

The Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992

Date	4th June 2021
Application Number	WSCC/052/20
Description	Construction of a single carriageway with shared cycleway / footway, roundabouts, road markings, traffic signals, bus stops, provision of hard and soft landscaping, construction of a substation building, installation of a noise barrier, and other associated works
Address	Land to the north of Eastergate and north-west of Barnham, PO22 0DF
Summary Response:	No objection

Previous comments issued 1st February 2021.

Comments

1. The application site is located on land to the north of Eastergate and to the north-west of Barnham, to the north of Bognor Regis within Arun District. The application comprises Phase 1 of the A29 Realignment Scheme which would connect the A29 south of Eastergate Lane to the B2233 Barnham Road, west of Downfield Road. Phase 2 would form the southern part and will be subject to a separate planning application.
2. The application site is approximately 11.8 hectares (ha) in size comprising 9.2ha of land for the proposed scheme and an additional 2.6ha of land for use temporarily for construction compounds and access, required to implement to proposed scheme. The application site begins on the A29 Fontwell Avenue at its junction with Northfield Farmhouse and Eastgate Lane. It extends approximately 214m south-west along the A29 Fontwell Avenue to a point opposite Westview, a detached residential property located on the east side of Fontwell Avenue and incorporating Folly Foot Farm. At this point, the Application Site extends approximately 818m south-east over arable fields, woodland, orchard, and areas of managed grassland where it abuts the north-west boundary of the properties in Ewens Gardens. The application site then extends south-west for a distance of approximately 549m, bordering the north-western boundary of the properties in Murrell Gardens, and extending between the south-eastern boundary of Fordingbridge Industrial Estate and the side boundary with Greenoaks, a detached property, until it joins the B2233 Barnham Road. The application site then extends approximately 214m along the B2233 Barnham Road between the frontage of Fordingbridge Industrial Estate to the north-west and its junction with Downview Road to the south-east. From the B2233 Barnham Road, the application site extends approximately 241m further south-west over land currently occupied by Fleurie Nursery.
3. The application site extends over arable fields, woodland, orchard, areas of managed grassland and paddocks. The land is classified as having high quality agricultural land (Grade 1).
4. The land to the south and west of the application site is allocated for housing, most of which forms part of Strategic Housing Allocation SD5 of the Arun Local Plan 2011-2031, with the

Landscape Architect Response to Planning Application

remaining part, closest to the village core, identified in Policy H1 of the Barnham and Eastergate Neighbourhood Development Plan as a site for at least 60 units.

5. Context/ baseline assessment

- i. **Landscape Character.**

The major part of the application site, to the north of Barnham Road, site lies within landscape character area (LCA) SC8 Fontwell Upper Coastal Plain. The area south of Barnham Road lies within LCA SC9 Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain as identified in the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment.
- ii. **Historic Landscape character.**

The major part of the site, is identified as lying within the Historic Landscape Characterisation Broad Character Type 'Horticulture' and the Historic Landscape Characterisation Character Type 'Orchard' with the eastern side being characterised as 'Informal Fieldscapes' and 'Modern Field Amalgamations'. Historic map examination suggests that the western part of the site has been the subject of subdivision over time and the eastern part has been amalgamated.
- iii. **Designations.**

At its closest the South Downs National Park lies approx. 1.4km to the north of the application site. There are no designated ecological sites within the immediate vicinity but there are areas classified on the Priority Habitat Inventory as Traditional Orchards within the site. There are a number of heritage assets and conservation areas in the surrounding area, the closest being the Grade II Choller Farmhouse which lies approx. 400m to the north east. Church Lane Eastergate Conservation Area lies at its closest, 400m from the application site, centring around Manor Farm (Grade II) and St George's Church (Grade II*),

PROW.
The application site is crossed by footpath 318 which runs northwards from Barnham Road and lies to the west of Fordingbridge Industrial Estate.
- iv. **Common Land and Open Access Land.**

There is no Common or Open Access Land in the immediate vicinity of the application site.
- v. **Settlement:**

Eastergate is a small village with historic cores centred on the junction of Barnham Road/A29 and around Manor Farm and which has extended eastwards.
- vi. **Tranquillity.**

Based on anecdotal evidence of undertaking field survey work, the site is generally tranquil despite occasional traffic noise and the proximity of the settlement.
- vii. **Visibility and Views.**

Due to the relatively flat landform and the amount of woodland cover it is likely that this will not be a highly visible development except in near views of the site, although traffic movements on the elevated highway and lighting columns will increase the development's visibility, particularly at night.

Landscape Architect Response to Planning Application

6. Relevant landscape-related planning policy.

West Sussex Local Transport Plan (2011-2026)

Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted July 2018)

Policy SD SPIa (Strategic Approach)

Policy SD SP3 (Preventing Coalescence)

Policy GI SPI (Green Infrastructure and Development)

Policy LAN DMI (Protection of Landscape Character)

Policy D SPI (Design)

Policy D DMI (Aspects of Form and Design Quality)

Policy QE SPI (Quality of the Environment)

Policy T SP3 (k) (Safeguarding the route of the A29 northern tie-in)

Barnham and Eastergate Neighbourhood Development Plan 2014-2029

Policy GA2 (Footpath and Cycle path Network).

7. The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

- 7.1. An LVIA has been prepared by WSP on behalf of the developer WSCC in support of the proposed development. The LVIA is included within the submitted Environmental Statement at Chapter 10 and the Methodology at Appendix 10.1.

8. Assessment methodology

- 8.1. The methodology has been reviewed and is considered acceptable.

9. Assessment of landscape effects

- 9.1. Whilst the fine-grained study of the landscape is appropriately divided into local landscape character areas, more consideration could still have been given to some of the individual elements that comprise landscape character (e.g. tranquillity, vegetation, access etc) and to the effects on key characteristics of landscape character as defined in the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment and Arun Landscape Study. There could have been more discussion of how typical the study area is of the LCA and how the proposals might affect the wider LCA and I would have wished to see the wider LCAs as landscape receptors. Consideration could also have been given to how the relevant Land Management Guidelines could inform the mitigation proposals.

- 9.2. As GLVIA states:

- *Even where there are useful and relevant existing Landscape character Assessments and historic landscape characterisations, it is still likely that it will be necessary to carry out specific and more detailed surveys of the site itself and perhaps its immediate setting or surroundings. This provides the opportunity to record the specific characteristics of this more limited area, but also to analyse to what extent the site and its immediate surroundings conform to or are different from the wider Landscape Character Assessments*

Landscape Architect Response to Planning Application

that exist, and to pick up other characteristics that may be important in considering the effects of the proposal. (GLVIA 5.16).

- 9.3. It is acknowledged that LCA2 Eastergate Semi-Rural Land study area will inevitably undergo considerable change due to the construction of the road which will cross a mosaic of fields and orchards but which also forms part of Strategic Allocation SD5. It is not considered wholly uncharacteristic of the landscape character of the wider area to find single track roads on the edge of settlements especially in the context of this wider SD5 allocation. The acoustic barrier is a less characteristic but necessary intervention to ensure the amenity of the houses which lie to the east. This barrier, in turn, results in visual effects but the planting of climbing plants against this barrier and the woodland planting proposed to the east will all help to ensure that, in time, the barrier is less obtrusive. The choice of material of this barrier, the planting proposals, and maintenance are key to ensuring its effect on landscape character (and visual amenity) is minimised. It is considered that, on balance, weathering steel is an acceptable choice as the colour and finish will sit well within the landscape.
- 9.4. The proposed enhancements to the north-south green corridor are considered to be acceptable and typical of the local landscape character, providing a valuable link between the village and the wider landscape for residents and wildlife.

10. Visual baseline

- 10.1. The LVIA has tested the visual envelope of the proposed development site by considering the visual baseline conditions at 7 representative viewpoints. These viewpoints have been chosen to represent different types of visual receptors and their location, reason for selection and distance from the Scheme summarised in table 10-7.

11. Assessment of visual effects

- 11.1. The proposals comprise the safeguarded road alignment within the wider SD5 allocation and as such there is acceptance in principle that the visual baseline will undergo future change. When the SD5 allocation is built out the proposed road will sit on the edge of the village and provide a strong edge to the expanded settlement.
- 11.2. The assessment of visual effects is considered sound and, unsurprisingly, concludes that there will be significant visual effects for the majority of receptors assessed, both during the construction period and after 15 years of vegetation establishment. These effects are however limited to close receptors with the most sensitive receptors being nearby residents and it is those residents to the east of the proposed scheme that will experience the most significant effects due to their proximity to the scheme and the likely change in view composition, from generally open fields to woodland planting with an acoustic barrier and/or a new roadway.
- 11.3. It is not considered that the proposals, including lighting will cause significant harm to the SDNPA or its setting as any views will be well-screened by existing and proposed vegetation and built form and seen in the context of the existing settlement. Proposed

Landscape Architect Response to Planning Application

lighting has been kept to a minimum and is to be controlled by dimming to ensure any effects on dark skies are minimised.

12. The submitted Site Plans A29-CAP-HPN-00-DR-C-0132 to 0136

- 12.1. Where 'Wildflower meadow grass mix EM3 Topsoil 150mm' is specified, soils should be tested to ensure that they are suitable for the proposed mix to establish and will not result in a proliferation of rank vegetation.
- 12.2. Where 'Wetland grass mix EM8' is proposed to the infiltration ponds and roadside swales it should be confirmed that this is appropriate and that the swales/ ponds will be damp rather than free-draining.
- 12.3. Where 3 no. *Acer campestre* are proposed to the roundabout (sheet 0133) consideration should be given to use of a clonal selection (such as *Acer* c. 'Streetwise') to ensure a more regular habit.
- 12.4. More thought should be given to the form of the orchard and its enclosure and the relationship with the other, larger trees to the west and south which could in time overshadow the orchard. I believe there is scope for additional native hedgerows in this area which would give the orchard a sense of enclosure and further increase the Biodiversity Net Gain . The inclusion of local heritage varieties of apples is appreciated but it should be ensured that these are available and not substituted. Details of how the orchard is to be managed should be submitted, or dealt with as a requirement of a planning condition.
- 12.5. Consideration should be given to suitable advance tree planting to the west of Upton Brooks if the compound it to stay in situ after the completion of Phase I to provide screening and ensure their privacy and amenity.
- 12.6. The proposed weathering steel finish of the acoustic fence and associated planting is considered acceptable and details of the maintenance of the associated planting should be given.

13. Appendix 3.6 Wider Landscape Plan

- 13.1. The inclusion of this plan is appreciated but some parts require clarification/ coordination with other reports and plans:
 - The northern pond adjacent to the roundabout is described as being planted with marginal/ floating plant, which is not as described on Site Plans where it is labelled as a dry 'infiltration pond'. For the sake of clarity I would suggest that primarily dry 'infiltration ponds' be referred to as 'infiltration basins' to avoid confusion.
 - If the orchard is to be considered a 'public open space' it will require a more detailed management strategy.

14. Appendix 10.3 Planting Schedule A29-CAP-HPN-00-DR-L-025 I

- 14.1. The apple trees specified on the Site Plans do not correlate with the schedule and should be clarified. The rootstocks should also be specified.
- 14.2. The Specimen Trees SW3 seem somewhat small and I would wish to see larger specimens specified to give more immediate structure. 12-14cm girth is considered more appropriate.
- 14.3. The Woodland Edge Mix SW1 would benefit from the addition of some standard trees to ensure the acoustic barrier's visual impact is reduced more quickly and to ensure that the planting closely resembles that shown in the Illustrative Sections in time.

15. Appendix 10.4- Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan

- 15.1. This plan should better reflect the proposals of the site plans and planting schedule and refer to 'Scrub' and 'Woodland Edge' for the avoidance of confusion.
- 15.2. Greater detail should be included regarding the management of the orchard including pruning of the proposed fruit trees, gathering of fruit and whether it is to be considered a 'community orchard'.

16. Appendix 14.2 Integration Statement in relation to Barratt David Wilson Homes Development.

- 16.1. This document sets out the collaborative approach between Barratt David Wilson Homes and WSCC with regard to biodiversity and ecology and is considered essential to ensure that mitigation is effective and green infrastructure linkages are created across the wider site. I am satisfied that, as far as is possible at this stage, the proposals would integrate with the wider SD5 allocation and existing landscape.

17. Conclusion

- 17.1. The submitted LVIA is generally sound and the landscape and visual effects predicted appear reasonable and as to be expected. It must be borne in mind that the safeguarded road alignment sits within a wider area of considerable future change due to the SD5 allocation however the proposed road is considered to be of a suitable scale and character for the location. Whilst significant localised landscape and visual effects have been predicted, appropriate primary mitigation is proposed by way of planting and an acoustic barrier. Inevitably, this acoustic barrier will itself result in visual effects, however in the long-term the planting proposed will mature and screen it from the most sensitive visual receptors if suitably maintained.
- 17.2. It is considered, on balance that the proposals accord with the aim of the Arun Local Plan (2011-2031) policies GI SPI to '*protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure assets and the connections between them*', LAN DMI to '*respect the particular characteristics and natural features of the relevant landscape character areas*', D SPI to '*reflect the characteristics of the site and local area in their ... landscaping*', D DMI Aspects of Form and Design Quality, and Policy T SP3 (k) Safeguarding the route of

West Sussex County Council

Landscape Architect Response to Planning Application

the A29 northern tie-in. In addition the proposal accord with Policy GA2 of Barnham and Eastergate Neighbourhood Development Plan 2014-2029 with regard to pedestrian and cycle linkages.

17.3. Some minor clarifications are requested as outlined above relating to the proposed planting and its maintenance and if the council is minded to grant permission for this proposal these could be dealt with by a suitably worded planning condition.

The terra firma Consultancy / *Keith Baker* for and on behalf of West Sussex County Council
(Environment & Heritage Team)