

**Wendy Strangeway**

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**From:** North 1  
**Sent:** 29 January 2018 10:38  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** 3185209 - 4 Echo Hill, Sleights, WHITBY - NYM/2017/0254/  
**Attachments:** 4 Echo Hill\_Sleights.PSS.10.03.17.pdf

Good morning

With regard to the above appeal, I attach for your information correspondence received from the appellants for the Inspector.

*Dear Deb,*

*May I apologise for my late response on this.*

*I would like to clarify that the "site landscape character assessment" noted at para 6.9 of the appeal statement, refers to section 6.13 - 6.27 of the Planning Supporting Statement submitted with the planning application. This section is not a full 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', but is rather a more detailed assessment of landscape character impacts, incorporated into the PSS, and the site, surroundings, and the impact of the proposal against the identified threats to this part of the National Park as set out in the NYMNP Landscape Assessment 2003.*

*The original PSS forms part of the planning application and is freely available online, though I attach a copy here for the record.*

*I trust that this clarifies matters for the Inspector.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Paul Robinson*



*Paul Robinson MRTPI  
Planning Director*

*Orbis  
town planning and development*

*Deb*

**Deb Smith, Case Officer  
Room 3M Kite Wing  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol**

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Orbis town planning



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS  
AMENDED)**

**4 Echo Hill, Sleights, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO22 5AE**



**Erection of a detached dwelling house on land adjacent to  
existing dwelling**

**PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT &  
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

Submitted on behalf of

Mr. & Mrs. Little

March 2017

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## Appendix A

### Design and Access Statement

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Supporting Statement (PSS) is submitted in support of a planning application for the erection of a new detached dwelling to the side of 4 Echo Hill, Sleights, near Whitby.

1.2 The plans submitted here follow a detailed site appraisal and design process to create a balanced approach to developing this 'vacant' double plot with an additional dwelling, whilst recognising its location as a single dwelling in the open countryside to the east of Sleights and within the North York Moors National Park (NYMNP).

1.3 This statement sets out the context of this process as well as the site and surroundings, and the practical and design influences that have led to the production of this submission. It considers the impacts of the proposal against prevailing planning policy and other material considerations. An assessment of the Landscape and Visual Impact of the development proposal has also been undertaken within the context of its surroundings and the sensitivity of the site to assess the relative visual impact of the proposals upon the National Park.

1.4 Orbis Town Planning is an independent firm of Chartered Town Planners with significant experience in both public and private sector development projects and applications. Specialising in small to medium sized housing developments, Orbis town planning services a niche market of individual clients who bring forward bespoke architectural buildings for either their own private residence or, in the case of the current proposal here, an extension to an individually designed single dwelling in the countryside. Our planning experience both within Council Planning Departments and in the private sector, and our focus on understanding both the planning constraints and opportunities at the outset before advising on the iterative design process, is a key aspect of our approach to produce exemplar

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dwellings and developments which meet both the expectations of our clients, local neighbours and the Council.

- 1.5 The plans and design of the proposals have been created by Close Grainger Gray and Wilkin (CGGW), who have worked extensively in the Whitby area on both domestic, heritage-led and infrastructure projects, including recent works to the harbour wall in Whitby.

## 2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site comprises an open garden area to the side (south) of the existing semi-detached house at 4 Echo Hill, Sleights. The site has dimensions of approximately 14m x 38m and therefore an area of 532m<sup>2</sup>. It is laid out mainly to lawn and shrubs, though there are parkland trees located towards its western end as the land slopes down towards the Esk, which themselves rather 'infill' the open gap here. A maintained native hedgerow forms the eastern boundary of the site to the sloping grass paddock beyond. Hedging also forms the southern and eastern boundaries.
- 2.2 The existing house at no. 4 is two storeys with habitable living space in the attic area, and is constructed in local sandstone with red brick returns above ground floor level. Forming part of a pair of semis, both houses have a covered veranda at first floor level connecting the two houses, giving the appearance of a single, large villa overlooking Sleights. To the north is another pair of significant semis, built in a different style but both having pronounced gables making the pair appear as a grander single dwelling. To the south lie two detached houses on slightly higher ground, both two storeys and finished in sandstone. Taken together these houses form a marked focal point on the ridge at Echo Hill.



Western façade of 4 Echo Hill facing Sleights village

- 2.3 At this point Echo Hill is located on a gently sloping ridge to the east of the main village of Sleights, and forms a cluster of 6 other houses on the ridge, with a further 2 houses within close proximity and a more isolated farmstead further to the east.
- 2.4 Access to the site is gained from Echo Hill, an unadopted lane connecting into Lowdale Lane to the south of the train station. Echo Hill is only partially tarmacked up to and around the cricket field at present. At a point north of Lowdale Farm it branches eastwards up to the application site, from where it becomes an un-tarmacked lane. In all, 12 properties are served by Echo Hill (plus the cricket pitch), with 9 served from the unmade section serving the application site, including a further farm to the east. Despite its nature the lane is well used, level and in reasonable condition, and serves these 9 properties without adverse incident. The houses at Echo Hill are arranged in such a way that vehicular access arrives at their 'rear' entrance, and most houses have a single garage and parking area allowing access into a kitchen or utility at the rear, the 'front' (and more ornately detailed facades) of the house facing westwards over their main gardens.

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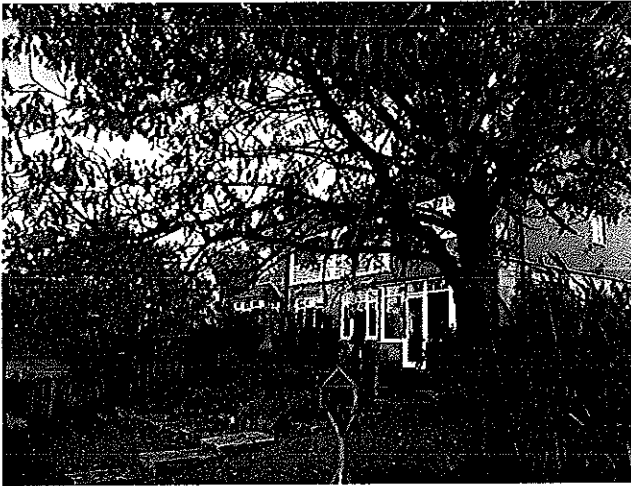




Access to the site from Lowdale Lane within Sleights village



Un-made section of Echo Hill access Lane up to application site



View of 4 Echo Hill from the main western garden area

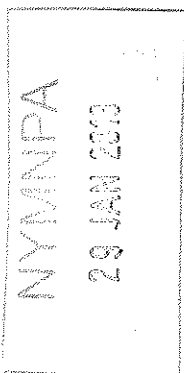


View westwards up the Esk Valley across Lowdale farm towards the main village at Sleights

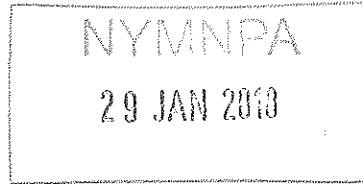
2.5 The village of Sleights is primarily a small residential settlement built around the bridge crossing over the Esk and the main A169 road between Whitby and Pickering. The village sits beneath the main escarpment and heather moor top within Eskdale and grew in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods with a number of residential villas, and saw further post war housing development to the east of the main village. The village is served by a post office and general store, public houses and a few other business serving basic daily needs as well as passing tourists. As such it is classified as a service Village in the NYMNP Settlement Hierarchy (2<sup>nd</sup> tier below the service centre of Helmsley).

2.6 The site is not within a conservation area and there are no nearby listed buildings that could be affected by development at 4 Echo Hill, but although clearly functionally part of the village and its general townscape, it falls approximately 150m outside the main village area of Sleights and for the purposes of planning policy, has been considered to be in an open countryside location within the National Park. It is not however in an isolated location.

2.7 The wider environment of the North York Moors is renowned for its scenic beauty, cultural assets and biodiversity - the principal features that have led to the designation of the area as a National Park. The diverse and distinctive landscapes of the area have evolved through a combination of natural change and processes, human intervention and management. Heather moorland is notably bereft of trees, creating a strong feeling of space, expansiveness, openness and, sometimes, solitude and wilderness. The sense of remoteness is enhanced by the relatively few roads and settlements which are visible on the moorland plateaus. The upland plateaus contrast with the dales with their scattered farmsteads and patterns of drystone walls enclosing small pastures. Eskdale which separates the North York Moors from the Cleveland Hills is a much broader valley and lacks the sense of enclosure of many of the other valleys. It has fine stone villages and extensive woodland which itself create a distinctive part of the character of Sleights and the application site.



2.8 A Landscape Character Assessment of the North York Moors was published in 2003. This extensive study identified nine landscape character areas, of which the application site lies within Lower Eskdale in the Central Eskdale Valley Character Area.



### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The planning history of the site itself is limited to some minor alterations to the house, but with the exception of an unsuccessful application to develop the land to the south of the house with a new dwelling in 2006 (Ref. NYM/2006/0861/OU). This application was submitted in outline and proposed a new detached dwelling on land to the south of the current house, in a similar vein to the current planning application. However, as an outline application no details were submitted for detailed approval, so matters such as its scale, siting and external appearance were not able to be considered. The application was refused planning permission, the reasons for refusal being:

1. *"The proposal lies outside the settlement of Sleights / Iburndale and does not constitute an infill plot within the built-up area of a settlement. If allowed this would consolidate this pocket of sporadic development in the countryside to the detriment of the character of the environment and landscape of the NYMNP, contrary to policy H3 of the NYMNP Local Plan (Development only allowed on infill sites within settlement boundaries / built up areas.*
2. *The development would generate additional traffic on the unadopted access road and Lowdale which is wholly inadequate in terms of construction, design and layout to cater for increased traffic movements, contrary to policy T7 of the NYMNP Local Plan"*

The applicants at that time did not make an appeal against this decision.

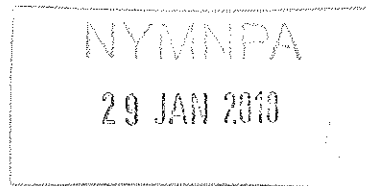
3.2 Elsewhere within proximity of the site there have been other applications of note that we consider should be taken into consideration in assessing this current planning application:

Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Decision
40340235	ECHO HILL, LOWDALE, SLEIGHTS	OUTLINE - ERECTION OF A SINGLE DWELLING HOUSE	Appeal Refused
40341236	1 ECHO HILL, SLEIGHTS	SITING OF 1,000 LITRE LPG TANK	Approved with Conditions
40341244	SUNNY RIDGE, 5 ECHO HILL, SLEIGHTS	PROPOSED ERECTION OF GARAGE AND PORCH	Approved with Conditions
40341245	3 ECHO HILL, SLEIGHTS, WHITBY	GARAGE	Approved with Conditions
40342512	6 Echo Hill, Sleights	erection of attached greenhouse	Approved with Conditions
40341363	paddock adjacent to 6 Echo Hill, Sleights	outline application for erection of a detached bungalow	Refused
NYM/2012/0003/FL	West Lea 2 Echo Hill Sleights	construction of replacement garage and car port	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2009/0514/FL	5 Echo Hill Sleights	erection of a sun room extension	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2007/0855/FL	1 Echo Hill Sleights	construction of a replacement garage together with construction of a retaining wall and fencing	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2006/0861/OU	4 Echo Hill Sleights	outline application for the erection of a detached dwelling	Refused
NYM/2006/0193/FL	4 Echo Hill Sleights	construction of a single storey extension to rear and conservatory to side	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2003/0690/FL	Caedmon 6 Echo Hill Sleights Whitby	single storey extension to garage to accommodate handweaving net business and erection of conservatory	Appeal Refused
40342512B	Caedmon, 6 Echo Hill, Sleights	erection of single storey workshop and erection of conservatory to rear of dwelling	Refused
40342546	Little Acres Echo Hill Sleights	construction of a replacement conservatory and porch	Approved with Conditions
40342512A	6 Echo Hill, Sleights	erection of detached double garage	Approved with Conditions

3.3 As can be seen from the above planning history, there have been numerous proposals to extend and upgrade the existing houses at Echo Hill that have been granted planning permission. There have been several proposals to erect new dwellings within the area of Echo Hill over the last 30 years or so, at no. 4, 6 and adjacent to Brookside, to the north of Echo Hill. It is noted that none of the above have been successful, but having examined these applications feel that little was put forward to justify these applications and

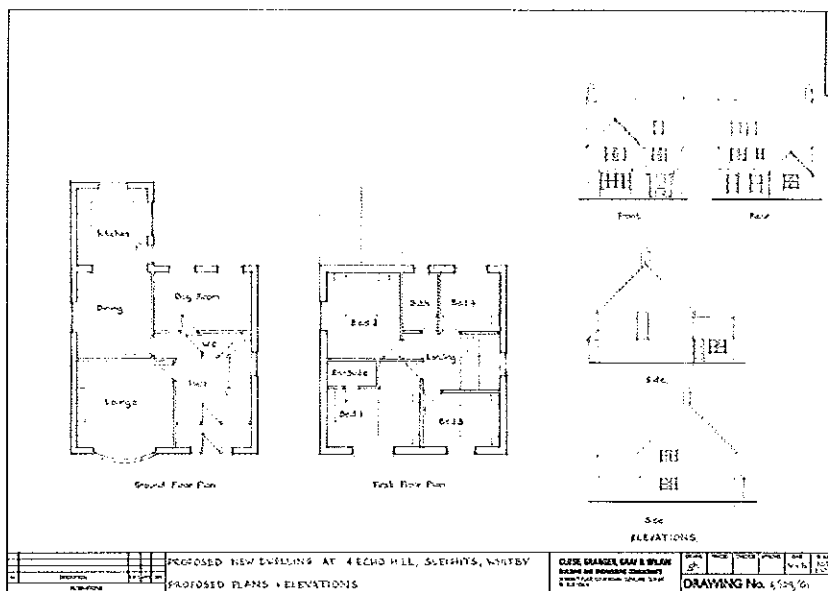
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set them against the actual impacts of the proposals upon the sensitive landscape and character of the National Park.



