

Application No: 19/00618/FULL Full Application

Site: Linford Park Nursing Home, Linford Road, Linford, Ringwood, BH24 3HX

Proposal: Retention of access track

Applicant: Mr White, Coombe Healthcare

Case Officer: Carly Cochrane

Parish: ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE AND IBSLEY

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council view

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION

Conservation Area

3. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

DP2 General development principles
SP7 Landscape character
SP16 The historic and built environment
SP17 Local distinctiveness

4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Not applicable

5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Sec 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council: Recommend refusal, for the reasons listed below:

- The applicant states the purpose of the track is to provide access to the

sewage treatment plant (not to the bunds / bladders), however access could be achieved directly from the nursing home grounds to the north

- There are inaccuracies within the submission
- Previous reasons for refusal have not been fully addressed
- Concerns with regard to design and implementation; change of use of agricultural land and need for the track

[The comments can be viewed in full via the National Park Authority's website]

8. CONSULTTEES

- 8.1 Landscape Officer: Objection.
- 8.2 Tree Officer: No objection subject to conditions
- 8.3 Ecologist: Direct significant effects on European designated sites cannot be justifiably demonstrated based on evidence currently available. If minded to approve, ecological enhancement should be secured.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 11 letters of representation have been received, raising objections to the proposal. The comments made are summarised as follows:
- Concern with regard to the compatibility of the material in relation to the local pH, and pollution of the Linbrook stream
 - No proposal with regard to the removal of the existing track
 - Concern with regard to damage to the grass outside of the growing periods, resulting in a muddy track
 - Klargestor tank could be moved negating the need for the track
 - Track is across agricultural land and for non-agricultural purposes
 - Track is harmful to the landscape and does not serve to conserve or enhance the intrinsic rural character or natural beauty of the area
 - Track does not offer a suitable habitat for birds and reptiles, and does not aid or support biodiversity of flora
 - Previous reasons for refusal of the track have not been overcome
- 9.2 One comment has been received, stating a lack of confidence in the applicant.

10. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 10.1 Retention and completion of access track (19/00058) refused on 17 April 2019
- 10.2 New dwelling to provide managers accommodation (18/01002) refused on 11 March 2019
- 10.3 2no. new dwellings to provide staff accommodation with undercroft parking, new access and footpath (18/00435) refused on 01 October 2018
- 10.4 Addition of cladding and render to nursing home and accommodation/catering block; alterations to fenestration (17/00321) granted on 27 June 2017
- 10.5 Application to vary condition 2 of planning permission 84/27216 to allow use as Residential Centre for treatment/rehabilitation of people subject to alcohol/drug misuse within class C2 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 2010 (13/98490) withdrawn on 07 June 2013
- 10.6 Change of Use of land to use as a nursing home & creation of 49 self-contained units of sheltered accommodation (01/72225) refused on 30 April 2002
- 10.7 Add 2 fire escapes & conservatories to ground & first floors (NFDC/93/51647) granted on 19 April 1993
- 10.8 Erect 6 detached dwellings (demolish extg sanatorium bldgs) (NFDC/91/46980) refused on 10 April 1991
- 10.9 Erect 6 detached dwellings (demolish extg sanatorium bldgs) refused on 09 January 1991
- 10.10 Construct new access road and provision of car park (NFDC/89/42938) granted on 17 October 1989
- 10.11 Change of use to elderly persons nursing home (NFDC/84/27216) granted on 07 October 1985

11. ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The application site of Linford Park (now St Martha's) is located to the north western side of Linford Road, within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area. The main building, which has a lawful C2 use (elderly persons nursing home), is located within the northern section of the site which is elevated from Linford Road; as such, the site slopes north to south. The site comprises a total of approximately 10 hectares, which includes agricultural land and woodland, and is surrounded by other parcels of agricultural land. The New Forest SSSI adjoins the southern

boundary. The main access track adjoins Linford Road, and runs north-south within the western section of the site.

11.2 This application seeks temporary permission, for a period of three years, for the retention of a track required in order to provide access to the existing sewage treatment plant, however of a differing construction to that currently in-situ. It would also provide access to the bladder tank/bund located adjacent to the eastern site boundary (the subject of planning application reference 19/00512). The track would span a length of approximately 245 metres and would be located within the southern section of the site, to the front of a band of woodland. The track would traverse two fields and run west to east, with the land rising slightly in this direction. The track would adjoin the existing main access track at its westerly point. It is proposed that the track be constructed as a 'grass road', using plastic units and with the areas between and the banks either side either turfed or re-seeded.

11.3 By way of background, the track in-situ, which is constructed using crushed concrete and limestone, was previously refused permission for the following reason:

"The retention of the access track within the agricultural land, for non-agricultural purposes, by virtue of its scale and materials represents an unacceptable and unnecessary development which has an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the site and conservation area, as well as a detrimental impact upon the intrinsic rural landscape character. The application is therefore contrary to Policies DP1 and CP8 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (DPD) (December 2010), Policy SP7 of the emerging Local Plan (Proposed Modifications, April 2019) and sections 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)."

