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30/10/2024

For the attention of: Bethan Tinning

Ref: DC/24/1292 - Ridge View Spinney Lane West Chiltington West Sussex RH20 2NX

Thank you for consulting us on the Change of use, removal of dilapidated shelter and the erection of new dog kennel and associated works (Part Retrospective).

This letter sets out our consultation response on the landscape impact of the application and how the proposal relates and responds to the landscape setting and context of the site following a desktop review.

Summary

Not supportive on landscape grounds	
Supportive subject to attached recommendations and / or conditions	X
Further information required prior to determination	
No landscape comments / does not wish to comment	

Whilst we recognise the constraints of development within the Green Gap and outside the BUAB, we judge that the visual amenity and character impacts of the new building are limited and therefore we have minimal concerns regarding the proposal. We do however advise that additional mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that the impacts are minimised.

Site Context

The application site is located on the southern edge of West Chiltington Common and is accessed via Spinney Lane which is a residential street comprising large, detached properties. An Ancient Woodland 'Perrett's Copse' is located adjacent to the application site and public right of way (PRoW) 3438 runs along Spinney Lane then between the site and the Ancient Woodland.

Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework

The Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) (HDPF) Proposals Maps identifies the site as being located outside the defined built-up area boundary and therefore designated as countryside.

- Policy 34 relates to West Chiltington Lanes Conservation Area. The access road (Spinney Lane) runs through the Conservation Area, and the main parcel is located directly adjacent to the it.
- The northern section of the main parcel is located within TPO/0159 and is therefore subject to Policy 31 'Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity'.

- Policy 25: 'The Natural Environment and Landscape Character' sets out that development proposals will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance the landscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.

- Policy 26: Countryside Protection sets out a presumption against development unless for agriculture, forestry minerals, quiet informal recreation or ensures the sustainable development of rural areas. The Policy also states that development permitted must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character location and must not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside and/or conserves, and / or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located.

- Policy 31: 'Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity' states that development should contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity.

Horsham Landscape Capacity Assessment (2021)

The HLCA identifies the site as being located within a small parcel within Landscape Character Area 54 'Land South and South-East of West Chiltington Common'.

- Landscape Character Sensitivities include that the area is a prominent ridgeline with a strongly undulating landform, variable scale field pattern comprising arable and pastoral fields, and enclosing woodland on the south edge of West Chiltington.

- Landscape Value and ecological interest is placed on the small area of Ancient Woodland to the south of West Chiltington Common, which is located next to the site.

Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

Policy 9: Green Gap states that *"Development between Storrington and West Chiltington will be resisted in line with Policy 27 of the Horsham District Planning Framework which seeks to prevent the coalescence of rural settlements"*.

The Horsham Landscape Character Assessment (HCLA)

The Horsham Landscape Character Assessment (HCLA) identifies the site as being located within E1 Parham & Storrington Wooded Farmlands and Heaths LCA. Characteristics relevant to this LCA include rolling landform of sandy ridges cut by small stream valleys, extensive oak-birch woodland, small mostly well-hedged pasture fields with mature hedgerow oaks, scattered farmsteads.

Guidelines include, establishing small woodlands in the valley and community woodlands near to the urban edge, conserve and manage the existing hedgerow network to maintain small scale field patterns.

West Chiltington Lanes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2024)

The Landscape Fringe Sensitivity Map identifies the site as being located within Fringe 2 and has a **high sensitivity to change**. Key features of this fringe include: Prominent ridgeline and strongly undulating landform, Variable scale field pattern comprising arable and pasture fields, interspersed by enclosing woodlands, Rights of way value, Tranquil landscape with few intrusions, Rural character with moderate condition, Intimate landscape character established by the small scale field pattern and mature boundary vegetation, Wooded nature of the skyline.

Review of Submitted Information

The application has not been supported by the submission of an LVA, however in our professional judgement, given the small scale of the development and the limited potential views into the site, we judge that there would be limited adverse impacts.

The new building is located outside of the built-up area boundary (BUAB) of West Chiltington Common and is also located within the Green Gap (Policy 9) as per the Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst we acknowledge that the development imposes on the Green Gap, we judge that the type and scale of development would not contribute to the coalescence of the rural settlements.

The new building is also located in place of the removed building. Although it is slightly larger than the removed, it is of similar proportions.

Perrett's Copse Ancient Woodland is located close to the site on the opposite side of the PRoW and is specifically identified as a valued feature within LCA 54 'Land South and South-East of West Chiltington Common'. Although the new building is located inside the buffer zone for the Ancient Woodland, it does not have significant adverse impacts on the visual amenity or character. However, we acknowledge there may be ecological impacts and these matters should be dealt with by an Ecological Consultant.

The development does not require the removal of any existing trees or vegetation and does not impact upon TPO/0159. Therefore, we have limited concerns regarding the physical impacts on the green infrastructure and potential conflict with Policy 25 and Policy 31 of the HDPF.

The West Chiltington Lanes Conservation Area Appraisal (2024) outlines management for new development. Whilst we recognise that the site is located outside the Conservation Area, it may affect the setting of it. Development must *"be sympathetic to its context in terms of its siting, scale (including height, size and massing), materials and details"*. The new building does not significantly conflict with these requirements, nor does it *"dominate buildings in the immediate vicinity"*.

PRoW 3438 runs along the immediate eastern boundary of the development site. However, this is separated by a hedgerow which restricts views of the building from users of the footpath. Views of the new building are partially obtained, particularly during winter months when leaf cover is less; however, these views are very localised and are often filtered through the surrounding vegetation. Views are therefore localised and not significantly adverse.

We acknowledge the removal of trees along the site boundary (owed to Ash dieback) may increase public views of the building. Therefore, we advise that additional hedgerow and tree planting is proposed between the building and the PRoW to replace potential removals and provide further visual screening.

We recommend additional information is submitted outlining the additional mitigation planting to be proposed to the east of the new building to contribute to reducing potential visual impacts, in addition to biodiversity enhancements and hedgerow replacement.

We question the need for a solid panelled close-board fencing. Alternatives such as post and rail with stock fence would be more in keeping with the verdant nature of the surrounding landscape and reduces the potential urbanising effect on the rural landscape edge to West Chiltington Common.

If you have any queries regarding the above matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Megan Cowell BA (Hons) MA
Landscape Consultant

Place Services provide landscape advice on behalf of Horsham District Council
Please note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter.