

Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
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Your Ref: 10/00742
Our Ref: GB_220310_Mr P Walker_10/00742

22.03.10

Planning Application 10/00742 Ladyhouse Farm (free range egg unit)

Dear Peter

Thank you for your consultation on this application and for the information you supplied in our recent telephone conversation. I have consulted with members of the AONB Partnership and their views inform this response.

While the AONB Partnership fully recognises the economic pressures placed upon farms and rural communities and accepts the need to facilitate rural sustainability, the Partnership has considerable concern in relation to the suitability of this installation at the proposed location. It is the view of the AONB Partnership that the development will create a substantial negative visual impact within a sensitive area of landscape and that insufficient consideration has been given to this element.

Shropshire Council's Policy 4 in the 2009-2014 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan states that, "*Farm diversification enterprises need to be in harmony with environment and protecting this resource, which also provides an important economic asset for the future.*"

Paragraph 21 of Planning Policy Statement 7 states that "*the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape (in AONBs) ... should be given great weight...in development control decisions in these areas.*" Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires planning authorities to "*have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty*". These requirements are reflected in Policy E1 of the South Shropshire Local Plan which states that "*Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect the character or natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*".

It is the view of the Partnership that this proposal, within the boundary of the Shropshire Hills AONB, will be visible from the perspective of the surrounding hills and as a result that it is likely to have an adverse effect on this nationally protected landscape. The application does not appear to have undertaken a detailed landscape impact assessment, particularly so in respect to the site being viewed from such a distant perspective. This is an important consideration in an area of landscape which derives considerable financial benefits from the visitors who are drawn to the landscape to walk its upland areas and enjoy the visual aspects of the landscape.

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While some consideration has been given to local topography and a mitigation planting scheme is proposed, hedgerow trees along Drury Lane and the field boundary to the east and parkland planting in the south, this is not well developed and appears rather limited in scale.

In response to the physical form of the building itself we consider the scale of the individual building to be large, and that either a smaller facility would be more appropriate or perhaps the same capacity achieved with more than one building. In addition we feel the proposed use throughout of steel sheet cladding (of whatever colour) is inappropriate on a large building in the AONB. We would recommend that wall cladding should be of horizontal lapped timber 'featherboard', and roof cladding of through-colour fibre cement board, preferably in grey (anthracite).

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership does not recommend steel sheeting for roof construction in the AONB. Exceptionally, where profiled metal sheeting is deemed absolutely necessary for functional reasons, plastic coated steel in one of the following dark colours should be selected: dark blue (blue or slate blue BS 18-8-29), green (juniper green BS 12-B-29), or brown (Van dyke brown BS 08-8-29).

These recommendations come from a draft 'Agricultural Buildings Design Guidance' document we have recently developed. Though the document is not yet published, we will be happy to provide a full draft of this if it would be helpful, an extract is attached to this document.

This response has been informed by consultation with members of the AONB Partnership.

Yours sincerely

G Barratt

Planning and Landscape Officer
On behalf of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership