (Southfield House) benefiting from an extant planning consent.



Figure 3.1 – Completed/Approved Sculptures comprising the Hanging Stones Project to date

- 3.3: In approving these sculptures, the Authority considered the proposals to be *'beneficial'*, *'that the proposal has a public benefit (i.e. Public access)'* and that the proposals would *'be in accordance with the Management Plan objectives'*.
- 3.4: The Authority also considered that through the use of local vernacular design and materials, the proposals would not be out of character in the landscape or visually prominent.
- 3.5: Notably, in their consideration of 'Redwall' the Authority did not apply Development Policy 8 given the proposal related to a new building on a site where there historically had not been any built development.

- 3.6: The Authority acknowledged that the small-scale nature of the building, local vernacular design and use of traditional materials meant the building (of traditional agricultural appearance) was not out of character in the landscape or visually prominent. In approving the application, the Authority further acknowledged the public benefit the proposal would bring, along with its accordance with Management Plan objectives.
- 3.7: The Authority's positive determination of Redwall is particularly relevant to this current proposal, which similarly does not involve the conversion of existing building of substantial build.
- 3.8: The public benefits of the current proposals are substantial and to this end should be recognised by the Authority in their forthcoming consideration of this and accompanying application(s). The proposals accord with Management Plan objectives which seek to promote public access to the countryside and comprise sustainable development, as this statement goes on to demonstrate.

CONSULTATION

- 3.9: Since the grant of the previous the applications and withdrawal of 4no. others (relating to Bogs House, Ebenezer, Red House and Northdale Head House²), the vision for the entire Hanging Stones Project has been significantly advanced and as a result, the Thorn House proposal has been created by Goldsworthy.
- 3.10: A dedicated website, www.hangingstones.org, has been developed by Goldsworthy and his team to provide valuable insight into the artistic vision for the Project. It provides details on the completed sites, the walk itself (and proposed management) and the proposals for the sites currently subject to planning applications.
- 3.11: The website details how the proposals put forward as part of this current package of applications are the final step in realising the **full** potential of the Hanging Stones Project. Their delivery is **essential** in order for the artist's vision to be complete and for the full benefits of the scheme to be realised.
- 3.12: Participation and input from the local community is a key component of arts and culture planning³. As such various consultation activities have been undertaken to promote the benefits of the proposals.
- 3.13: A public meeting was undertaken in July 2018 whereby the artist, Andy Goldsworthy, presented his vision for the walk to the local Rosedale Abbey community. This event was advertised on the Rosedale Abbey website and was well-attended by locals.
- 3.14: The talk centred not only around the completed works and works which were underway at the time, but also around the current proposals and what they would add to the Hanging Stones Project.

² See accompanying planning applications.

³ Arts and Culture Planning: A Toolkit for Communities, CMAP (2010)

- 3.15: The results of this meeting were incredibly positive, with high levels of local support for the proposals, including recognition of the benefits they could bring through a sensitive and controlled increase in visitors to the local area.
- 3.16: It was welcomed that access to the buildings themselves would be restricted and access would be granted only via a key, available through the David Ross Foundation from a local pick-up points within the village. It was appreciated that this mitigation measure would assist in limiting the potential impacts walkers could have on the surrounding landscape.
- 3.17: Prior to the submission of the current applications, key stakeholders and organisations were also identified and contacted with regards to the proposals/upcoming submissions.
- 3.18: The persons contacted were chosen as a representative range of people and organisations with an interest or stake in arts and culture within the National Park and with an interest in the local area. These included:
- Local Parish Council;
 - Local Ramblers Associations;
 - Welcome to Yorkshire;
 - North York Moors National Park Trust;
 - Yorkshire Sculpture Park;
 - Head of Economy and Housing (Ryedale District Council);
 - Head of Promotion and Tourism (North Yorkshire Moors National Park Authority);
 - York, North Yorkshire & East Riding LEP;
 - Ryedale Folk Museum; and
 - North Yorkshire Moors Association.
- 3.19: The dedicated website has also assisted the pre-application consultation process, providing further details and background information on the proposals to those who visit. This website will act as a booking facility for members of the public once the Project is complete in its entirety.
- 3.20: No comments or responses from this stakeholder consultation have yet been received, although it is intended to undertake interviews with these stakeholders over the course of the application. This will enable valuable insight into the proposals from the arts and culture communities, landscape organisations and advisors
- 3.21: It is also the applicant's intention to undertake another public meeting in Rosedale Abbey following the submission of the applications, to update the local community on the progress with the proposals and engage with them on the most recent submissions. Dates and details for this meeting will be confirmed following validation of the current applications.
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4. THORN HOUSE

