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Your Ref:
Our Ref: gb_070111_Manor Fm obj 10_04482

7 Jan 2011

10/04482 Manor Farm, Wistanstow, Erection of Poultry Houses

Dear Mr Walker

Thank you for your consultation on the above application. **The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership objects to this application enlarging the already substantial poultry complex at this location. The visual and landscape impacts have not been adequately assessed in relation to the AONB and it is the view of the AONB Partnership that the development will, when adding to the existing complex of buildings, have a significant negative impact on landscape character.** This response has been informed by consultation with members of the AONB Partnership.

Policy Background

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 saved Policy E1 of the South Shropshire District 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"*.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The Visual Impact/ Landscape Assessment section (4.6, p 8) of the Environmental Statement accompanying the application is entirely inadequate. In its cursory seven lines of text this does not even mention that the site is within the Shropshire Hills AONB, and in no way assesses the potential impacts of the proposed development on this nationally protected landscape. We would suggest therefore that the application does not comply with the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 requiring Environmental Impact Assessment of relevant classes of development.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment study should be undertaken as part of Environmental Impact Assessment to the standards set out in the Landscape Institute's publication *'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'* 2002. It is important to note that landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, an environmental resource, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. Visual effects relate to changes in views, and to people's responses to these changes. While a proper assessment will therefore include assessment of views in relation to receptor sites (viewpoints such as settlement, roads, public paths and visitor locations), and consider the sensitivity of those receptors, visibility is not the only consideration. The scale and nature of a development may have an adverse effect on landscape character, the physical characteristics and sense of place of that area of land, irrespective of how visible it may be.

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While the AONB Partnership supports the need for farms and rural communities to remain sustainable, we do not believe it is necessary to do this at the expense of the AONB's nationally important landscape. Our recently published Agricultural Buildings Design Guide (available at http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/partnership/documents/Agricultural_Buildings_Design_Guide.pdf) provides information on how the design of new agricultural buildings can be appropriate to the AONB, where the scale and location is judged to be acceptable.

G Barratt
Planning & Landscape Officer

On behalf of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership