

APPLICATION 20/00794

Single storey nine car garage – Langstone Lodge, Langstone

Response to Chichester Harbour Conservancy Objection

The objection is on two grounds namely:

1. AONB Protected Landscape Character Assessment

The proposal for a free-standing large outbuilding with associated large manoeuvrability area for use for car parking and storage would amount be contrary to the provisions of Chichester Harbour AONB Planning Principles (Management Plan version April 2019) Planning Principle PP01: Chichester Harbour as a Protected Area; and the Chichester Harbour AONB Joint Supplementary Planning Document (16 May 2017) as adopted by the Council, paras. 15.1 to 15.2 (ancillary buildings) and 12.1 to 12.4 (guidance on size increases), in that the proposal would result in a development which would be physically remote from, being segregated by intervening landscape from and therefore visually separate to, the main dwelling house it is claimed to be ancillary to. It is positioned within the extensive grounds at a distance which is disassociated with the dwelling, with its own independent means of access and lack of clear, and close, internal linkage to the main dwelling being separated by internal field boundaries and planting belts. As a standalone structure, isolated within a separate, an open field division of the grounds, it is of a scale and visual presence that would have a clear visual impact upon the AONB protected landscape. Overall, it therefore represents a building which would have an unnecessary presence, unrelated to its field setting, is disjointed from the main dwelling, and with a noticeable visual impact within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) protected landscape.

2. Potential Future use within the AONB

As a standalone structure the proposal represents an isolated building within a separate, an open field division of the grounds, it is of a scale and visual presence that would have a clear visual impact upon the AONB protected landscape and could in the future be difficult to oppose if it were proposed to be separated as an independent commercial, tourism related, or residential use from that of the host dwelling. Overall, it therefore represents a building which would have an unnecessary presence, unrelated to its field setting, is disjointed from the main dwelling, and with a noticeable visual impact within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) protected landscape.

These will be addressed below.

Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Supplementary Planning Document.

It is alleged that the proposal is contrary to the overarching principle of the SPD. This is not accepted as:

- The proposal does not fail to protect, conserve and enhance natural beauty and wildlife because the immediate character of the application site is not natural beauty but is an area of built development that just so happens to be in the Chichester Harbour AONB but does not share the natural beauty characteristics of the bulk of the AONB.
- The natural beauty of Chichester Harbour is unaffected.
- The building is of appropriate design
- The development will not be seen in the wider landscape and from the water and there are no adverse impacts to be mitigated.

Reference is made to two sections of the SPD. The first section 12 provides guidance on the size increase of house extensions or replacement dwellings. This proposal does not fall within that type of development reference to Section 12 is therefore irrelevant and of no purpose in the consideration of this application.

The second section referred to is 15 Ancillary Buildings. This requires careful thought to be given to the siting and scale of ancillary buildings so as to avoid impact on neighbouring properties and dominance over the dwelling. The setting should not be intrusive in the landscape or in public views from the land or water. Careful thought was given to the siting of the building placing it in a location that would ensure all mature trees would be retained and grouping it close to adjacent buildings. Siting it close to the existing dwelling would adversely affect the setting of a building of character as well as having implications for trees. In other words, the siting accords with the aim of the SPD. The scale of the building does not dominate the neighbouring properties or Langstone Lodge. It would not be intrusive in the built landscape or affect views from water.

The second section then advises that garages should be set back from the front face of the building to avoid dominating the street scene and increasing the mass of a house. This aim is not contravened.

Padding out the objection by referring to extraneous matters eg Dark Skies, scale and massing (solely deals with new houses) and Lower Coastal plain: Langstone and Warblington is unhelpful.

Conclusion: the proposal is not contrary to the Chichester Harbour AONB Joint Supplementary Planning Document.

Chichester Harbour AONB Landscape Character Assessment

The application site lies within the Havant to Chichester Coastal Plain the Key Characteristics of which are:

- *Flat, coastal plain on brickearths, sands and gravels;*
- *Open, arable farmland, with strong rectilinear field patterns. Small hedged paddocks associated with the villages;*
- *Pockets of orchards, enclosed coastal grazing marsh and small copses are distinctive features around Nutbourne, Prinsted, Fishbourne and Langstone;*
- *Linear historic settlements follow, or are located in close proximity to the Roman Road line of the A259;*
- *Dense, urban development of Havant, Chichester, Emsworth and Southbourne;*
- *Occasional views from south of the A259 to the Harbour.*

The proposal has no impact on those key characteristics.

The Landscape Character Assessment describes the settlement character as:

4.4.109 Langstone historic core comprises rows of simple two-storey brick and tile cottages and historic commercial buildings along the High Street and quayside, with the distinctive landmark of Langstone Towers and the Old Tide Mill. It has a well treed setting.

