

19 January 2012

North York Moors National Park Authority

Ryedale District Parish: Thornton Le Dale	App Num. NYM/2011/0653/FL
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Proposal: Construction of a multi user trail

Location: Ellerburn, Low Dalby

Applicant: Forestry Commission, fao: Mrs Petra Young, Outgang Road, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 7EL

Date for Decision: 30 January 2012

Grid Ref: SE 485620 486677

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Approval subject to the following conditions:

1. TL03 Standard three year commencement date
2. AP07 Strict accordance with plans/specifications or minor variations
3. LS03 Trees/hedges to be retained (on or adjacent to the proposed trail)

Reasons for Conditions

1. To ensure compliance with Sections 91 to 94 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.
2. For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the details of the development together with any subsequent insignificant variations as may be approved in writing, comply with the provisions of NYM Core Policy A and NYM Development Policy 3.
3. In order to comply with the provisions of NYM Core Policy C which seeks to ensure that trees, woodlands and hedgerows of landscape amenity, nature conservation or historical value are safeguarded.

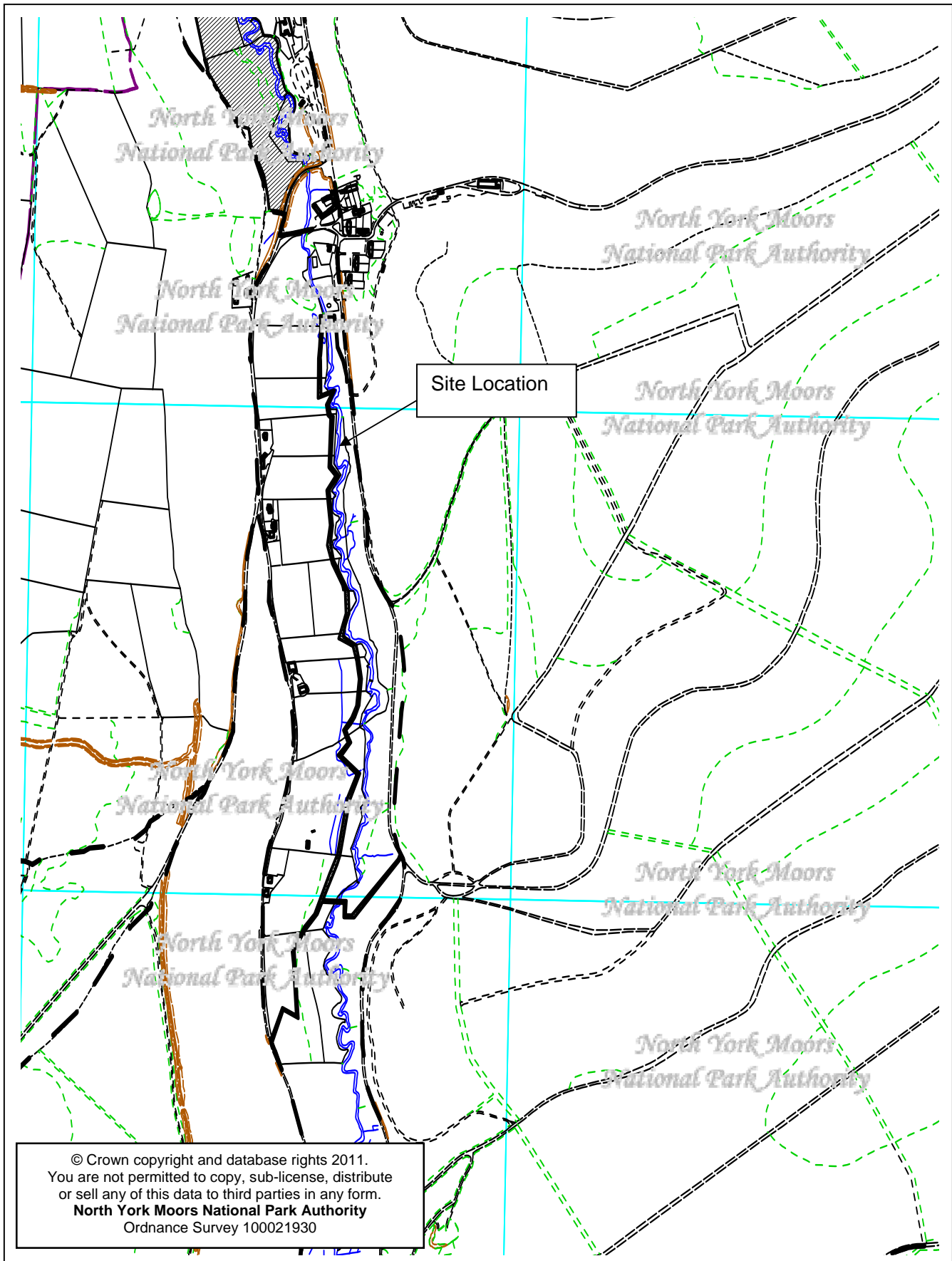
Consultations

Parish - No objection.

Advertisement Expiry Date - 3 January 2012.

Others - Mr & Mrs Welburn, Low Dalby Wood, Low Dalby - Object to the application. We rent four fields from the Forestry Commission which run along the becksides and keep stock of sheep and horses. They rely on the natural curves of the planted beck line to provide shelter and also use the beck as a watering hole. The proposed path will eradicate these. The trail will also destroy the natural habitat for birds and other wildlife. The otters will not continue to survive along this stretch with continual noise and disruption caused by dogs and humans. Birds such as Kingfishers and Dippers are very 'private' birds that will not tolerate a lot of human activity so will be lost. Also concerned that the proposal will result in loss of privacy as everyone walking along the path will be free to view our daily activities.

From Dalby Visitor Centre upwards to Sieve Dale there is very little in way of river wildlife due to tourist activity, and this proposal will result in another section being destroyed.




Site Location

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North York Moors National Park Authority
 Ordnance Survey 100021930



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Scale: 1:10632 



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Amanda Welburn-Smith, 8 Low Dalby - Object to the proposal as feel it will completely decimate the wildlife that can be seen here. The otters will not remain on the beck with dogs and children constantly in the water. The privacy of residents must surely be an issue too, as it is like putting a path in their back garden. The wildlife around the visitor centre has disappeared due to all the tourist activity so if some kind of pathway is essential, why can't it be built in that area?

Mr & Mrs Booth, Upper Dalby Wood, Low Dalby - Strongly object to this proposal, which the Forestry Commission have not consulted us on, for the following reasons:
Our property will be surrounded by visitor trails. The current forest trail on the east side of the beck is completely hidden by the trees running either side of the beck. This development will be very intrusive to our views. Currently the east side of our house is totally private but this proposal will change that. This new development will create noise by visitors from the east. There is currently an adequate disabled access trail on the east side of the beck. The application states that the trail will blend into the landscape, which is not the case. There is a forestry viewing point between our house and Low Dalby Wood. The view to the north, east and south is magnificent. It is a view down the field, to the beck and up into the trees. One continual vista which will be ruined by the proposal. Many visitors stop at the viewing point to admire the scenery and take photographs. The application contains bat and water vole surveys; it is a pity the Forestry Commission do not take the welfare of the human residents as important as the animals. Dalby Forest is a huge area of land with the residents living in one small area so why do the Forestry Commission keep developing so close to the residents when they have thousands of acres of opportunity. I would suggest you visit the site to see the affect the proposal will have on the existing views not just for the residents but the visitors too.

Background

Dalby Forest is a popular visitor attraction and important habitat for wildlife, on the southern side of the National Park, a few miles north of Thornton le Dale.

Permission is sought for the construction of a new, multi-user trail/footpath to provide access for the 10% of the 400,000 annual visitors to Dalby Forest with mobility issues and people with a range of disabilities. It is proposed that the trail can be used by wheelchair and pushchair users, by people borrowing mobility scooters from the visitor centre as well as the disabled bicycles which are available in the forest.

The proposed trail would start at the courtyard at Low Dalby and use the existing village road onto the forest road. The trail would then leave the forest road down towards the beck and a new timber bridge would be constructed to take visitors across the beck. The next section would follow the Ellerburn Beck, through fields that are currently leased to local residents for grazing. A new line of standard stock proof fencing will be erected to keep stock off the trail. South of Dalby Meadow Farm is a particularly wet area and the route would curve to the west. This is a small wooded area with specific heritage and conservation value so the trail will go round this and become a boardwalk for 150 metres. At Dalby Beck Farm the trail would continue across the field towards the excising footpath. At this point the trail would provide a return loop using a similar bridge to the first, and continue back up the forest road.

