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By email only to: joan.desmond@westoxon.gov.uk

27 March 2023

Dear Joan,

APPLICATION NO: 23/00463/FUL

DESCRIPTION: Temporary change of use of part of agricultural field measuring 60 metres by 32 metres to provide car parking for adjacent farm shop until 1st January 2025, including provision of temporary limestone chipping surface.

LOCATION: Diddly Squat Farm Shop, Chipping Norton Road, Chadlington, Oxfordshire

Thank you for consulting the Cotswolds National Landscape Board¹ ('the Board') on this proposed development, which would be located within the Cotswolds National Landscape².

The Board considers that establishing a temporary car park for up to 70 cars in this location would be at odds with the local landscape character and vehicles parked in the field would be visible, primarily in transient views when travelling north along the A361. Whilst the proposed bund may act to reduce the visual impact of the car park, it would in of itself constitute an uncharacteristic feature in the landscape.

However, the Board considers that the current traffic congestion and, in particular, the damage to roadside verges on Chipping Norton Road and the A361 being caused by visitors to Diddly Squat Farm Shop is also harmful to the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape. Notwithstanding the legal planning status of the buildings and activities currently taking place which are the subject of the appeals to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate, it is likely that Diddly Squat Farm Shop will remain a popular destination for the period covered by this application (i.e. until 1 January 2025), regardless of the result of those appeals, particularly given that a third season of 'Clarkson's Farm' is likely to be released during 2024.

The waiting restrictions that the Board understands could potentially be enforced by Oxfordshire County Council along the roads closest to the farm shop would likely displace any inappropriate parking to locations further away from the farm shop and bring further highway safety issues in addition to current undesirable situation.

Therefore, in reaching our recommendation, we have had to balance this potential harm to the natural beauty of the local landscape against the continued harm being caused at present by the lack of adequate parking provision at the farm shop. We consider that the harm to the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape caused by the current situation outweighs the harm that would be caused by the temporary car park. As such, on balance, the Board **does not object** to this application as a temporary measure to 1 January 2025, subject to conditions being imposed to ensure that there

Cotswolds Conservation Board

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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB),
managed and looked after by the Cotswolds
Conservation Board.

cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Chairman:
Brendan McCarthy

Vice Chair:
Rebecca Charley

is no lighting for the car park and that the land is restored to its current state at the end of the temporary permission period.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Board does not support any external lighting for this temporary car park as this would further increase its impact upon the landscape and dark skies of the National Landscape. Without prejudice, if the LPA is minded to grant planning permission, we recommend that the LPA requests further confirmation from the applicant on this matter and imposes planning conditions so that no external lighting is permitted for car park and, if necessary, to control operational hours to limit the use of the site to daylight hours.

Given the ongoing popularity of the shop, we would also suggest that the LPA works with the applicant and the Highways Authority to develop a traffic management plan to ensure that appropriate controls are put in place so that the capacity of the temporary car park is not regularly exceeded. This might potentially include a ticketing arrangement when visiting the farm shop. Additionally, given the Board's commitment to encouraging sustainable modes of travel within the National Landscape, a traffic management plan should consider the option of shuttle services between the site and local railway stations to encourage visitors to travel by train and/or Chipping Norton town centre where greater public parking facilities are located.

The Board would also recommend regular monitoring of the development to ensure compliance with all approved plans and conditions and given the temporary nature of the permission sought by the applicant, the imposition of an appropriately worded planning condition to ensure that the parking area is restored to its current undeveloped state as soon as is practicable after 1 January 2025.

Please also note that our lack of objection to this specific proposal for a temporary car park does not imply that the Board would necessarily support a permanent car park in this location, which would be a separate consideration in response to any future application for such a development. Our full response is outlined in Annex 1 below.

If you have any queries regarding this response, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Joyce', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon Joyce

Planning Officer

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ANNEX 1. COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSULTATION RESPONSE IN RELATION TO PLANNING APPLICATION 23/00463/FUL

In reaching its planning decision, the local planning authority (LPA) has a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.³ The Board recommends that, in fulfilling this 'duty of regard', the LPA should: (i) ensure that planning decisions are consistent with relevant national and local planning policy and guidance; and (ii) take into account the following Board publications⁴:

- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2023-2025 ([link](#));
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to Landscape Character Type (LCT) 9 (High Wold Dip Slope), which the site is located within, and LCT 16 (Broad Floodplain Valley) from which the site could potentially be seen;
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to LCT 9 ([link](#)), including Section 9.2, 9.14 and 9.15, and LCT16 ([link](#));
- Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change ([link](#));
- Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to
 - Tranquillity Position Statement ([link](#)) particularly sections 4.5 Traffic and Vehicle Movements, 4.6 Visitor Numbers and 5.1 Parking; and
 - Dark Skies and Artificial Light Position Statement ([link](#)) and its appendices ([link 1](#), [link 2](#), [link 3](#)).

Landscape impact, traffic and parking

In considering this proposal, on one hand the establishment of a temporary car park for up to 70 cars in this location would be at odds with the local landscape character and would be visible, notably in transient views when travelling along the A361. The bund proposed to be comprised by the topsoil removed to create the parking area, and that would be used in the reinstatement of the field, may act to reduce the visual impact of parked vehicles, but would also in itself constitute an uncharacteristic feature in the landscape. However, this view is balanced against the continued harm to the character and appearance of the National Landscape being caused at present by roadside parking.