- 4.1: The proposed site for the Thorn House sculpture forms the historic site of a small unmarked agricultural building. As outlined in Section 2 of this report, this structure is thought to have been in situ until the late-20th century, when it is thought to have fallen into dis-use and subsequent disrepair.
- 4.2: Whilst the remains of the building to some elevations are substantial (i.e. full height walls) the proposal would result in the majority of the structure being re-built. The proposed new structure would however be constructed on top of the old walls, re-using as much of the existing stone as possible.
- 4.3: As already mentioned in this report, the proposal for Thorn House has only recently come to full fruition following various visits to the Northdale Valley by the artist, most recently during the 2018/2019 winter season.
- 4.4: The existing building is very evidently entangled by established trees and undergrowth, and it is the Blackthorn trees which engulf the site which have in particular inspired the artists vision for Thorn House.
- 4.5: The connection to the thorn is important for this sculpture and the wealth of natural thorns encompassing the building, owing to the Blackthorn trees, has provided impetus to the proposal.
- 4.6: Andy Goldsworthy has a long history of working with thorns and has long used them within his sculptures alongside leaves, stalks, grasses and wool. Past works of his have however employed the thorn as you might a nail or pin; the Thorn House proposal by contrast is about the thorn itself.
- 4.7: The artist's vision revolves around thorns being 'at the sharp end of nature'; being a natural feature you might meet when you get up close or step off of the track. They provide the perfect counterpoint to the notion of the land being soft, benign, gentle, welcoming, romantic or pastoral. The use of thorns in Andy's work has always given an underlying sense of confrontation, tension, threat and menace. The Thorn House proposal explicitly draws these qualities to the surface.
- 4.8: Along with the re-building of the now derelict structure, the sculpture would involve the entirety of the back internal wall of the building being densely covered with thorns (see Figure 4.1 below).

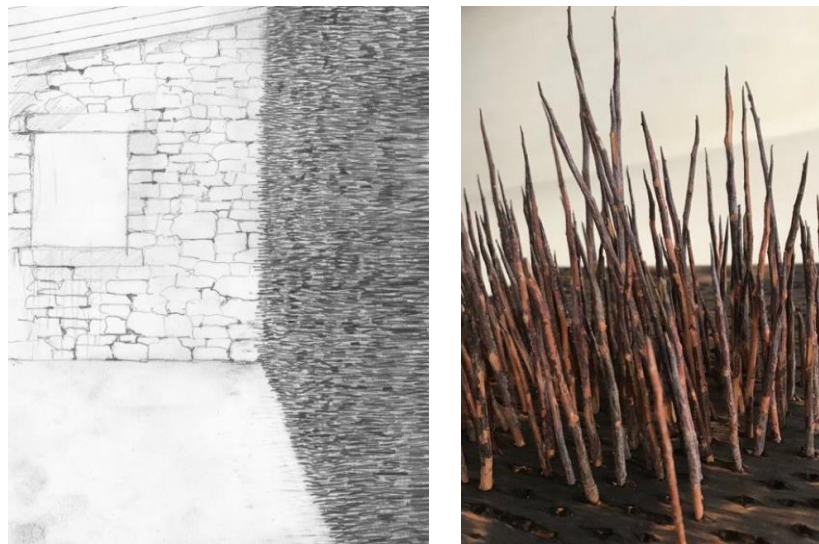
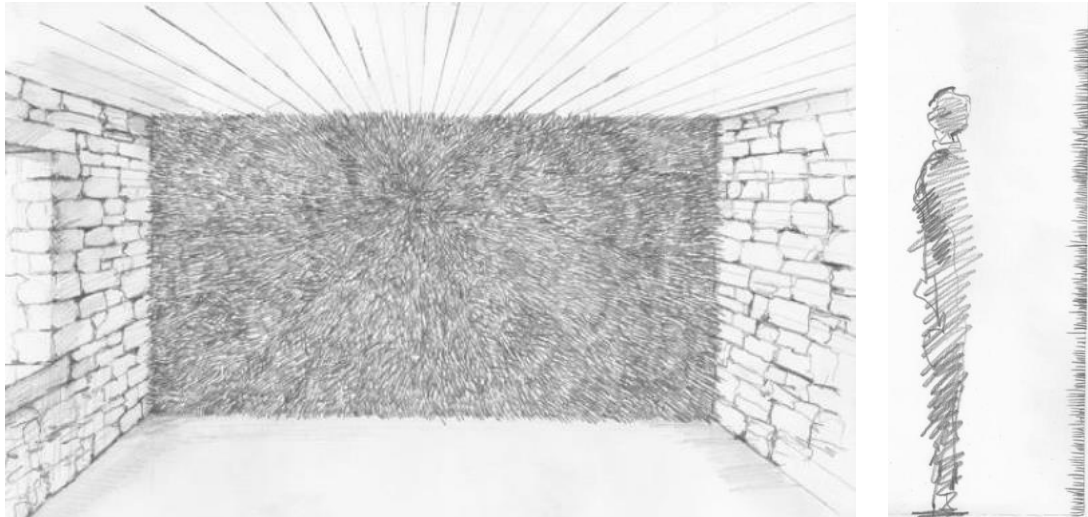


