

9.11.2016

**16/04340/OUT. Erection of up to 9 residential units, and associated ancillary development. Land To The North Of Copse View Northleach Gloucestershire.**

The Cotswolds Conservation Board wish to object to this proposal for the following reasons:

The Board attended the 2015 SHLAA consultation event and made representations against the inclusion of this site in the emerging Local Plan.

The Council have also already discounted this site as being suitable. Cotswold District Council's "*Evidence Paper Supplement – To Inform Non-Strategic Housing and Employment Site Allocations April 2016*" did not recommend the inclusion of any further allocations than those already accounted for in Northleach within the Local Plan.

Prior to the above, Cotswold District Council's "*Study of land surrounding Key Settlements in Cotswold District: Update 2015*" specifically also excluded this site (Site "N\_18") as being suitable for consideration as an allocation. The Update 2015 report stated:

**"LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY:**

**Evaluation:** High

**Justification:**

*The susceptibility of this site to housing development lies in its location west of the Fosse Way significantly separated from the main part of Northleach, only associating with linear development. It is highly apparent from the Monarch's Way in a view which also includes the Northleach church tower and the prison which are interesting features. The value of the site is in its AONB designation and the juxtaposition with the listed prison which should be viewed as separate from the settlement. Housing development would significantly and obviously extend the settlement in this location, reinforcing incremental linear settlement, and would have a significant negative impact on the local landscape."*

The "Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines" (2016) shows the site as being within the "Character Area 10. High Wold Dip-slope Valley." The principle Landscape Sensitivity risk is listed as being from developments that would compromise the rural character including from "*Intrusion of expanded settlement fringes into the landscape*" amongst other negative impacts.

The Council's existing conclusions above (and those of the Board) clearly indicate that the landscape evidence submitted by the applicant substantially under values the character and special qualities of this part of the nationally protected Cotswolds AONB. The development of this area would result in negative impact for the reasons that the Council have already identified and it would therefore fail to conserve and enhance the AONB (as legally required by Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000).

The NPPF confirms (Paragraph.7.) that sustainable development includes "*an environmental role*" which specifically relates to "*contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.*" Accordingly although there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, by reason of Footnote.9. of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, the presumption does not automatically apply due to other restrictions within the Plan. The relevant Paragraph in relation to the AONB within the NPPF is Paragraph 115 which confirms that "great weight" should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs.

Therefore, amongst material considerations, national policy gives the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty in an AONB a particular enhanced status. It is not a simple balancing exercise as "great weight" should be placed on the conservation and enhancement of the AONB. This proposal fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF, has specifically been excluded by the Council as part of the emerging Local Plan process, and fails to meet the legal purposes of conserving and enhancing the AONB and therefore should be refused planning permission.