

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

26 June 2020

**APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION BY THE COMMITTEE**

Report of the Head of Development Management

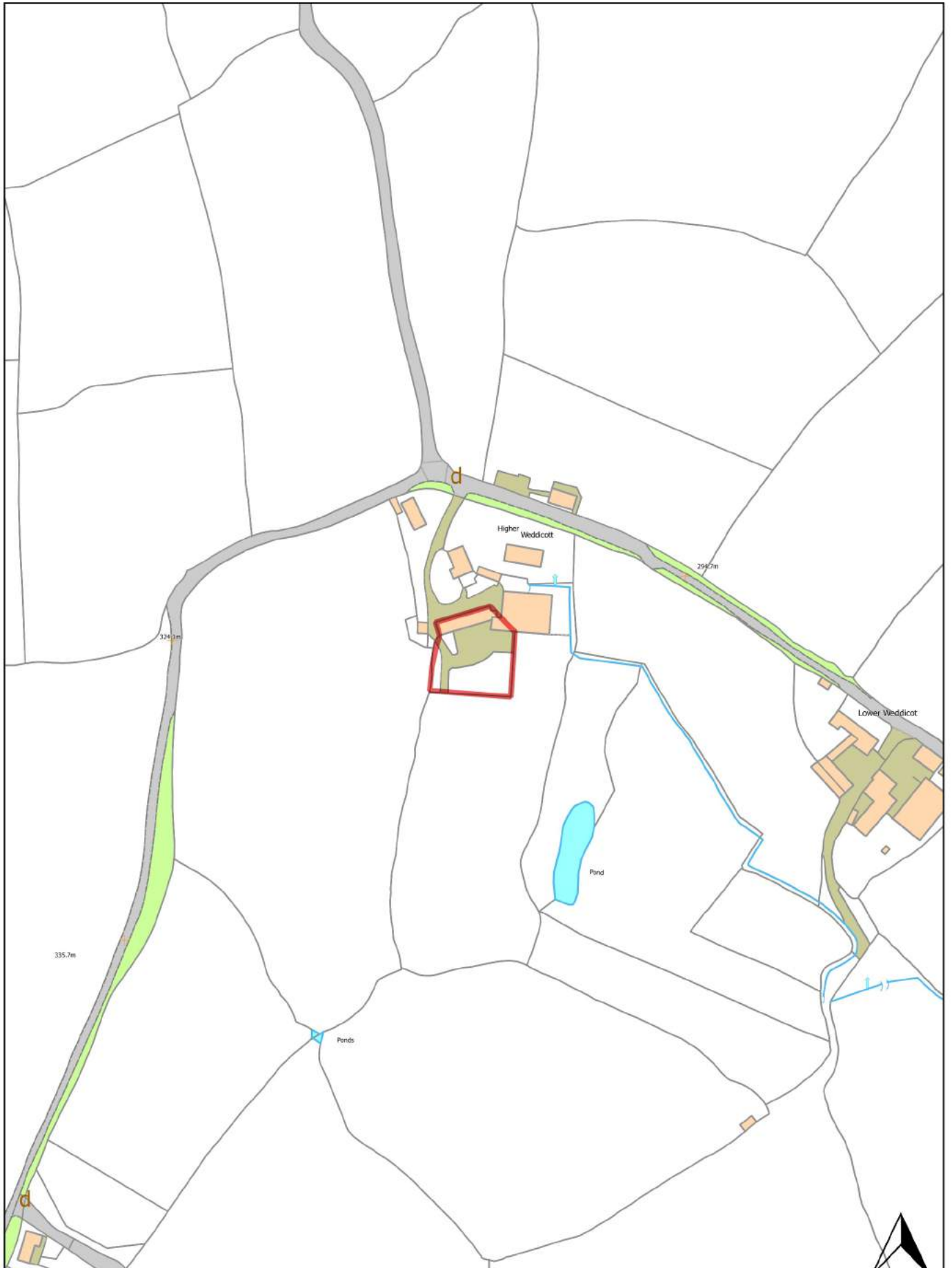
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# 0167/20 - Higher Weddicott Farm, Chagford



Scale 1:2,500



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1. Application No: **0167/20** District/Borough: **West Devon Borough**  
Application Type: **Full Planning Permission** Parish: **Chagford**  
Grid Ref: **SX700859** Officer: **Jo Rumble**

Proposal: **Removal of condition 1 to planning permission granted under ref. 0203/13 to allow building to be used as an unrestricted dwelling**

Location: **Higher Weddicott Farm,  
Chagford**

Applicant: **Mr D Rogers**

Recommendation **That planning permission be REFUSED**

### **Reason(s) for Refusal**

1. The proposal is in an area where the Authority would only permit a new dwelling in exceptional circumstances. The proposed development would result in an unjustified and unsustainable open market dwelling in the countryside and is therefore contrary to policies COR2, COR15 and DMD23 of the Development Plan and to advice contained in the English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

### **Introduction**

Higher Weddicott Farm lies outside Chagford on the slopes of Meldon Hill.

The large free standing traditional barn stands opposite the main farmhouse and was converted for holiday use in the early 1990's. It has a private garden with access and parking provided at the rear.

The application seeks permission to remove the holiday occupancy condition to allow the barn to be let as a full-time residence. This application is presented to the committee in view of the conflict with adopted planning policy.

### **Planning History**

0203/13	Removal of condition (b) from 03/08/2342/91 relating to holiday unit Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally	13 June 2013
03/08/2342/91	Conversion of redundant farm building to self catering unit for farm diversification project Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally	01 November 1991
03/08/2041/91	Conversion of disused barn into additional accommodation Full Planning Permission	Refused	31 May 1991
03/08/2342/88	Strip existing thatch roof, carrying out necessary essential remedial repairs to timber and replace with new asbestos slate roof Listed Building Consent	Refused	07 October 1988

### **Consultations**

Environment Agency: Flood zone 1 - standing advice applies  
County EEC Directorate: No objection on highway grounds.

West Devon Borough Council: Does not wish to comment

### **Parish/Town Council Comments**

Chagford PC: Chagford Parish Council would like to object to the proposed variation of condition 1 to planning permission granted under ref:0203/13 to remove the length of time the barn may be occupied at Higher Weddicott Farm, Chagford.

#### Reasons

- The barn is part of a Farm Diversification Plan
- It cannot be linked to the farm and would be available on the open market
- It is outside the settlement area

### **Relevant Development Plan Policies**

COR1 - Sustainable Development Principles  
COR14 - Meeting the infrastructure requirements of new development  
COR15 - Providing for limited new housing to meet local needs  
COR19 - Dealing with proposals for tourism development  
COR2 - Settlement Strategies  
COR20 - Providing for agricultural diversification  
COR21 - Dealing with development and transport issues in a sustainable way  
COR3 - Protection of Dartmoor's special environmental qualities  
DMD1a - Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
DMD1b - Delivering National Park purposes and protecting Dartmoor National Park's special qualities  
DMD23 - Residential development outside Local Centres and Rural Settlements  
DMD3 - Sustaining the quality of places in Dartmoor National Park  
DMD44 - Tourist accommodation  
DMD5 - National Park Landscape  
DMD7 - Dartmoor's built environment  
DMD9 - The re-use and adoption of historic buildings in the countryside

### **Representations**

None to date.

### **Observations**

#### PLANNING HISTORY

Permission was originally granted for the conversion of the barn to holiday accommodation in 1991. It was the subject of a farm diversification project and a condition requiring the holiday unit created to be ancillary to the operation of the farm was imposed.

Subsequently, an application in 2013 was received requesting the removal of this condition as it was proving a barrier to obtaining mortgage funding. This was approved and a new condition imposed which limited the use of the building to holiday occupation only, without being tied to the farm. The wording of the condition is given below:

'The approved holiday unit shall not be used or occupied other than for the provision of short let holiday accommodation and shall not at any time be used, let, sold or otherwise occupied as a persons' sole or main place of residence. No person, couple, family or group shall occupy or use the accommodation hereby permitted for a single period or cumulative periods exceeding 28 days in any calendar year. An up to date register of the names and addresses of all occupiers should be maintained and made available to the Authority on request.'