Figure 4.1 – Sketches of the Thorn Wall

- 4.9: This wall would be met by visitors face on as they enter the building, through a central door in the south eastern elevation. The intention is to create a somewhat gloomy interior, through the use of either a single skylight or wall window that would rake light across the thorns. No artificial light will be present within the building and no electricity/power provided to the site.
- 4.10: The current application seeks approval for the principle of a structure on this site, replacing the existing building. The full detail of the building, including materials and height and number of external openings will be confirmed through later submissions, albeit the building will be of a small-scale and sensitive to its surrounding landscape setting. Indeed its scale is constrained by the extent of the existing footprint and will seek only to re-establish a traditional rural building on a site where one once stood.
- 4.11: It is intended to protect as many of the existing blackthorn trees as possible during the reconstruction of the building, so that on completion the building

remains hidden and the connection between the inside and outside thorns is maintained.

- 4.12: The building would be sympathetically designed, utilising local building materials for both the walls and roof. It would be reflective of the other sculptures already provided around the walk (see Page 11, Figure 3.1): Hanging Stones House, Hither House, Job's Well and Redwall, the latter of which (Redwall) being the only building on the walk to be constructed on a site not already featuring an existing building or ruin. It is intended that the building will re-use as much of the existing stone on the site as possible and will be viewed as a very small-scale agricultural building only, similar to many other agricultural buildings that feature across the Northdale valley.
- 4.13: Section 5 of this report considers views of the structure in greater detail, along with its considered impact on the surrounding landscape setting.

5. PLANNING APPRAISAL INCLUDING PLANNING POLICY AND LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

POLICY CONTEXT

5.1: Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY

5.2: The statutory development plan is made up of:

- The North York Moors Core Strategy and Development Policies document adopted November 2008.

5.3: There are also a number of other supporting documents (Supplementary Planning Documents); this includes the Design Guide (adopted June 2008).

5.4: The new Local Plan (the North York Moors National Park Local Plan 2016-35) is currently in the process of being produced. At the moment the plan is at stage 4 of a 5 stage process, with consultation on the pre-submission draft commencing in April 2019. At present, the adoption of the plan is timetabled for the end of 2019. As such, the policies in the emerging plan carry little weight in the determination process for the planning applications at present.

5.5: There are no neighbourhood plans which cover the application area or any adjoining area.

5.6: The Local Planning Policies relevant to this application are set out in the adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies Document and include those listed below:

- Core Policy A – Delivering National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development;
- Core Policy C – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy G – Landscape, Design and Historic Assets;
- Development Policy 1 – Environmental Protection;
- Development Policy 3 – Design;
- Development Policy 14 – Tourism and Recreation; and
- Development Policy 23 – New Development and Transport.

