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By email only to: [stephanie.eldridge@publicagroup.uk](mailto:stephanie.eldridge@publicagroup.uk)

15 April 2021

Dear Stephanie,

**APPLICATION NO:** 21/00365/FUL

**DESCRIPTION:** Change of use of land from agricultural to provide a takeaway cafe with associated facilities.

**LOCATION:** Land North East Of Cornwell Hill Farm Cottage, Worcester Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire.

The above planning application, which is for a development that would be located within the Cotswolds National Landscape<sup>1</sup>, has been brought to the attention of the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

In reaching its planning decision, the local planning authority (LPA) has a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.<sup>2</sup> The Board recommends that, in fulfilling this 'duty of regard', the LPA should: (i) ensure that planning decisions are consistent with relevant national and local planning policy and guidance; and (ii) take into account the following Board publications:

- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2018-2023 ([link](#));
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to Landscape Character Type (LCT) 15 (Farmed Slopes);
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to LCT 15 ([link](#)), including Section 15.2;
- Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change ([link](#));
- Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to Miscanthus & Short Rotation Coppice ([link](#)) and Dark Skies & Artificial Light ([link](#)), including Appendices A ([link](#)), B ([link](#)) and C ([link](#)).

The proposed development would be on an exposed site, on an elevated ridge between valleys to the north and south, with expansive views to the north and south (see Appendix 1). As such, if the café was to operate during hours of darkness, the proposed festoon lighting could potentially introduce incongruous 'lit elements', which could be seen across a wide area, into a characteristically dark landscape. If this lighting is not directed downwards, it could also cause 'sky glow'. These factors could adversely affect the darks skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape, which are one of the area's 'special qualities'.

The applicant's supporting information indicates that the surrounding farmland would potentially be planted with miscanthus as a means of mitigating the visual impacts of the proposed development. However, this crop is not commonly grown in the Cotswolds due to its soil requirements, and

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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

[cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](http://cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

Chairman:  
**Brendan McCarthy**  
Vice Chair:  
**Rebecca Charley**

consequently does not tend to reach the full growth height. Furthermore following cutting the crop has to regrow and the development would then be visible for 5-6 months of the year (i.e. February to August). This will limit the extent to which the miscanthus 'hides' the development.

In addition, it is not clear where people using the café would be expected to park and / or turn their vehicles around, or whether any earthworks would be required to provide for this parking.

Without prejudice, if West Oxfordshire District Council is minded to grant planning permission, we recommend that planning conditions should be set that help to address these issues. For example, conditions should be set that limit the extent to which the café would be allowed to operate during hours of darkness.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Mills". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

John Mills  
**Planning & Landscape Lead**  
[john.mills@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:john.mills@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk) | 07808 3912

#### NOTES:

- 1) Cotswolds National Landscape is the new name for the Cotswolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The new name takes forward one of the proposals of the Government-commissioned 'Landscapes Review' to rename AONBs as 'National Landscapes'. This change reflects the national importance of AONBs and the fact that they are safeguarded, in the national interest, for nature, people, business and culture.
- 2) Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. ([Link](#)).

## APPENDIX 1

### Google Earth screenshots

View from the access track, adjacent to the site of the proposed development, looking north-west.



View from the access track, looking south across the site of the proposed development.