11.4 A planning application (19/00787) has been submitted for a permanent drainage solution, by connecting to the mains which is located approximately 1.2 kilometres to the west, close to Poulner Baptist Church. This would remove the need for the track beyond the proposed temporary period.

11.5 The main considerations for this application relate to:

- The encroachment of C2 use onto agricultural land (and therefore the principle of the development); and
- The impact upon the visual amenity, character and appearance of the conservation area.

11.6 The access track would traverse agricultural land. The land is separate from the operational area of the Linford Park building (contained within the northernmost section of the site) and is therefore considered agricultural in its use and character; this is not disputed by the applicant. The track, therefore, which would

provide access to the sewage treatment plant which serves the main Linford Park building, is considered to be an extension and encroachment of the C2 use of the site into agricultural land. Condition 5 of the consent for the use of the building as C2 (NFDC/84/27216) specifically states:

"The use of the open fields, since hatched brown on the submitted plan, shall be for grazing purposes only"

with the reason given that the

"site lies in open countryside where the policies of the local planning authority are not to allow the establishment of new dwellings or other urban development and to safeguard agricultural land".

The reason also goes on to state that permission was granted solely because of the particular circumstances of the site, and that *'any ancillary facilities should be confined to those reasonably required to support this main use'*. Whilst it is not disputed that the sewage treatment plant is reasonably required to support the lawful C2 use of the site, it, and the access track, are located within the areas which were specifically protected from 'urban development' as part of the above condition and the original consent for the use of the site as C2.

- 11.7 The above issue has been raised as a concern by local residents and the Landscape Officer has also raised an objection on the basis that the differing construction of the proposed track does not ameliorate the presence of the track: it would still be a visual intrusion in the landscape which would not conserve or enhance the landscape character of the immediate and wider landscape. Policy SP7 of the Local Plan sets out that *'Development proposals will be permitted if they conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest's landscapes and seascapes by demonstrating that...they are compatible with the distinct features and type of landscape in which the development is located...the design, layout, massing and scale of proposals conserve and enhance the existing landscape character and do not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park'*.
- 11.8 The previously refused application sought permission for the retention of an access track constructed using materials considered inappropriate given the sensitivities of the area, and on a permanent basis. The proposal now, for the use of the grass road system, would still constitute a track across agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes, however in relation to its appearance, it would be more appropriate as it would allow the grass to regenerate and grow around it, reducing the visual impact of its presence. Further, and unlike the previous application for the track, it is proposed that the track would be a temporary measure.

- 11.9 The trees located within and adjacent to the site are protected by virtue of being located within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area. The laying of the existing track has already resulted in detrimental impacts upon these protected trees, and therefore a method statement is required in order to ensure that the removal of the existing track and laying of the grass road does not further result in any harm to trees on the site. Subject to this, the Tree Officer has no objection to the application.
- 11.10 Whilst it is not disputed that the development undertaken thus far is incongruous within the rural landscape, the proposed use of the grass track is considered, on a temporary basis, to be acceptable. It is noted that this is a solution that in these particular circumstances can be considered appropriate within the National Park due to the fact that it is less intrusive than other solutions both in terms of the groundwork required and visual impact. Whilst the operation of the sewage treatment plant and bladder tanks are not reliant on the presence of a track, due to the need for both to be serviced and emptied as a result of their respective temporary siting, weight is given to the alternative solution, which would be to remove the track completely and re-surface with grass. This would not remove the need to service the sewage treatment plant or bladder tank; should there be no 'hard' surface by which they can be accessed by vehicles, the utilities company will not serve them, and the impact of this would not only result in significant harm to the natural environment due to overflow or blockages, but also the closure of the site due to its inability to operate, albeit temporarily. It is also pertinent to note that an application for the permanent drainage solution has been received by the Authority and will be assessed on its own merits in due course. This will remove the need for the length of track as the sewage treatment plant and bladder tank will no longer be required. With regard to the temporary permission sought, being that of a three year period, based on the information provided by the planning agent and the aforementioned fact that an application for a permanent solution has been received, it is considered reasonable and necessary to reduce the temporary time period to that of two years in order to minimise the impact upon the visual amenity of the area. It is considered reasonable and necessary to condition that the land upon which the track would be situated be made good upon the cessation of its use, with landscape and biodiversity enhancements sought.
- 11.11 It is therefore recommended that a 'one-off' temporary planning permission is granted, for a period of two years, subject to conditions.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Grant Temporary Permission

Condition(s)

- 1 The track shall be removed on or before 19 November 2021 and the land restored to a condition which has first been agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: The long-term retention of the development would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area and the intrinsic landscape character and would represent inappropriate development on agricultural land contrary to policies DP2, SP6, SP7 and SP17 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036.

- 2 Development shall only be carried out in accordance with drawing nos: NFNP-ID-257.7.01 Rev A, NFNP-ID-257.7.02 Rev A, NFNP-ID-257.7.03.

