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## **15. FULL PLANNING APPLICATION – ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO HOLLOWFORD OUTDOOR ACTIVITY CENTRE, ROBINLANDS LANE, CASTLETON (NP/HPK/0414/0381, P.5910, 14/4/14, 414823 / 383603, JK)**

**APPLICANT: LINLEY EDUCATIONAL TRUST LTD**

### **Site and Surroundings**

The Hollowford Centre is located in the open countryside about 1km north of Castleton village. It is a purpose built outdoor pursuits training and conference centre which aims to encourage the development of young people through the use of learning. It is operated by the Lindley Educational Trust which is a charity specialising in helping young people and has been in existence for over 40 years.

Hollowford provides facilities for groups of between 10 and 130 people in four separate accommodation blocks. The newest addition at Hollowford was built in spring 2008 and two of the older blocks were refurbished in 2009 and 2010. The most recently refurbished accommodation block 'Stanage', was refurbished and extended in 2012/13 following planning consent and was the first step in a much larger renovation of the whole of the facilities at Hollowford expected to span over the next 3 years. This application relates to part of this phase of the major upgrade to their facilities and covers their intention to extend and refurbish selected areas of the premises, namely the kitchen, kit store and the main entrance.

Access to the site from the village is via Millbridge Lane, a narrow single metalled lane which leads from the centre of the village before splitting into Hollowford Lane which leads to the north west up towards the footpaths up to Hollins Cross and Robinlands Lane, a minor un-metalled which swings north east/east between the Hollowford Centre site and the Hope Valley rugby club and playing fields opposite. The main entrance into the centre is situated a few metres down Robinlands Lane with a secondary accesses into the site farther down the lane.

For the purposes of policy application the site lies outside the village of Castleton within an area of attractive open countryside where restrictive development policies apply.

### **Proposal**

The application has been amended since submission and relates specifically to four discrete developments; i) The erection of a replacement stone 'kit store' building housing the kit store and an entrance foyer with a single storey flat roofed extension linking the it to the main building, ii) a lean-to kitchen extension and new 'living wall' enhancement to the existing kitchen gable end, and iii) a replacement main entrance extension; along with iv) ancillary improvements to access and the surfacing of a section of the un-metalled Robinsland Lane.

#### **Kit store facility:**

The proposal involves demolition of the existing pre-fabricated concrete and corrugated sheet roofed double garage and adjacent timber/felt roofed shed (total approx. 49m<sup>2</sup>) followed by the erection of the new 'kit store' building (approx. 204m<sup>2</sup>). The building is of traditional design with natural limestone walling under a 'Hardrow' concrete tiled roof to match the main centre's roofs. It would have a stepped form in both roofline and walls with the main taller and wider section being built directly off the lane side wall. The eastern end with the taller roofline will house the replacement kit store, whilst the western end would form an entrance foyer accessed via glazed doors in the gable off the main courtyard. The kit store building would be joined to the main building via a flat roofed glazed link which would also provide for a fully glazed rear entrance. The framing to the largely glazed link building will be powder coated aluminium in a dark neutral colour and the unglazed section of roof would be covered in a dark grey membrane.

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**Kitchen extension/alterations;**

The east gable end of the current kitchen (south facing) will be replaced by a new 'living wall' system giving a green planted wall area either side of the central window. Above the window the wall would be boarded in dark stained cedar planks to match those on the newly refurbished accommodation block. On the west of the existing kitchen building an existing bin storage area is proposed to be removed and a lean-to extension constructed, set slightly back from the gable end, to house additional toilet and dry storage facilities for the kitchen. Materials will be natural limestone under a concrete tile roof to match the main roof.

**Main entrance enhancement;**

The existing single storey glazed main entrance foyer/corridor which runs across the principal elevation is proposed to be demolished followed by a replacement contemporary styled entrance extension. This would have a concave front glazed wall recessed under a flat roof with a convex curved edge and would open out onto a new terraced area. The curved roof would provide an overhanging canopy over part of the terrace. Sun pipes would provide light to the rear area of the new extension. Externally the hard and soft landscaping would be improved to lead visitors up to the new terrace and entrance foyer.

