

Application Reference: S.15/1297/FUL

Application Address: Land East Of A46 Cheltenham Road And South Of The Park, Painswick, Gloucestershire. Erection of eight 3-5 bedroom market houses and nine 1-3 bedroom affordable dwellings.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board have considered this proposal and wish to raise an **objection** for the following reasons:

The application site is in an exposed hillside location visible from public viewpoints from the surrounding area including highways and the rights of way network. Although The Park is a small existing hamlet this development will clearly result in a further intrusion and further erosion of the open countryside within the nationally protected AONB, in this gap between the settlements of Painswick and Sheepscombe. The NPPF affords the conservation and enhancement of the AONB “great weight” and confirms its highest status of protection (paragraph 115).

The Board attaches a recent appeal decision in respect of a not dissimilar proposal (5 open market and 4 affordable dwellings) on the edge of the hamlet of Upper Quinton, also within the Cotswolds AONB where the Inspector dismissed the appeal and concluded:

“...I have found that the proposal would result in the harmful spread of development into an area of countryside outside this settlement and that it would not conserve the landscape of the area which has been identified as worthy of protection as part of an AONB.....Moreover, the Framework indicates that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of an AONB. Overall, I find that the proposal would not accord with the Framework when read as a whole and would not constitute ‘sustainable development’.”

This proposal does not fulfil the “exception” site requirements, as the proposal is not adjacent to the edge of an identified and accessible settlement and there are other fundamental environmental constraints (i.e. the AONB). Therefore this proposal is also considered not to constitute “sustainable development” contrary to the NPPF, the emerging Local Plan and the AONB Management Plan and Position Statements.

Local housing needs are best met on suitable sites within or immediately adjacent to the defined Painswick settlement boundary, as identified through the emerging Local Plan process and not in separate hamlets where landscape impact will be very negative and where development will fail to conserve and enhance the character and special qualities of the AONB, contrary to the purposes of designation.