The proposal has no adverse effect on that character

The Landscape Character Assessment explains that the key issues for the Havant to Chichester Coastal Plain are:

- Sea level rise;
- Past loss of hedgerows;
- Potential pressure for urban extensions on the edge of Havant, Chichester and Southbourne;
- Infill development in extensions to villages;
- Spread of horse grazing around Emsworth, east of Prinsted and on the edge of Southbourne;
- Intrusive modern development and urban fringe activities around Emsworth marina.

The proposal has no adverse implications for those issues.

The Landscape Character Assessment sets out the following Planning and Land Management Guidelines (within the AONB):

- Conserve and manage existing hedgerows;
- Conserve characteristic views of the water;
- Restore hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- Conserve the landscape setting of the historic villages;
- Take opportunities for managed realignment of the sea defences on low lying land, creating new areas of coastal habitat. Avoid significant adverse impacts on existing habitats and ensure sympathetic form, design and materials of any new sea defences;
- Promote better management of horse grazed areas around Prinsted, Emsworth and Southbourne;
- Secure landscape improvements, including hedgerow, hedgerow trees and copse planting to the land around Emsworth Marina, and to the A259 corridor between Bosham and Fishbourne;
- Ensure any new small-scale development in or on the edges of the historic villages of the area is of an appropriate scale, form, design, materials that responds to historic settlement pattern, landscape setting, and locally distinctive building styles and materials.

The proposal has no adverse implications for those guidelines.

Conclusion: the proposal is not contrary to the Chichester Harbour AONB Landscape Character Assessment

Chichester Harbour Management Plan (2019-2024)

The objection specifically refers to planning principle PP01 and the accompanying justification also refers to planning principles PP03 and PP09.

Planning principle PP01 says:

*PP01 Chichester Harbour as a Protected Area
Chichester Harbour is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with the statutory primary purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The Conservancy shall give great weight to the protection of the landscape, the conservation*

of nature and the special qualities of Chichester Harbour, as defined in the AONB Management Plan and Landscape Character Assessment. The Conservancy will oppose any application that, in its opinion, is a major change or will cause material damage to the AONB or which will constitute unsustainable development.

As the Statutory Harbour Authority, Chichester Harbour Conservancy is also responsible for navigation. Planning decisions which affect navigation should give great weight to safety considerations as defined in the Management Plan and the Port Marine Safety Code.

This principle is laudable but must be tempered by the National Planning Policy Framework (para 172) that accepts that there can be development in an AONB provided the scale and extent of development is limited. That closely aligns with the Conservancy policy that it will oppose major change or material damage to the AONB which this proposal does not do. Objecting on the grounds of the proposal being contrary to PP01 does not hold water and is misplaced.

The reference to planning principle PP03 is utterly irrelevant as the proposal is not for a replacement dwelling or a domestic householder extension. Likewise reference to planning principle PP09 is another irrelevance as the proposal is not for a lighting proposal. As to planning principles PP07 and PP14 they have absolutely nothing to do with the type and character of development proposed.

Unfortunately, the Conservancy has a misplaced view of the status of AONB Management Plans seeming to believe that they are a material planning consideration. However, it fails to understand that National Planning Practice Guidance para. 004 ref: ID: 8-004-20140306 says that such plans

“may also be material considerations in making decisions on individual planning applications, where they raise relevant issues”.

The key word is “*may*”, the point being that if the issues the Conservancy pray in aid of are not relevant then the Management Plan is not a material planning consideration.

Conclusion: The proposal is not contrary to the AONB Management Plan.

Physical impact

The substance of the objection is that the proposed building is overlarge and detached from the dwelling with adverse effects on the landscape – in this case the streetscape of Langstone Road. There is nothing in the application that “claims” the proposed building is ancillary to the main dwelling house. It is very clearly stated that it is ancillary to Langstone Lodge.

The Conservancy is entitled to its view about the physical impact of the proposal but that view is far removed from the realities of the situation. The building is of the proposed size to house a private classic car collection and it is of a single storey with a pitched roof to minimise its visual impact on a suburban street that in itself is not a natural beauty being main made and built up. Furthermore, the building is proposed in a location that respects the character and setting of Langstone Lodge and minimises the impact on trees that in themselves are the natural beauty element of the streetscene.

Conclusion: The Conservancy objection in terms of the physical impact of the development is grossly over stated and the alleged harm will not occur.

The second reason for the Conservancy's objection concerns the potential future use of the proposed building. The application makes no proposal for the future use of the building and that issue is irrelevant to the consideration of this application. This ill-informed and misplaced objection does not merit being dignified with any further comment as it is not a material consideration.

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