

6th March 2017

Ref No. 16/05371/FUL. Erection of 33 hotel bedrooms and dining pavilion, creation of car parking and new access and use of barn as plant room. Hare and Hounds, Fosse Cross, Chedworth, Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4NN

The Cotswolds Conservation Board wishes to raise an **objection** to this proposal.

The Board notes the planning history of this site, including the permission granted in January 2001 for 32 bedrooms which were not constructed.

The site lies within the Cotswolds AONB. Paragraph 115 of The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that “great weight” should be given to conserving and enhancing scenic beauty in AONBs which “have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty”.

The site falls within the High Wold Dip Slope landscape character type, as described in the [Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines](#). It occupies a prominent, isolated position in open countryside, adjacent to the Fosse Way. The Hare and Hounds pub is a Grade II listed building, set amongst a small cluster of ancillary buildings, some of which are of a more recent construction.

Whilst in principle the Board is not opposed to further development of this site it has the following concerns regarding the current application,

1. The proposed design and materials. Unlike the previous permission granted in 2001, the proposed design and materials do not reflect the local Cotswold vernacular. The modern, industrial design does not support Policy DTP1 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013-18 which states that development should:
 - i. Be compatible with the distinctive character of the location as described by the relevant landscape character assessment, strategy and guidelines
 - ii. Incorporate designs and landscaping consistent with the above, respecting the local settlement pattern and building style
 - iii. Be designed to respect local building styles and materials

Whilst the new accommodation block is to the rear of the site and will in part be screened by existing buildings, the Board does not consider the design to be appropriate either to its setting in the wider landscape or to the adjacent listed building. The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for the High Wold Dip Slope advises that the

- proliferation of suburban building styles and material be controlled,
- that new development does not adversely affect settlement character and form and

- the use of local stone and building styles be used in the construction on new buildings and extensions to existing dwellings (new buildings should, at least, respect local vernacular styles).

It is the Board's view that the current design and materials do little to conserve or enhance the AONB.

2. Screening. The Design and Access Statement at Paragraph 5.1 vii. refers to the existing natural screening at the rear of the site as affording a sense of enclosure, despite its isolated and exposed position. Furthermore, it highlights that the proposed building blends into this screening. It would appear from the submitted documents however that the applicant does not own the land which provides this screening. Should it become necessary/desirable by the landowner to remove the existing screening at some point then it would leave the inappropriately designed accommodation building far more exposed in the wider landscape. As the proposed building is adjacent to the site boundary there would appear to be little opportunity to provide new screening.
3. Car park. The proposed car park area is currently a grassed paddock to the south-west of the pub and associated buildings. With minimal existing screening, it affords open views to the pub when travelling along the Fosse Way in a north-easterly direction. This openness is characteristic of the High Wold Dip Slope type. Any change of use to a car park will have an impact on rural, open character of the buildings and surrounding area. Greater consideration should be paid to reduce any impact should the council be minded to grant permission. Some of the effects could potentially be minimised by ensuring the car parking is kept away from the roadside of the paddock, along with sensitive, appropriate landscaping. Lighting of the car park is also a cause for concern. The Landscape and Strategy Guidelines highlights the introduction/accumulation of lit areas and erosion of characteristically dark skies as having landscape implications. It goes on to advise that measures should be adopted to minimise/reduce light pollution. The Board has an aspiration for Dark Skies status and has produced a Position Statement entitled [Tranquillity and Dark Skies](#) which should be read in conjunction with this response. Should the Council be minded to approve the application the Board advises that lighting be controlled by condition and that low level/intensity bollard style lights are used in order to minimise light pollution.
4. Additional accommodation. The Planning Statement (para 1.5) refers to a future Phase 2, comprising an additional 54 bedroom proposal. As stated above the Board has no objection in principal to development of this site. However, any further development of this site above that which is proposed in this application would constitute over-development of the site, further eroding the not only the listed buildings, but also the wider landscape setting.