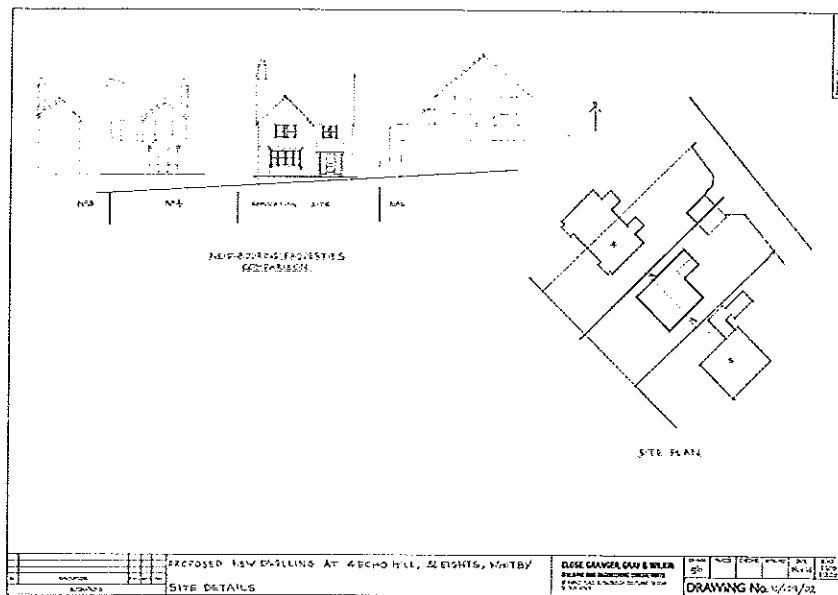
#### 4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The proposed development is for the erection of a new dwelling on the open garden area to the south of the existing house at no. 4 Echo Hill, Sleights. The proposed house would be two storeys in height and comprise of 4 bedrooms, matching the broad style, height and appearance of the house at the host property and those of surrounding plots.

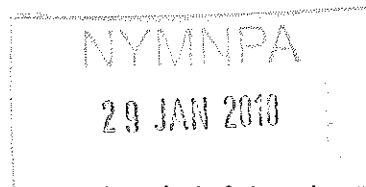


4.2 The house would be sited centrally within the new plot and match the front (west) building lines of neighbouring houses. Its roof would largely mimic that of the existing houses at 3 and 4 Echo Hill with a low front gable over the master bedroom, and with side gables to the main roof. Finished Floor Levels and its ridgeline would be comparable with neighbouring properties either side, whilst taking into account the natural rise in the land southwards from the main access lane at Echo Hill. This would produce a natural progression of building heights along the ridge in keeping with its scale and character.

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- 4.3 The proposed palette of materials would mirror those of neighbouring houses, using local stone and red brick with clay roofing tiles. Windows would be white uPVC matching those of neighbouring houses.
- 4.4 Access to the site would be from Echo Hill to the east (as with all neighbouring plots). Car parking on site would be provided to the west of the house within a single garage, with additional forecourt parking at the rear as deemed necessary.
- 4.5 As opposed to the 2006 planning application in outline, the application here is submitted as a full planning application, and is therefore supported with a full set of detailed plans showing the design of the proposals, as well as the following documents, which have also been used throughout the iterative design process to shape the eventual design and form of the proposal before you now.
- Completed Planning Application Forms;
  - Site Location Plan, existing topographical survey plan, block plans and proposed plans and elevations;
  - 'Streetscene' elevation from the west showing the proposal within the group of properties on Echo Hill;



- Planning Supporting Statement, incorporating brief Landscape and Visual Impact based assessment; and,
- Design and Access Statement

4.6 Since it is not intended to affect any trees surrounding the site, an arboricultural report has not been submitted.

## 5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The relevant policy background for this submission includes at the National level, the NPPF (2012),

### 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework

5.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 27th March 2012. The document effectively condenses previous planning policy guidance into one document (with the exception of certain Planning Policy Statements).

5.2.2 The NPPF emphasises the Government's policy on sustainable development, stating that this is essentially made up of a combination of economic, social and environmental considerations. It states that the role of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and advises that development which accords with the development plan should be approved without delay. Local Authorities are advised to respond positively to opportunities for growth and should contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy.

5.2.3 In Chapter 3 (Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy) the NPPF advises that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- 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;
- 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; and,
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

5.2.4 Chapter 6 (HOUSING) Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a ve-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

5.2.5 To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or

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- where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or
- where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting; or
- the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should:
  - be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;
  - reflect the highest standards in architecture;
  - significantly enhance its immediate setting; and
  - be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

5.2.6 Chapter 7 of the NPPF concerns design and requires all development to achieve a good standard of design. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;

- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

5.2.7 Chapter 10 of the NPPF concerns meeting the challenge of climate change and contains a set of broad-based policies to seek to address this in new development. The NPPF advises that in order to support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and, actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings.

5.2.8 Chapter 11 concerns the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and states that local planning authorities should protect and enhance valued landscapes, geological conservation areas and soils, recognise the wider benefits of ecosystem services and minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity, where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Both new and existing development should be prevented from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. In addition, where required, sites should be remediated and despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, mitigated, where appropriate.

5.2.9 In Chapter 12 the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

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5.2.10 Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

5.2.11 In all circumstances, planning authorities are also encouraged to consider the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.

### 5.3 North York Moors National Park Core Strategy (2007) and Development Policies DPD

5.3.1 The NYMNP Core Strategy and DMP DPD sets out the strategic and detailed aims for the Borough. The following section summarises those policies and objectives relevant to the consideration of the current application:

#### **CORE POLICY A - Delivering National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development**

The Local Development Framework seeks 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. Priority will be given to:

- Providing a scale of Development and level of activity that will not have an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape or the quiet enjoyment, peace and tranquillity of the Park, nor detract from the quality of life of local residents or the experience of visitors;
- Providing for development and in locations that will support the character and function of individual settlements;
- Managing and enhancing the natural environment and conditions for biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Conserving and enhancing the landscape, settlement, building features and historic assets of the landscape and character areas;
- Applying the Principles of sustainable Design and Energy Use to new development;
- Enabling the provision of a choice of housing that will meet the needs of local communities in terms of type, tenure and affordability.
- Strengthening and diversifying the rural economy and providing tourism based opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities.
- Enabling access to services, facilities, jobs and technology whilst minimising the environmental impacts of transport.

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### **CORE POLICY B - Spatial Strategy**

This is the overarching Strategy to meet the needs of people in the National Park and is based upon improving the sustainability of Local communities by supporting, improving and consolidating existing services and facilities, providing additional housing and employment within settlements and enabling alternative modes of transport. A settlement hierarchy includes Sleights in the 'top tier' of settlements as a service village, in which it is envisaged housing (including open market housing) will be located and the role of the service villages will be consolidated.

In the Open Countryside it is envisaged that housing will be restricted to that which is related to an essential need to live in the countryside, holiday

conversions and other community uses where there are no more suitable sites within settlements.

The policy allows for the development of new services and facilities, housing and employment development within settlements according to its designation within the settlement hierarchy with the overall aim of making local communities more self-sustaining.

The Proposals Maps show all of the settlements in the hierarchy, but no development limits are identified. The suitability of a site for development will be assessed on a case by case basis. In the case of Helmsley a joint Development Plan Document for the town will be produced with Ryedale District Council which will address the scope for further housing and employment development including allocations where necessary.

#### **DEVELOPMENT POLICY I Environmental Protection**

To conserve and enhance the special qualities of the North York Moors National Park, development will only be permitted where: It will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on surface and ground water, soil, air quality and agricultural land; It will not generate unacceptable levels of noise, vibration, activity or light pollution; There will be no adverse effects arising from sources of pollution which would impact on the health, safety and amenity of the public and users of the development; Land stability can be achieved without causing unacceptable environmental or landscape impact; and, There is or will be sufficient infrastructure capacity to accommodate the demand generated by the development.

#### **CORE POLICY D Climate Change**

Activities in the National Park will also address the causes of climate change by reducing the use of energy and the need to use energy; Generating energy from renewable sources where these are of a location, scale and design appropriate to the locality and which contribute towards meeting domestic, community or business energy needs within the National Park;

Requiring residential developments of 5 or more dwellings to displace at least 10% of energy use to renewable sources.

Development will be directed away from flood risk areas and encouraging enhancements for biodiversity to buffer, extend and connect habitats.

### **CORE POLICY G** Landscape, Design and Historic Assets

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 identified in the North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment.

To maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the National Park, development will be permitted where:

1. The siting, orientation, layout and density preserves or enhances views into and out of the site, spaces about and between buildings and other features that contribute to the character and quality of the environment and will not result in the loss of an open space which contributes to the amenity, character and setting of a settlement.
2. The 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.
3. A high standard of design detailing is used whether traditional or contemporary, which reflects or complements that of the local vernacular.
4. Provision is made for adequate storage and waste management facilities.
5. Good quality sustainable design and construction techniques are incorporated in the development including measures to minimise energy use and where possible use energy from renewable sources.

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6. A satisfactory landscaping scheme forms an integral part of the proposal.
7. The design takes account of the safety, security and access needs for all potential users of the development and provides car parking provision in line with the standards adopted by the Authority.

## **CORE POLICY J Housing**

The Authority will seek a mix of housing types and tenures will be sought to maintain the vitality of local communities, consolidate support for services and facilities and support the delivery of more affordable housing. This will be delivered through locating all market housing, including new build and converted units, in the main built up area of the Local Service Centre of Helmsley and the Service Villages. On larger sites more than 0.1 hectares or where 2 or more residential units are proposed, at least 50% of the resulting units must be affordable including conversion schemes;

Supporting the development of local needs housing located on infill sites or as a conversion of an existing building within the main built up area of the Local Service Villages and Other villages;

Restricting new housing development in the Open Countryside to that which is proven as essential for farming, forestry or other essential land management activities, replacement dwellings and conversion of traditional rural buildings for residential letting for local needs.

Local occupancy restrictions are also applied. Core Policy J allows for housing development within the main built up area of the settlements. The Proposals Maps show the entire settlement and an interpretation of what constitutes the main built up area will be considered on a case by case basis.

The majority of new housing development will take place on infill sites and these are defined as a small gap within a continuously built up frontage

within the main built up area of the settlement, which can accommodate no more than one dwelling. However it is important to recognise the amenity value of certain open spaces within the built up area of settlements and therefore not every gap will be considered as an appropriate infill site. Gaps created by the development of affordable housing exception sites are not considered as infill gaps and may not necessarily be part of the main built up area of the settlement. On larger sites in Helmsley and the Service Villages consideration will be given to the use of the whole site and therefore on sites which can accommodate more than one unit proposals to split the site into smaller units for the construction of single dwellings will not be considered as infill gaps.

### **CORE POLICY M** Accessibility and Inclusion

Through strong and effective partnerships the Park Authority will work to improve accessibility to services and facilities within and beyond the National Park for all users and to encourage more sustainable patterns of travel. This will be achieved by:

1. Locating new development in settlements where services and facilities are available or where they can be accessed in another settlement by a range of transport modes.
2. Supporting the development and implementation of Service Centre Transportation Strategies contained in the North Yorkshire County Council Local Transport Plan for Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside, Pickering and Thornton-le-Dale, Stokesley and Great Ayton, Whitby and Esk Valley, Scarborough, Thirsk and Northallerton.
3. Demand management measures that reduce seasonal traffic congestion, minimise the environmental impacts of transport and increase road safety for the benefit of all users.
4. Supporting the development of community transport initiatives such as the Esk Valley Community Railway.

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5. Improving accessibility through the use and development of innovative and alternative modes of transport to the private car - including public transport, walking, cycling and horse riding.
6. Providing access to new developments in technology and communications services.
7. Reducing the need to travel.

#### **DEVELOPMENT POLICY 23 New Development and Transport**

In order to effectively minimise the overall need for journeys and reduce the environmental impacts of traffic on the National Park, development will be permitted where:

1. Its location is, or is capable of being, accessed by public transport, walking or cycling.
2. Existing Public Rights of Way, linear routes and other access routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders are protected.
3. The external design and layout and associated surfacing works take into account the needs of all users including cyclists, walkers and horse riders. It is of a scale which the adjacent vehicular road network has the capacity to serve without detriment to highway safety or the environmental characteristics of the locality.
4. Highway detailing, road improvements and street furniture are complementary to the character of the area and are the minimum required to achieve safe access.
5. Existing attractive or historic highway features important to the character of the National Park are preserved.
6. Parking is provided in accordance with the relevant maximum standards adopted by the Authority.

#### **5.4 North York Moors Landscape Character assessment (2003)**

5.4.1 A comprehensive Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the North York Moors National Park was completed by White Young Green in 2003. Its purpose is to provide an assessment that identifies landscape types and

areas, their characteristics and attributes and potentially damaging and beneficial measures. The information will be used to inform the National Park Management Plan policies, conservation and grant aid scheme development and planning policy implementation. It may also be used in public consultation as part of the National Park Management Plan process.

5.4.3 Landscape character assessment is an objective, value-free assessment of landscape concerned with character rather than quality or value, although following the process of characterisation judgements may be made about particular landscapes and values may be assigned to them to inform particular decisions.

5.4.3 The LCA identifies the main forces driving change in the landscape character of the National Park have been, and are likely to remain, developments in agricultural practice and the effect of numerous small-scale, minor developments.

5.4.4 Sleights and its surrounds is located in the Lower Esk Valley sub-area (8b) of the wider Central (Esk) Valley Landscape character Area, and is characterised by its narrow, deep and sinuous central valley located between areas of heather moorland, widening in its middle reaches to an open, flat valley floor; in its lower reaches the valley form becomes more complex as a result of extensive glacial deposition. The valley is more open on its southern side where it is joined by a number of moorland dales.

