
**Thimbleby
Shooting
Ground
Thimbleby
Estate
Thimbleby**

**Planning Statement
and Justification
for construction of
replacement
Shooting Lodge.**

DEB Town Planning and
Development Ltd

59 Hurgill Road Richmond
North Yorkshire DL10 4BJ



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is to be read in conjunction with the submitted application, documents and Design and Access Statement. This document will set out the background to the Thimbleby Farms business and the Planning Case for the proposal, which comprises the construction of a replacement Shooting lodge.

2.0 Business Background

2.1 Thimbleby Farms Ltd operates an estate that extends to some 1100hectares in the Western Fringe area of the North York Moors. The estate includes moorland, woodland, arable, grazing and scrub. The location of the estate on the edge escarpment behind Thimbleby provides for a mix of terrain which requires varied management and farming methods.

2.2 Of the 1100 hectares some 50% of the land is moorland which operates as shooting grounds managed under sheep. The sheep flock comprises some 400 ewes, tups and hogs. This flock is unprofitable, contributing only to the moorland management programme.

2.3 There are 110 hectares of woodland, which generates a small income and supplies the Estate, and there are 110 hectares of arable land, but this is not of a sufficient scale or quality (Grade 3) for viable intensive crop production.

2.4 The Estate also has 120 hectares of grazing land and following the NYMNP (2016) approval of cattle buildings at Home Farm, Thimbleby, a new beef herd enterprise is now operating in this lowland area.

2.5 It is clear however that the Farm needs to maintain its diversity if it is to achieve profitability. An essential part of the Farm income is generated the Thimbleby Shooting Ground (TSG). This operates within a steep valley area known as Town End Wood - south of Thimbleby. This has been in operation, (on a lease basis) since 1995, but only in the last few years has it come back into the direct control and management of Thimbleby Farms.

2.6 Thimbleby Shooting Ground (TSG) has benefitted from the increased popularity of Shooting sports across all ages –largely due to GB success during the Olympics and Paralympics. The sport now attracts youth groups and schools, disabled groups as well as increasing numbers of women. Thimbleby Shooting ground has proved especially popular because of it's close proximity to the A19 and its attractive location.

2.7 However, this ever widening range of customers has presented difficulties. The on-site lodge facilities are simply not of a sufficient size, or standard, to serve the various needs of these diverse groups. In order, to meet the safeguarding and access needs of customers, whilst ensuring first class firearms security it is necessary to provide a new lodge with modern facilities. Failure to meet the required standards will mean the Shooting Ground is less attractive and hence less competitive and therefore less viable. Its ability to contribute to the turnover of the wider farming enterprise will be materially affected if it cannot provide customers with a modern service building which meets all access, security and health and safety requirements.

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2.8 It is therefore critical to the overall financial well-being of Thimbleby Farms that this long established diversification into a recreation / tourism use can modernise and keep pace with current standards. The business is confident that the new Shooting Lodge will provide the excellent facilities needed to retain customers so that the Shooting Ground can continue to play its vital part in securing the Farms' long term future in the rural economy.

3.0 Current Building

3.1 The existing lodge has been in situ since 1998.

Photograph 1



3.2 The existing building is extremely small providing only three tables for customers, a toilet and disabled persons toilet, kitchen and counter. The building lacks all of the following:

- a) reception desk;
- a) secure storage;
- b) changing rooms;
- c) appropriate toilet facilities;
- d) facilities for disabled persons;
- e) kitchen storage;
- f) staff facilities;
- g) instruction and training space;
- h) cartridge store;
- i) ability to satisfy safeguarding requirements in relation to children and vulnerable adults;
- j) sufficient seating area;
- k) office.



3.3 The lack of secure storage within the building has meant that over 15 years ago the previous operators resorted to container storage units being placed on the site. Two of these are evident in Photograph 1 on the previous page. The lack of seating space is demonstrated in Photograph 2 below, in the need to provide an area of temporary shelter next to the existing lodge.

Photograph 2



3.4 It is clear that the current lodge facilities are now completely inadequate to service the modern requirements of a popular recreation business with particular safety and security requirements. The existing structure is no longer fit for purpose, and therefore a new lodge is proposed which will serve the needs of the wide range of customers now visiting the site. This new lodge will be constructed to the highest standard and comply with all access, safeguarding, security and health and safety regulations. This will require a larger building where all the facilities are provided under one roof.

