



Application No: 08NP0049

Proposed Development: Construction of new building to provide bunk house accommodation, farm shop, services to camp site and storage at Charlton Farm, Charlton, Bellingham

Applicant Name: Mr and Mrs J Morrison-Bell

Agent Name: Butler Haig

1. Proposal and Site

- 1.1 This application follows application reference 08NP0020 which was granted planning permission in July 2008 for the conversion of farm buildings at Charlton to a live-work unit, B&B accommodation, a café, gallery and performance space, craft studios, farm shop and camp site. That application initially included the conversion/remodeling of a modern cattle shed to form a bunk house, and facilities for the camp site, together with a mixed use space and a biomass boiler with fuel hopper and flue. That element of the proposal was deleted from that scheme following negotiations with the applicant. It was felt that the appearance of the cattle shed was not acceptable and that it would not make a positive contribution to the scheme overall, and in particular to the setting of the listed buildings at Charlton Farm.
- 1.2 This application is for a new building which would stand within the footprint of the cattle shed and accommodate a bunk house, washing, toilet, kitchen and drying room facilities for the camp site, a farm shop, tea room and storage. The building would be rectangular in shape with a footprint of 23.5m by 14m with a covered section along the front of the north elevation measuring 2.7m wide which the roof would oversail. The building would be 2.5m in height to the eaves on the north side; however it would be cut into the slope of the land such that the ground level would be almost up to the eaves level on the south side. The building would be 6.1m in height to the highest part of the roof. The roof would be pitched, though asymetrical, with a vertical glazed section separating the two parts. Solar panels would be incorporated on the south facing roof slope. The building would be clad in vertical larch or cedar boarding with a natural finish that would fade to silver grey, with extensive glazed sections on the north and west elevations, the roof would be clad in zinc with a vertical standing seam, and the windows and doors would be in timber. The access road would be to the north of the proposed bunk house building, a change from the previously approved plan which showed the road running between the live-work unit and the existing shed.
- 1.3 Charlton is a hamlet on the Bellingham to Kielder road approximately 3.5 km (just over 2 miles) to the west of Bellingham. Charlton Old Farmhouse, a grade II listed building, is at the western end of the hamlet, and is excluded from the application site. The current proposal relates to a diversification scheme for the range of farm buildings which were historically associated with Charlton Old Farm house, and which was approved earlier this year.
- 1.4 There are a dozen dwelling houses within the hamlet to the east of the application site and separated from it by the other farm buildings, which were the subject of application ref.08NP0020. The village is on a loop by-passed by the main road. The proposed access from the public highway would be as approved under planning



permission ref. 08NP0020. Parking would be to the north of the proposed bunk house building. The access road would wrap around the north side of the proposed bunk house to serve also the developments approved under permission ref.08NP0020. The access road previously approved went between the proposed live-work unit and the existing cattle shed. Whilst the existing track into the west end of the village is not a public road, the applicant states that the new access would be available to existing residents as an exit and access point to the village.

- 1.5 The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, a Flood Risk Assessment, and Non Mains Drainage information. The applicant states in the Design and Access Statement that consideration will be given to rainwater harvesting and drainage in the form of a mini wetland to the north west of the site, sustainable drainage solutions to hard surfaced areas, communal methods of heating buildings such as solar energy and/or a ground source heat pump and the highest possible insulation standards in the proposed new building. Foul drainage would be to a new treatment plant. Landscaping would involve new tree planting, sustainable drainage to parking areas and the access track, which would be surfaced in hoggin and gravel, and post and rail fencing. External lighting would comprise bulkhead light fittings to main entrances, and on each elevation security lights on automatic timers set to switch off after a set period. Where extracts are required these would be domestic in nature and where necessary noise attenuation fans would be installed.
- 1.5.6 Sixteen parking spaces are proposed to the north of the proposed bunk house, and these would extend beyond the north elevation of the existing cattle shed into the field beyond. As previously approved under permission 08NP0020, the parking area would be surfaced with gravel on a hoggin base. The existing field wall would be re-aligned to the west of its current line. The redundant muck midden to the west of the cattle shed would be filled in and the land level made up. The field slopes gently away immediately behind (to the north) of the existing shed. The level of this land would be made up in height to facilitate access to the proposed parking area.
- 1.5.7 It is proposed that the scheme as a whole, including the elements approved under reference 08NP0020, would generate 4 full time and 4 part time jobs. Hours of operation for the commercial elements are proposed to be 7am to 11pm seven days a week. Landscape planting with native species is proposed to the west and north of the proposed parking areas.

2. Planning Policy

- 2.1 Regional Policy:
 - RSS 8
 - RSS 12
 - RSS 16
 - RSS 24
- 2.2 Joint Structure Plan:
 - No relevant saved policies
- 2.3 Northumberland National Park Local Plan
 - CD1
 - CD2
 - CD10



CD12
CD16
C1
C19
TR2
TR6

Buildings Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

3. Planning History

- 3.1 07NP0053 planning application similar to subsequent application 08NP0020 – refused permission 21st February 2008. Seven reasons for refusal: policy relating to the live-work units; retention and re-use of the cattle shed; detached garage; loss of trees; siting of the car parking; design of the extension to the front of the pole barn; and impact on the setting of the Listed Building.
- 3.2 07NP0054LBC application for Listed Building Consent similar to subsequent application 08NP0021LBC – withdrawn after consideration of 07NP0053 at Development Control Committee February 2008.
- 3.3 08NP0020 application for conversion of agricultural building to provide 1 live-work unit; conversion of agricultural building to bed and breakfast holiday accommodation; conversion and extension of agricultural building to provide café, art gallery and performance space with staff accommodation on the first floor; conversion of agricultural buildings to craft studios, farm shop and storage; change of use of land to camp site with up to 20 pitches; and new vehicular access at Charlton – granted permission 24th July 2008
- 3.4 08NP0021LBC Conversion of an agricultural building, including internal and external alterations, to form craft studios, farm shop and storage at Charlton Farm – granted Listed Building Consent 24th July 2008.

4. Consultations/Representations

Internal and Statutory Consultee Replies	Support	Objection	No Objection	Recommend Condition/ Other Comment	No Comment/ Out of Time	Recommendation in Accord with Reply
Bellingham Parish Council					✓	
Tarset Parish Council			✓			
Tynedale Council (Planning)			✓			
Tynedale Council (Environmental)					✓	



Health)						
Historic Buildings Adviser		✓				✓
North East Civic Trust		✓				✓
Highway Authority			✓	✓		
Environment Agency		✓				✓
NNPA Ecologist			✓	✓		
NNPA Archaeology					✓	
NNPA Rights of Way			✓	✓		
Visitor Development Manager					✓	
Neighbours/ Notices		✓	✓	✓		

4.2 Important issues, if any, raised by consultees and/or raised in representations, of which the National Park Officer should be aware.

Tarset and Greystead Parish Council: No objections to the planning application for the construction of anew building at Charlton Farm to provide accommodation, farm shop etc. It is felt that the development is an improvement on the previous application.

Historic Buildings Adviser: I have a number of fundamental concerns with this proposal namely its scale, massing and lack of architectural quality.

The National Park Design Guide offers the following relevant advice;

“New build development should be of our time whilst relating to the character of traditional buildings to maintain the sense of place within the National Park.

All development should aim to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park by making a worthy contribution to an environment that has taken many generations to evolve.”

Although the proposed building may be smaller than that which it would replace, its scale and massing is very different to that of the traditional buildings in the park which have been constrained by the capabilities of the construction materials. Consequently it does not relate to the surrounding buildings in Charlton which I have previously indicated are worthy of conservation area status. I can see no reason other than financial economy to incorporate the proposed uses in one building. My concerns could be addressed by accommodating the proposed uses in two or three buildings with possibly some scope for inter-linking.

Most of the buildings in Charlton are locally distinctive and make a worthy contribution to the environment of the National Park. I consider that the proposed



building is almost devoid of any architectural quality and barely rises above the standard more usually associated with an industrial estate. Dressing it up in eco friendly materials does not excuse this lack of quality. I realise that design issues involve an element of subjectivity but feel confident that a design review panel would quickly arrive at the same conclusion. As we have already seen with the associated Charlton planning application the involvement of an architect with an appreciation of local distinctiveness is needed to reach a satisfactory solution.

Until the above issues are satisfactorily addressed I am unable to support the proposals which would cause harm to the character and appearance of Charlton.

With respect to the comparison with the National Trust's Portstewart Strand "green" visitor facility, whatever the "green" merits of the building, I fail to see any local distinctiveness and do not consider the design quality to be of a particularly high standard. There is clearly some similarity between this building and that proposed for Charlton. Transposing a building design from one location [in Northern Ireland] to another is seldom satisfactory.

North East Civic Trust: The scheme represents an interesting opportunity to create publicly-accessible contemporary architecture in a previously private historic farmstead setting, and is welcome in principle. The design of the proposed multi-purpose building is also acceptable in principle, but one significant change should be sought to make it acceptable in planning terms, whilst other changes are considered desirable to improve its appearance.

The building is a modest attempt to combine the form of a pre-existing twentieth century agricultural barn with contemporary design animation, creating quite a distinctive building which will be very visible from one of the main roads to Kielder. Whilst the building only goes so far in this approach, it is felt that a bolder, more striking design would be unnecessary at this point as the building, whilst publicly accessible, will not become a key destination in the National Park and must be seen within the hierarchy, form, layout and setting of the historic farmstead which is very intact with strong agricultural themes.

Nonetheless, the building will be very prominent from the west and, when heading towards Bellingham, the full form of the existing building is clearly in view from quite some distance up the road from Kielder. This view is from an oblique angle and, with the proposed building taking the same footprint, there is considerable concern over the choice of proposed roof material. A zinc roof will be very visible in the landscape, a highly reflective surface which would act much like a mirror, unlike any other roof slope in the settlement. This is compounded by the size and exposed nature of the north roof slope and the fact that zinc is unlikely to dull to a satisfactory degree over time. Consequently, and bearing in mind the applicant's own design comparator (the Port Stewart Stanley amenity building, a worthy comparator), it is suggested that the plans should be amended to use a green roof. This would allow the building to be 'lost' in the landscape from the middle-distance, similar to the well-weathered corrugated roof on site today. This would entail reducing the slope of both pitches which could be acceptably achieved without altering the distinctive asymmetrical roof shape or the size or prominence of the clerestory windows. Without such a change in roof materials, the Trust does not see how the proposed building can leave the landscape setting and medium distance views unharmed.



Although it is desirable for the building to blend in to middle distance views, at Charlton itself, the building's prominence from the highway is acceptable, giving prominence to the proposed use and creating a distinctive punctuation point on the route from Kielder. For this reason, further amendments to the proposed building's appearance are desirable to ensure the west elevation is suitably distinctive and high quality. This is one of the building's principal elevations but, as proposed, it only appears as the 'end' of a building which has been designed in section and is a disappointing public face for the scheme. Amendments should be sought which demonstrate a greater attention to the design of this prominent elevation. One suggestion is to extend the veranda roof from the north elevation round to the west (thus giving shelter to the hard standing presumably to be used as external seating for the shop and cafe), helping to break up the gable end and create a distinctive visual statement. Providing this veranda with a green roof would also add greater life to the scheme from the highway, breaking up the large area of cedar cladding and reflecting the landscape around it. Other design solutions to animate this key elevation may be also be acceptable.

With these changes, the proposed building can develop its profile as a 'modest statement' on the route to Kielder, but still reflect and mellow into its strong agricultural setting. Without the change in roof materials, the Trust does not see how the proposed building can be acceptable in planning terms.

Environment Agency: Objects due to insufficient information to enable adequate consideration of the proposed means of foul drainage to be made.

Highways Authority: Eight planning conditions are recommended including a requirement that visitors to the development exit via the new access and not past the houses to the easterly access, and appropriate signs shall be provided within the site. This relates to vehicles and would not affect visitors rights to use the lane on foot through the village to the east of the development site, which is also a public footpath.

NNPA Rights of Way Officer: Concerns are raised over the proposed "No entry for Visitors" sign at the end of the access road as this would imply that there is no legal right to access Bellingham Public Footpath 9, which runs along the main access road in the village to the east and then heads northwards along the existing track to the east of the application site. No objections are raised on condition the public right of way is protected throughout. No action should be taken to disturb the surface of the path, obstruct the path or in any way prevent or deter public use of the path without the necessary legal diversion or closure order having been made.

NNPA Landscape Manager: The footprint is similar to the existing shed and the new building should be seen as an improvement on the old cattle shed.

NNPA Ecologist: The building to be demolished is not important for bats and no timing restrictions are needed for its demolition. It was noted that bats foraged in the area and in the barn, but the mitigation elsewhere on the site makes up for this, particularly the nearby wetland area to be created. The development as a whole does require a license from Natural England prior to work commencing. There was also mitigation which involved erecting bat boxes before work commences. If we grant permission we should put on a condition to adhere to the mitigation outlined in the bat and barn owl report by E3, including these elements.



Public Response: The Cyclists Touring Club (CTC) suggests that cycle parking is made a condition of planning consent. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) has no observations on the proposals. The proprietor of Kielder Organic Meats objects to the plans for the farm shop "as the area cannot sustain two farm shops in such a small area, with the current credit climate being the way it is we think it would be detrimental to our farm shop and the new one to let this go ahead."

A neighbour has written:

"... after discussion with other objectors [to the previous scheme] we had agreed not to make a submission on the latest application as it does not materially affect the overall plan. The whole project remains the wrong thing in the wrong place...Of particular concern to me personally continues to be the failure of the latest application to take my legal right of passage along the whole of my frontage into account. I have made several friendly approaches to Mr Morrison-Bell about this and have had little satisfaction it has to be said. With luck, once he has got his permission, he will see it is prudent and sensible to get, and keep, other concerned parties on side. As I made clear at the last hearing I would regard having to take the legal nuclear option as absolutely abhorrent!"

Spence and Dower Architects have commented:

"While the new building will have a smaller volume than the shed to be removed it follows rather similar lines of massing with a wide span rectangular form. This is not in itself particularly satisfactory as it creates no beneficial external space that can be defined or sheltered by the building.

There seems to be three functions which, rather than being pushed into one envelope, might be teased out to allow a better articulated built expression;

- 1) Covered bunkhouse accommodation
- 2) General washing facilities including drying room and campsite kitchen
- 3) General shop/tea room and stores.

Clearly there are some essential relationships within this summary and some of these relationships have not been developed in the proposed plan even where convenience and amenity suggest it. It seems to me possible to work within a built form that is more linear, with smaller roof spans which would fit well with the ranges of existing buildings while at the same time offering the possibility of sheltered outdoor space which might be an added bonus for campers. I think it is worth encouraging the applicant to have another shot at this."

5. **Assessment**

5.1 The issues are:

Principle of development
Impact on the protected landscape of the National Park
Design
Impact on the setting of Listed Buildings
Impact on residents' amenity
Access and Parking
Other



5.2 Principle of development

- 5.2.1 Policy CD12 of Northumberland National Park Local Plan states that the National Park Authority will permit proposals for small scale development, and for the re-use of buildings outside settlements, which provide opportunities for the diversification of existing farm businesses, provided that they respect the character of the landscape and any adjacent buildings and conform with Policies CD1 and CD2. The proposal would be for a new building which would accord in principle with Policy CD12 although it would only be marginally smaller than the footprint of the existing cattle shed; a footprint of 23.5m by 16.7m as compared with 23.5 by 17.6m, and the same height at 6m, though a lower eaves level of 2.5m as compared with 4.2m. The proposal would constitute a diversification of an existing farm business and it would form part of the scheme granted permission in July of this year for the remainder of the buildings at Charlton Farm and which included a camp site. The proposal would not conflict with Policy CD12. Policy CD10 does resist the construction of new buildings in the open countryside other than for the expansion of existing businesses or under policies CD11, CD12 relating to agriculture or forestry. As the proposal would not conflict with Policy CD12 it would similarly not conflict with Policy CD10.
- 5.2.2 Policy TR2 of the Local Plan generally supports proposals for small scale tourism developments. The creation of new facilities through the diversification of existing businesses will be permitted subject to conformity with Policies CD10 and CD12. Policy TR7 states that the Authority will permit the development of small scale facilities which encourage informal recreation and quiet enjoyment of the Park. The proposed bunk house, camping facilities, farm shop and tea room would constitute a diversification of the existing farm business, the proposals conform with Policies CD10 and CD12, and the scheme would therefore accord with Policy TR2. It is considered that the proposals would also accord with policy TR7, in that the shop and tea room in particular would encourage visitors, many of whom may be passing through the National Park to Kielder, to stop and thus contribute to the local economy within the National Park.
- 5.2.3 In forming a part of a mixed use development already approved under permission ref.08NP0020 for Charlton Farm, in incorporating renewable energy technologies, and subject to a condition to limit the range of produce sold in the farm shop, the proposals would not conflict with RSS Policies 12, 16 and 24. Policy 12 seeks to promote “green” businesses in terms of self sufficiency, locally produced goods and services, aided by the provision of green infrastructure. Policy 16 seeks to ensure the development of tourist facilities is guided by the principles of sustainability, and Policy 24 promotes mixed use developments which contribute to the strengthening of local communities. The proposals, in principle, would also be in accordance with guidance in PPS7 and Planning for Tourism – A Good Practice Guide, which has the status of a Planning Policy Statement.
- 5.2.4 The provision of solar panels, and the incorporation of sustainable surface water drainage features would be welcomed and would accord with national policies and Policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

5.3 Impact on the protected landscape of the National Park

- 5.3.1 The demolition of the poor quality modern shed to the north of the hamlet as part of the development proposals would significantly improve the appearance of the site from the west and north, and would considerably enhance the natural beauty of the National Park. Although the proposed building would only be marginally smaller than



the existing cattle shed in footprint and height, its mass would be significantly less because the eaves would be significantly lower. In addition it would be sited closer to the live-work unit previously approved under permission ref.08NP0020, and the south elevation would be cut into the slope such that the eaves would almost be at ground level. It would therefore sit further down in the landscape than the existing shed and relate more closely to the existing buildings. These aspects of the proposed building would be acceptable. The zinc roof, however, would be very conspicuous in the landscape, especially as this material would be highly reflective and zinc is unlikely to dull to a satisfactory degree over time. It is considered that this element would be harmful to the landscape setting and in medium distance views. It is considered that in this respect the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the landscape and would conflict with Local Plan Policy C1.

5.3.2 The siting of the proposed car parking would be as previously approved under permission ref.08NP0020 and, subject to landscape planting as proposed to mitigate its visual prominence, it would accord with Local Plan Policy C1.

5.3.3 Landscape planting with native species is proposed to the north and west of the site. The details of this planting scheme would be addressed satisfactorily by condition, if permission were to be granted, in accordance with Local Plan Policy CD2.

5.4 Design

The form of the building would not relate well to the existing buildings at Charlton. The existing farm house and attached byre are grade II listed buildings and although the proposed building would not be immediately adjacent to these buildings, it would be closely related visually with the associated range of farm buildings, which are considered to be of a similarly high quality. The rectangular form of the building with such a wide span would not be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment, nor would it demonstrate local distinctiveness. The proposed timber cladding would blend well with the fine stonework of the existing buildings, and the incorporation of renewables would be welcome, however these elements would not overcome nor outweigh the unacceptable design of the building. The proposed building would therefore fail to accord with RSS Policy 8, Policy CD1 of the Local Plan and the Buildings Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

5.5 Impact on the setting of Listed Buildings

For the reasons set out above the form of the proposed building would not relate well to the Grade II listed farm house and associated farm buildings. The proposed development would not conserve and enhance these historic buildings. The design and proportions of the building would adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings contrary to Policy C19 of the Local Plan and Policy 8 of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

5.6 Impact on Residents' Amenity

The proposed bunk house, camp site facilities, farm shop, tea room and storage space would be separated from existing residents by the live-work unit to the south, and by the remainder of the scheme previously approved under permission ref.08NP0020. The distance and degree of separation would be considered acceptable, subject to conditions limiting the hours of operation and deliveries for the shop and tea room. Thus the development would accord with Policy CD1 in this respect. The control of external lighting and the provision of appropriate noise attenuation measures would also be possible by condition if permission were to be



granted. A condition would also be appropriate to restrict the uses of the building to those proposed in order to control future potential changes of use.

5.7 Access and Parking

5.7.1 Subject to conditions recommended by the Highways Authority, which are similar to those for permission ref.08NP0020, the proposed access and parking arrangements would be acceptable. The local road network would be capable of accommodating the additional traffic. A condition to require cycle parking would also be recommended. The development would thus accord with Local Plan Policy CD1 in this respect.

5.8 Other

5.8.1 If permission were to be granted, a planning condition would be appropriate to control the nature of products for sale in the farm shop, to ensure it would supply local produce in a sustainable way, in accordance with guidance in PPG6. The viability of the shop, and of the other elements of the proposal would be a matter for the applicant, and not a relevant consideration for the Local Planning Authority. The competition it would potentially represent to other farm shops in the area is not a material planning consideration – that is for the market to decide, and not the Local Planning Authority.

5.8.2 The access rights which some residents may have over the stone track to the west of Charlton Old Farm house are a private legal matter for the parties involved. The grant of planning permission cannot extinguish such rights.

5.8.3 The public footpath which follows the lane through the village would not be affected by the proposals. Appropriate signage would direct visitors to use the new vehicular access whilst not preventing access to the part of the lane that is public highway, and public footpath.

5.8.4 If permission were to be granted, a condition would also be required to prevent the farm shop and tea room/café going ahead in both this scheme and the scheme previously approved under ref.08NP0020. Both proposals would be acceptable individually, however.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The proposed development would be acceptable in principle and would accord with Policies CD12, CD10, TR2 and TR7 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and Policies 12, 16 and 24 of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The form of the building would not however respect the adjacent traditional local buildings contrary to Policy 8 of the RSS, Policy CD1 of the Local Plan and design principles set out in the Buildings Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. The building would not be sympathetic to the setting of the Listed Buildings contrary to Policy C19 of the Local Plan and Policy 8 of the RSS. In particular, the zinc roof would detract from the landscape contrary to Policy C1 of the Local Plan. Subject to conditions relating to the proposed uses of the building, hours of business and deliveries, noise, lighting, access and parking, the development would not adversely affect neighbouring residents and would accord with Local Plan Policy CD1. A condition would also satisfactorily limit the range of goods sold in the farm shop to ensure compliance with national planning policy relating to retail, and a condition would prevent the overlapping elements being implemented from both this, and the previously approved application.



7. **Recommendation**

Refuse permission for the following reasons:

1. The design would not be of a sufficiently high standard given its situation within the National Park, in that the rectangular form of the building with a wide roof span and a zinc roof would not be sympathetic in the landscape and to the adjacent traditional farm buildings, nor would it demonstrate local distinctiveness, contrary to Policy 8 of the Regional Spatial Strategy, Policies C1 and CD1 of the Local Plan and design principles set out in the Buildings Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.
2. The design of the building would adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings at Charlton Farm contrary to Policy C19 of the Local Plan and Policy 8 of the Regional Spatial Strategy.
3. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development would not cause an adverse impact to the environment, amenity and public health, in that insufficient information has been submitted to enable adequate consideration of the proposed means of foul drainage to be made, contrary to Policy CD1 of Northumberland National Park Local Plan and guidance in DETR Circular 03/99.

Contact Officer:

For further information contact Ms L Butler, Development Control Manager, on 01434 611508 or e-mail: planning@nnpa.org.uk.