5.4.5 Landcover is varied and comprises a mixture of farmland with broadleaved woodland and areas of coniferous and mixed plantations. Small patches of scrub, bracken, rough pasture, wet grassland and areas of upland grass moor occur.

5.4.6 Fields of improved and (occasionally) rough pasture and arable are bounded mainly by low stone walls in the upper dale and closely trimmed and overgrown hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees in the lower valley, giving a well-wooded appearance to the lower dale.

5.4.7 Blocks of broadleaved woodland (including some ancient semi natural upland oak woodland) are a feature of the upper, middle and lower valley sides, and follows the line of the river and valley side beck. Blocks of coniferous plantation are sited on the steeper valley slopes. The density and size of woodland areas increase significantly in the lower dale.

5.4.8 Relatively densely settled, villages being of varied character, constructed mainly in sandstone with pantile roofs but with brick and slate also used as building materials. Although the older settlements are generally of a clustered form, many have expanded in linear fashion along the roads to include modern, suburban style housing. Traditional railway stations are a feature of many settlements. Scattered farms are sited on the mid and upper valley sides.

5.4.9 The LCA identifies (amongst other issues) the following practices, which if not sensitively managed, represent a threat to the overall scenic beauty and landscape character of the Lower Eskdale Valley:

- Demand for residential and holiday homes in the National Park;
- Pressure for small scale settlement expansion inc. infill; and,
- The cumulative effect of changes in the physical fabric of settlements, inc. conversion of redundant buildings, closure of shops and schools, introduction of tourism facilities, creeping suburbanisation and gentrification of settlements, inappropriate planting and loss of specimen trees within settlements

## 5.5 Summary of extant local planning policy

5.5.1 The emphasis of extant Development Plan Policies and supporting documents is clearly to restrict inappropriate open market housing to within the existing built-up areas, with new housing in the 'open countryside' being limited to that considered essential to rural needs or affordable housing. The reasoning for this is clearly based on safeguarding the character and appearance of the National Park, but also includes consideration of the proximity of housing to services including transport,

shops and health services etc. It is notable that no development limits are prescribed, and therefore one must assess all proposals on a case-by-case basis, including the determination of what constitutes the built up area of any particular settlement. We would submit that such an analysis is in itself not a straight forward matter of demarking a line on a plan, and must involve an assessment of landscape, townscape and its visual and functional connectivity to a place. Moreover, as with any planning application, all proposals must be considered on their merits, and a significant part of this is a consideration of the relative harm (or otherwise) that might come about if the development was to go ahead.

- 5.5.2 In the case of the current planning application, whilst considering the overriding planning policy background to development not within existing 'built up' areas, a deeper assessment of the proposal against findings and management policies of the North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment should also strongly influence consideration of the merits of the proposal.

## 6.0 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The foremost matter in determining whether the site is suitable for the development of a new dwelling is its location within the National Park policy area, and the consideration of this against the settlement policies of the development plan.

6.2 Previously the principle of the development has been the focus of concern, with a seemingly automatic assumption that development outside the built up areas will be harmful, without proper consideration of its actual impact. We feel all matters must be considered to determine whether the proposal would in fact, be harmful or not to the character of the National Park. Our approach to this is set out below in this section, with the following aspects being identified:

- Land Use Principle

- Quantum of Development and Design Considerations
- Setting, Landscape Impact and impact on the Character and Appearance of the Open Countryside.
- Residential Amenity
- Access, Parking and Highways Impact
- Flood Risk
- Energy and Sustainability Considerations

### Land Use Principle

- 6.3 Whilst there are purposefully no 'limits to development' around Sleights, a more abstract consideration has to be made to determine whether the site lies within the 'built up' part of the settlement. In this respect the NYMNP Authority considered previously that the site is located outside this for the purposes of planning policy, in 2006 stating, *'the proposal lies outside the settlement of Sleights / Iburndale and does not constitute an infill plot within the built-up area of a settlement'*.
- 6.4 Whilst there is a clear argument to suggest that the houses on Echo Hill do form a part of the village of Sleights (and they are certainly not in an isolated location given their proximity and connection to the day-to-day functions of the village), we must accept that they are not central to the settlement and must be considered as being in the open countryside on policy terms.
- 6.5 Core Policy B states that it is envisaged housing (including open market housing) will be located and the role of the service villages will be consolidated. Conversely, in the Open Countryside it is envisaged that housing will be restricted to that which is related to an essential need to live in the countryside, holiday conversions and other community uses where there are no more suitable sites within settlements. Core Policy J (Housing) is firmer in its intentions, stating that all market housing, including new build and converted units, will be sited in the main built up area of the Local Service Centre of Helmsley and the Service Villages.
- 6.6 Broadly speaking therefore, the policy direction in terms of new open-

market housing points towards new housing in the open countryside being considered to be unacceptable unless it meets the exceptions of fulfilling the needs of rural workers and practices. However, the plan clearly states that this is an '*envisaged*' result (i.e. it is guidance or an expectation, and not therefore an absolute). Reflecting this it goes on to state that 'the suitability of a site for development will be assessed on a case by case basis'. This in itself is reflective of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38 (6)), which requires 'the determination of planning applications to be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'. (our underlining)

- 6.7 Taking the above into account we consider that it is fair to conclude that whilst the general direction of policy would quite rightly place a presumption against ad hoc housing in the open countryside / National Park, an individual assessment of the merits or harm of any proposal must be taken into account in order to determine what adverse impacts would result should a new proposal be allowed. Any new housing should not therefore automatically be considered harmful by its nature - should it be demonstrated that there would be no material harm arising, then it follows that planning permission ought to be justified on an individual basis.

#### Quantum of Development and Design Considerations

- 6.8 There are 9 houses located off the unmade section of Echo Hill, of which 7 are located upon the ridge (2 x semis plus 3 detached houses). These buildings are well-established and form a strong visual reference point to the east of Sleights, emphasising the broader settlement limits of the village. However, there is an obvious built gap within this ridge line to the south of the application site.
- 6.9 The proposal is therefore to infill this gap with a single detached dwelling. The building would be entirely proportionate to those surrounding it and,

inter alia, will represent a logical form or development set against the visual prominence of its neighbours.

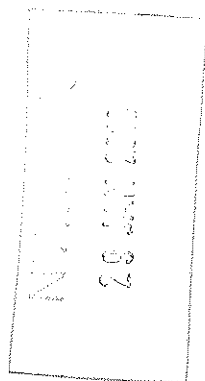
6.10 It was determined at an early stage that the detailed design of the house should follow a traditional form, reinforcing a justification that this is in effect a vacant plot which, in other circumstances, may well have been developed at the same time the neighbouring houses were built. The proposals will therefore reflect the proportions and form of the neighbouring Edwardian 'villas', with materials of stone, red brick and clay tiles to ensure the resulting new building would sit comfortably within its surroundings. This would further be reinforced by the proposed FFL, being roughly halfway between nos. 4 and 5 Echo Hill as the slope rises up to the south. The existing rhythm of housing here will also be maintained with the allowance for adequate space to the side of the proposed house, ensuring that open gaps are maintained between both existing and proposed houses.