4.0 Planning Policy Justification

The National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the Government's overarching policies for the planning system, with the key objective being to achieve sustainable development. Paragraph 7 confirms there are three dimensions to achieving this, namely economic, social and environmental.

4.2 The *economic* role should contribute to sustainable development by building a strong, responsive and competitive economy and ensuring the sufficient amount, and right type, of development to support growth. The *social* role is required to support communities by creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services to reflect the needs of the community. The *environmental* role should protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

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4.3 Paragraph 19 goes on to confirm the Government's commitment to supporting sustainable economic growth and that:

"planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth and therefore significant weight should be placed on the move to support economic growth through the planning system"

4.4 The NPPF at paragraph 28 supports a prosperous rural economy and requires LPA's to:

- *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres*
- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses

National Parks For England

4.5 In a January 2015 statement issued by National Parks England, the Chair of National Parks England and the North York Moors National Park Authority, Jim Bailey said:

*"We need to make more of the thriving businesses found in some of our most beautiful areas of countryside. As well as being hugely important for supporting the health of the nation, our National Parks attract exciting entrepreneurs and support the rural economy. **Our message is National Parks are open for business.**"*

4.6 The report - **Valuing England's National Parks 2013** – highlights one of the challenges facing National Parks is:

- Lack of diversity of businesses and employment, with high reliance on farming, forestry and tourism, and associated seasonality of economic activity.

North York Moors Management Plan

4.7 A principle aim of this Plan is to increase the economic value of tourism and the number of people employed in the industry. The following policies are relevant to this proposal.

- Policy B1. Visitor spend will be increased.
- Policy B4. The quality and variety of tourism and recreation facilities and accommodation will be improved.



- Policy B16. Support and encouragement will be given to the grouse shooting industry for its positive environmental and economic impacts.
- Policy B18. The shooting industry will be supported where there are environmental and/or economic benefits which do not harm the special qualities of the National Park.
- Policy B20. Economic development will be supported where it is related to the special qualities of the National Park and the amount of allocated employment land will be increased.
- Policy B21. The employment and training opportunities available to people in the National Park will be increased and maintained.
- Policy B23. Modern and traditional skills will be developed within the workforce.
- Policy U3. Make available to a wide section of people the enjoyment opportunities in the Park.

North York Moors Core Strategy

The relevant policies of the Core Strategy and Development Policies are as follows:
Core Policies A, B, D and H and Development Policies 3, 10 and 14.

4.8 Core Policy A (Delivering National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development) gives priority, amongst other matters, to strengthening and diversifying the rural economy and enabling access to services, facilities, jobs and technology whilst conserving and enhancing the landscape of the Park.

4.9 Core Policy B (Spatial Strategy) seeks to improve the sustainability of existing settlements by supporting, improving and consolidating existing services and facilities and restricting development in the open countryside to that which meets the needs of farming, forestry, recreation, tourism and other rural enterprises that have an essential need to locate in the countryside.

4.10 Core Policy D (Climate Change) requires all developments of 200sqm or more to generate energy from on-site renewable sources to displace at least 10% of predicted CO2 emissions.

4.11 Development Policy 3 (Design) promotes a high standard of design detailing, whether traditional or contemporary, which reflects or complements the local vernacular.

4.13 Development Policy 10 (New Employment and Training Development) advises that in the open countryside development for new employment and training purposes should make use of an existing building. It advises that the Authority is keen to support the expansion of business premises which provide employment opportunities for local people in order to facilitate local economic activity.

4.14 Development Policy 14 (Tourism and Recreation) supports the expansion of existing tourism businesses. Proposals for new buildings are required to demonstrate that the facility cannot be satisfactorily accommodated within an existing building.

4.15 Development Policy 14 also seeks to ensure that new tourism development and the expansion or diversification of existing tourism businesses will be supported where the proposal will provide opportunities for visitors to increase their understanding, awareness and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

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5.0 Planning Justification for Benefits of New Shooting Lodge

5.1 The proposed new lodge will meet the following seven objectives of National Planning Policy, the Core Strategy and the Park Management Plan.