**New section of internal driveway, lane resurfacing and access alteration;**

An existing driveway within the site would be formed off an existing internal drive to give access to the rear (east end) of the new kit store building. This would be a porous paved track and link via existing internal roadway around from an existing site access from the un-adopted Robinlands Lane towards the extreme eastern end of the site. One Sycamore and one Ash tree will need to be removed to facilitate the construction of the new section of drive.

An existing vehicular access currently adjacent the proposed new kit store site is to be reduced down to a pedestrian access with matching walling.

It is also proposed that the existing site access part way along Robinlands Lane which is currently a simple hard-core minor lane, be sealed with tarmac up to the existing western access beside the new kit store.

The proposed scheme specifically incorporates facilities for wheelchair users and people with special needs.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Standard 3 year time limit to commence development.**
- 2. Adopt amended Plans**
- 3. Sample panel of stonework**
- 4. Cedar boarding and finish to match recently completed accommodation block**
- 5. Define roof materials**
- 6. Windows and doors recessed 150mm in stone kit store building**
- 7. link building framing material to be powder coated metal with dark neutral coloured matt finish. Solid flat roof membrane to be dark neutral grey.**

8. **All pipework to be internal with no vent terminations through the roof plane.**
9. **Minor design details ( includes Pointing, rainwater goods, verge detail)**
10. **Submit and agree detailed landscaping scheme covering hard and soft works/external lighting/living wall planting.**
11. **All waste spoil to be disposed off-site via licensed waste operator.**

### **Key Issues**

1. The design of the proposals in relation to the character and appearance of the existing buildings and their immediate setting.
2. The impact of the proposals upon the local highways.
3. Any impact upon local amenity.

### **History**

There have been a number of applications over the years for the extension and alteration of the centre in connection with the upgrades/enhancement referred to in the introductory paragraph of this report. The last application for the refurbishment and extension of the accommodation block closest to Robinlands Lane has set the design standard for the refurbishment work with the block having the existing concrete 'Davie blocks' replaced with natural limestone walling with areas accented in dark stained cedar boarding.

### **Consultations**

DCC Highways – No objections.

High Peak Borough Council – No representations received.

Castleton Parish Council – Object due to highway issues, considering that the site is outgrowing the access road. They commented further that the Council would welcome any comments from Highways. The Council were therefore re-consulted with attention drawn to the 'No Objections' response from DCC.

In conversation with the planning officer the Parish chairman explained that the council object to further development at the site on the grounds that the site has outgrown the access leading to strong amenity and safety concerns for local residents and users of the lane as a result of increased traffic and scale of vehicles using the lane to access the site. In a later email from the Chairman on behalf of the PC he states the council unanimously saw no reasons to withdraw their original objection.

### **Representations**

Site notice displayed and three neighbours notified – No representations received.

### **Main Policies**

#### Core strategy

GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L1, L2, & RT1

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## Local Plan

LC4, LT11, LT18

## National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and saved policies in the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the NPPF with regard to the issues that are raised.

## Development Plan

CS policies GSP1, GSP2 and GSP3 together say that all development in the National Park must be consistent with the National Park's legal purposes and duty and that particular attention will be paid to impact on the character and setting of buildings, landscaping and building materials, design in accordance with the Design Guide and the impact upon living conditions of local communities.

CS policy DS1 states that in the countryside extensions to existing buildings will be acceptable in principle.

CS policies L1 and L2 seek to ensure that all development conserves and enhances the Landscape Character and biodiversity of the National Park.

Saved LP policies LT11 and LT18 state that all development must be provided with appropriate parking and safe access.

The Authority's Design Guide which is an adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is also a material consideration.

## **Assessment**

The main issues for consideration during the processing of this application are considered to be the size, scale, form and design of the alterations and the extensions and the impact that these will have on the character and appearance of the host building, its setting and the wider surrounding area, residential amenity and highway safety.

### Kit store building and link:

The new Kit Store building will house two spaces, the eastern end with the taller roof will house the kit store of sundry 'outdoors' equipment required of a Centre of this nature and will enable ambulant disabled persons and wheelchair users to directly access the kit distribution areas which is unachievable in the current premises. The western end would form a secondary entrance foyer from the main courtyard accessed via glazed doors in the gable end.

The new kit store building would be joined to the main centre via a flat roofed extension. This would provide a fully glazed rear entrance foyer that would link through to the main centre building and to the new entrance foyer in the western end of the proposed kit store building.

The proposed building style, in the form of a pitched roofed traditional building built partly off the

lane-side wall is considered to be an appropriate design solution for this location. The use of limestone rubble walling, gritstone quoins and lintels would also be acceptable and be in keeping with the local vernacular and help make it appear in public views from the lane like a converted/organically extended traditional field barn.

In terms of fenestration the lane side would be largely blank and have only three simple vent slot windows which would complement the barn like style chosen for the building. Three rooflights would be sited on the 'hidden' rear slope facing away from the lane. The inseting of the western bay would help reduce the impact of the building upon the lane and allow more of the lane side wall to remain unaltered. Simple timber doors in the east gable provide the only access into the kit store. The glazed entrance foyer doors on the other gable are similarly simple and appropriate in scale and design.

The new kit store building is much larger than the existing free standing garage and wooden shed which coupled with being partly built off the lane side wall will clearly make it a more obvious and visually prominent building on the lane. However, despite being larger and more prominent it is not considered that it would be overbearing or too dominant on the lane. Being of traditional materials and design it will be strongly reflective of traditional field barns in the area and represent an overall enhancement to the site over the quite intrusive concrete sectional garage and modern timber shed that exist at present.

The contemporary styled flat roof and glazed entrance foyer would be sandwiched between the kit store and main centre building and be inset from the gable ends of the kit store. As a result it would be largely screened from public views from the lane. The link would be modest in scale and with the suggested neutral coloured framework the addition would appear as a simple and subservient addition to the main buildings either side. As well as functioning as an entrance foyer and link its part glazed roof would also facilitate use by the centre for parties to safely study the night sky from inside.

In this location the scale and design of the link represent an acceptable solution for linking the traditionally formed store building to the main centre subject to appropriate detailed conditions covering minor design matters.

#### Extended Access Driveway and lane resurfacing:

A section of new porous driveway is required to be formed beyond the east end of the new kit store building to enable the Centre's minibuses to directly service the new kit store access doors. This would connect to an existing internal driveway and in turn an existing site access from the un-adopted Robinlands Lane towards the extreme eastern end of the site. This work would not normally need planning permission and in any case there are no objections to the proposed new section of drive as the use of a porous surface treatment will facilitate the natural drainage on the site and help it 'green up' eventually into simple wheel tracks.

It is also proposed that the existing un-metalled section of Robinlands Lane from the junction of the main entrance up to the revised pedestrian access (reduced down from vehicular access width) beside the new kit store be sealed which again would be work that would be classed as a repair or improvement of the lane and as a result would not need formal planning consent.

One Sycamore and one Ash tree will need to be removed to facilitate the construction of the kit store and the new drive to its rear. These are modest specimens and given the overall tree cover on the site (the centre has an active tree planting programme over the 7 acre site) their loss is not considered to be an issue, and would in any case be offset by the proposed plans to upgrade both hard and soft external landscaping around the new works.

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*Kitchen (south facing) End Elevation and extension:*

The gable end of the kitchen is currently a Davie block wall with a large ‘picture’ window. This is to be removed and replaced by the addition of a ‘living wall’ system to enhance this end of the building. This will be a modular design with substantial vertical planting troughs attached to a solid back panel. This provides the necessary rigidity, waterproofing and security suitable for use as cladding on buildings in place of the Davie block. Planting will be carried out in-situ after panels have been installed. This ‘green’ wall will be contrasted by a central panel of cedar cladding above the window which will reflect that used on the nearby refurbished accommodation block.

Together, the green wall and cladding is considered an acceptable treatment which will enhance the building and the site. It will also sit alongside the proposed new lean-to kitchen extension which would be constructed in natural limestone walling under a matching tile roof. The scale of the extension is modest and being set back from the proposed living wall will further enhance this building and the principal elevations at the front of the centre. The extension and enhancements are therefore considered acceptable and accord with adopted policy.

*Main Entrance (approx. 39m<sup>2</sup>):*

The current main entrance and small rather cramped foyer are contained within a narrow single storey extension across the central block of the centre. This extension is essentially a long and narrow link corridor across the frontage within a white painted timber framed glazed structure above a low Davie block plinth. The roof structure is formed by several shallow linking pitched forms covered in felt. This structure is increasingly reaching a dilapidated state and is, in any case, a rather unattractive feature across the main building frontage giving a rather unappealing entrance feature to the centre.

The proposal is to demolish this and build a larger replacement entrance area looking out onto a new external paved terrace. The extension has a contemporary design with a flat roof having a concave glazed front which would open out onto the new terraced area. The roof would have a convex curved fascia that would extend beyond the front wall to provide an overhanging canopy extending over half of the new terrace and provide some sun-shading. It is considered that the proposal would significantly enhance the approach to the main building both physically and visually as well as provide much better access for ambulant disabled persons and wheelchair users to the main reception area. The large clear areas of glazing would minimise the visual transition between the internal and external areas on the terrace. Overall officers consider that the form, scale and contemporary design of the new entrance extension is an appropriate design solution in the context of the character and setting of the existing centre buildings. Furthermore it is considered that it would enhance the entrance and complement the existing buildings on the site, yet still be modest enough not to impose upon the wider setting. Subject to minor conditions to cover the colouring of the framing and to agree the precise details of the roof structure and roof lights, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

*Highway and amenity issues:*

The proposed development would not result in the loss of any parking provision nor generate increased traffic as there would be no increase in bedroom accommodation and the additional floor space is designed to serve the existing use. Adequate parking and turning facilities are currently provided on the site and the Highways Authority have raised no objections to the scheme.

The proposed development is not considered to raise any adverse amenity issues. The site is located a short distance from the village centre and there are no residential properties within close proximity that could be disturbed by the development. Whilst the Parish Councils concerns which have led to its objection have been carefully noted, there is no increase in traffic use as a result of the proposals in this application. Consequently the Highway Authority have no concerns

or comments to make and in these circumstances whilst officers note the lanes from the village are used by a number of different users and can get quite congested at times, no changes to the scheme are warranted and a refusal on highway grounds could not be sustained without support from the highway Authority.

The applicants are clearly aware of the access constraints and already seek to minimise use by encouraging more sustainable ways of accessing the site and by conducting as many activities on-site as possible. Also of particular note in this regard is the applicant's revised proposal to now close an existing vehicular access onto Robinlands Lane down to pedestrian access and omit their earlier proposals for a new vehicular access at the eastern end of the kit store. These revisions rationalise access and concentrate the majority of vehicle movements and parking activities to the main frontage area accessed via the main entrance.

### **Environmental Management**

The supporting statement from the agent states that the Hollowford Centre is passionate about Green Energy and will take the opportunity to significantly enhance the insulation and other environmentally initiatives as part of the project. It states that the Trust are committed to environmentally friendly working practices whenever practicable. It encourages groups to use public or shared transport and provides as many activities as possible on-site to reduce impacts. It also seeks to source local produce and services and in this project seeks to reduce use of non-sustainable natural limestone by use of complementary contemporary design solutions e.g. sustainable timber cladding.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed extensions and alterations are considered relatively modest in size and scale in relation to the overall scale of the Hollowford Centre buildings. Their scale, form and detailed design are also considered acceptable and would accord with adopted policy and design guidance subject to minor design conditions. Whilst it must be noted that the National Park does not have a tradition of timber or green wall cladding, they are acceptable contemporary design solutions in this particular context, especially in respect of the part timber cladding which is a material used on existing buildings within the centre. Overall the scheme uses a very simple palette of materials and brings the appearance of the buildings more in line with the local building tradition giving significant overall enhancement in terms of external appearance. The site is already well landscaped and proposals to upgrade the external areas will improve the appearance of the site further. In conclusion the proposal is considered welcome enhancement and in improving existing facilities will not lead to further intensification in the use of the site, the access lane or impact adversely upon local amenity.

### **Human Rights**

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

### List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil