
From: Vikki Orange
Sent: 21 July 2021 16:29
To: Hilary Saunders
Cc: Tim Coyne
Subject: FW: New application post - NYM/2021/0168/CU - Abbey Inn, Byland Abbey

Hi Hilary,

My formal recommendation and support of the application was based on the submitted documents, of which the 'design and access' statement made several references to an under-utilised carpark and did not mention that this car park was used as an overflow parking arrangement provided for the Abbey.

At the time of my site visit there did not appear to be any issues regarding the overflow parking affecting the public highway at that time. However, as it has now been identified through the receipt of additional information provided , regarding the parking concerns and the applicant advising that this car park is used for the purposes of the Abbey's visitors, I do not believe that the current parking provision has the capacity to accommodate a further intensification of use as a result of the proposals outlined in the application documents and, would like to withdraw Local Highway Authority support of application reference NYM/2021/0168/CU

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Kind regards

Vikki

From: planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Comments on NYM/2021/0168/CU - Case Officer Mrs H Saunders - Received from Building Conservation at The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, York, YO62 5BP,
Date: 17 June 2021 09:33:28

Happy with the report and offer no further comment.

Comments made by Building Conservation of The Old Vicarage
Bondgate
Helmsley
York
YO62 5BP

Comment Type is Comment
Letter ID: 568361



Mrs H Saunders
North York Moors National Park Authority
The Old Vicarage
Bondgate
Helmsley, York
North Yorkshire
YO62 5BP

Our ref: P01412891

14 June 2021

Dear Mrs Saunders

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**ABBEY INN, BYLAND ABBEY, NORTH YORKSHIRE
Application No. NYM/2021/0168/CU**

Thank you for your letter of 4 June 2021 regarding further information on the above application for planning permission. On the basis of this information, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Historic England has previously provided advice to your authority on this development proposal on 13th April, 2021.

At that time it was our advice and recommendation that we had 'concerns on heritage grounds', owing to the lack of assessment of the significance of heritage assets, and lack of visualisations of the proposal from key locations within the surrounding landscape.

We have now been provided with a combined *Heritage Statement and Views Assessment* (Purcell, May 2021).

Historic England can confirm that the new document addresses the concerns expressed in our original advice letter, and we consider that the proposal will generate a minimal level of harm to the significance of heritage assets.

This minimal level of harm can be delivered and potentially further reduced if the suggested mitigating landscape measures are put in place.

Historic England does not object to the development proposal on heritage grounds.



37 TANNER ROW YORK YO1 6WP

HistoricEngland.org.uk





Recommendation

Historic England has previously provided advice to your authority on this proposal on 13th April, 2021.

At that time it was our advice and recommendation that we had concerns on heritage grounds owing to the lack of assessment of heritage sites and their significance. We have now been provided with Amendments to the original application, consisting of a combined Heritage Statement and Views Assessment (Purcell, May 2021).

Historic England can confirm that the new information addresses our concerns, and therefore we now have no objection to the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph number 189.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess, and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Keith Emerick

Keith Emerick
Ancient Monuments Inspector

cc: Miles Johnson, Head of Historic Environment, NYMNPA
Jake Hunt, Byland Abbey Inn
Dr Mark Douglas, English Heritage Trust



From:
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Comments on NYM/2021/0168/CU - Case Officer Mrs H Saunders - Received from Building Conservation at The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, York, YO62 5BP,
Date: 26 April 2021 19:17:42

The application for planning permission for the erection of bell tents in the corner of the garden attached to the Abbey Inn. This area contributes not only to the setting of the Grade II listed Abbey Inn, but also the Grade I listed Abbey remains. The proposal also has the potential to impact a Scheduled Monument and buried features identified on the HER.

Regarding the impact on the Abbey Inn, I have less concerns about the development due to the footprint in which it is limited. There will still be a rather substantial garden associated with the property. What I am concerned about in this regard is that there is no mention of washing facilities. The application makes clear that there will be no plumbing etc within the development area but surely then that would lead to alterations in the listed building. I would like clarification on this and if necessary a LBC submitted for the change alongside this application in order that we can judge the impact of development as a whole. This is an important point made in <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/guidance-on-temporary-structures-for-events/temporary-structures-historic-places/>

The development also lies within the scheduled area. I am sure the archaeological officer will have comments and questions regarding the underlying archaeology and any potential impact. However, I would like to enquire are the nature of the supposed platform upon which the development will sit. There is no indication as to what they comprise and so it is impossible to ascertain the impact of these. It also appears there is a drain running through the area, for which there is a line of 6 associated HER entries describing footings for a building.