- It will strengthen and diversify the rural economy;
- It is in a suitable and acceptable location;
- It represents Sustainable development;
- It improves the Quality of tourism and recreation facilities;
- It supports the National Park's Shooting Industry;
- It increases Employment and Training Opportunities;
- It will improve access, safeguarding and security measures.



Strengthens and diversifies the rural economy – Complies NPPF and Core Policy A

5.2 Thimbleby Shooting Ground is a viable business operating within Thimbleby Farms Ltd. As explained in Section 2 of this Statement TSG represents agricultural diversification away from traditional farming activities, as supported by Core Policy A. It utilises an area which cannot be cultivated; nor is it suitable for grazing. The new lodge will allow the Ground to keep pace with the training advances in the sport of Shooting and the basic standard of facilities required by customers, all of which is promoted by Core Policy A.

5.3 A new shooting lodge at TSG will support the needs of a tourism and recreation facility which is in high demand, but very limited supply. Records show there is only one other shooting ground within the National Park boundary, Thimbleby Shooting Ground therefore plays a vital part in diversifying the rural economy of the Park by offering a rural based activity which can only take place in the countryside. The NPPF places considerable weight upon these material benefits.

5.4 TSG provides employment to trained instructors, groundsmen and specialist engineers who service the equipment in addition to administrative and catering staff. The specialist nature of the sport requires most staff to have a gun licence and be experience with firearms. TSG supports and helps maintain the employment and training of people in a specialist field and truly strengthens and diversifies rural employment options.

5.5 The NPPF supports the new shooting lodge as it represents the expansion of a tourist and visitor business which simultaneously helps diversify an existing farming operation and the wider visitor offer in the countryside. Core Policy A objectives are met by this diversifying role, training opportunities and the creation of additional jobs.

Suitable & acceptable location – Complies NPPF and Core Policy B

5.6 The Thimbleby Shooting Ground is a long established tourism and recreational site. It is located on the very western boundary of the National Park and within the Western Fringe Landscape Area. The NYM Landscape Assessment for the Western Fringe states:

“Generally a quiet area that tends to be bypassed by visitors, except where the A19 (T) forms the character area boundary. Very well treed with coniferous or mixed plantations clothing the

steeper slopes almost continuously. In some areas smaller blocks of woodland are interspersed with steeply graded pasture."

5.7 TSG is within close proximity of the A19 which can be heard from within and beyond the site boundaries. The Ground occupies a steeply sided valley bottom and is fully screened from surrounding vantage points due to the undulating topography. The site for the lodge is visually discrete and due to high levels of tree cover the new lodge will not be visible from outside the Ground and only at close proximity within the Ground.

5.8 The new lodge is in an appropriate location for this particular activity and complies with Paragraph 28 of the NPPF. It also meets the test of Core Policy B as it is a recreation, tourism and rural training enterprise which has an essential need to locate in the countryside.

Sustainable development – complies with Core Policy D

5.9 The existing Ground benefits from excellent access direct from the A19 just 1km away. This means the vast majority of customers have direct access from the major road network to the site without passing through any of the National Park landscape, or any of its settlements.

5.10 The new shooting lodge is to be constructed on the site of the existing lodge and container stores, no new areas of hard surfacing will be created, and no areas of ecological value will be affected.

5.11 The new shooting lodge is to be constructed with sustainable materials (fsc timber) and low energy features. It will comply with the latest building efficiency standards and CO2 emissions are offset by over 10% by the use of solar panels. The new building complies fully with Core Policy D of the Core Strategy. The sustainability merits of the new building far outweigh the inefficient energy consumption of the existing building.

5.12 The new lodge represents a sustainable rural tourism and leisure development which is fully supported by the NPPF (paragraph 28).

Improves quality of tourism and recreation facilities – complies NPPF; DP 14 and Management Plan Policies B1 and B4.

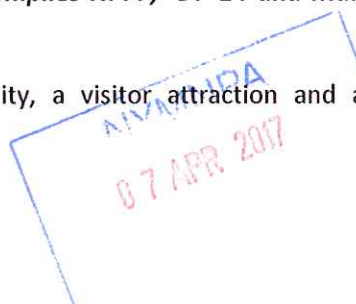
5.13 Thimbleby Shooting Ground is a recreation facility, a visitor attraction and a training establishment. It is a member of:

- Welcome To Yorkshire;
- English Tourist Board;
- Clay Pigeon Shooting Association; and
- British Association of Shooting and Conservation.

