

1.7.2016

S.16/1293/VAR. Land Adjacent To Ruscombe Farm Bread Street, Ruscombe, Gloucestershire.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board wish to raise an **objection** to this proposal.

This site is located within an exposed area of the Cotswolds AONB and the area as a whole is subject to good public access and wide views across the landscape from a variety of rights of way.

The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (2016) shows this site is within area 8.High Wold Valley (specifically 8B Painswick and Slad Valleys Landscape Character Area).

The specific “potential landscape implications” as stated within the 2016 guidance which are relevant in this case are:

- “Proliferation of stables and other visual clutter such as ribbon fences, jumps, horse boxes, shelters, manège and lighting associated with ‘horsiculture’.
- Creation of paddocks by sub-dividing fields using non characteristic field boundary treatments such as post and rail fence or ribbon fences
- Erosion of the rural landscape.”

Therefore the original planning conditions imposed by the Council to control this form of development within the nationally protected Cotswolds AONB were made for good reasons and in compliance of the Council’s legal obligations under Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000 which has a requirement for the Council to have regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the landscape and special qualities of the AONB. The special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB include the absence of visual clutter, the dark night skies of the AONB and the absence of forms of pollution as stated within the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013-18. The planning conditions that had been imposed, we understand were the Council’s approved planning conditions which are used on all similar sites. The NPPF Paragraph 115 also confirms that “great weight” should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs.

As the Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement on the Keeping of Horses (see attached) suggests lighting may be possible in certain circumstances but it should be low level, directed downwards, of a dark night skies compliant design and fitted with cut off timers and a time agreed when their use shall cease each night – plans should be provided of locations, design and numbers but all lighting units should be kept to the very minimum and strictly controlled by planning conditions. The current condition 9 is a standard requirement – to vary this to meet the applicant’s requirements would make the condition unenforceable as the Council would not be able to monitor the coming and going of differing horses from differing owners. There are therefore valid reasons for this condition to remain. Temporary jumps when not in use in certain circumstances can be acceptable, however the numbers proposed and in such an open landscape it would almost be certain that they would remain as semi-permanent features visible in the wider landscape. There are therefore valid reasons for this condition to remain. In respect of the burning of waste on the site, it is assumed that was originally intended in relation to the burning of waste relating to the equestrian use. If varied, there should be limits to confirm no importation of waste on to the site from outside for burning and any burning should solely be in relation to appropriate on site tree and hedgerow management.

In conclusion, there is a real concern that these proposed changes will result in negative impact on the character and special qualities of the AONB for the reasons given above, unless appropriate conditions remain in force to strictly control the use of this site.