## APPLICATION

It is this condition that is now the subject of this further application. The applicant has requested that the condition be taken away to remove the restriction on who could occupy the barn and the length of time the barn can be used. It is understood that the current Covid 19 lockdown restrictions on travel have stopped guests booking short break holidays which, the applicant states, has had a devastating effect on income now and for the foreseeable future. The applicant goes on to state that: 'with the restriction lifted we would be able to let the barn on the open market for between £2K-£2.5K per month....the removal of this restriction will help us survive in a unknown future marketplace'.

The application is to effectively remove the occupancy condition and time limit for occupation. If approved the barn would become unencumbered by any occupancy condition and could therefore be let or sold for full time residential use.

## POLICY

Local Plan policies resist the creation of unrestricted dwellings in the open countryside. Holiday accommodation is a restricted form of residential accommodation that can only be occupied for short term holiday purposes.

If the applicant were to apply to convert the barn at today's date, Local Plan policy (DMD9 and DMD23) would support its use as holiday accommodation in the first instance and would only consider affordable housing if viability showed that this was not sustainable. Open market housing would not be supported in any instance in this countryside location. Plan policy recognises the contribution short stay tourist accommodation makes to sustainable tourism and the rural economy as is required by Core Strategy policy COR18.

Policy DMD44 requires holiday accommodation to be subject to a condition to ensure that the accommodation is occupied for holiday purposes only, that it is not occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence and that a register is kept of names and addresses of all occupiers.

## CONSULTATIONS

The Parish Council objects to the application considering that it was originally permitted as part of a farm diversification scheme and that as it lies outside the settlement and would be available on the open market, it would be in conflict with Local Plan policy. No other representations have been received to date.

## SUMMARY

The devastating impact of Corona virus on the tourist industry is well recognised and unquestioned. The Authority has sought to assist the applicant during this time and several

options in terms of how to support the farm through this application were discussed. Members will be aware that when this application was last presented to the Development Management Committee in May, the officers recommendation was that temporary permission be granted for 12 months.

While this is not strictly in accordance with policy, it was considered a reasonable and pragmatic response to the issues existing at that time. However, the circumstances have changed since the previous report and recommendation was made over a month ago, and, as a consequence, officers no longer consider that they are able to support this application.

Lockdown restrictions are being eased slowly across the UK and whilst the tourist industry does not yet have the green light to re-open fully, Government advice on the relaxation of restrictions in the hospitality industry suggests that short-term lets in England could start to re-open to guests by 4 July 2020. Self-contained units have a lower risk than other forms of holiday accommodation and it is believed that these will be amongst the first to re-open. This is a rapidly changing situation which has moved on significantly since this application was presented in April and first debated by Members last month.

The results of the Dartmoor Covid Business Survey were released on 28 May and are being used to inform some immediate actions, and shape the Dartmoor Recovery Plan in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Leisure and Tourism sector provided by far the highest number of responses by business type to the survey and it is considered that this planning application conflicts with emerging approaches around positive support (across Dartmoor, Devon and LEP) for tourist related business. It should also be noted that the Authority continues to receive planning applications for new holiday lets which runs at odds with the justification supporting this proposal.

