

Coberley Parish Council

Application 17/04117/FUL: Conversion and partial demolition of agricultural barns to form 4 no. dwellings with access, car parking and landscaping at Dowmans Farm, Coberley

Coberley Parish Council (CPC) has held a meeting, attended by members of the Parish, and is broadly supportive of this proposal on the basis that it would bring back into valuable use, buildings which are surplus to the requirements of the farm and which would, otherwise likely deteriorate to the visual detriment of the surrounding rural environment.

The Council does however, have some concerns, requests and questions which it asks to be resolved during CDC's consideration of the application.

Traffic access & management

Whilst recognising that access to the development, the farm buildings and the farm land has to be via the Restricted By-Way from Coberley Road, CPC has concerns that traffic from the development could use the northern continuation of the Restricted By-Way to access the A436. CPC therefore requests that a condition be placed on any permission, in order to prevent vehicular use, other than farm vehicles, of this route with its potentially hazardous junction with the A436.

As stated in Paragraph 6.15 of the application's Planning Statement, it is important that the site access is modified to improve visibility in both directions, but in particular to the west.

Drainage management

No mention appears to be made in the application with regard to drainage management. Because a water course lies close by, at the foot of the slope to the south of the development, CPC requests that CDC establishes what measures are planned.

Design and materials

CPC notes that the application proposals aim to safeguard the form, detail, character and setting of the existing barns and that the development will respect their rural character and the surrounding area.

However, in the event that the barns are sold unconverted, but with planning permission, CPC asks that a condition/covenant is imposed to ensure strict compliance with the sympathetic, sensitive traditional style of housing as outlined above and which remains in keeping with the adjacent Dowmans Farm.

Developer contributions

CPC asks whether any affordable housing, or a contribution to such, can be requested as part of this development. Although local and national policy only requires a contribution in an AONB for developments of 5 houses or more, CPC asks for consideration of an exception to policy.

Affordable housing is crucial to the vitality and sustainability of the countryside.

Housing in many rural areas has become increasingly unaffordable to people on low and average incomes and the failure to create affordable homes is fuelling some of the main issues facing rural communities. The closure of rural services (such as post offices and pubs) and the skewed population structure, due to falling numbers of young people, is linked strongly to the ability of people to be able to afford a home. A very recent Housing Needs Survey carried out for CPC by GRCC has identified a need for affordable housing within the Parish. More importantly, CPC asks whether a contribution can be sought towards Primary Education.

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The nearby Coberley Church of England Primary School would be the nearest facility for any children living in these properties and Coberley Parish Council is aware that the School is seeking to improve its premises and facilities, including a new classroom to accommodate growth, a new larger hall with kitchen and toilet facilities and improved outdoor space for play and PE.

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20 November 2017