6.11 Core Policy G requires that high quality sustainable design will be sought which conserves or enhances the landscape setting, settlement layout and building characteristics of the landscape character areas identified in the North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment. Development will therefore be permitted where:

- the siting, orientation, layout and density preserves or enhances views into and out of the site;
- spaces about and between buildings and other features that contribute to the character and quality of the environment are maintained;
- it will not result in the loss of an open space which contributes to the amenity, character and setting of a settlement.
- the scale, height, massing, proportion, form, size, materials and design features of the proposal should be compatible with surrounding buildings;
- it will not have an adverse effect upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers;

- a high standard of design detailing is used whether traditional or contemporary, reflecting or complementing that of the local vernacular; and,
- good quality sustainable design and construction techniques should be incorporated in the development, including measures to minimise energy use and where possible use energy from renewable sources.

6.12 It is clear that on the level of individual design, the intended proposals meet with the design requirements of the development plan as set out above. The new dwelling would not detract from the setting of Echo Hill and, whilst there would be an increase in development on the ridge this would not detract from its overall setting within the National Park (discussed in detail below). In essence, the proposal would not fail to conserve and enhance the Park's special qualities, providing as Core Policy A requires, 'a scale of development and level of activity that will not have an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape or the quiet enjoyment, peace and tranquility of the Park, nor detract from the quality of life of local residents or the experience of visitors'.



#### Landscape Impact upon the National Park.

6.13 Core Policies B and J do not set out exceptions to their preclusion on new open-market housing outside the built up settlements. There is also no housing provision requirement in the development plan. Nonetheless, this does not mean that other factors should not be taken into account when determining planning applications. In this case we believe that the development of a single house here does generate an exceptional circumstance in so far as there would be a relative lack of harm resulting in this particular case, when considered against its existing setting and the objectives of maintaining the character and appearance of the National Park in both the development plan and the more recent NPPF. Both local and national policy quite rightly place great significance on conserving the



NYMNP  
29 JAN 2003

landscape and scenic beauty of the NYMNP and National Parks in general, so the starting point for any assessment must be, what are the intrinsic qualities of the park in this location and, what harm would result should the development proposal proceed.

- 6.14 The starting point for this assessment is reference to the NYMNP LCA (2003). The wider setting is classed as the Lower Esk Valley sub-area (8b) of the wider Central (Esk) Valley Landscape character Area. It is characterised by its narrow, deep and sinuous central valley located between areas of heather moorland, widening in its middle reaches to an open, flat valley floor; in its lower reaches the valley form becomes more complex as a result of extensive glacial deposition. At Sleights the valley is more open on its southern side where it is joined by a number of moorland dales, and as at Echo View, there are residual bluffs within the valley formed by moraines of retreating glaciers.
- 6.15 Land cover is varied and comprises a mixture of farmland with broadleaved woodland and areas of coniferous and mixed plantations. Small patches of scrub, bracken, rough pasture, wet grassland and areas of upland grass moor occur. Fields of improved and (occasionally) rough pasture and arable are bounded mainly by low stone walls in the upper dale and closely trimmed and overgrown hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees in the lower valley, giving a well-wooded appearance to the lower dale.
- 6.16 As with other villages, Sleights is relatively densely settled, and whilst having an older and clustered core, like others it has expanded both in a linear fashion along the roads to include modern, suburban style housing and outwards to the east. Within this context the LCA identifies the following can pose a threat to the overall scenic beauty and landscape character of the Lower Eskdale Valley:

- Demand for residential and holiday homes in the National Park;
- Pressure for small scale settlement expansion inc. infill; and,

- The cumulative effect of changes in the physical fabric of settlements, inc. conversion of redundant buildings, closure of shops and schools, introduction of tourism facilities, creeping suburbanisation and gentrification of settlements, inappropriate planting and loss of specimen trees within settlements

6.17 Taking into account the above, the question then moves to what harm the proposal here would have on this over-riding character and scenic beauty, the key question being, 'would it be under threat'. To this end the principles of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment have been followed in order to establish the impacts of the proposals, albeit in this case tailored to the scale of the proposals at hand (i.e. a single new dwelling adjacent to a row of existing houses). Points of local interest and public use have been identified, and visual reference points identified in the locality to determine the impact of the scheme, at all times referring back to the identified character and management objectives of the development plan and National Park.

6.18 Whilst Townscape and Landscape would often be assessed separately, in this case we consider the two are inter-dependable and interchangeable, reflecting the nature of the park itself, and so has been assessed as one.

6.19 It is a fact that the site is surrounded by houses on either side which together form a distinct form of development of about 100m in length on the ridge when viewed from either the east or west. On either side, open fields then slope away from the ridge but interspersed with hedgerow and single or grouped trees / small coppice. Given its siting and topography the site is clearly visible from a wide area both near and further afield, though from afar the site is somewhat masked by the extensive built appearance of Sleights itself. The key visual reference points to assess its impact therefore lie to the immediate east and west of the site, from locations lower down (such as the Sleights cricket field) to the west, and open land towards Ruswarp in the east. Whilst there are several footpaths and rights of way running through the area, an assessment of this network shows there to be few within the visual 'zone of influence' of the proposed dwelling.

6.20 The following assesses each criterion setting out the identified threats to the scenic qualities of this part of the park:

Demand for residential and holiday homes in the National Park

6.21 The proposal clearly falls into this category but we would contend that in planning practice this does not automatically follow that a new dwelling will harm the park per se. Its impact must clearly be assessed.

6.22 In this case the house would sit in a very logical location between 7 other houses. It would partly fill in the existing gap between nos. 4 and 5 Echo Hill, but with gaps retained to the side and a sympathetic design, materials and landscaping scheme (including new and enhanced planting). The proposed house would also sit behind existing mature trees which already replicate the rhythm of housing that would come about if the current proposal was built (see photo below). Within this context the visual impact upon the scenic beauty and special characteristics of the park in this location would be negligible. The national Park would clearly be under no material threat from the proposal.



Current 'rhythm' of built development and existing mature trees within the site

Pressure for small scale settlement expansion including infill

6.23 The proposal does not comprise a settlement extension, though there are few if any areas within Sleights itself for any meaningful housing

developments to take place. In practical terms the proposal does comprise a partial infilling of the space between the existing houses, but not so in the context of Core Policies B and J of the development plan. As set out above in 6.22, the infill will have minimal impact upon the setting of the ridge and the houses upon it, which already form a very strong visual reference locally, and would not affect any longer range views either up or down the valley or up to the heather moorlands.

6.24 In 2006 the planning authority stated that in their view that development here would 'consolidate this pocket of sporadic development in the countryside to the detriment of the character of the environment and landscape of the NYMNP'. As set out above we contest this conclusion, and consider this is adequately demonstrated in the current proposals which show detailed plans, rather than the basic layout plans submitted in 2006, and which remained untested at appeal. The classification of Echo Hill being 'sporadic' development is also questionable, since this term would imply that the housing here is at irregular intervals, scattered or only in a few places, when this is clearly not the case here - the houses on the ridge are closely grouped, have a relatively homogenous form, appearance and materials and already comprise a strong visual reference point. They are far from sporadic in nature, having only a single gap between them where the proposed house would sit. Thus, a conclusion that the proposal would consolidate sporadic development cannot therefore be justified.

6.25 The site is also unique in its situation between the existing row of houses on the ridge. There are no further plots were this could logically take place without expanding the current form of Echo Hill, and therefore there can be no question of precedent being created which could lead to a material expansion of development here.

The cumulative effect of changes in the physical fabric of settlements,.. creeping suburbanisation and gentrification of settlements.

6.26 As set out above in 6.22 - 6.25, the proposal would not materially alter the existing pattern of development or its physical fabric, nor would its form,

design or materials represent creeping suburbanisation. The proposal would deliver a house that would compliment the design and era of those immediately surrounding it, and in this respect would have no negative impact.

- 6.27 In light of the above assessment we conclude that whilst the proposal would conflict with the headline approach of Core Policies B and J, in reality there would be no material harm arising from the proposal. This includes those issues rightly identified of acknowledged importance: the setting, scenic beauty or management objectives of the National Park. Thus, given this lack of material harm, the proposal would meet with the objectives of the NPPF - the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park would be safeguarded, as well as its wildlife and cultural heritage.

### **Residential Amenity**

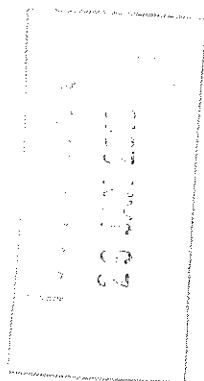
- 6.28 The application site has existing housing either side but no neighbours to the front or rear. Given the design of the proposal and its setting, leaving adequate gaps to either side, there would be no adverse impacts upon the amenity of neighbouring occupants or the occupants of the proposed dwelling in terms of light, outlook or privacy. Within the site itself the proposals will provide an excellent standard of accommodation that will serve the future occupants of the building well. Generous garden space is also proposed to the front and rear and so on all respects, the proposals will safeguard and promote adequate levels of residential amenity.

### **Access, Accessibility, Parking and Highways Impact**

- 6.29 Within the context of Sleights the site is clearly connected functionally to the village and its services and facilities. These provide easy access to Whitby and Middlesbrough via the train station as well as local bus services, and there is provision for basic needs shopping within the village. As with the rest of Sleights, more expansive facilities and shopping etc is provided

in nearby Whitby or further afield. In local terms therefore, the site is considered to be reasonably well connected and comprises a sustainable location. It therefore meets the requirements of Core Policy M in locating new development in settlements where services and facilities are available or where they can be accessed in another settlement by a range of transport modes.

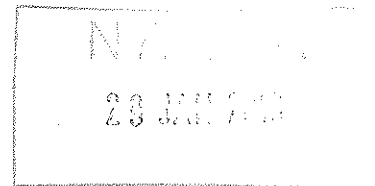
- 6.30 As for the access lane itself it is noted that under the previous planning proposal here in 2006, concerns were raised over the general standard of access to the site from the adopted highway, since this and the surrounding 11 houses are located off Echo Hill, comprised of a largely single-track private lane. The planning authority concluded that: *'the development would generate additional traffic on the unadopted access road and Lowdale which is wholly inadequate in terms of construction, design and layout to cater for increased traffic movements, contrary to policy T7 of the NYMNP Local Plan'*.



- 6.31 The fact that the access track from the main section of Echo Hill is unmade cannot be denied. However, notwithstanding the desire of the County Highways Authority to seek to limit the amount of housing that should be accessed from such lanes, one must consider firstly how commonplace this arrangement is within the National park, and then consider what adverse impacts this in fact causes.
- 6.32 On the first point it is clear that many households, whether farmsteads, individual houses or small groups of houses are connected to the highway by unmade tracks, often by quite lengthy stretches in some cases. Indeed, it could be strongly argued that within the National Park this in itself is a contributory factor in its character and appearance, giving it its strong rural qualities and avoiding over-intensified engineered roads and laneways.
- 6.33 On the second aspect, it must be borne in mind that Echo Hill already serves at least 11 dwellings as well as the cricket pitch. The unmade section

leading up to the application site serving 9 dwellings at least. Whilst it could be argued that this arrangement is inadequate and should not be furthered, the opposite is also true - that since this has operated in this way for many years without adverse incident or prejudice to the occupants of housing served by it, the addition of one further dwelling would not be significant.

- 6.34 Thus, whilst Development -Policy 23 requires that external design, layout and associated surfacing works take into account the needs of all users including cyclists, walkers and horse riders, it is of a scale which is compatible with the environmental characteristics of the locality. Since there are no safety concerns in this case and there is already an established use of this lane, it is considered that the latter aspect of DP23, to safeguard the environmental characteristics of the locality should prevail in this case.



### **Trees and Landscaping**

- 6.35 There are few trees within the application site itself but the site is bounded by hedgerow and some individual trees around the site. Nonetheless, these trees contribute positively to the character of the site and surroundings and indeed, provide a strong visual presence in the gap between nos. 4 and 5 Echo Hill. As such, none of these trees will be materially affected by the proposals.
- 6.36 In the case of the proposals, extensive open garden would be provided to both the front, sides and rear, which would mimic the domestic character of the existing site and surrounding housing. The opportunity also exists to plant further native trees to the west as well as reinstating traditional native hedgerow to the western boundary. In this respect a subtle approach to landscaping would be both in keeping with the rural character of the site as well as providing local ecological enhancements through the reintroduction of native flora. In this respect, the proposal would comply with extant planning policy.

## Energy and Sustainability Considerations

- 6.37 Core Policies A and D suggests a best endeavours approach the matter of sustainability and energy within new developments of less than 5 dwellings, looking for at least a 10% displacement of energy demands on site. Whilst there is a lack of localised detailed policy in this respect the broad thrust of national planning policy is to seek to engender the principles of sustainable building techniques and energy use and provision within new development schemes. In this case a 'best endeavours approach would nonetheless be taken to the construction and energy and water needs of the dwelling to minimise its immediate and ongoing environmental impact. This would seek to exceed the performance required when set against those required under the current Building Regulations requirements.
- 6.38 Subject to an assessment of impacts to design and character within this sensitive setting, the following energy efficiency measures can be implemented at the site to reduce the overall energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the development before renewable or low carbon technologies are installed:

- 
- Appliances and equipment
  - Building control systems
  - Design detailing
  - Fabric insulation
  - Heating systems
  - Lighting
  - Windows and doors

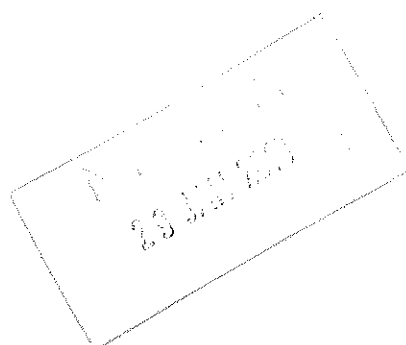
- 6.39 As is the industry standard, the construction of the dwelling would be based on 'fabric first' principles, reducing the need for energy in terms of lighting and heating, and an extensive bank of photovoltaics are still proposed to the west facing roof slopes in order to provide on-site energy generation. This approach would ensure real energy savings are made within the site and would be an overall benefit to the scheme.