The trail would be 2.5 metres wide and constructed mainly of locally available materials, such as limestone for the sub base and surface with road planings or 10mm to dust hard stone chips. The two bridges would be timber decked with gabion basket abutments which have been designed to current flood studies for 1:100 year storms.

Surveys have been undertaken and submitted by the application in relation to the impact of the proposal on water voles, otters and bats, which conclude that no harm will be caused by the proposed development.

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Background (continued)

The applicants advise that the proposed trail has been designed to blend into the landscape and micro topography to give a flowing non-linear trail and its aim is to open up the forest to a wider range of users.

Main Issues

The main issues relating to this application are considered to be whether the proposed route would encourage further and sustainable enjoyment of the National Park, whether the development would preserve and enhance the natural beauty and ecology of the National Park and would not adversely affect the quality of life of residents.

Policy Context

The relevant NYM Local Development Framework policies are Core Policy C (Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Geodiversity), Core Policy M (Accessibility and Inclusion), Development Policy 14 (Tourism and Recreation) and Development Policy 23 (New Development and Transport).

Core Policy C seeks to ensure that the quality and diversity of the natural environment is conserved and enhanced and to maintain, and where appropriate enhance conditions for priority habitats and species identified in the North York Moors Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Core Policy M seeks to improve accessibility to services and facilities within and beyond the National Park for all users and to encourage more sustainable patterns of travel. Amongst other things, this will be achieved through strong and effective partnerships, reducing the need to travel and improving accessibility through the use of innovative and alternative modes of transport to the private car.

Development Policy 14 seeks to support proposals which provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park in a manner that will not undermine the special qualities of the National Park or in a way that conserves and enhances the special qualities.

Development Policy 23 seeks to effectively minimise the overall need for journeys and reduce the environmental impacts of traffic on the National Park by permitting development where its location is capable of being accessed by public transport, walking or cycling, where there are existing Public Rights of Way, and it is of a scale where the adjacent road network has the capacity to serve without detriment to highway safety.

Accessibility

The proposed path is well related to other networks in that it can be accessed by existing and established public routes which lead from the centre of the village. This new route would provide a short circular route, close to the main facilities at Dalby Forest which could be enjoyed by the very young and elderly alike due to its modest distance and level surface suitable for buggies and wheelchairs. It is therefore considered that the path would increase the opportunities available to residents and visitors to enjoy the National Park and the beauty of the National Park environment by increasing and diversifying the current tourism and recreation product.

Design and Materials

The design and materials proposed are typical of this type of development and are considered to sit comfortably in this rural setting whilst ensuring that the new path is fairly low maintenance and remains easy to use by everyone.

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Need for the facility

It is noted that objections have been registered from local residents on a number of grounds but largely raising concern with regard to the need of a new path, privacy and impact on wildlife. Officers consider that the proposed path would create a route which would be more attractive and accessible to a range of users. The other paths in the area are quite narrow and in places difficult to traverse due to the nature of the topography. This path would create a more level and attractive route for a range of users. Its primary function is accessibility.

Impact on Neighbours

The path would be some 100 metres from the nearest residential boundary, and it is not considered that at this distance, the development would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the occupiers of these properties, either in the form of noise or disturbance or overlooking resulting in loss of privacy. Loss of private view is not a planning consideration. It is not considered that the creation of the trail, which does not involve vertical structures (other than two small bridges) or tree removal together with the distance involved would have a detrimental impact on residential amenity levels.

Impact on Ecology

Surveys have been undertaken and submitted by the application in relation to the impact of the proposal on water voles, otters and bats, which conclude that no harm will be caused by the proposed development. The National Park's Ecologist has scrutinised the proposal and raised no objections. In addition no objections have been raised by the National Park's Woodland Officer or Archaeologist.

Recommendation

It is considered that the development is unlikely to generate any significant increased level of activity which could be likely to detract from the experience of visitors and the quality of life of local residents and would in fact increase recreational opportunities available to all users of this part of the National Park. It is not considered that the path amounts to undesirable urbanisation of the countryside. In view of the above, the proposal is recommended for approval.

Reason for Approval

The proposed development is unlikely to generate an increased level of activity, including noise, which would be likely to detract from the experience of visitors and the quality of life of local residents. The development is considered to increase recreational opportunities available to users of this part of the National Park and would encourage more sustainable modes of transport. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Core Policies C and M and Development Policies 14 and 23 the NYM Local Development Framework.