BACKGROUND TO POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 5.7: It is of note that in the Authority's consideration of the previous 2017 proposals for development of similar sites to Thorn House for other sculptures on the Hanging Stones Project walk, Development Policy 8 (Conversion of Traditional Unlisted Rural Buildings) was considered to be applicable to the extent whereby it was considered justification for refusal of the applications.
- 5.8: As previously stated, the Thorn House site itself has not previously been considered for development, although the format of the proposals are very similar to those which the Authority have previously been minded to refuse.
- 5.9: To this end, it is pertinent to consider whether Development Policy 8 (used as a reason for refusal for similar proposals to the Thorn House proposal) is applicable to the current application.
- 5.10: In considering whether Development Policy 8 is applicable, it is pertinent to consider the precise wording of the policy, which states:
- Outside the settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy, the **conversion** of traditional unlisted rural buildings for an **employment use, short term self catering holiday accommodation, residential annexe to an adjacent existing dwelling or long-term/permanent residential letting units for local occupancy** will be permitted where...
- 5.11: The current development proposals, as outlined in previous sections of this planning statement, do **not** comprise the conversion of an existing rural building. The building has historically collapsed and only comprises the partial remains of the walls.
- 5.12: Further, the use class of the building forming the sculpture and housing the artwork will be Sui Generis, it does not fall within an employment use, holiday accommodation use or any of the residential uses outlined within Development Policy 8.
- 5.13: To this end, the proposals do not relate to a form of development to which Development Policy 8 covers. The development plan does not in-fact include any policies which relate specifically to outdoor sculpture or public art. National policies are also silent in relation to this subject area (although relevant in so far as they relate to good design and supporting the rural economy).
- 5.14: In light of the above considerations, Development Policy 8 is wholly irrelevant to the current proposal and so cannot be applied by the Authority in their determination of the application.
- 5.15: Consideration of the proposals must therefore weigh on the benefits they will bring to the tourism and recreational aims of the National Park and their accordance with other policies included within the development plan (such as design policies).
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POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 5.16: Core Policy A of the development plan sets out an overarching approach which is relevant to all proposals in the Park, seeking to further the National Park purposes and duty by encouraging a more sustainable future for the Park and its communities, whilst conserving and enhancing the Park's special qualities.
- 5.17: The policy states that priority will be given to, *inter alia*, providing a scale of development and level of activity that will not have an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape; and strengthening and diversifying the rural economy and providing tourism based opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities.
- 5.18: The small-scale nature of the Thorn House proposal, as outlined in previous sections, is considered to be in accordance with Core Policy A. The site lies within an agricultural field which is screened on all sides with mature trees and hedgerows. The site is additionally not located in an elevated position on the eastern valley side and views of the site from the surrounding landscape are limited.
- 5.19: The proposal will form the first stop in the Hanging Stones walk and therefore plays an important role in the overall project. The structure will be of a small-scale overall and will not have an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape; it will be largely hidden from surrounding views by existing mature trees.
- 5.20: The proposal, along with the Hanging Stones Project as a whole represents an exceptional opportunity to provide for arts and culture within the National Park and provide a sensitive tourist attraction which is routed in providing visitors with an understanding and enjoyment of the Rosedale landscape and artworks themselves. It is therefore considered that the proposal fully accords with Core Policy A by delivering the National Park Purposes and comprising sustainable development.
- 5.21: Core Policy G sets out that the landscape, historic assets and cultural heritage of the North York Moors will be conserved and enhanced. High quality sustainable design will be sought which conserves or enhances the landscape setting, settlement layout and building characteristics of the landscape character areas.
- 5.22: The landscape, historic and cultural assets of the North York Moors are an integral part of its special qualities, and it is for this reason that they have formed the foundation for the Hanging Stones project and have been considered at every step of the development process to date.
- 5.23: As this section of the planning statement goes on to demonstrate, following a baseline landscape assessment into the landscape character covering the site, it is considered that the proposals have a minimal impact on the quality of the landscape, which, whilst highly sensitive to change, is characterised by dispersed small-scale development. In conjunction with the benefits of the proposals
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(including their contribution to the National Park objective) the proposals are considered to be in full accordance with Core Policy G (Landscape, Design and Historic Assets).

- 5.24: In order to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the North York Moors National Park, Development Policy I (Environmental Protection) seeks to ensure that development proposals will not have an adverse impact on the environment, including amenity and land stability.
- 5.25: In order to consider the effects of the proposed development on the surrounding area, it is pertinent to consider the surrounding public footpath network and the proposed route for the Hanging Stones walk as a whole (see Figure 1.1, page 7).
- 5.26: A series of public rights of way are already in place to make up a large part of the proposed Hanging Stones Project walk and connect most of the sites. An Ecology Assessment was however undertaken by MAB Ecology in August 2017 to consider the effects of the additional proposed paths which would connect the sculptures and which do not already comprise existing public rights of way⁴. The report confirms that the proposed pathway will have no significant impact on habitats, amphibians or reptiles.
- 5.27: As outlined in the previous section to this report, the sculptures comprising the Hanging Stones Project are all access by keys.
- 5.28: This controlled access will have the effect of limiting the number of walkers and visitors at any one time along the route, therefore managing the effect of the Project on the surrounding environment and Moorland itself. Whilst the number of walkers on the public footpath network can not be controlled, only those with a key to the sculptures will be permitted to walk the permissive routes provided by the Estate. This measure has been devised by Goldsworthy and the applicant to protect the important surrounding environment and avoid the negative impacts large numbers of walkers sometimes bring (e.g. erosion, litter & parking issues).
- 5.29: The permissive paths have been agreed with the Park Authority (in correspondence with Officers) as appropriate, and the proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Development Policy I.
- 5.30: Development Policy 3 (Design) sets out that development will be permitted where it is of high-quality design, including where it preserves views into and out of the site and reflects local vernacular.
- 5.31: The development of Thorn House, and indeed all of the connected sculpture proposals has been the subject of an iterative design process, which has seen the

⁴ These 'permissive' footpaths are being offered by the Rosedale Estate to contribute to the route and overall Project. The route of the walk, and scenery it takes in, is as much a part of the Project as the sculptures themselves.

artist, Andy Goldsworthy, develop the proposals over time with detailed consideration of local vernacular the valley's history.