6.40 The most suitable low carbon or renewable technology system chosen to achieve the energy savings would be the use of photovoltaics, with typical savings achieved by selected low carbon or renewable technology system after energy efficiency measures are implemented being a 6% saving in energy and around a 8.6% saving in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### Flood Risk

- 6.41 The site is located at a height of 50m+ above sea level and sited on a ridge above the surrounding land. The site is accordingly noted as being with Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency's flood zone map, and is not therefore at risk of flooding. A search also reveals that the site is not at risk of flooding from surface water or other localised sources, and so there are no concerns in respect of flooding to the property.
- 6.42 The property itself will be connected into the existing water system for both foul and surface water which we understand has more than adequate capacity. The site would therefore have no adverse impacts upon flooding or flood capacity downstream, meeting with the requirements of Core Policy D.



## 7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### Summary

- 7.1 The application site lies to the east of Sleights in an area that previously has not been deemed to form a part of the 'built up area of the village settlement. Whilst there is a clear visual and functional connection to the main village, the development of an open-market dwelling in this location would be contrary to Core Policies B and J.
- 7.2 In this case however, we have demonstrated that despite a conflict with the headline policy restriction, in this case the development of the site would not lead to any material harm to the character and appearance of National Park. The detailed design and form of the proposal would be very much commensurate with its surroundings and the addition of one further dwelling here could not be considered to have a consolidating effect on 'sporadic' development. Thus, since there would be no material harm to the National Park, an exceptional case in this instance is justified on planning merits alone. Therefore, on the basis of a thorough assessment (rather than a more arbitrary policy requirement), there is no material harm upon which to base a reason for refusal.
- 7.3 In terms of amenity, nearby residents would be unaffected by the proposals. and there would be no adverse impacts upon the highway network, safety, or parking.
- 7.4 The proposals have also paid due attention to matters of ecology, landscaping and trees, upon which there would be no adverse impacts, and there would be no flood risk issues.

### Conclusion

- 7.5 In light of the above and despite a conflict with the locational strategy of the Core Strategy, given there would be no actual adverse impacts arising, we consider that planning permission is justified in this case. The NPPF rightly places great emphasis on conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Park, but without any material harm being created these

qualities are clearly safeguarded in this instance. In all other respects the proposals represent sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and as such, we strongly request that planning permission should be granted.

End.

**Paul Robinson BA(Hons) BPL MRTPI**  
Orbis town planning  
February 2017



## **Appendix A – Design and Access Statement**

### **Orbis town planning Ltd**

#### **Land at 4 Echo Hill, Sleights - Design and Access Statement.**

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in accordance with the acknowledged industry standards in order to highlight the key aspects of the design process and assessment involved in bringing the submitted proposals to the point of submission to the Council.

The approach to the character of the site comes from the analysis, understanding and appreciation of its features and the context in which it sits. The following sections describe how the dwelling proposals have been developed using best practice design principles to take greatest advantage of the site opportunities, whilst safeguarding the special landscape and scenic beauty of the surrounding North York Moors National Park.

#### **Amount**

The existing site is ancillary garden area to the side (south) of no. 4 Echo Hill and measures approximately 14m x 38m, having an area of 532sqm. The proposed house would sit centrally within this having dimensions of 9m x 9m (plus annex) and a footprint of 97sqm. The net density of development on the plot would therefore be about 19dph, which is very much comparable with the surrounding row of houses on Echo Hill.

A total of 4 bedrooms is proposed, which is also comparable with the scale of housing on neighbouring plots.

#### **Existing Site**

The existing site forms a part of the garden area located to the south of no.4 Echo Hill. The land is relatively flat for the most part but tapers down towards its western end as the ridge starts to fall into the slope running down the bank. The site is largely laid out to domestic lawn and shrubs, with some native trees located to the western end, providing for a green 'infill' in the gap between nos. 1-4 and nos. 5 and 6 Echo Hill.

#### **Proposed Layout**

The house sits centrally on the plot with generous gaps of 2 and 3m to either side, allowing for extensive views through the site in either an east or west direction, reinforcing the open rural character of the site within the National Park. Extensive open gardens are also maintained to the front and rear, in keeping with neighbouring houses.

## **Scale**

The scale of the proposed house mimics that of its surroundings in both height, scale, mass and plot coverage. This is done purposefully to reinforce the character and appearance of the cluster of existing housing on this low ridge.

would be fitting to its setting as well as the need to maintain the character and openness of the landscape of the surrounding National Park.

## **Landscaping**

In principle it is proposed that landscaping is kept to a minimum although sufficient space exists to plant additional hedgerow and native woodland trees to the front and rear to reinforce the existing planting on the site and along this ridge. It is considered this detail, to be agreed in a detailed landscaping scheme, can be determined at conditions stage should planning permission be granted.

## **Appearance**

The design, form and proportions of the house has again been arrived at to mimic those of on neighbouring plots, the rationale being that this open site very much presents itself as a vacant plot which, in other circumstances may well have seen development in a similar vein to the neighboring 5 houses had it been built out at that time. This includes its setting and levels, which are proposed to carry on the somewhat 'regimented' order of these detached and semi-detached villas located on the ridge at Echo Hill.

In keeping with the majority of the surrounding residential properties a simple palette of stone, brick and clay tiles is proposed. This maintains a coherence with the surrounding area.

The option to utilise both solar panels can be implemented subject to design considerations, whilst a 'fabric-first approach' will in any case aim to make the dwellings more efficient than the current building regulations. The use of high performance insulation and durable facing materials together with high quality detailing will ensure the dwellings will be both robust and environmentally sustainable.

## **Access**

The existing access route from Echo Hill and Lowdale Lane will be used, serving one additional house on this ridge over the 11 already served.

Access to the local highway network is readily available on Lowdale Lane, the train station is less than 5 minutes walk and local bus routes serving Whitby, the moors and further afield are readily available. Local shops are located in Sleights.

The house will be built with level access so will be fully wheelchair accessible to the ground floor, where doorways and facilities will be available to allow the house to be lived in as a 'Lifetime Home', and in accordance with up-to-date Building Regulation standards.

## Summary

The development proposed has been put together following an iterative design process and taking into account the setting, policy background and specific characteristics of the site.

We trust that the above Design and Access statement demonstrates this process and explains the eventual designs and layout that are now submitted to the council.

*End.*

P. A. Robinson

Director - Orbis town planning

February 2017

