

Arun District Council
Arun Civic Centre
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
West Sussex
BN17 5LF

Our Ref: SDNP/20/05541/ADJAUT
Contact Officer: Stella New
Tel. No.: [REDACTED]

21st December 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Neighbouring Authority Consultation

Proposal: Adjacent Authority Consultation from Arun DC - Case Ref: A/109/20/RES - AMENDMENTS RECEIVED 3rd December to Approval of reserved matters following outline consent A/99/17/OUT for 175 No dwellings & associated infrastructure. This application may affect the setting of a listed building, may affect the character & appearance of the Angmering Conservation Area & falls within Strategic Site SD9, CIL Zone 1 (Zero Rated).

Address: Land South of Water Lane , Angmering

Thank you for your correspondence received 4 December 2020, consulting us as a neighbouring authority on the above noted development proposals.

Although the application site is located outside of the National Park, the Council has a statutory duty to consider the Purposes of the National Park when making its determination. The statutory purposes and duty of the National Park are:

- **Purpose 1:** To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- **Purpose 2:** To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- **Duty:** To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

The National Park's comments on the development are as follows:

Thank you for re-consulting the SDNPA on this application for approval of reserved matters following outline consent A/99/17/OUT for 175 No dwellings & associated infrastructure, following the submission of revised plans on 3 December relating to landscaping, parking and drainage details.

Under 11A (2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949), any relevant authority, including Local Planning Authorities, must have regard to National Park purposes, in particular the first purpose which is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. It is notable that the application still appears to give no consideration to the impact of development on the setting of the National Park, which is a nationally designated landscape, or its special qualities. As previously iterated, the site is exposed in views from the National Park and as a characteristic rural buffer currently makes a positive contribution to its visual setting and the International Dark Sky reserve. It is particularly notable that the Illustrative Visuals Rev A document does not include any views into the site

South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Centre, Midhurst, GU29 9DH



from the west, which remains the principle concern of the Authority due to the poor quality of the proposed buffer along the western boundary, and its inability to provide an adequate screening function as a result.

The revised Landscaping Master Plan appears to be broadly similar to previously submitted versions and predominantly urban in character. The planting scheme still indicates that a single line of trees would be provided along the western 'woodland' buffer, several of which are still proposed to be non-native ornamental or evergreen varieties. There is no assurance that the "Sussex View" character area would not retain "aspect over the National Park" and achieve "scenic views of the National Park" as previously stated in the Design and Access Statement, indicating that the buffer would be sufficiently sparse and/or broken up to allow clear views out of the site; or that the dwellings in this area would not be light in colour (render or weatherboard?) and therefore more eye-catching in the landscape.

The number of visitor parking spaces within the western buffer appears to have been reduced to 2No, which is welcomed; however, the Authority remains of the view that this important buffer has been reduced to the minimum possible by the applicant to the point where it is likely to be incapable of serving its primary screening purpose, and it should not be minimised further by the provision of any parking spaces. The detailed landscape proposals include two dotted black lines within the western buffer either side of what is presumed to be the red edge which is also dotted; however, these are not annotated and it is unclear what they indicate - are these services routes? It also remains unclear how the buffer will assist in protecting commuting badgers, as required by condition 10 attached to the permission if parking spaces continue to be provided.

Full details of any external lighting (both during and after the construction period) should be secured by an appropriate planning condition with the intention of limiting harmful light spill and disturbance to wildlife. The removal of permitted development rights in respect of roof lights would also be welcomed by the Authority.

The comments submitted previously are included below for ease of reference.

COMMENTS PROVIDED 24/11/2020

The applicant has provided new information to address concerns raised by a number of consultees, as set out in the revised Planning Statement. It is notable that section 3 of this document 'Site and Surrounds' makes no mention of the National Park setting. Despite the assertions of the statement that the scheme is 'landscape-led,' the Authority is of the view that the proposal continues to give little or no consideration to evidence, in particular to the context of the site's National Park setting.

A response to the Authority's objection to the scheme is provided on pp14-15 of the statement, which iterates that the proposals are within the specified parameters of the outline permission. The proposal has nonetheless been amended in response to any perceived visual impact by reducing the height of the apartment block in the north east corner of the site to 10.4m (to ridge), below the 12m specified by the parameters plans.

The revised landscaping masterplan also annotates the eastern boundary by including depth measurements of the planted buffer which range from 7m to 15m. However, the measurements include the existing boundary hedge, as well as what appears to be a pedestrian access running the western edge of the buffer and, in some cases, what appear to be sections of private garden. No measurements are provided of the narrowest sections of the buffer where the visitor car parking spaces are provided.

In summary, the only change that has been made in respect of the concerns raised by the Authority is to reduce the height of the apartment block in the north east corner by 1.6m. As such, the concerns previously raised are retained, and the Authority therefore retains an objection to the application proposals. The comments submitted previously are included below for ease of reference. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice in relation to the National Park, please contact us.

COMMENTS PROVIDED 16/10/2020

Landscape and Visual Impacts

Of key consideration is the impact of the proposals upon the setting of the National Park, a nationally designated landscape. The site is exposed in views from the National Park and makes a positive contribution to the visual setting of the National Park and the International Dark Sky reserve, and the setting of the National Park, through its provision as a characteristic rural buffer. Any development within the setting of the National Park should positively contribute to ecosystem services and demonstrate environmental net gain. Substantial green infrastructure should be provided within the site to soften and break the visual impact of the development and provide green corridors for wildlife. The Authority objected to the original outline application A/99/17/OUT as the proposed scheme would have an unacceptable negative impact upon the setting of the SDNP and its Special Qualities.

It is unclear how the reserved matters application has taken into consideration any of the concerns previously raised by the Authority in regard to landscape and visual impacts, or the need to positively contribute to ecosystem services and demonstrate environmental net gain. The submitted Layout and Illustrative Landscape Plans appears to be broadly similar to the layout submitted at outline stage and urban in character, with little in the way of green infrastructure. The dwellings are generally of a standard, large urban size and appearance and the development is relatively dense throughout the site, providing little sense of any edge-of-settlement 'petering out.' The site's currently strong rural character, a positive landscape characteristic that makes an important contribution to the setting of the National Park, will be significantly eroded as a result of the development.

It is noted that the Officer's report recommending approval of A/99/17/OUT, dated 12/03/2019, states that "in the spirit of the MoU and paragraph 115 of the NPPF, it is fundamental that ADC works with the SDNPA and the applicant at an early stage of the Reserved Matters application to ensure that the design of the scheme is 'landscape led.'" The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) outlines considerable pre-application discussions including an advisory panel session on the design, however the Authority was not approached for any advice at any time during the design process, which is unfortunate.

The Officer's report cites paragraph 5.4 the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed between Arun DC and the SDNPA in September 2017, which included an additional criterion e) to the strategic allocation policy HSP2c to ensure that any scheme "be supported by a detailed Landscape Appraisal which has regard to the special qualities of the South Downs National Park, and must include landscape mitigation measures which address harmful impacts identified within the Appraisal." The Landscape Baseline in the submitted LVIA is not considered to be sufficiently detailed or comprehensive in its assessment of the National Park and its setting; and whilst the impact is occurring outside the National Park, some evidence and commentary would be expected at least in relation to determining what constitutes the setting of the National Park, how the site contributes to its landscape setting, and how any impacts to the setting would be adequately mitigated.

The submitted LVIA also makes no commentary on how the development would conserve and enhance the National Park's setting, which the Council has a statutory duty to consider. Although several of the LVIA's selected viewpoints are noted as being located within the National Park, no assessment is made on impacts on these viewpoints in terms of the landscape designation. Beyond mention of the site's proximity to the National Park as a constraint, the submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) makes no reference to any assessment of the National Park setting, or any regard being had to the National Park's setting during the design process.

The only point where the LVIA considers the visual impacts on the National Park is in section 5.5 Landscape Effects, where impacts during construction (and presumably at year 1) are considered to be 'moderate adverse;' however reduced to 'negligible' by year 15 due to the provision of the 5.5m-m wide buffer along the eastern boundary of the site, which "once matured" would "significantly screen" views from the east. No visual montages are provided, and no consideration is given to the effectiveness of the landscape buffer, either generally or more specifically in winter vs summer months.

It is understood from the Officer's report recommending approval of A/99/17/OUT, dated 12/03/2019, that the Local Plan Examiner raised concerns during the examination of the Arun Local Plan in regard to what

he felt was the 'substantial' landscape sensitivity and 'low capacity' for development at Angmering North, including part of the application site and required an additional viewpoint assessment, which concluded that a "generous planted mitigation buffer" should be provided "along the eastern edge of Site 12D... and pockets of planting within the site to address the visibility of some rooftops." However, the proposed buffer is only 5.5m wide along the majority of its width and as such cannot be considered to be 'generous.' It also appears to have been further eroded by the provision of eight visitor parking spaces, the associated hardstanding for which will likely significantly limit the number, size and/or height of trees that could be provided within it. It is unclear whether the buffer is intended to assist in the provision of a 'minimum 5m boundary feature around the majority of the site' to protect commuting badgers, as required by condition 10 attached to the permission; but the parking spaces are unlikely to allow this to be achieved.

