

PLANNING RESPONSE

For the Cotswolds AONB

COUNCIL / DEPT / AGENCY:

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APPLICATION NUMBER:

17/01435/FUL



4-Oct-17

DESCRIPTION:

Change of use of land from a leisure use (land associated with golf club, touring caravans site and caravan storage) to land for the siting of static holiday caravans ('caravans' under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960), and associated enabling works including minor access alterations.

RESPONSE:

The Cotswolds Conservation Board (the Board) wishes to make the following comments on the above application.

Although not opposed in principle to the change of use of land for the siting of static holiday caravans on this site, the Board has concerns regarding the following which should be addressed prior to any decision;

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 states that "a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty". Furthermore, Paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that 'great weight' should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs.

The site is outside, but immediately adjacent to the nationally designated Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and therefore development could affect the setting of the AONB. The Board considers the setting of the Cotswolds AONB to be the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting materials or design can be considered to have an impact, positive or negative, on the landscape, scenic beauty and special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB. The Board is aware of pressures for major development outside but in the setting of the AONB. However, even poorly designed and located minor development can also have negative impacts. The Board recognises there is a need to manage development pressures and land use changes both within and within the setting of the AONB, with sensitivity in order to maintain a balance in promoting economic and social viability whilst retaining traditional Cotswold character. We have produced a Position Statement '[Development in the setting of the Cotswolds AONB](#)' which provides more information and guidance which we recommend the authority take into consideration.

The Board recommends that consideration is given to the [Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines](#), published in 2016. The two character types relevant to this application are 1. Escarpment Outliers and 19. Unwooded Vale. The summary description for type 1. Escarpment Outliers highlights that outliers such as Bredon Hill are important landmarks in their own right and can be viewed from miles around. It advises that these landscapes are sensitive and that care is required to respect the character of each outlier. The Landscape Sensitivity section of 19.

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Unwooded Vale character types highlights that ‘...the screening effects of landform, farm woodlands and shelterbelts provide a framework in which some opportunities for small-scale development exist’. Taken together this would indicate that although the landscape may be capable of some additional development, this must be done in a sensitive manner which responds to the surrounding landscape.

The Board welcomes the applicants consideration of the impact of the development on the AONB. This includes views to and from Bredon Hill, which is within the AONB. However, there is little assessment of the immediate character of the AONB which is within 100m of site boundary (Phase 2 area). There is also no consideration of night time views, which may be adversely affected by lighting both from the caravans themselves and external lighting around the site. In addition the LVIA should provide more winter time views to enable better assessment of the impacts of development when trees will provide less screening. It is the Boards view that the applicant should submit additional information prior to any decision.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment refers to a ‘palette of muted tones’ for the colour of the proposed caravans. The Board recommends that, should the Council be minded to approve, a condition be included requiring agreement on the colour(s) to minimise impact on views from the AONB.

The Board welcomes the fact that no static caravans are proposed for the ‘rally field’. The openness of this part of the site means that views from the AONB are very sensitive to change in use. The Board recommends that this field remain solely for the use of temporary rallies to minimise the detrimental impact on views from the AONB.

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