5.14 TSG participates in the Cleveland & North Yorkshire Sporting Clay League; and has 175 regular members, plus hundreds of new and regular visitors per annum. Some come from within the National Park, but most are from well beyond the park boundaries.

5.15 TSG also hosts numerous group events for the following users:

- Corporate Events;
- North York Moors Moorland Organisation;

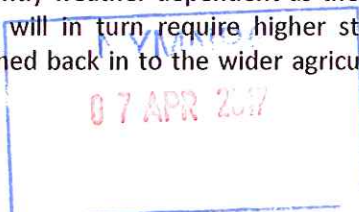


- Charities (NY Air Ambulance, Osmotherley show);
- Ladies clubs;
- Youth Groups.

5.16 TSG has high participation among young people's groups, such as the Scouts and local Schools Clubs and Young Farmers; helping to encourage the next generation in to countryside pursuits.

5.17 To retain the scale and wide diversity of the customers visiting the Ground it is essential that the facilities at the Ground are improved to match expected standards. A main aim of the National Park Management Plan is to **increase visitor spend** (Policy B1) and that the quality and variety of the tourism facilities will be improved (Policy B4).

5.18 By improving the facilities at Thimbleby Shooting Ground visitor spend will increase. The provision of appropriate kitchen and seating space will enable a wider food offer. Photograph 3 below shows the constrained and limited facilities inside the lodge. Training space will allow regular instruction courses to be provided (currently weather dependent as they have to be held outside). These improvements in visitor facilities will in turn require higher staffing levels and generate greater income. This can then be ploughed back in to the wider agricultural operation to support the farming enterprise.



Photograph 3



5.19 The NPPF demands support for rural tourism and leisure developments which seek to expand facilities for visitors. The provision of a high tech training room in the new lodge will give opportunities for visitors to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the National Park as required by DP 14. It is also clear that there are no other existing buildings on the site which could be used for these purposes.

5.20 It is also important to note that the tourism and recreational role of the new lodge will not be seasonal. Shooting is a year round pursuit and as such it offers year round employment and enjoyment. These businesses make a vital contribution to year round employment in the Park.

Supports the National Park's Shooting Industry – complies with Management Plan B16 and B18

5.21 The new lodge will enable TSG to improve its training facilities. The training provided at Thimbleby Shooting Ground is a vital part of maintaining the skills of local gamekeepers and estate workers. From gun safety to training on loading and managing the varying standard of participants on a grouse shoot; TSG has a track record of serving those who work in the local shooting industry. The new lodge will support the grouse shooting industry and is in turn supported by Policy B16.

5.22 TSG is also an essential provider of training for those seeking to progress to grouse and pheasant shoots; it is therefore the first stage in a process of training participants in a recreational activity which is responsible for the management of vast areas of the National Park environment. The training facilities provided at the Ground will be significantly improved by the new lodge facilities which will house new technology screens and simulators. These can be used by the beginner through to the expert shot. The economic benefits of this development are therefore supported by Policy B18.

Increases Employment and Training Opportunities – complies Development Policy 10 and Management Plan B20, B21 and B23

5.23 The new lodge will create 5 new jobs; 2 additional full time posts (instructors) and 3 additional part time posts in administration, catering, cleaning and maintenance. Policy DP10 states that:

“the Authority is keen to support the expansion of business premises which provide employment opportunities for local people”.

5.24 The particular skills required for the Shooting Ground mean that local people have the required experience to take advantage of these job opportunities. Furthermore, the shooting ground is within 3 miles of Osmotherley and Thimbleby which provides easy access for workers living in these settlements. It should be noted that all of the current employees live within the local area. This proposal creates a variety of new jobs for local people which fully accords with Policy DP10.

5.25 The new lodge enhances employment and training opportunities in a traditional skill which is closely related to grouse shooting and the management of the special qualities of the National Park. A direct link can be drawn between the conservation of the Moors for commercial shooting, and the Thimbleby Shooting Ground which provides people with training and helps them into the sport. The objectives of Management Policies B20, B21 and B23 are perfectly met in this development.

Complies with essential access, safeguarding and security measures – complies Management Plan Policy U3

5.26 Thimbleby Shooting Ground is open to the public and as such needs to provide appropriate facilities to meet the needs of all. Unfortunately the age and design of the existing building pre – dates much of recent legislation which seeks to ensure such access and protect all visitors. The current building has very limited facilities for disabled visitors – with the required security door being a barrier to some disabled persons. The new lodge would be fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005(DDA) and provide the full range of access and service measures expected in a building which is used by the public.

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5.27 The increased popularity of the sport amongst women and young people also places a requirement on the business to provide appropriate changing facilities, these are included in the new lodge. The regulations also require a space where children and young people's groups can be separated from the general public in accordance with Safeguarding and Supervision requirements; (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).

5.28 Management Plan Policy U3 states "*Opportunities to enjoy the National Park will be available to a wide cross section of society*". The facilities provided by the new shooting lodge will achieve exactly this objective by catering for a wider cross –section of the population.

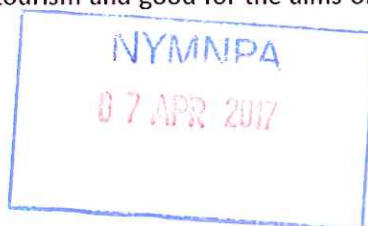
5.29 The use of firearms at the site also places additional specific security requirements on the design of the building. Designation of secure areas for storage, handling and management of guns and equipment is essential to maintain site safety. The replacement lodge will meet the latest security measures as recommended by the Home Office and advised by NY Police Firearms and Explosives Licensing. This will enhance the safety and security of the whole site. At **Appendix 1** of the Statement are attached two letters of support for the proposed new lodge from North Yorkshire Police and the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association which have security and safety oversight responsibilities.

Conclusion

This statement has demonstrated that all relevant Planning guidance and Policy fully supports this proposal. The replacement of the existing inadequate lodge building with a sustainable building which meets the needs of all its users is now essential if the Thimbleby Shooting Ground is to maintain its tourism, recreation and training role. The existing 1990's structure fails to meet the access, safeguarding and practical requirements of a building used by the public; a new lodge is long overdue.

A purpose built, CO2 efficient lodge; designed to the specific needs of the sport of shooting will allow this year round business to remain a viable part of Thimbleby Farms diversification programme; enabling the whole businesses to have a more secure future.

The new lodge facilities would directly lead to the creation of 5 new jobs for local people. This building is good for employment, good for tourism and good for the aims of the North Yorks Moors National Park Authority.



Appendices:

Copy of NY Police supporting letter.

Copy of Clay Pigeon Shooting Association supporting letter.

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Thimbleby
Shooting
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Statement -
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Development Ltd

59 Hurgill Road Richmond
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in accordance with government advice in the National Planning Policy Framework. This document is to be read in conjunction with the submitted documents, drawings and planning application. A Planning Statement setting out the planning justification for the development and a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) are provided separately.

2.0 The Application Site

2.1 The application site comprises the site of the existing shooting lodge at Thimbleby Shooting Ground (TSG). The lodge lies at the centre of the shooting Ground adjacent to a large existing car park and access road.

2.2 The Shooting Ground is located south of the village of Thimbleby Village which is approximately 1km east of the A19 Trunk Road. The site is accessed from the A19 via Thimbleby Road. Before entering the village the entrance to Thimbleby Shooting Ground can be found on the east side of Thimbleby Road. The Shooting Ground has a very elongated shape running north to south along the low valley at the base of Thimbleby Bank plantation. This is the high ridge which forms the western edge of the high plateau of the North York Moors.

2.3 The Shooting Ground access road extends some 400metres into the site through Town End Wood. This opens out into the existing car park which lies at the centre of the site. The existing shoot lodge is orientated on a north south access at the southern end of the car park.

2.4 The existing shooting lodge is made of timber construction and cladding, with profile metal roof. It has an external seating area and provides, internally, kitchen, seating area and toilets. Also on site are two storage containers which provide storage space

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 . It is proposed to demolish the existing lodge and storage buildings and construct one single, all-purpose building which meets all current legislative requirements relating to:

- firearm security;
- Disability Discrimination Act requirements and access;
- Environmental health and Health and Safety requirements;
- safeguarding requirements.

3.2 The new lodge is to be located on the existing hard standing site of the current lodge and storage buildings. It is larger than the current lodge in order to accommodate the necessary facilities required by visitors, health and welfare, security and safeguarding. In addition, a training room is proposed which will enable all-weather instruction on simulators. Staff facilities will also be provided within the building.

3.3 The building is orientated east west across the end of the car park, this achieves a twofold purpose:

- Prevents access by members of the public to the Shooting Ground without first passing through the building in the interests of site safety.

- Affords maximum surveillance of the car park and Shooting Ground in the interests of security.

3.4 The building has a cruciform shape with full glazed north and south gables and part glazed gables on the east and west elevations. It is finished with horizontal boarded timber walls and slate roof. Oak supports feature on the south and north gables.

3.5 The new lodge has a single storey appearance with an eaves height of just 3.3m; but a steeply pitched roof allows for a second floor to occupy part of the internal roof space. The overall height to ridge is 8m. This large slate finished roof allows for the siting of solar panels on the south elevation which will offset 10% of the CO2 emissions of the building.

3.6 The new building will accommodate a reception, secure store, secure display and handling area, changing room, toilets, kitchen, café area, training room, office and staff facilities.



4.0 Planning Policy Relevant to Design and Access

National Planning Policy Framework - published 27 March 2012

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration; paragraph 14 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The 'golden thread' running through the Framework is that development should be approved unless, *'the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits'*. This Statement will show that there are no adverse impacts of the new lodge which outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.2 Paragraph 57 of the NPPF states: "It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development".

It also requires that developments should function well, add to the overall quality of the area, respond to local character and reflect local identity whilst not preventing innovation. Developments should be visually attractive with good architecture and landscaping.

4.3 Whilst Paragraph 63 states: In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

NYMNP Core Strategy

4.4 *Core Policy G* requires that: "High quality sustainable design will be sought which conserves or enhances the landscape setting", this is expanded in Development Policy 3.

4.5 *Development Policy 3* requires siting, orientation and layout to not impact amenity, character or setting. Furthermore, it seeks to ensure "scale, height, massing, proportion, form, size, materials and design features of the proposal are compatible with surrounding buildings, and will not have an adverse effect upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers."

4.6 DP 3 also requires a high standard of design and the provision for storage facilities, and sustainable construction using renewable energy sources.

4.7 In addition to landscaping DP3 requires the safety, security and access needs for all potential users of the development to be taken in to account along with car parking.

5.0 Design issues

5.1 In accordance with the NPPF the overall design for the new Shooting lodge is of high quality; inclusivity has been a driving force in the layout and design of the building. As explained in the Planning Statement clay target shooting has become extremely popular over the last 5-7 years with strong interest from young people and disabled persons wishing to take up the sport. Much of this has been driven by the successes in recent international sporting events and Paralympics. In these circumstances the range and quality of facilities required by users has increased hence the need for a new lodge to meet regulatory and customer demands.

Siting & Orientation

5.2 The proposed shooting lodge is sited in the same location as the existing lodge. It is to be orientated on an east west axis as opposed to north / south in order to maximise the roof plane facing south for the benefit of solar panel energy generation. This also has security benefits. This orientation means the narrowest elevations face east and west, minimising any possibility of viewing the building from these directions which host rights of way.

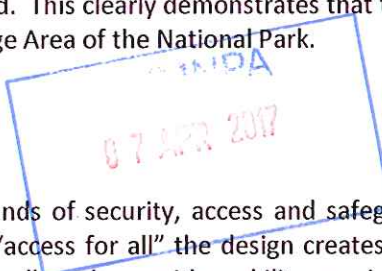
5.3 The proposed siting represents the most well screened part of the whole Ground. The ground level of the new lodge is at 143.2 AOD. To the east, north and south it is surrounded by high ground plus mature tree cover. To the east the ground levels are between 147 and 150 AOD with tree heights of over 155 AOD. This means at no point on public access routes, or the highway is the site for the new lodge visible. At no point is the new lodge visible from land not within the applicants' ownership and control. The whole structure is screened by both landform and dense tree cover.