- 5.32: The proposals will be constructed by hand using local materials and will be of a small-scale massing which is entirely appropriate within the surrounding landscape. The proposal does not seek to increase the footprint of the existing Thorn House ruin and instead seeks to reintroduce a now lost building, in turn contributing to the character and quality of the landscape.
- 5.33: The proposal will utilise good quality sustainable design and construction techniques. Whilst taking the form of a traditional agricultural building, the development is first and foremost a sculpture of exceptional design. The proposal is therefore considered to be in full accordance with Development Policy 3.
- 5.34: A key benefit of the proposal and other interconnected sculptures is the tourism and recreation draw that the Project will bring to the valley of Rosedale and indeed the National Park as a whole.
- 5.35: Development Policy 14 (Tourism and Recreation) sets out that new tourism development will be supported where the proposal will provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park in a way that conserves and enhances the special qualities.
- 5.36: The proposed development will provide a world leading, unique and exceptional tourism related attraction to the National Park. One of the key aims of the North York Moors National Park Management Plan (December 2016) is to provide people with opportunities to experience the leisure and recreation that the Park has to offer.
- 5.37: The key statutory purpose of National Parks, as set out in the 1995 Environment Act is to *"conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the park by the public"*.
- 5.38: The Management Plan additionally includes aspirations to increase visitors to the National Park, which will in turn result in increased income for the local economy. It goes on to state at paragraph 3.2 that *"given the potential benefits of a growth in visitors to the well-being of the public and to the local economy, it is proposed that the Authority should support and encourage growth, but only in so far as it does not negatively impact on the communities and special qualities of the area"*.
- 5.39: Policy C5 of the Management Plan also states that the interpretation of the landscape and cultural heritage of the North York Moors will be encouraged.
- 5.40: In accordance with the aims of Development Policy 14, the overarching purpose of the National Park and policies contained in the Management Plan, the proposed development of Thorn House and the Hanging Stones Project as a

whole will provide a significant benefit to the local tourism economy. The proposals are founded on a thorough understanding and assessment of the local landscape and cultural heritage, and should be supported on this basis.

- 5.41: In addition, the proposals will provide an exceptional educational resource and represent a once in a lifetime opportunity to introduce sensitive and internationally important sculptures into the landscape that will be enjoyed for many generations to come.
- 5.42: The proposals are therefore considered to be in full accordance with Development Policy 14, which states that new tourism development will be supported where it provides opportunities to increase awareness of the National Park.
- 5.43: The above assessment of local plan policies has demonstrated that the proposals would not impact on the landscape or aims of the National Park in a negative way. The proposals will instead bring substantial benefits to the National Park which outweigh the negligible disadvantages of providing a new small-scale building within the protected landscape.
- 5.44: The following assessment goes on to examine the surrounding landscape in accordance with local guidance and further highlights that localised impact from the proposal on the surrounding area is minimal.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

- 5.45: To determine whether or not the landscape will be able to successfully accommodate the development, this section of the report will establish the nature of the potential change anticipated, establish the landscape baseline, in terms of its character, condition and current land use and assess the impacts and significance effects of the potential change against the sensitivity of the landscape.
- 5.46: The region within which the site falls is classified in the 'Character of England Map', as defined by Natural England, as falling within landscape character area 25: North York Moors and Cleveland Hills. The key characteristics typical of this landscape area include (inter alia):
- *Upland plateaux, generally below 400m, dissected by a series of dales – some broad and sweeping but others narrow, steep sided and wooded – creating strong contrasts between open moors and enclosed valleys;*
 - *Extensive areas of heather moorland on plateaux and hills, largely under sporting ownership, including large expanses of upland heathland and blanket bog habitats, creating a sense of space, expansiveness and openness;*
 - *Valley landscapes characterised by pastoral farming, with a clear demarcation and strong visual contrast between the enclosed fields and some species-rich grasslands and wetlands, farms and settlements, and the bracken-fringed moorlands above;*

- *Drystone walls and hedgerows enclosing the small pastures and meadows in dales and fringing farmland, often replaced by fences in arable areas;*
- *Sparsely settled, with scattered farmsteads and small villages, and traditional buildings constructed of local sandstone or limestone and with red pantile roofs, creating a strong visual unity; and*
- *A rich archaeological heritage from many different periods, especially on the moorland plateaux.*

5.47: At a county level, the North Yorkshire County Council Landscape Characterisation Project, written by Chris Blandford Associates in 2011, provides an overarching assessment of the country's landscape consolidating the existing district landscape character assessments and providing "*consistent and integrated County-wide picture which will help to raise awareness of local distinctiveness, issues and strategic initiatives at a landscape scale*" (Chris Blandford Associates).

5.48: At the county scale, the landscape surrounding the site is categorised according to county character types. The landscape at and surrounding the site lies within landscape character type 10, Narrow Upland Dale, which is characterised by (inter alia):

- *Distinctive cultural landscape with the remains of abbeys and granges and a legacy of sheep grazing, monastic routeways and medieval settlements;*
- *Sparsely settled and inaccessible valleys with a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity;*
- *Visual unity within settlements and sense of harmony with the surrounding landscape resulting from the use of local building materials;*
- *Industrial legacy from the mining of iron ore within the Dales, particularly in Rosedale; and;*
- *Strong pattern of stone walls and hedgerows.*

5.49: At a district level, the North York Moors National Park Landscape Character Assessment, prepared by WYG in 2004 identifies landscape types and areas, their characteristics and attributes and potentially damaging and beneficial measures.