## CONCLUSION

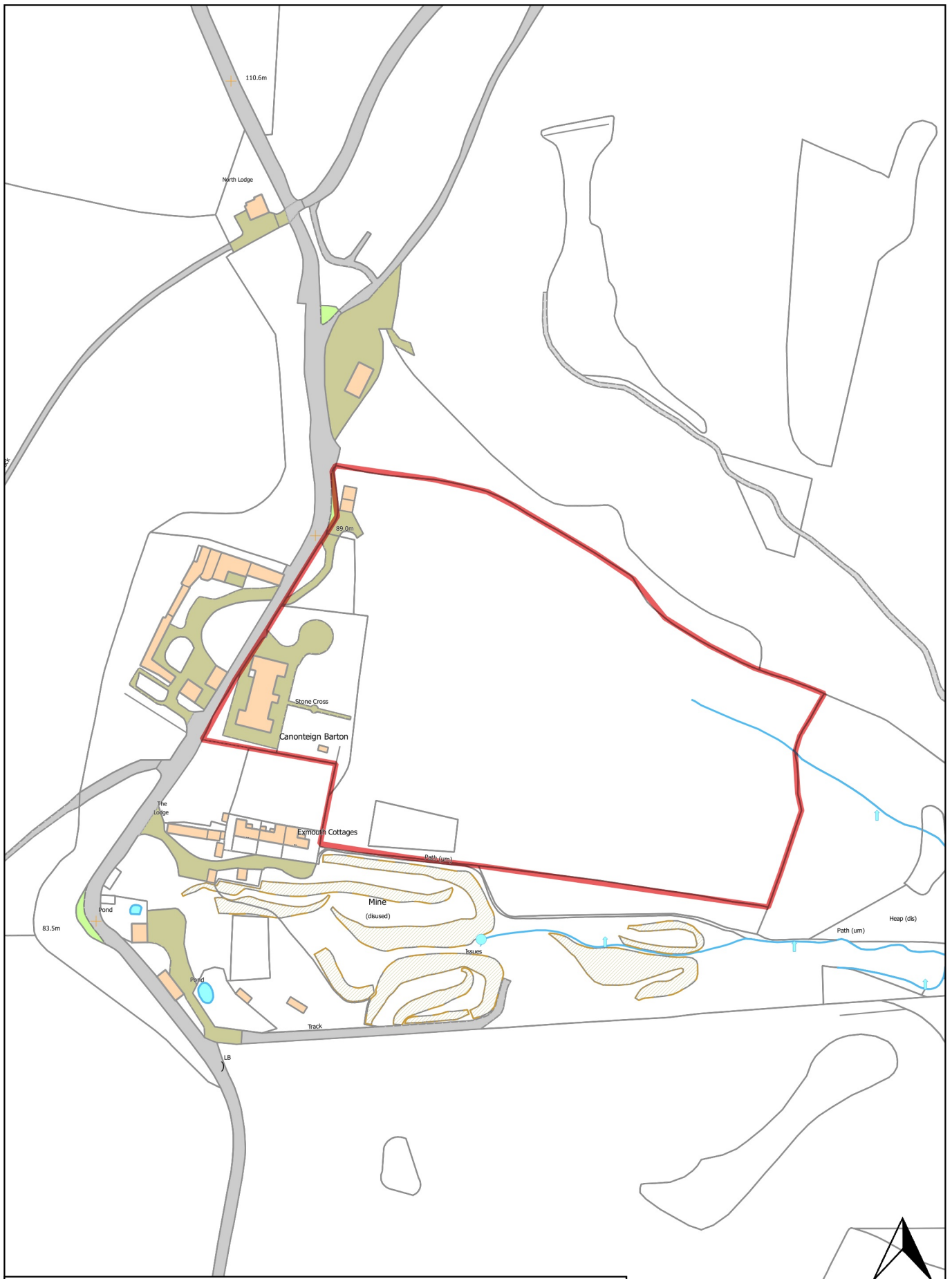
The barn has been a successful and popular holiday venture and there is nothing to suggest that it would not continue to be so once the current restrictions are lifted. Indeed, such accommodation and its occupants are likely to be key in generating tourist pounds in the local economy, when Dartmoor once again opens to tourists.

The suggested variation amounts to the permanent lifting of the holiday occupation condition and the applicant acknowledges this within his application. This clearly conflicts with local plan policy and while there is sympathy to the applicant's current circumstances. Given what we now know about the potential easing of lockdown measures, there is no longer considered to be any planning justification for the permanent or temporary removal of the holiday occupancy condition.

# 0547/19 - Canonteign Manor, Christow



Scale 1:2,500



2. Application No: **0547/19** District/Borough: **Teignbridge District**  
Application Type: **Change of Use** Parish: **Christow**  
Grid Ref: **SX839831** Officer: **James Aven**

Proposal: **Change of Use from C3 (residential dwelling) to Sui Generis (Holiday Let)**

Location: **Canonteign Manor, Christow**

Applicant: **Mr L Peng**

Recommendation **That, subject to the completion of an acceptable unilateral undertaking, permission be GRANTED.**

### **Condition(s)**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the site location plan and fence detail document received 12 February 2020 and floor plan valid 25 November 2019.
3. The use hereby approved shall not commence until the fencing shown on the approved detail document received 12 February 2020 has been installed. At all times thereafter, the approved fencing shall be retained in the approved location.
4. The development hereby permitted shall not be used or occupied other than for the provision of short let holiday accommodation. No person, couple, family or group shall occupy or use the accommodation hereby permitted for a single period or cumulative periods exceeding 28 days in any calendar year.
5. The owners/operators of the holiday accommodation hereby approved shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names, main home addresses and dates of occupancy of all occupiers using the accommodation and shall make this information available to the Local Planning Authority on request.
6. The Staff Accommodation hereby approved shall not be used or occupied other than for the provision of accommodation to a person (together with their spouse or partner, children and dependents) solely or mainly working as a housekeeper or manager of the holiday accommodation hereby approved, and shall not at any time be used, let, sold or otherwise occupied as a separate dwelling.
7. The delivery and collection of goods and materials to and from Canonteign Manor shall only take place between the hours of 09:00 and 18:00.
8. The collective acoustic impact of the use of the site must not be any greater than 5dBa 5 min over the existing background noise level when measured at the boundary of the site and without tonal element. The sound shall not be greater than the background sound level when measured at the facade or boundary of the nearest noise sensitive premises. The impact of any noisy activities on neighbouring premises shall be monitored when requested to do so by the Local Planning Authority or Environmental Health Officer and appropriate action taken to reduce noise to acceptable levels if they are found to be excessive or distinguishable above residual sound levels at the facade or boundary of the nearest noise sensitive property.

### **Introduction**



Canonteign Manor is in open countryside, 1.8 km south of the centre of Christow (the nearest settlement). The site is accessed and partially visible (the western elevation of the building) from the public highway to the west of the site. The main Teign Valley road is approximately 1km to the south.

The property is a large Grade I Listed Building, with residential use. The property is set within its own spacious grounds. To the south of the main residence is a 12m by 5m outdoor swimming pool and associated hard standing.

To the immediate south of the garden walls is a cluster of 5 residential properties (10m south of the edge of the hard standing associated with the swimming pool).

The application seeks planning permission to use the property for holiday letting purposes. It is presented to the Committee on the basis of the concerns raised by neighbouring residents and the Parish Council.

### Planning History

0056/18	Internal alterations to comply with fire regulations Listed Building Consent	Withdrawn	05 April 2018
0044/18	The proposed use of Canonteign Manor for occasional short stay lets to groups Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development	Certificate not issued	23 March 2018
	Appeal lodged: 31 July 18	Result: Dismissed	
0415/17	Use of dwelling for occasional short stay lets Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development	Withdrawn	10 October 2017
0439/16	Change of use from dwellinghouse (use class C3) to hotel (use class C1) Change of Use	Withdrawn	03 March 2017
0605/13	Reconstruction of existing vehicle entrance and realignment of gravel drive Listed Building Consent	Grant Conditionally	08 January 2014
0604/13	Reconstruction of existing vehicle entrance and realignment of gravel drive Full Planning Permission - Householder	Grant Conditionally	08 January 2014
0729/01	Construction of new orangery within lower garden and subterranean link to Manor House, and new private sewage treatment plant Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally	27 May 2003
0730/01	Construction of new orangery within lower garden and subterranean link to Manor House, and new private sewage treatment plant Listed Building Consent	Grant Conditionally	27 May 2003
5/37/162/97/07	Internal alterations to provide additional bathrooms, etc. Installation of multi-fuel stoves and associated works. Listed Building Consent	Grant Conditionally	12 September 1997

## Consultations

Environment Agency:

Flood Risk Zone 1 - Standing Advice

County EEC Directorate:

The application is for the change of use of seven separate guest 'suites' of the large residential manor house to holiday let. The highway authority is aware of the site and its history over recent years since the current owner acquired the property.

Holiday let residential 'units' have the potential to generate far fewer daily and annual traffic movements than conventional residential units and each of those individual units will be extremely unlikely to be occupied by guests for 100% of the year. Even if they were to be, the highway authority has no highway safety concerns about the potential additional traffic movements that would be generated by the proposed change of use, having regard to the trip generation potential of the building as a large residential property.

The access to the highway from the site is acceptable in geometry and visibility for that increase and there will be a modest increase in vehicular usage of the highway network in the vicinity of the site, notwithstanding its constraints in width - commensurate with many roads within the National Park.

For that reason there is no objection to the proposed change of use from a highway safety point of view.

