

1.6.2016

S.16/1040/FUL Land At Dane Lane, Daneway, Sapperton, Gloucestershire.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board commented on the application last year (S.15/0658/FUL) in relation to this site (see below) which was later withdrawn.

This current proposal is for a new field access. The proposal shows sight lines of 77m and 72m either side of the access. The addendum report refers to the removal of 120m of hedgerow to achieve the required sight lines. The tall fencing which is currently behind the existing hedge, will become exposed for some length of time before the new hedging becomes fully established. Therefore, the level of potential harm by opening up of the frontage of the site and prior to the new planting becoming established is significant.

It is noted that to achieve the required visibility splays the access opening has been pushed almost to the mid-point of the land ownership area along Dane Lane. This is understandable in terms of trying to achieve the required visibility splays to comply with the Highways Authority requirements, but at the same time (as well as hedgerow loss) increases the level of landscape impact of the access way by increasing distance within the site to reach the existing buildings on the site.

The application refers to the access entrance as being made of scalplings and therefore (subject to strict planning conditions) could be maintained as a simple field access. No curb stones and the lack of a solid tarmac or concrete surface avoids the potential for greater impact. A simple steel agricultural farm gate is all that would be necessary for an agricultural use.

In conclusion, the creation of a scalping surfaced field access with a standard steel farm gate to serve an agricultural use is not in itself unacceptable. However, the loss of 120m of hedgerow, before the new hedgerow becomes established, will leave the existing site, buildings, fencing (and an access way across the land) open in the landscape and will result in a negative impact on the character and quality of the AONB. The Council are requested to carefully consider the impact this development will have on the character and special qualities of the nationally protected AONB and balance whether the need for the new access is so great to outweigh the level of harm caused by the loss of the existing roadside hedgerow.