**Objection**

**Retrospective: Siting of three no. shipping containers & pergola to be used as cafe and bar (A3/A4 use). Reference 20/01420/FUL**

Bamburgh Parish Council wishes to object to the above application because of the significant negative impact on the Bamburgh conservation area.

This application has generated a huge amount of concern amongst the residents of Bamburgh with reactions being universally negative. Additionally, issues have been raised by several of the consultee bodies who have highlighted the significant amount of additional documentation required before the application can be considered complete.

In its meeting of 25 June, the parish council discussed the various objections and comments of residents.

* + design and visual impact
  + Impact on privacy (viewing platform)
  + noise, smell, pollution
  + excessive opening hours
  + access/traffic/parking
  + health/ health and safety

Bamburgh Parish Council supports the residents in their objections to this project. Rather than repeat the many conflicts with planning policies raised by this application we would agree with the objections raised by Hedley Planning Services (dated 4 June and submitted on 10 June). Bamburgh Parish Council are particularly concerned at what it believes to be the negative impact on the village as a conservation area.

The applicant’s planning and heritage statement makes reference to various policies that are applicable. Primarily the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) although no mention is made of paragraph 12 of the NPPF that states;

*The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.*

As a consequence, it is clear that the acceptability or otherwise of this application should be evaluated against the policies detailed in the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan 2017 – 2032. There is no mention of this neighbourhood plan in the applicant’s planning and heritage statement.

Of particular relevance to this application is the following policy from the neighbourhood plan;

*POLICY 11 BAMBURGH CONSERVATION AREA*

*Within the Bamburgh Conservation Area, development proposals will be required to* ***preserve or enhance*** *the character or appearance of the area. Development proposals, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings and structures, will be required to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Particular consideration will be given to the following elements:*

*a)  the impact of any development proposal on the setting of Bamburgh Castle and its environs;*

*b)  the setting of key open spaces, including Local Green Spaces within Bamburgh village;*

*c) the use of vernacular materials specific to Bamburgh village as identified in the*

*Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guide;*

*d)  the setting of listed buildings in Bamburgh; and*

*e)  the importance of the Duckett and its setting*

*Development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the Conservation Area and the way it functions will be refused.*

Bamburgh was designated as a conservation area being of special architectural and historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The walled garden is at the heart of the conservation area with several heritage assets located nearby.

* The site boundary wall is grade II listed and dated at approximately late 18th century.
* The Castle Inn is a grade II listed asset as are the adjacent residential properties.
* The Victoria Hotel is identified as a non-listed heritage asset in the neighbourhood plan.

The wall is not listed purely because of its age. It is listed because of its contribution to the unique Bamburgh streetscape within the conservation area and its relationship with other nearby heritage assets. The setting is very much part of the listing.

Although the applicant has failed to provide a heritage statement there are a number of features of this development that would indicate that considerable harm would be caused to the conservation area.

**Proximity to a heritage asset** . The shipping containers are adjacent to the listed wall and clearly provide competition with and distraction from the asset.

**Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness**. The agent states that the containers would be ‘largely hidden from public view behind existing view’. This is manifestly untrue. The containers can be seen when approaching the village along the Lucker road. Where the wall reduces in height opposite the Potted Lobster the containers are over a foot taller than the wall. The containers are visible from the Victoria Hotel, the Sunningdale Hotel, the properties in Islestone Court and also from the listed properties in Front street.

**Dimensions, scale and massing.** Large rectangular boxes are totally out of character with the curved, aged wall against which they sit. Their size creates a focus of attention that is inappropriate to the village environment.

**Architectural style and design.** The AONB design guide sets out a general principle that clearly has not been met for this development;

*All development should aim to enhance the character of settlements and wider landscapes in the AONB by making a worthy contribution to an environment that has taken many generations to evolve. Work that relates closely to existing buildings should draw inspiration from the principles which informed the work of our predecessors.*

The Parish Council concurs with the comments of the AONB in its objection document regarding the style and design of this development,

*‘the appearance of the cafe/bar complex is considered to be overly urban in style and therefore ill-suited to the core of Bamburgh; a scenic and historic village in a rural coastal location’*

Policy 11 of the NNCNP, Bamburgh conservation area, ends with this statement:- Development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the Conservation Area and the way it functions will be refused. Bamburgh Parish Council feel that this application totally fails and, therefore, must be refused

Regarding the wider consequences of this development, the parish council is particularly alert to parking and road safety issues which have historically proved extremely complex. The applicant unrealistically suggests that there will be no additional requirement for parking spaces despite managing a business that expects to employ 16 people and provide100 covers in its café area. The traffic and parking information requested by the Highway Authority in their response to this application should be subject to critical review on receipt.

The parish council is also concerned that the applicant has demonstrated a cavalier attitude to this planning application. The work was started without any consultation and, during the recent Parish Council meeting, the director of Box tried to justify the retrospective application as being the right thing to do, rather than as a response to a threatened enforcement action. Bamburgh Parish Council are appalled at the unprofessional and incomplete application, particularly in respect of crucial elements as the long list of concerns raised by your Public Protection team highlights. The director of Box was unable to give the meeting any confidence that they could bring this project to a satisfactory conclusion. We have serious concerns regarding their ability or desire to fund the necessary investigations required and respect the details of agreed commitments or plans or to act as a responsible operator.

Bamburgh Parish council strongly objects to this application and would urge its refusal.