
From: Andrew.Clout
Sent: 14 February 2023 13:53
To: Stephen.Astles
Cc: Trees
Subject: DC//23/0057 - Plot 1 Steel Framed Barn, Oaklands, Colstaple Lane, East of Southwater

Dear Steve,

Further to your consultation request to the Trees team in respect of the application for proposed demolition of an agricultural building and replacement with two dwellings and associated infrastructure at the above property, I make the following observations and recommendation:

The site is bounded to the south by the Upper Blunts Copse designated Ancient Woodland (AW). The LPA are duty bound to ensure that this irreplaceable resource is not potentially negatively impacted upon by any form of development. Hence it is recommended that as a minimum requirement, a buffer is maintained between new development and the woodland edge to reduce the foreseeable likelihood of pressures to use the woodland for flytipping/introduction of alien species (some conifer plantings already in situ introduced presumably as screening to the existing building), cat predation, wildlife impact etc. associated with nearby residential land use.

The proposal sites the new build position on the minimum recommended buffer of 15m from the woodland edge. However, it includes a new driveway and associated car parking within the residential amenity area to the front of the dwellings within the buffer. In my view, the proposed design does not comply with the ethos of the NPPF in providing the necessary buffer to protect the woodland from the adjacent site usage associated with new residential development.

The largest tree on the boundary bank of the woodland is an oak tree near to the NW corner. This tree has a minimum recommended root protection area that extends into the site within the area of proposed new driveway. The application refers to the ground area within the site immediately adjacent to the woodland as being concrete hardstanding. From available site photos and my observations from outside of the site, if some form of compacted hardcore or other weight bearing substrate is present, it is not precluding vegetation growth over its entirety and thus more detailed assessment of impacts on tree rooting would be required if minded to recommend approval of the current layout.

I recommend that the application be withdrawn and dependant on other planning matters, consideration be given to re-siting all development to mitigate/avoid indirect potential indirect impacts on the AW. Alternatively, in addition to the Council's former reason for refusal in respect of negative impact on landscape character of new residential development in this location (DC/15/2440), if minded to refuse, **I recommend an additional standard reason for refusal** in respect of failure to conform with both Local and National requirements for conservation of AW that is a material consideration in the assessment of landscape impact.

Regards

Andy

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