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05/02/2024

For the attention of: Kate Turner

Ref: DC/23/2116 - Southdowns Coltstaple Lane Horsham West Sussex

Thank you for consulting us on the planning application for the erection of an agricultural livestock building.

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.

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	

We have some concerns regarding the impact of the development on the adjacent hedgerow.

Context

The application site is located approx. 3km south of Horsham, 2km east of Southwater and forms part of grazing land and includes the access route from Kerves Lane/Coltstaple Road junction. The northern and eastern boundaries are open to the wider grazing field. The south and west are bound by hedgerow.

A Public Right of Way (PRoW), footpath SOW 1663/9 is located to the west, whilst footpaths SOW 1663_2/1 and SOW 1689/1 located to the south. Grade II listed building named Colstaple [sic] Farmhouse (1354143) and Little Coltstaple Farmhouse (1262105) are located to the south across the Coltstaple Road. Parson's Farmhouse (1193378) is located to the west across Kerves Lane.

Planning 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 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 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 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity requires development to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should also be compliant with Policy 33: Development Principles which states that proposals should be distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments.

Review of submitted information

The application Site falls within M1 Crabtree & Nuthurst Ridges & Ghylls Landscape Character Area (LCA) of the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex. Key relevant characteristics of this LCA include steep wooded ridges and ghylls, strong pattern of woodlands, shaws and hedgerows, ancient hedgerow oaks, small to medium size irregular and regular shaped pasture fields and confined views.

Key issues within this LCA include the decline in hedgerow management associated with the expansion of horse paddocks and the landscape condition is overall good although there are localised areas where it is declining due to loss of hedgerows. Planning and land management guidelines are to encourage the planting of tree groups around modern farm buildings.

The application has not been supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA). However, owed to the agricultural context in which the building is proposed and the extent of surrounding established hedgerow boundaries, the proposal benefits from natural screening. It is therefore judged that visual harm will be minimal and no LVA is required for submission.

However, a potential viewpoint receptor is expected to be users of the Coltstaple Road to the south around listed building Colstaple Farmhouse which is located to the southwest. It is possible that the existing site and associated buildings can be seen from here during winter months through fragmentation of the hedgerow.

While the principle of an agricultural barn on the site could be acceptable and seen as part of the existing context, we do have concerns regarding the protection of the adjacent hedgerow during construction. The submitted Block Plan does not make clear the location of the existing hedgerow in relation to the proposed building. Since the visual impact of the proposed building from the south-west relies on the retention of this hedgerow, confirmation is required on its location to ensure the proposed building and hardstanding do not impact the hedgerow, trees or associated root protection areas (RPA).

The Block Plan indicates a new access is to be proposed to the north of the Site where we anticipate hedgerow and tree removal may be required. However, correspondence has confirmed that existing access through the gateway is to be used. Details of proposed tree and hedgerow removal will be required within the submitted plans to ensure landscape impacts are minimal.

We recommend that colours, materials and finishes of the building elevations are submitted as a pre-commencement planning condition to better simulate the building within the landscape.

In the event that approval of this application is forthcoming then the following conditions should also be considered:

PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT: TREE/HEDGE PROTECTION MEASURES
A scheme for the protection during construction of the trees and hedges on the site, in accordance with BS 5837:2012 - Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall show the extent of root protection areas and details of ground protection measures and fencing to be erected around the trees, including the type and position of these. The protective measures contained with the scheme shall be implemented prior to commencement of any development, site works or clearance in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained and retained until the development is completed. Within the root protection areas, the existing ground level shall be neither raised nor lowered and no materials, temporary buildings, plant, machinery or surplus soil shall be placed or stored thereon. If any trenches for services are required within the fenced areas they shall be excavated and backfilled by hand and any tree roots encountered with a diameter of 25mm or more shall be left unsevered.

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

Yours sincerely,

Laura Cohen BSc (Hons)
Assistant Landscape Consultant

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.