My primary concern for the development is its relationship to the Grade 1 listed and scheduled remains of Byland Abbey and the impact on setting of any development. Comments from HE indicate that the development site is within the outer court of the site but there has been no discussion of this of exploration within the submitted heritage statement. There is also no assessment of the relationship of the space with abbey, its function, how that space was selected against other options. I appreciate there has been some consideration on intervisibility, and while this is a concern, setting comprises much more than what is intervisible and issues with amenity, it concerns how the assets as a whole are viewed and also the relationship of the assets with the space, whether visible or not. In the guidance <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/> reference is also made to intangible elements that can impact our ability to appreciate a heritage asset, such as sounds, smells etc. the dissolution of the abbey and surrounding infrastructure within the landscape are part of its history, and as such any development within the setting of the abbey has the potential to impact negatively upon the appreciation of the space.

I appreciate that the application is for temporary citing of bell tents, which are by their nature temporary. I would be unlikely to support anything permanent and so in that sense the application is not objectionable. However, I do think a more thorough assessment of the issues are required to make an informed decision. I also think the matters such as the bases and any facilities should also be clarified in order to fully consider the proposals, and the impact upon the heritage assets.

Comments made by Building Conservation of The Old Vicarage
Bondgate
Helmsley
York
YO62 5BP

Comment Type is Request Additional Information
Letter ID: 564010

From:

Subject: NYM/2021/0168/CU - Abbey Inn, Byland Abbey
Date: 26 April 2021 12:06:27

Dear Hilary

I have concerns relating to potential impact from the development on the water quality of the adjacent beck.

The application states that no additional facilities are required to provide toilet and washing facilities to the campsite. Can you request confirmation that adequate toilet and washing facilities, easily accessible to campers without causing undue impact on other site users (of tea rooms and guest accommodation), will be available whenever the campsite is in use, to prevent the potential for further applications down the line for additional facilities.

I also note that the application form states that a package treatment plant will be used to dispose of foul sewerage but not connecting to an existing drainage system. Can this please be confirmed? If a new unit is to be installed, then this will need to be shown on the plans and considered as part of the scheme as a whole, as this will have an increased likelihood of direct impact on the archaeological heritage of the site. I note that third party comments mention that the existing 'septic tank' outflow is upstream of the proposed campsite. Septic tanks are no longer allowed to discharge directly into watercourses, they must now drain to a drainage field more than 10m from a watercourse or field drain, but can be retrofitted with equipment to ensure they serve as a package treatment plant greatly improving the quality of the effluent discharged. Package treatment plants are permitted to discharge directly to watercourse. If the existing unit serving the Abbey Inn is in fact a septic tank rather than package treatment plant (to the layperson the installation itself can look the same) then this will need to be investigated and modifications carried out irrespective of whether this planning application is approved.

I would support measures being proposed as to how campers (and dogs) can be discouraged from accessing the beck itself whilst using the site to prevent the risk of disturbing sediment and causing pollution of the watercourse. The usual soft landscaping measures (tree planting etc) may not be compatible with the scheduled monument status and so this will need to be carefully thought through and should be secured by a landscaping condition if approved. The density of the proposed site is also of some concern as it appears that tents may therefore have to be sited very close to the beck edge which should be discouraged to prevent impacting on the watercourse and its banksides.

I note that the application states that the facility will be compliant with dark skies policies. The surrounding area is of very high quality to nocturnal wildlife including bats and owls amongst others. Ideally no artificial lighting will be introduced to the site at all, with the only significant lighting in the wider area being of Byland Abbey itself, however any lighting proposed must be minimal in nature, with type/number etc secured by the usual condition if approved.

I echo concerns from some third party commenters regarding the potential for parking issues in the surrounding area. The road verge extending south of Byland Abbey to the large laybys over the hill is of particular floristic merit with a number of rare species

recorded, so any displacement of parking from the currently available sites for visitors to the Abbey and the wider area should be discouraged.

Many thanks

Elsbeth

Elsbeth Ingleby MA_{Cantab} ACIEEM

Ecologist

North York Moors National Park Authority

The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, York YO62 5BP

Mrs Hilary Saunders
North York Moors National Park
Development Control

Our ref: RA/2021/142933/01-L01
Your ref: NYM/2021/0168/CU

Date: 16 April 2021

Dear Mrs Saunders

Application for use of land for the siting of 12 no. Tents for holiday letting purposes

Abbey Inn, Byland Abbey

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above application.

Having reviewed the details submitted we have no objection to the proposed development provided it is in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.

We strongly recommend that the applicant agree a flood warning and evacuation plan with the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) Emergency Planning Team. If not already registered the applicant/occupants should phone Floodline on [redacted] to register for a flood warning, or visit <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>. It's a free service that provides warnings of flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater, direct by telephone, email or text message. Anyone can sign up.

Flood warnings can give people valuable time to prepare for flooding – time that allows them to move themselves, their families and precious items to safety. Flood warnings can also save lives and enable the emergency services to prepare and help communities.

For practical advice on preparing for a flood, visit <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding>.

To get help during a flood, visit <https://www.gov.uk/help-during-flood>.

For advice on what do after a flood, visit <https://www.gov.uk/after-flood>.

Flood warning and emergency response - advice to LPA

We do not normally comment on or approve the adequacy of flood emergency response procedures accompanying development proposals, as we do not carry out these roles during a flood. Our involvement with this development during an

emergency will be limited to delivering flood warnings to occupants/ users covered by our flood warning network.

The [planning practice guidance](#) (PPG) to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that, in determining whether a development is safe, the ability of residents and users to safely access and exit a building during a [design flood](#) and to evacuate before an extreme flood needs to be considered. One of the key considerations to ensure that any new development is safe is whether adequate flood warnings would be available to people using the development.

In all circumstances where warning and emergency response is fundamental to managing flood risk, we advise local planning authorities to formally consider the emergency planning and rescue implications of new development in making their decisions. As such, we recommend you refer to '[Flood risk emergency plans for new development](#)' and undertake appropriate consultation with your emergency planners and the emergency services to determine whether the proposals are safe in accordance with paragraph 163 of the NPPF and the guiding principles of the PPG.

We trust this response is helpful as you consider this application. Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mr Matthew Wilcock
Planning Specialist

Environment Agency
Foss House, Kings Pool, Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX

Website: www.gov.uk/environment-agency

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
BUSINESS and ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**



**LOCAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
CONSIDERATIONS and RECOMMENDATION**

Application No: **NYM/2021/0168/CU**

Proposed Development: Use of land for the siting of 12 no. tents for holiday letting purposes

Location: Abbey Inn, Byland Abbey

Applicant: Mr Jake Hunt

CH Ref: **Case Officer:** Vikki Orange

Area Ref: 3/23/13p **Tel:**

County Road No: **E-mail:**

To: North York Moors National Park
Authority
The Old Vicarage
Bondgate
Helmsley
YO62 5BP **Date:** 16 April 2021

FAO: Hilary Saunders **Copies to:**

The Local Highway Authority does not offer any objections to the proposals as outlined in the documents provided. The visibility, construction and size of the existing access and the parking provision are adequate to support the expected increase in vehicular activity therefore:

There are **no local highway authority objections** to the proposed development

Signed:

Vikki Orange

For Corporate Director for Business and Environmental Services

Issued by:

Kirby Misperton Highway Office
Beansheaf Industrial Park
Tofts Road
Kirby Misperton
YO17 6BG

e-mail:



Mrs H Saunders
North York Moors National Park Authority
The Old Vicarage
Bondgate
Helmsley, York
North Yorkshire
YO62 5BP

Our ref: P01412891

13 April 2021

Dear Mrs Saunders

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**ABBEY INN, BYLAND ABBEY, NORTH YORKSHIRE
Application No. NYM/2021/0168/CU**

Thank you for your letter of 29 March 2021 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

This is a Full planning application for the Change of Use of part of the garden at the Abbey Inn, Byland, to be used as a camp site for up to 12 bell tents for seven months of the year.

The application site is located within the Scheduled Monument of 'Byland Abbey Cistercian monastery: monastic precinct, water management earthworks, enclosures, ancillary buildings and quarries' (NHLE 1013403). The Abbey Inn is listed grade II (NHLE 1149575).

The significance of the heritage sites:

Byland Abbey: The scheduled monument includes the buried, earthwork and standing remains of a medieval abbey complex. The standing remains are tall, impressive and prominent in the landscape, although not as extensive as those at Rievaulx or Fountains.

Byland Abbey was founded in 1177 by the formerly Savignac monks of Old Byland, who had moved to Stocking in 1147 and become Cistercian before moving again to their final location near Wass. The abbey is unusual amongst abbey complexes in that the bulk of the site is of a largely twelfth century date, with most buildings completed around 1200.



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HistoricEngland.org.uk





Now part of the lawned garden to the rear of the Abbey Inn, the proposed camp site is to be located within what would have been the former monastic Outer Court. The gatehouse to the Outer Court survives in part, approximately 60 meters to the north west of the proposed development site.

In 2006 archaeological evaluation and geophysical survey across the Outer Court (and including the garden to the rear of the Abbey Inn) revealed evidence of a range of medieval stone built structures, with the upper layers of intact archaeology some 0.50m below the present ground surface.

The archaeological potential of the whole scheduled area is high.

Abbey Inn:

An impressive and characterful public house of early-mid nineteenth century date. Built of hammer dressed local limestone with a Welsh slate, hipped roof, the building has a central entry with a cross wing to the rear. Of 2 storeys and in 3 bays, it has a 4-panel door and 16-pane sash windows in flush wooden architraves beneath stone lintels throughout.

Impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage sites:

The application is supported by a range of information including a brief Heritage Impact and Flooding Assessment. Unfortunately this document does not provide an assessment of the significance of the heritage aspects of the site, or those heritage sites in close proximity to the Abbey Inn. There is no acknowledgement that the site is within the Scheduled Area, and therefore that Scheduled Monument Consent will be required in addition to planning permission.

Although the proposed works are likely to be of little or minimal physical impact on the known archaeological deposits, greater assessment should be presented of the visual impact of the scheme, when seen from the surrounding landscape, including any views down onto the site from Abbey Bank Wood.

Policy relating to the proposal:

The application in its present form does not fully meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly para 189.

Position of Historic England:

Historic England has concerns on heritage grounds with regard to this proposal. The application should be supported by a more thorough assessment of the significance of





the application site and the potential visual impact of the scheme, including views and visualisations from a number of locations around the application site.

Recommendation

The application is for a Change of Use of part of the garden to the rear of the grade II listed Abbey Inn public house to be used as a camping site for up to 12 bell tents for seven months of the year.

The application site is within the Scheduled Monument of Byland Abbey, located in what would have been its monastic Outer Court. Although the physical impact of the proposal on known archaeological deposits is likely to be slight or minimal, the proposal is likely to have a visual impact on the abbey complex and the Abbey Inn. This possible visual impact has not been appropriately assessed by the applicant, and should be supplemented by a more complete assessment of the significance of the site and additional views and visualisations from a number of locations around the site, including views from Abbey Bank Wood.

In its present form the application does not meet the requirements of the NPPF, particularly para 189, and as such Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Keith Emerick

Keith Emerick



37 TANNER ROW YORK YO1 6WP

HistoricEngland.org.uk





Historic England

Ancient Monuments Inspector

cc: Dr Mark Douglas, English Heritage Trust.
Mr Jake Hunt, Byland Abbey Inn



37 TANNER ROW YORK YO1 6WP

HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

Date: 06 April 2021
Our ref: 348513
Your ref: NYM/2021/0168/CU



North York Moors National Park Authority
planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir or Madam

Planning consultation: Application for use of land for the siting of 12 no. tents for holiday letting purposes

Location: Abbey Inn, Byland Abbey

Thank you for your consultation, which was received by Natural England on 29 March 2021

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

NO OBJECTION

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites.

Natural England's generic advice on other natural environment issues is set out at Annex A.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on statutorily protected sites and has no objection to the proposed development.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zones

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 requires local planning authorities to consult Natural England on "Development in or likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest" (Schedule 4, w). Our SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS dataset designed to be used during the planning application validation process to help local planning authorities decide when to consult Natural England on developments likely to affect a SSSI. The dataset and user guidance can be accessed from the data.gov.uk website

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences

Yours faithfully

Corben Hastings
Consultations Team

Annex - Generic advice on natural environment impacts and opportunities

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Local authorities have responsibilities for the conservation of SSSIs under s28G of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 175c) states that development likely to have an adverse effect on SSSIs should not normally be permitted. Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS dataset designed to be used during the planning application validation process to help local planning authorities decide when to consult Natural England on developments likely to affect a SSSI. The dataset and user guidance can be accessed from the Natural England Open Data Geoportal.