The planting scheme indicates that a single line of regularly repeated tree species would be provided, several of which are proposed to be non-native ornamental or evergreen varieties. The submitted DAS also refers to the "Sussex View" character area which offers an "aspect over the National Park" with "dwellings benefiting from scenic views of the National Park," indicating that the buffer would be sufficiently sparse and/or broken up to allow clear views out of the site. The submitted Street Scenes plan 1-1150 indicates that the "Sussex View" dwellings which face outwards along the eastern edge of the development, appear to be of a uniform 2-storey ridge height, aside from the large apartment block in the north eastern corner. Furthermore, several of these dwellings would be light in colour (render or weatherboard?) and more eye-catching in the landscape.

It is the view of the Authority that the design of development generally should be of a high standard so as not to require screening; however, in this case it is accepted that a woodland buffer is necessary to mitigate the impacts of development on the National Park setting. However, the buffer as proposed is insufficient to provide adequate screening the development, let alone support multifunctional recreational or wildlife corridor benefits. To achieve the level of screening necessary, and given the scale and height of the new dwellings (in particular the large three-storey apartment block comprising units 159-167) the buffer should provide a wooded belt of a sufficient width/depth of local native tree and scrub species to ensure minimum/glimpsed views of the development, and to assist the scheme in achieving biodiversity net gain.

Within the wider site, the majority of tree planting appears to consist of ornamental, feature and broadleaf evergreens. This choice of species is characteristic of urban developments, and will not assist in providing meaningful wildlife habitat or biodiversity net gain, which is a national requirement. Appropriate native planting contributes positively to the enhancement of habitats and to the restoration of landscapes, and can deliver multiple benefits in terms of ecosystem services, ecology, managing surface water, and creating any potential improvements to green infrastructure. Planting within the site should be native to the locality and designed to provide wildlife corridors through the site, rather than the discrete and disconnected landscaped areas such as proposed.

Dark Night Skies

The South Downs National Park is a designated International Dark Sky Reserve and dark skies and tranquillity are two of the National Park's special qualities that need to be protected from harmful development. Paragraph 180(c) of the NPPF 2018 outlines that development should limit the impact of light pollution on intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. The application gives no consideration to impacts up on the Dark Night Sky reserve.

Any new development close to the National Park's boundary should have a sensitive approach to external lighting which conforms the Institute of Lighting Professionals for lighting in environmental zones, and tries to achieve zero upwards light spill in all respects. The external lighting scheme should also take into account the biodiversity sensitivities of the site and not disturb or harm wildlife. The Council's biodiversity officer should be able to advise further on this. Further information/advice on sensitive lighting can be found in the SDNPA's Dark Skies Technical Advice Note which is available via the following link

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/TLL-10-SDNPA-Dark-Skies-Technical-Advice-Note-2018.pdf>

If minded to approve the application, the SDNPA recommend that full details of any external lighting

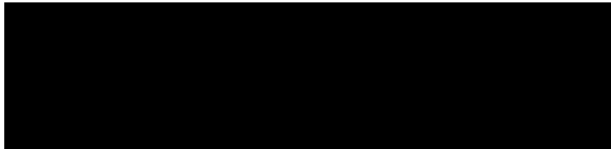
(both during and after the construction period) are secured by an appropriate planning condition with the intention of limiting light pollution and disturbance to wildlife. None of the submitted dwelling plans appear to incorporate roof lights, which is welcomed. The removal of permitted development rights in respect of roof lights would also be welcomed by the Authority.

Summary

In summary, the South Downs National Park Authority objects to the proposal due to the degree of harm to the setting of the National Park landscape. Areas of concern as well as potential improvements have been outlined above. However, should the Local Planning Authority be minded to recommend the application for approval, on balance, then improvements to the scheme are advised in order to mitigate impacts on the landscape and natural and scenic quality of this area and improve green infrastructure. In particular, the eastern woodland buffer should be widened, and the visitor parking spaces removed from it; and the planting plan revised to include predominantly native species.

If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice in relation to the National Park, please contact us.

Yours faithfully



TIM SLANEY
Director of Planning
South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer
Stella New