No alterations to the approved development shall be made unless otherwise agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: To prevent any further inappropriate development at the site which would be harmful to the intrinsic landscape character of the National Park, neighbouring amenity and natural environment in accordance with Policies DP2, SP6, SP7, SP16 and SP17 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).

- 3 No development, demolition or site clearance shall take place until the arrangements to be taken for the protection of trees and hedges on the site and an arboricultural method statement (to be identified by agreement with the Local Planning Authority beforehand), have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The agreed arrangements shall be in accordance with BS 5837:2012, be carried-out in full prior to any further activity taking place and shall remain in-situ for the duration of the development.

Reason: To safeguard trees and natural features which are important to the visual amenities of the area, in accordance with Policies DP2 and SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).

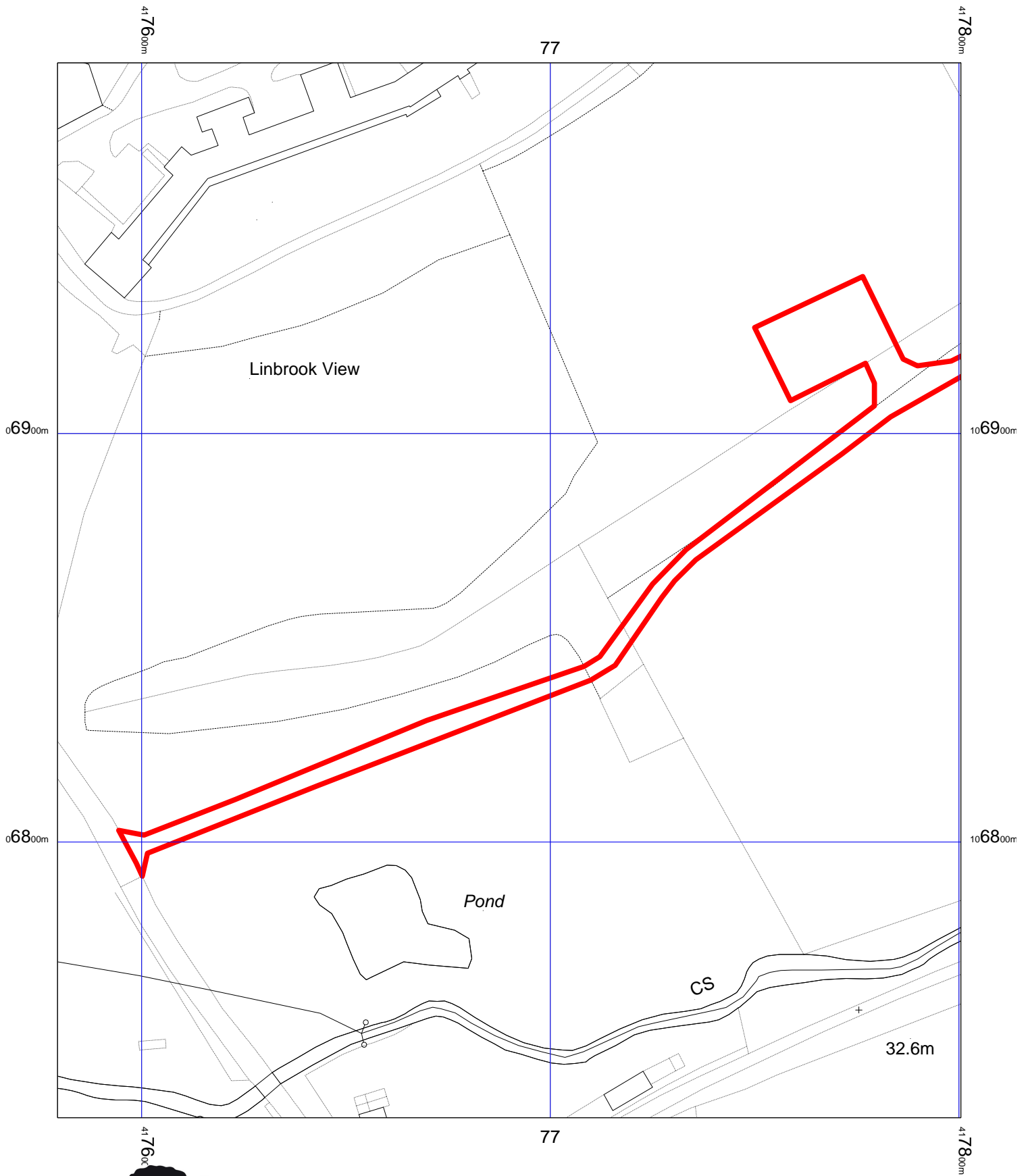
- 4 Within three (3) months of this planning permission, a scheme of landscaping of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall include:

- a) the existing trees and shrubs which have been agreed to be retained;
- b) a specification for new planting (species, size, spacing and

- location);
- c) areas for hard surfacing and the materials to be used;
 - d) other means of enclosure;
 - e) a method and programme for its implementation and the means to provide for its future maintenance.

No development shall take place unless these details have been approved and then only in accordance with those approved details.

Reason: To safeguard trees and natural features which are important to the visual amenities of the area, in accordance with Policies DP2 and SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).



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