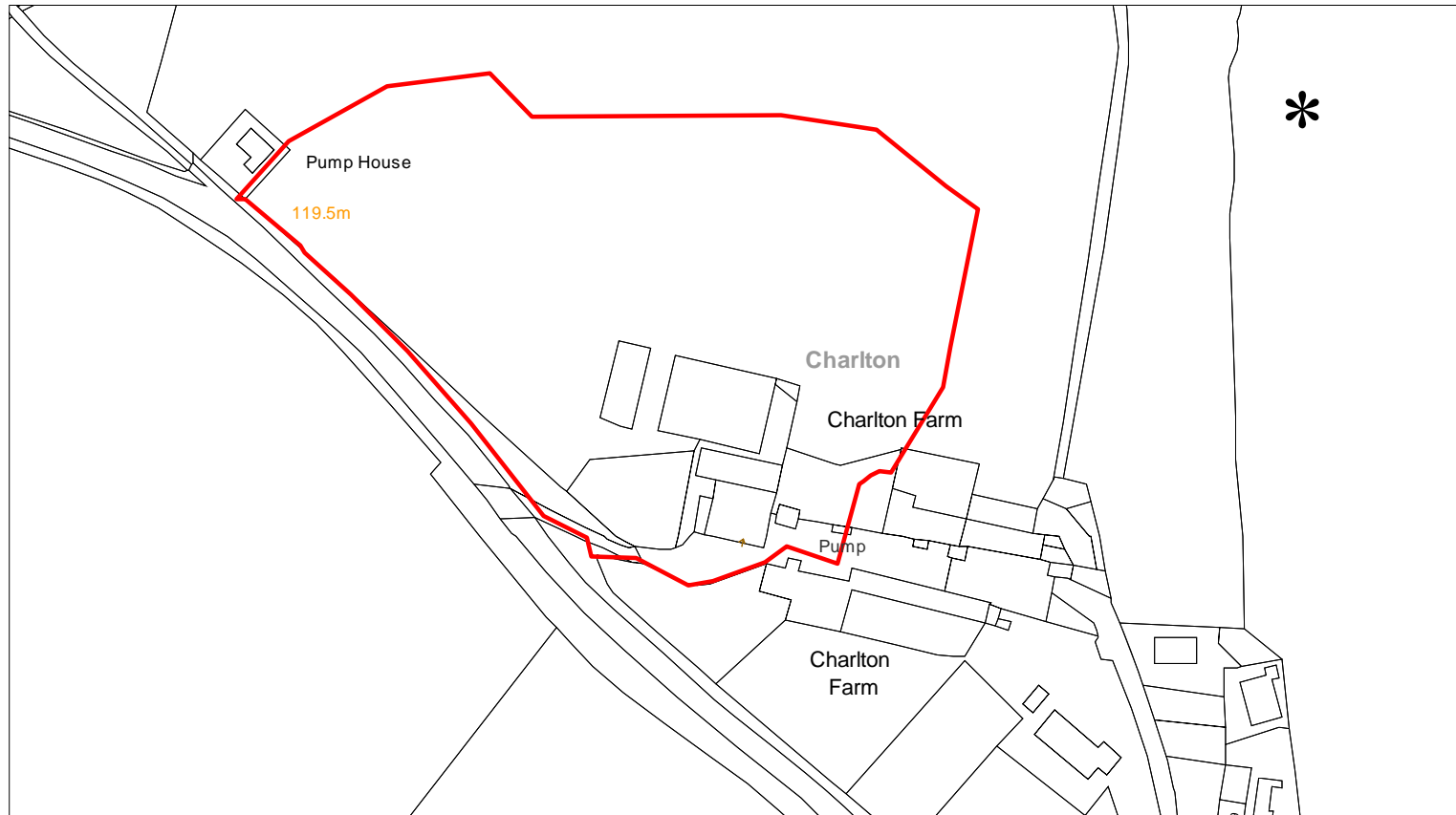
Background Papers:

Planning Application File: 08NP0049
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas 2004
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment 1994
Planning for Tourism – Good Practice Guide

08NP0049 Charlton Farm

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