

APP/20/00626 – Tournerbury Woods, Tournerbury Lane, Hayling Island

Dear Steve,

Apologies for the delay in replying, owing to staff being on leave and prioritising Committee work.

Tournerbury Woods, Tournerbury Lane, Hayling Island

APP/20/00626 – Variation of conditions 2 and 7 of Planning Permission APP/17/00207 (Construct vehicular track from the public highway to Tournerbury Woods Estates for the purpose of avoiding agricultural operations in Tournerbury Farm) to substitute a new plan "BJC Location and Site Plan (Plan no. H125/2020.07.03L/SP)" in lieu of approved plan "Site Plan and Section DN: A102"; and revised landscaping and tree planting proposals from those previously approved.

Fully delegated Officer decision from Chichester Harbour Conservancy

Recommendation – No objection, subject to conditions securing –

- Retention of western field boundary hedgerow alongside proposed track, with consideration given to the council making a formal hedgerow order on it, to ensure its retention;
- Specified proposed planting to line to eastern side of track to be planted in this coming autumn planting season and if any plantings die, become deceased or fail within 5 years of planting, they are to be replanted with similar species, unless an alternative native species is agreed in writing with the local planning authority; and
- 'Stone chippings' finish to the proposed track to be in a muted or darker colour.

I visited the site on 24.9.2020, which is within the Chichester Harbour AONB, viewing the site from Tournerbury Lane, accompanied by the applicant. We walked the entire length of the track that has so far been provided and I made a photographic record of the visit. Where the limit of the public highway stops and the private road begins, are two substantial brick, stone-capped piers. The applicant remarked that he was going to remove these, so that larger vehicles could swing into/out of the bellmouth access to the track.

I noted the access track had largely been constructed on top of a geotextile membrane of what appeared to be inert building rubble. The works were not complete and a final surface was still to be applied to the track. The track just stops short of the Tournerbury Woods boundary, marked by posts and strands of barbed wire.

A plastic drainage pipe has been placed across the bellmouth access to allow an existing ditch there to continue to drain. I noted a sign in this private road leading to the golf centre and Tournerbury Farm inviting drivers to keep speeds to 5 mph and warning of a concealed entrance.

I did not observe any drainage ditches either side of the track, but saw that it would be possible for surface water run-off to easily percolate through the track or drain away naturally to either the hedgerow verge or field to the sides of the track.

The hedgeline to the west of the track is well-established and contains a number of mature trees along its length of various heights. Immediately west of that is another unmade track leading to a cattery.

Adjacent fields were laid to pasture and I did not see any arable farmed produce being grown in the fields the track now gives access to. The applicant advised me that crops had been grown in the past, but many years ago. They are currently just used to graze livestock. No drainage pipes had yet been laid to the eastern side of the track to allow the track to drain through a natural dip in the land towards a pond close to the Tournerbury farmhouse.

Having regard to the policy framework* below make the following comments.

The Conservancy took no issue with application APP/17/00207, although did query use of land it was intended to serve, which the Council is now taking appropriate action over separately. My previous colleague Linda Park's comments in 29.3.2017 read –

“Overall, it is considered that subject to the retention of the existing field boundary hedgerow alongside the proposed track, the planting of a native species hedgerow with standard trees to line the proposed track rather than lines of Green Olive trees; and the provision of a muted or darker coloured stone chippings finish for a more restrained appearance appropriate to the rural location, then the proposed access track would not be harmful to the AONB and should reduce disturbance to the SSSI/Ramsar site which is currently used for access into the woods.”

Whereas the applicant is different to that for APP/17/00207, permission of course runs with the land and I note the current applicant successfully applied to the Council to discharge pre-commencement conditions and commenced work prior to that earlier permission lapsing. I note this included native-species tree planting, which is something Linda had asked for in 2017.

As I understand it, the only other differences between APP/17/00207 and APP/20/00626, looking at both sets of approved plans are –

- A single line of a lesser number of (Hornbeam) trees to only be planted at 30m centres on the east side of the access track, underplanted with a new hedgerow and backed by field fencing;
- Retention of a mature ash tree within the access bellmouth; and,
- A 2.5m western verge instead of a 3.75m western verge.

I still concur with Linda's comments from 2017, namely

“In terms of landscape impact, the proposed track lies on the boundary of the AONB, and would be sited along a field edge, adjacent to an existing hedgerow. It would not be situated

in an exposed position in wider landscape terms, since there would be limited views of the track from Tournerbury Lane itself and from the public footpath to the southwest. On this basis, provided the existing hedgerow boundary is retained, appropriate new planting is provided, and the surface materials are appropriate to this rural location within the AONB, the proposed track should not create an intrusive or urbanising feature within the landscape.”

The site is within an uncertain area for Brent geese and waders and located in the EA Flood Zone 1 (least risk of flooding). I did not see any Brent geese or waders using the adjacent fields during my visit, but did see what may have been either rooks or crows. I have discussed the application with Peter Hughes, The Conservancy's Ecology Officer, who did not consider this and adjacent fields to be significant in terms of past WeBS count data for Brent geese or other waders.

The new access track is still intended to give better access to Tournerbury Farm fields to facilitate efficient farming and as such considered necessary and reasonable development (immediately) outside the Borough's defined urban areas. It could also still provide an alternative access point to Tournerbury Woods, covered by a woodland TPO/S.S.S.I./SPA also covering the 'Tournerbury' (a Scheduled Ancient Monument), allowing for their maintenance and sound management.

Whether the applicant will allow such access rights is a private matter between the two landowners and outside the determination of this application.

Matters of highway safety in terms of the adequacy of the junction of the access track with the private road which is the continuation of the public highway known as Tournerbury Lane is a matter for Hampshire County Council to determine, but did not seem to have been an issue when APP/17/00207 was approved. Pedestrians navigating Tournerbury Lane to reach the AONB would have good visibility of vehicles emerging from the access track and vice versa.

I am aware of an objection on-line, pointing out 'contraventions' in terms of how the track has been constructed so far, in terms of what had been approved for APP/17/00207. However, the applicant has now asked for the merits of the current application to be considered and do not consider that any additional significant harm would or has occurred to the AONB landscape, from what has been and remains to be provided.

Whereas an arboricultural impact assessment is still valid from APP/17/00207, unless the council's tree officer has objections, the porous nature of the track provided and limited weight/frequency of vehicles traversing the track, albeit impinging on the root protection areas of identified trees, would not seem to have – at this stage caused either hedgerow or trees within it to have failed. Whereas the ash tree in the bellmouth was noted to be in poor condition, its retention as a natural feature within the AONB landscape is supported.

*Policy framework

NPPF - 1-3, 6-12, 17-20, 28, 38-42, 47-48, 54-55, 80-81, 83, 102, 108-110, 117-118, 124-127, 130, 157, 163, 170-172, 175, 180, 212-213; **NPPG** – ID's 8, 26; **HBLP** – CS11-CS12, CS15-CS16, CS19-CS20; DM8-DM10; **HBLPA** – AL1-AL2, DM23; **HBLPPV** – DR1, IN3, E1, E3, E5, E12, E14-E15, E17-E20, E24; **CHMP** – 1-2; **PP** – 01; **SPD/SPG**.

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework – (Revised Feb 2019)

NPPG – National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 onwards)

HBLP – Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy)(2011)

HBLPA – Havant Borough Local Plan Allocations DPD (December 2013)

HBLPPV – Havant Borough Local Plan (up to 2036) pre-submission version (2019)

CHMP – Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan (2019-2024)

SPD

- Havant Borough Design Guide (2011)

- Joint CHAONB SPD (2017)

Yours sincerely

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