5.50: The landscape of the National Park which washes over the site lies within the type 2, Narrow Moorland Dale, landscape character type. Within this character type, eleven distinct character areas have been identified. The landscape at the Thorn House site lies within landscape character type 2e, Rosedale, which is characterised by (inter alia):

- *Deep u-shaped valley, with narrow valley floor, smoothly sloping lower valley sides and steep upper valley sides, underlain by soft Lias mudstones and Cleveland ironstone with thin limestone beds. Valley narrows in its lower reaches, where it becomes more v-shaped and completely enclosed by surrounding moorland to the west and Cropton Forest to the east;*
 - *The dale is settled by small traditional farms, with occasional modern outbuildings, marked by groups of trees, and houses of stone and red pantile*
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or frequently sate roofs evenly spaced along the spring line at the mid valley side. Small distinctive hamlets of nineteenth century terraced miners cottages are a feature of the dale. Chapels are a roadside feature; and

- *Ironstone mining has left Rosedale with a legacy of industrial features, including the line of the ironstone railway, visible as a scar on the upper eastern valley side and the massive calcining kilns visible as a series of tall masonry arches in the same area. The workings have left a despoiled appearance in many areas, which is reduced where they are starting to green over.*

- 5.51: The high scenic value of all the above-mentioned landscapes results in a high level of sensitivity to change. Likewise, the condition and value of all landscapes within the National Park is considered to be exceptional.
- 5.52: Notably, all of the identified landscape character areas covering the site are similar and make note of the rich history which shaped the valleys. It is not uncommon for agricultural buildings, or even modern buildings, to be located within the landscape.
- 5.53: Despite the landscapes high level of sensitivity to change, we consider there is scope for positive yet sensitive enhancement and improvement of this landscape, drawing on its agricultural and industrial past and some of the industrial features which are identified as a legacy of the landscape. Importantly, the sensitivity of the landscape does not render all development, especially development with significant public benefit, inappropriate.
- 5.54: The characterisation of the landscape surrounding the site notes in all instances the strong industrial past which is a feature of the valleys and the historical legacy of the ironstone mining formally undertaken in Rosedale. The introduction of the Hanging Stones Project builds on the rich history and adds value to the landscape by re-establishing lost traditional rural buildings and providing high-quality artwork and cultural development that draws on and provides an interpretation of the landscapes agricultural and industrial legacy.
- 5.55: Thorn House is located in a relatively low position on the eastern valley side, with views of the site being limited owing to the surrounding mature field boundaries and the trees covering the site itself. The introduction of a small-scale building in this location would not look alien within the valley, where there are already many agricultural buildings present.
- 5.56: The resultant magnitude of change resulting from small-scale development on the site is therefore determined to be negligible. Whilst there will be a minor change to some close distance views, the footprint, massing and scale of the proposed building is very small and indiscernible within the wider landscape. The retention of existing mature trees around the site, intended to encompass the site and hide it from view, will further assist in amalgamating the development into the landscape.
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- 5.57: The building will use traditional local materials and only be viewed in the context of the valley's other small-scale agricultural buildings which are dispersed throughout the surrounding valley landscape.
- 5.58: The building is first and foremost to be viewed as a sculpture within the landscape and the benefits derived from this will far outweigh the low-level impact the introduction of the building will have on the landscape.
- 5.59: Following a review of baseline information together with consideration of likely landscape and visual effects, it is considered that the proposed site for the sculpture and indeed the surrounding landscape has the capacity to accommodate a small development such as the small sculpture proposed.
- 5.60: The impact of the small-scale and largely screened proposal on the designated landscape will be negligible. Further, the dispersed nature of the proposals as a whole (with each site being considerably separated from one another) will result in a negligible level of harm on the overall landscape character.
- 5.61: The proposals are therefore considered to be entirely acceptable from a landscape perspective and in consideration with the benefits they will bring to the arts, culture and local tourism communities, should be supported by the Authority.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 5.62: National Planning Policy is set out in the NPPF and paragraphs 8, 11, 38, 83, 84, 92, 98, 124, 170, 172 and 174 are particularly relevant.
- 5.63: Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three overarching objectives of national planning policy, which are an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective (collectively and interdependently achieving sustainable development). The social objective specifically references the need to foster a well-designed and safe built environment and reflects current and future cultural well-being.
- 5.64: Paragraph 11 goes on to set out that where there are no relevant development plan policies, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or where policies to protect assets of importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development.
- 5.65: As already outlined in this report, the local development plan is silent on the development of sculptures and art/cultural installations in the National Park. As this statement demonstrates, the development does not create an undue impact on the protected National Park and there are therefore no clear reasons why permission should not be granted. The economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposals outweigh any negligible harm experienced through the introduction of a small-scale structure within the landscape. In accordance with

paragraph 11 and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the proposals should therefore be approved without delay.