Biodiversity duty

Your authority has a duty to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of your decision making. Conserving biodiversity can also include restoration or enhancement to a population or habitat. Further information is available here.

Protected Species

Natural England has produced standing advice¹ to help planning authorities understand the impact of particular developments on protected species. We advise you to refer to this advice. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on protected species where they form part of a SSSI or in exceptional circumstances.

Local sites and priority habitats and species

You should consider the impacts of the proposed development on any local wildlife or geodiversity sites, in line with paragraphs 171 and 174 of the NPPF and any relevant development plan policy. There may also be opportunities to enhance local sites and improve their connectivity. Natural England does not hold locally specific information on local sites and recommends further information is obtained from appropriate bodies such as the local records centre, wildlife trust, geoconservation groups or recording societies.

Priority habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. The list of priority habitats and species can be found here². Natural England does not routinely hold species data, such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found here.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees

You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 175 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced standing advice for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees where they form part of a SSSI or in exceptional circumstances.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

² <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

Protected landscapes

For developments within or within the setting of a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), we advise you to apply national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 172) provides the highest status of protection for the landscape and scenic beauty of National Parks and AONBs. It also sets out a 'major developments test' to determine whether major developments should be exceptionally be permitted within the designated landscape. We advise you to consult the relevant AONB Partnership or Conservation Board or relevant National Park landscape or other advisor who will have local knowledge and information to assist in the determination of the proposal. The statutory management plan and any local landscape character assessments may also provide valuable information.

Public bodies have a duty to have regard to the statutory purposes of designation in carrying out their functions (under (section 11 A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended) for National Parks and S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 for AONBs). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Heritage Coasts are protected under paragraph 173 of the NPPF. Development should be consistent the special character of Heritage Coasts and the importance of its conservation.

Landscape

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes through the planning system. This application may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes, including any local landscape designations. You may want to consider whether any local landscape features or characteristics (such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls) could be incorporated into the development in order to respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness, in line with any local landscape character assessments. Where the impacts of development are likely to be significant, a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment should be provided with the proposal to inform decision making. We refer you to the [Landscape Institute](#) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for further guidance.

Best and most versatile agricultural land and soils

Local planning authorities are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) information to apply NPPF policies (Paragraphs 170 and 171). This is the case regardless of whether the proposed development is sufficiently large to consult Natural England. Further information is contained in [GOV.UK guidance](#). Agricultural Land Classification information is available on the [Magic](#) website on the [Data.Gov.uk](#) website. If you consider the proposal has significant implications for further loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, we would be pleased to discuss the matter further.

Guidance on soil protection is available in the Defra [*Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites*](#), and we recommend its use in the design and construction of development, including any planning conditions. Should the development proceed, we advise that the developer uses an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on, and supervise soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make the best use of soils on site.

Access and Recreation

Natural England encourages any proposal to incorporate measures to help improve people's access to the natural environment. Measures such as reinstating existing footpaths together with the creation of new footpaths and bridleways should be considered. Links to other green networks and, where appropriate, urban fringe areas should also be explored to help promote the creation of wider green infrastructure. Relevant aspects of local authority green infrastructure strategies should be delivered where appropriate.

Rights of Way, Access land, Coastal access and National Trails

Paragraphs 98 and 170 of the NPPF highlights the important of public rights of way and access. Development should consider potential impacts on access land, common land, rights of way, coastal access routes and coastal margin in the vicinity of the development and the scope to mitigate any adverse impacts. Consideration should also be given to the potential impacts on any nearby National Trails, including the England Coast Path. The National Trails website www.nationaltrail.co.uk provides information including contact details for the National Trail Officer.

Environmental enhancement

Development provides opportunities to secure net gains for biodiversity and wider environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 72, 102, 118, 170, 171, 174 and 175). We advise you to follow the mitigation hierarchy as set out in paragraph 175 of the NPPF and firstly consider what existing environmental features on and around the site can be retained or enhanced or what new features could be incorporated into the development proposal. Where onsite measures are not possible, you should consider off site measures. Opportunities for enhancement might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Designing lighting to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

You could also consider how the proposed development can contribute to the wider environment and help implement elements of any Landscape, Green Infrastructure or Biodiversity Strategy in place in your area. For example:

- Links to existing greenspace and/or opportunities to enhance and improve access.
- Identifying opportunities for new greenspace and managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips)
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network or using the opportunity of new development to extend the network to create missing links.
Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition or clearing away an eyesore).