5.4 The site chosen is already hard surfaced and laid with communication and power services its re-use is therefore the least environmentally disruptive and the optimum location for the new lodge. The siting has no visual impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and to support this a Visual Impact Appraisal has been produced. This clearly demonstrates that there is no adverse impact upon the landscape of this Western Fringe Area of the National Park.

Size, Form and Mass

5.5 The size of the building reflects the demands of security, access and safeguarding which are placed on a new building. In order to permit "access for all" the design creates a large open plan area which can be flexibly used for groups as well as those with mobility requirements. Changing facilities and disabled provision has been incorporated throughout the building. It also incorporates services and storage under one roof.

5.6 Although larger than the existing structure this building has no implications for the visual appearance or character of the landscape. Its location and design ensure it blends with its surroundings and is indiscernible in the landscape due to surrounding topography and screening.



5.7 The proposed size reflects a modern visitor building which has to include all the statutory facilities required regardless of visitor numbers. The scale of visitor facilities required is evident at Sutton Bank and Rievaulx Abbey.

5.8 The cruciform shape of the building serves to reflect the 'lodge' appearance and breaks up the mass of the building into four parts. The very modest eaves height of 3m serves to draw the building towards the ground, again visually reducing its mass. The four gables also serve to physically break up the roof planes such that they are not over dominant despite the low eaves.

5.9 Overall the size is dictated by the requirement to satisfy regulations and customer needs; the form breaks up the mass of the building and the mass is made acceptable by the form. This is a well-designed building compatible with the scale of its surroundings.

Design and Materials

5.10 The designed appearance of the new lodge reflects the character of its wooded setting. Its strong roof pitch and low eaves, plus the use of strong gable features create the character of a woodland lodge. This is entirely in keeping with the wooded surroundings of the site.

5.11 The building has a simple functional appearance compatible with its use and surroundings, but also includes an element of design flair which serves to raise the design standard for functional buildings. The full gables, part glazing and use of oak supports which mirror trees create an attractive design which is both practical and pleasant.

5.12 The design fully responds to the function of the building as well as the local character, it represents good architecture which is visually attractive and is in total accord with the NPPF on design. This high design standard also meets the tests of Development Policy 3.

5.13 With regard to materials the palette has been kept very simple:

- Feather edged sustainably sourced horizontal boarding;
- Slate for all roofs;
- Glazing for gables.
- These materials are sustainable and compatible with the surroundings.
- The timber boarding ensures the functional purpose of the building and woodland setting are reflected in the character of the building.
- The use of slate ensures the roof will have a dark, muted colour and over time become weathered to its surroundings. These are natural materials which weather and will blend with their surroundings.
- The full height glazing is used to create an airy open structure similar to the Dalby Forest and Rievaulx Abbey Visitor Centres.
- The sympathetic materials of timber boarding and slate roof will ensure that in texture and colour the building reflects the character of its wooded setting. The selective use of glazing enhances the overall design.

Landscaping

5.14 The site is already surrounded by mature dense landscaping of a wide variety and mix of species and height. The Visual Impact Assessment has found that as a result of the extensive tree

and hedge cover in the shooting ground and adjacent to it, and the topography of the site no visual impact will result. However, in order to provide generational landscaping it is proposed to add understorey planting to the tree belt to the west of the boundary of the shooting ground. This will ensure the site of the lodge remains well screened for decades to come.

6.0 Access Issues

6.1 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will continue to be from the existing access and access road, which is served by passing places.

6.2 Parking will continue to be provided within the existing car park which is currently very large with some 74 spaces.

6.3 There will be an improvement in parking for disabled persons with two disability parking spaces being provided and identified close to the new lodge.

6.4 Level access to and within the building will enable those with limited mobility to access all services in the building. This is a considerable improvement on the current arrangements. The new lodge will provide a safe and equipped environment with access for all; it will provide essential access facilities including a lift to the training room and staff facilities at first floor.

Conclusion

This application for a new lodge will see a vast improvement in the quality, sustainability, design and accessibility of the building. The new lodge will meet all the regulatory standards placed upon a public building with firearms. It will be functional, yet sympathetic to the character of its setting and it will have an attractive high standard of design which will enhance the area and visitor experience without any detriment to the appearance of the landscape.