5.66: Paragraph 83 advises that planning decisions should enable

The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses and **sustainable rural tourism and leisure development which respect the character of the countryside.**

5.67: Paragraph 84 actively recognises that sites to meet local business and community needs in a rural area may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements.

5.68: The proposals represent a unique opportunity to introduce sustainable rural tourism into the Northdale Valley. The proposals fully respect the character of the countryside and will help the National Park in meeting their objectives to increase awareness of the landscape and attract more visitors to the Park. Paragraphs 83 and 84 of the NPPF are therefore supportive of the proposals.

5.69: Paragraph 92 of the NPPF sets out that decisions should provide for recreational and cultural facilities to serve the needs of communities and promote cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

5.70: Paragraph 98 goes on to set out that decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access.

5.71: The proposals will assist in increasing public access to the countryside, in turn having a positive impact on the cultural well-being of visitors and locals as well as health through promoting physical activity. The proposals additionally provide an excellent educational resource which will serve the needs of the community. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with paragraphs 92 and 98 of the NPPF.

5.72: Section 12 of the NPPF and most notably paragraph 124 sets out that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and the design quality of the current proposals is exceptionally high. This quality was recognised by members of the Park Authority upon their visit to 'Hanging Stone House' in March 2019, where the quality of the building design itself and quality of workmanship was highly praised.

5.73: Paragraph 170 sets out that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

5.74: Paragraph 172 goes on to state that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the

highest status of protection in relation to these issues. To this end, the scale and extent of development within designated areas should be limited and planning permission should be refused for **major** development other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

- 5.75: The proposed development of Thorn House and indeed the connected schemes can not be considered major. The proposals are interspersed throughout the landscape and of a very small-scale. The proposals do not seek to provide for buildings of a greater footprint other than what was once present on the site.
- 5.76: The proposals will contribute to the landscape through helping to provide an understanding of the character and beauty of the countryside, increasing access to the Northdale valley whilst also limiting the amount of access at any one time to minimise impact on the protected landscape.
- 5.77: The proposals conserve the value of the landscape and contribute to the objectives of National Parks. There are no significant adverse impacts of the proposals on the designated area and the benefits to the National Park are exceptional. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the provisions of paragraphs 172 and 174 of the NPPF.

EMERGING LOCAL PLAN POLICY

- 5.78: Whilst the North York Moors National Park Local Plan 2016 to 2035 is still currently under preparation, it is considered pertinent to look at the direction of travel of these emerging strategies and policy. The latest stage of the plan, consultation on the pre-submission draft, commenced in April 2019.
- 5.79: The Vision of the North York Moors in 2035 is of:
- A place where visitors are welcome and cultural and recreational opportunities and experiences are accessible; and
 - A place that continues to adapt to change whilst National Park purposes continue to be further and pursued.
- 5.80: The Draft Plan acknowledges at paragraph 2.24 that there are strong artistic traditions in the North York Moors, and that the moors continue to inspire modern art in the landscape (something the proposals seek to build on).
- 5.81: The pre-submission draft also notes that there will be a 'strong and varied local economy based on farming, forestry, land management, tourism and other rural enterprises. There will be a focus on:
- Small scale recreational and cultural opportunities and different types of accommodation for visitors. **Recreation and tourism development will strengthen the special qualities for the National Park and the recreational/tourism experiences associated with them.**

- 5.82: Draft Strategic Policy J (Sustainable Tourism and Recreational Development) sets out that proposals for tourism and recreational development will be permitted where they conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Park, where it does not lead to harm and where it provides opportunities for people to increase awareness and understanding of the Park.
- 5.83: As already outlined above in the assessment of Development Policy 14, the proposals will not lead to any perceivable harm on the landscape and represent a unique opportunity for sensitive tourism development in the National Park.
- 5.84: The proposal is therefore considered to meet with the requirements of Draft Strategic Policy J and should be supported by the Authority on this basis. Whilst still in draft, the emerging Local Plan has been the subject of various consultation events in the past and is anticipated to advance further during the course of the application. The policies contained therein are therefore considered to carry some weight, albeit little, weight in the determination of the application.

SUMMARY AND BENEFITS

- 5.85: In summary, it is considered the proposals accord with relevant development plan and national planning policy in relation to the provision of sustainable development and tourism related and cultural facilities that promote the understanding of the National Park.
- 5.86: The local development plan, and indeed national policy, is silent on the provision of arts and cultural development in the open countryside, but this is not to say that such installations should be resisted, especially when the benefits they can provide are so great.
- 5.87: The impact of the sculpture on the landscape would be negligible, with the proposed structure not being over-bearing or out of keeping with the landscape or other existing structures within the valley. The proposals are largely screened, wholly rural and will not create an urbanising impact on the landscape. The landscape itself is already home to other such man-made infrastructure, and the re-introduction of a new small-scale building on this site for the purposes of art is considered to be in keeping with the overarching character of the Rosedale landscape.
- 5.88: There are multiple public benefits arising from the proposals, all of which meet with National Park and the Management Plan objectives (see Section 6). The proposal is site-specific in its design and will attract people to visit the Northdale Valley, providing significant educational potential and providing for public enjoyment. Its isolated location is highly relevant to the interpretation of the artwork and the Hanging Stones Project as a whole and does not comprise sporadic or irregular development; it is part of an overarching artwork project to which it is a key component.