The traffic congestion and inappropriate parking, in particular on Chipping Norton Road, that has occurred during the opening hours of the Diddly Squat Farm Shop has been well publicised and the damage that has been caused to the roadside verges along a significant length of Chipping Norton Road was witnessed by the Board's Planning Officer during a recent site visit. The photographs below show the current state of the roadside along Chipping Norton Road as of 15 March 2023:



Chipping Norton Road at the entrance of Diddly Squat Farm Shop, looking towards Chadlington



Chipping Norton Road at the entrance of Diddly Squat Farm Shop, looking towards the A361

The level of traffic generated by the shop may not be appropriate in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty such as the Cotswolds National Landscape, especially given that one of the 'special qualities' of the area is its relative tranquillity (as outlined in the Board's Tranquillity Position Statement, referred to above). However, and notwithstanding the legal planning status of the buildings and activities currently taking place at Diddly Squat Farm Shop which are subject to an appeal to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate, it is clear to the Board that whilst the Diddly Squat Farm Shop continues to operate and a large number of visitors continue to visit, which we consider is likely to be the case for the period covered by this application, the current parking arrangements are undesirable in terms of both highway safety and landscape and visual impacts.

We are also aware that Oxfordshire County Council has recently resolved to approve 'No Waiting at Any Time' restrictions at the A361 and Chipping Norton Road which could be implemented by the County Council in the short term. We would agree with the applicant's view expressed in their covering letter that this is likely to displace parking to locations further away from Diddly Squat Farm Shop and would encourage increased pedestrian movements along both the A361 and Chipping Norton Road.

Therefore, and also recognising the temporary use rights available to the applicant to provide parking at the site for up to 28 days per calendar year, we consider that on balance a temporary car park is likely less harmful to the natural beauty of the National Landscape and may go some way to improving the current situation with regards to parking at the farm shop. This does not imply that the Board would necessarily support a permanent car park in this location, which we would have to consider separately should any application be submitted in the future.

Lighting

The Board notes that this application contains no lighting proposals, however we are mindful of the consultation responses submitted for the previous application for parking at Diddly Squat, including those from consultees who recommended lighting would be required for safety reasons.

In line with our previous responses, the Board would not support the provision of intrusive lighting in this location as it would introduce a 'lit element' into what would otherwise be a relatively dark night-time landscape. The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy & Guidelines for LCT 9 (Section 9.2) identifies '*the introduction of lit elements to characteristically dark landscapes*' as a potential (adverse) implication for isolated development such as this. The guidelines seek to '*conserve areas of dark skies*', with these dark skies being one of the 'special qualities' of the Cotswolds National Landscape. This is particularly important in an area with relatively low levels of light pollution such as this (as indicated in Appendix 1 of the Board's Tranquillity Position Statement, referred to above).

As such, the introduction of any visually intrusive lit elements would not be compatible with this guidance or, by extension, with the policies of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan, for example, Policies CE5 (Dark Skies) and CE10 (Development & Transport – Principles) as well as Policies EH2 and EH8 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

Conclusion

The Board, on balance, **does not object** to this application as a temporary measure to 1 January 2025, subject to conditions being imposed to ensure that there is no lighting for the car park and that the land is restored to its current state at the end of the temporary permission period.

Without prejudice, if the LPA is minded to grant planning permission, we recommend that the LPA requests further confirmation from the applicant on this matter and imposes planning conditions so that no external lighting is permitted for car park and, if necessary, to control operational hours to limit the use of the site to daylight hours.

Given the ongoing popularity of the shop, we would also suggest that the LPA works with the applicant and the Highways Authority to develop a traffic management plan to ensure that appropriate controls are put in place so that the capacity of the temporary car park is not regularly exceeded. This might potentially include a ticketing arrangement when visiting the farm shop. Additionally, given the Board's commitment to encouraging sustainable modes of travel within the National Landscape, a traffic management plan should consider the option of shuttle services

between the site and local railway stations to encourage visitors to travel by train and/or Chipping Norton town centre where greater public parking facilities are located.

The Board would also recommend regular monitoring of the development to ensure compliance with all approved plans and conditions and given the temporary nature of the permission sought by the applicant, the imposition of an appropriately worded planning condition to ensure that the parking area is restored to its current undeveloped state as soon as is practicable after 1 January 2025.

NOTES:

- 1) Cotswolds National Landscape is the new name for the Cotswolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The new name takes forward one of the proposals of the Government-commissioned 'Landscapes Review' to rename AONBs as 'National Landscapes'. This change reflects the national importance of AONBs and the fact that they are safeguarded, in the national interest, for nature, people, business and culture.
- 2) The name used for the organisation associated with the AONB designation is the Cotswolds National Landscape Board. At times this is abbreviated to National Landscape Board or The Board. The legal name of the organisation remains the Cotswolds Conservation Board but this name is no longer used in most circumstances.
- 3) Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/85
- 4) The documents referred to in our response can be located on the Cotswolds National Landscape website under the following sections
 - a. Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2018-2023
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/management-plan
 - b. Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/lca
 - c. Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/lsg
 - d. Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ldlc
 - e. Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ps1
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ps2