

From: Matt Tompkins [<mailto:Matt.Tompkins@hunterpage.net>]
Sent: 24 July 2018 14:43
To: Webster, Gemma (Senior Planning Officer) <Gemma.Webster2@herefordshire.gov.uk>
Subject: 181975 & 181978

Dear Gemma,

I hope you are well.

Now that the consultation window has closed for the foregoing applications, I have taken the opportunity to review representations made to the application and enclose a short response thereto.

I should be grateful if you would consider this as part of both applications.

Now that the application has expired, are you able to let me know your views? Is there any technical objection to the application at this point?

I should be grateful if you could provide a response by close of play Thursday as I am speaking with the applicant Friday morning.

Kind regards,

Matt Tompkins
Senior Planner

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MT/StoneFarm

Gemma Webster
Development Management
Herefordshire Council
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0LE

23 July 2018

Dear Mrs Webster,

Response to representations made in respect of planning applications 181975 & 181978 at Stone Farm, Felton

Now that the period for consultation has expired in respect of the foregoing applications, I am writing to address the material issues raised in letters of representation thereto. The points raised, in the main, relate to both applications and as such, I have consolidated the applicant's response into one letter. I have made it clear where a specific point relates to one application only.

Provision of housing for the rural community

A number of letters of support have been submitted, particularly from local businesses and with regards to the 8 unit scheme which includes an affordable element. This demonstrates a clear local penchant for housing in this location that might be occupied by employees of local businesses or young local people who might otherwise not be able to get a foot on the property ladder.

Community Benefits

A number of representations also reference potential community benefits. The Planning Statement and summary section of the DAS fully explain the myriad community benefits associated with the scheme, however, and in brief, the most significant of those benefits are:

- The provision of market, affordable (for the 8 units scheme) and self-build housing for which there is a significant and documented need both locally and throughout the county in an area which benefits from an unusually large number of employers. This would help to sustain those employers and invigorate the local community;

- The provision of a traditional orchard along with other enhancement measures will result in a net gain for biodiversity across the site;
- Landscaping will improve key views to the site, including providing an enhanced setting for the existing 'big shed' which seems to have attracted some criticism locally; and
- The proposed connection to the bridle path enables members of the community to access the proposed orchard and provides safer pedestrian routes to and from the bridleway and Crozen.

The Orchard

Some representations question the benefit of planting an orchard as, "The owners took out a good historic orchard, so why now a new one?" The land owner has confirmed that when Stone Farm was purchased, c. 6 years ago, there was no orchard on site. Rather, having lived locally all his life, the land owner recalls the remnants of an orchard being removed some 40 years ago.

The salient point is that there is no orchard on the ground now and there can be no doubt that the orchard was not removed to facilitate the development given the amount of time between the two events.

The traditional orchard which is proposed here is informed by landscape and ecology advice whereby its provision is inherently an environmental benefit of the proposal. The applicant will accept a condition which requires submission of a management plan for the orchard to ensure its appropriate management and longevity. This would allay any fears of future removal.

Quality and use of the land

Some representations refer to the land as "very good farmland" and that it "should be used for agriculture" as the neighbouring farmers do. The land that forms the site(s) is not of particularly good quality or well maintained. As referred to in the Ecology Impact Assessment other fields neighbouring Stone Farm are predominantly arable, whereas the land that forms the site(s) is either grassland, scrub or former garden land. The land is not classified as BMV.

With regards to other subjective comments such as "until recently this was a good smallholding", when the current land owner purchased the farmhouse, the outbuildings and land the complex was not in a good state of repair and was on the verge of dereliction. The land itself was very overgrown. It would not be reasonable to describe the and as 'a good small holding'.

Landscape impact

A number of representations reference landscape elements, including that the 'big shed' is an eyesore, and how further buildings will impact the view from the bridle path. The impact of the development on all views, including those from the bridleway has been thoroughly assessed in the Landscape and Visual Assessment which accompanied the application. I won't repeat its contents here, but it is clear that the responsive and high quality design of the schemes will not result in an undue impact on landscape character or visual amenity.

Similarly section 5.0 of the DAS shows the current and proposed view of the site from the bridle path and illustrates how the proposed buildings are significantly set back and at a lower topographic level whereby the impact on views from the bridleway is negligible.

Specifically, one representation states, "Many other buildings around the area are in places where they are hidden from long distance views, but this one is on top of a hill, the shed next to it can be seen from Burley Gate - adding to this will make it look more like a town from a distance." The Landscape and Visual appraisal assesses long range views of the proposed development and, at figure 6, includes this long range view of the site from a lay-by at Burley gate.



It is quite clear that Stone Farm is barely visible on the ridgeline. It does not break the skyline owing to its being read against the backdrop of dense vegetation which is of a substantially greater height. The existing development is not read as a silhouette. The proposed buildings have also been designed to be in keeping with the agricultural forms that are scattered in the landscape whereby they will conform to the character of

the area. The development would be viewed in a similar way to the existing development, against the vegetative backdrop thereby having a negligible impact on long range views.

It is also worth noting that the original application for the agricultural unit (ref. P141445/F) did not attract any letters of objection. Nevertheless, the proposed landscape design for the proposed developments includes significant woodland planting to further screen the existing 'big shed', this is illustrated in the image below (taken from section 5.0 of the DAS) of an open view to the proposal from the bridle path. From this viewpoint only the upper floors and roofs of proposed dwelling 1 and dwelling 4 are visible behind existing buildings. Beyond this point, when walking along the bridle path towards Crozen, potential views of proposed buildings become further obscured as the level of the bridle path drops in relation to the existing hedgerow and treeline.



Proposed usage of the bridleway

Erroneous concern has been expressed for potential vehicular use of the proposed pathways that connect to the site and the bridleway and that they might be used to access additional housing. As described in the DAS the intention of these pathways in the overall landscape strategy is to allow residents of Stone Farm a pedestrian route through to the bridle path, to offer an alternative walking route to the C1118 and to encourage sustainable travel.

There is certainly no intention that the paths would be used by vehicles. Indeed the paths would not be hard surfaced.

Flood risk and water run off

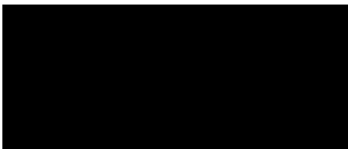
One representation raised concerns that “water that finds its way into the brook that starts at Stone Farm will run through Rosemaund” and “water runoff from the drives has nowhere to go but the road which will effect road traffic”.

The brook starts approximately 400m to the west of Stone Farm. The proposal includes a schematic drainage strategy predicated on permeable hard landscaping with run off directed to on-site soakaway’s. The SUDs proposal also includes a second attenuation pond in combination with the soakaway’s and significant amount of tree planting. The water retention capacity of the site and thus run-off rates would therefore be significantly improved. The applicant is accepting of, and indeed expects a planning condition to be appended to any permission given requiring that SUDs design details are provided prior to development commencing.

Conclusion

I trust that the above is useful in your consideration of the applications, but please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Tompkins
Hunter Page Planning