- 5.89: The proposals will additionally support the rural economy and bring economic benefits through visitors and increased local expenditure on goods and accommodation.
- 5.90: Consequently, it is respectfully requested that planning permission for the Thorn House sculpture proposal is approved without delay, in accordance with the National Park Management Plan and overarching objectives of the National Park to improve understanding and awareness of the landscape.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND PLANNING BALANCE

- 6.1: Both local and national planning policies seek to secure a prosperous rural economy and encourage sustainable economic growth providing that the proposed development is not determinantal to the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park and that sustainability benefits can be derived.
- 6.2: There will be no urbanising impact as a result of the proposal which is small-scale in its nature and will be indiscernible within the wider landscape. There have already been sculptures approved by the Authority which form part of the walk, and these high-quality structures are exceptional examples of what is trying to be achieved with the current proposals.
- 6.3: The site is located in a low position within the east of the Northdale valley and benefits from screening in the form of mature trees and field boundaries which will be retained as part of the proposal. Views of the building would be limited and short-distance only, seen in the context of the surrounding farming activities and agricultural buildings and not as a new-build within this protected landscape.
- 6.4: It is not intended that the structures will ever be used for any other purpose. The sculptures are permanent and not designed to be removed or replaced at a later date. To this end, the applicant would be agreeable to a condition on any consent to ensure the building is only used for the purposes of art and for no other purpose over its lifetime, should this be something the Authority would like to secure.
- 6.5: Social benefits of the proposals include:
- The introduction of art and culture into the local landscape, increasing public awareness of the arts and increasing understanding of the local landscape and cultural well-being;
 - The introduction of an educational resource, to be utilised by schools and/or other educational bodies studying the arts; and
 - Attraction of visitors to the National Park, increasing public awareness and enjoyment of the National Park landscape in accordance with management objectives.
- 6.6: Economic benefits of the proposals include:
- Potential for local employment opportunities through guided tours and management of the key-only system;
 - Increased local expenditure through the attraction of visitors to the local area, both on local goods and accommodation; and
 - Supporting the rural economy and the creation of sustainable rural tourism development in accordance with paragraph 83 of the NPPF.
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6.7: Environmental benefits of the proposals include:

- Wider access to the countryside and land, created through the opening up of existing private estate tracks as part of the walk, which would otherwise not form part of the public footpath network;
- Reduction in carbon-footprint through promoting physical activity;
- Provision of high-quality buildings based on local vernacular which will have an overall positive impact on the local environment; and
- Provision of educational benefits to visitors including a greater understanding of the North York Moors landscape, art and culture.

6.8: The application as submitted provides strong evidence that the proposal comprises sustainable development and that the proposal does not create any adverse impacts on landscape character and the scenic beauty of the National Park (Core Policies A, C & G and Development Policies 1, 3, 14 & 23).

6.9: There are no other material considerations which would prevent planning permission being granted.

6.10: It is vitally important that the Authority recognise that the planning system, along with investment from developers, can be a key way to add value to local culture and the arts community. Arts and culture are a nationally recognised way to bring people together and the contribution of the proposal to the arts community is something which should be afforded great weight in the determination of the application.

6.11: The applicant has a strong reputation and deep-rooted goals in encouraging young people and others to become interested in the arts. The educational benefits of the proposals alone should be viewed as exceptional by the Authority.

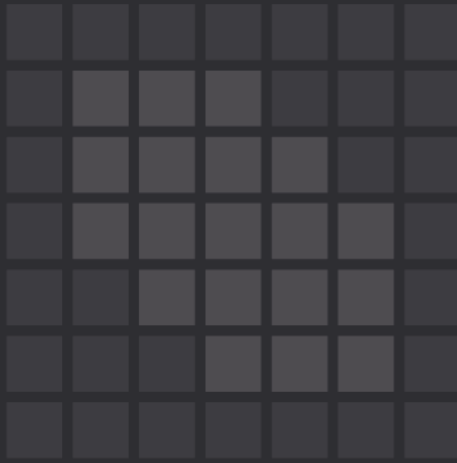
6.12: Overall, it is considered the outstanding contribution of the proposals both to the local landscape, environment and National Park fully reflects the requirements of the NPPF and aims of local plan policies and National Park objectives.

6.13: With reference to planning policy and other material considerations, there are no significant and demonstrable adverse impacts that would arise from the proposed development that would outweigh the significant benefits. The 'planning balance' is therefore weighed positively in favour of the proposal with reference to the benefits summarised above. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

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