Historic England:

Canonteign Manor is a grade I listed building on the fringes of Dartmoor. It was built in the late 16th century house and retains a distinctive E shape plan. The house had been in an extremely poor state of repair by the mid 20th century. During the 1970s Lady Exmouth, whose family owned the estate, undertook a significant programme of restoration, which appears to have resulted in the buildings current layout, which has resulted in the floor plan being difficult to interpret.

The current application relates to the change of use of the property from residential to holiday let. Historic England's interest lies in the impact of the fire upgrade works required by the proposed change of use. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Listed Building Consent that will need to be submitted for any works connected to the property.

Teignbridge District Council (EHO):

The EHO initially raised concerns regarding the impact of the use of the main building, grounds and pool area on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

He now raises no objection to the change of use following the additional information provided, but has recommended

- some additional conditions be attached;
- The collective acoustic impact of the use of the site must not be any greater than 5dBa 5 min over the existing background noise level when measured at the boundary of the site and without tonal element. The sound should not be greater than the background sound level when measured at the facade of the nearest noise sensitive premises.
  - A nominated person will monitor and assess the impact of any noisy activities on neighbouring premises periodically throughout the rental period or when complaints are received and take action to reduce noise levels if they are found to be excessive/distinguishable above residual sound levels at the facade or boundary of the nearest noise sensitive property.
  - The delivery and collection of goods will be restricted to between 08:00 and 18:00 hours each day.
  - Smoking zones must be pre designated away from neighbouring homes.

### **Parish/Town Council Comments**

Christow PC: Object - impact to the local environment / increased traffic on small lanes / noise and light pollution in rural location.

### **Relevant Development Plan Policies**

COR1 - Sustainable Development Principles  
 COR19 - Dealing with proposals for tourism development  
 COR2 - Settlement Strategies  
 COR21 - Dealing with development and transport issues in a sustainable way  
 COR5 - Protecting the historic built environment  
 DMD1a - Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
 DMD1b - Delivering National Park purposes and protecting Dartmoor National Park's special qualities  
 DMD4 - Protecting local amenity  
 DMD44 - Tourist accommodation  
 DMD5 - National Park Landscape  
 DMD7 - Dartmoor's built environment  
 DMD8 - Changes to Historic Buildings

### **Representations**

10 letters of objection 1 letter of support

Objections:

The proposed use will have an unacceptable effect on near neighbours. In particular, the use of outdoor space including the swimming pool, hot tub and garden have historically and will in future, adversely affect the quiet enjoyment of neighbouring residents. The large property inevitably attracts large groups who have already caused disturbance into the early hours. There is a difference between a low intensity family dwelling and all year round commercial use of the property. The use would increase traffic on narrow roads

and compromise the safety of other residents. It is unrealistic to assume that conditions restricting use could be adequately enforced. There will be no benefit to the local community or additional employment. The proposed use is not needed to 'save' the historic building.

In support:

The application would support the maintenance of an historic building. The proposed use would add to the local economy, bringing tourists and creating work in the area.

## **Observations**

### LOCATION & HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Canonteign is a Grade I listed manor house dating from the late sixteenth century which was subject to major restoration works in the 1970's. It occupies an imposing position in the Teign valley on the western valley side affording dramatic views to the east. The property is constructed of stone rubble with granite dressings on a symmetrical plan form. It is positioned tight to the highway on the western side with extensive grounds to the east leading down to the Teign Valley road. It is listed for its architectural significance and historical associations.

The property is currently used as a single residential property (use class C3). It is laid out as a six bedroom residence with staff quarters. In the recent past it has been let out on a casual basis to groups and families for holiday purposes.

### PROPOSAL

This application seeks planning permission for the change of use from C3 Residential Use to a Sui Generis Holiday Let of the main property (Canonteign Manor) and its associated parkland. Listed Building Consent has not been sought at this time for any works to the property.

The holiday unit would provide six bedroom suites with en-suite facilities, various activity rooms (billiards room, drawing room, family lounge, breakfast room and kitchen), spa and treatment facilities with a separate staff accommodation flat on second floor.

The red line indicating the application site on the location plan has been amended to exclude the open air swimming pool, hot tub area and adjoining garden space. It is intended to decommission the pool, provide a permanent cover and fence this area from the remaining site. Guests would have full use of the property and the extensive grounds within this red line only.

The property is primarily accessed from the south being approximately 1km from the Teign Valley road. Vehicle access is from the north side of the property leading to a designated parking area.

### PLANNING HISTORY

The property has been subject to a number of permissions/consents for works to the fabric of the building. A pool house/orangery was permitted in early 2000 on the southern aspect. The pool has been constructed however the orangery (enclosure) has not been pursued to completion.

More recent planning history relates to the present owners desire to use the property as an alternative to the authorised residential use. A planning application to use the premises as a hotel was withdrawn in 2016. An application seeking a certificate of lawful use for holiday letting was refused by the Authority in 2018. The subsequent appeal was dismissed by the Inspector. A corresponding application for listed building consent for internal works related to fire prevention was withdrawn in 2018.

The submission of this application is primarily a response to the Inspector's decision on the certificate of lawful use application. His decision stated that the use of the building for holiday purposes was not a lawful use and that planning permission would be required, hence the application we now have before us.

## PRINCIPLE

The use of the property to provide short stay holiday accommodation to multiple visitors is one that, in principle, could accord with policy DMD44. Inter alia the policy specifically states that tourism development will be permitted where it comprises 'accommodation in large houses in the countryside..... where the management of the tourism enterprise is undertaken from that dwelling'. There is also an element of using an important Grade I building to promote the special qualities and understanding of the Park.

Policy DMD4 is pertinent in that it seeks to minimise the impact of development proposals, in general, on the amenity of residents in association with maintaining the special qualities of the Park.

In a wider sense, policy DMD5 states that development proposals should conserve and / or enhance the character and special qualities of the Dartmoor landscape by respecting the tranquillity and sense of remoteness of Dartmoor.

At present there are no works proposed that have a direct impact on the fabric of the building however there may be a need to address the specifics of fire regulations in a subsequent listed building consent application if required. The policies relating to the importance of the historic built environment (COR5, DMD7, DMD8 and DMD9) have relevance but are focussed on the physical works that are commonly associated with changes of use. Nevertheless, they reiterate the importance of considering the impact that inappropriate uses can have on the historic environment and how important is to ensure any identified harm does not impact on the importance of the historic asset.

Policy COR11 seeks to sustain Dartmoor as a place that continues to offer a sense of tranquillity to residents; those who work in the National Park and those who visit it.

## MAIN ISSUES

Given that there is support, in principle, for the re-use of a large country house for holiday letting purposes, the main issues in this case are considered to be twofold.

Namely, the harm this proposal may have on the nationally important listed building and secondly, that of the amenity of neighbouring residents through activity, noise, traffic and intensity of use – all matters identified as concerns in the locality.

In the case of harm to the building, it is acknowledged that the internal fabric of the building has been significantly altered to accommodate the needs of 21st century living standards. It is a country house that displays a fine historical façade and setting but internally already has all

the comforts of a modern residence. The anticipated internal improvements to meet fire regulations would need to be the subject of detailed scrutiny but are not for consideration at this time through this change of use application. In principle, it is hard to argue that the proposed use would have a harmful impact on the fabric of the heritage asset at this stage.

With regard to the impact on character and amenity issues, this stems from the intensification of use of the property, facilities and outdoor space. This was the thrust of why the Planning Inspector considered that planning permission was required in order to pursue this change. Specifically he noted that;

'Recreational activity by people living in the property whilst enjoying their holiday break would be more likely to lead, particularly in good weather, to recreational activities within the garden. The large swimming pool is likely to be a particularly attractive feature for such occupants. In many instances from my experience it would seem likely that this would create a significant amount of activity in the form of sounds from voices, games being played and music.' Furthermore, he stated that; 'a live-in house keeper is likely to live integrally with the family unit assisting with domestic needs and responsibilities. It is proposed that the role would change to include monitoring of activity to ensure compliance with the 'house rules'. The member of staff would be a manager living separately and in a socially more detached manner than at present. It seems likely to me that the staff accommodation may also become functionally more distinct from the rest of the dwelling. These changes would therefore substantially alter the role and manner of occupation of the building of that staff member at times when groups are in occupation.'

The applicant has sought to minimise impacts by employing a live-in housekeeper who would seek to monitor and enforce a stringent set of house rules. He has offered to provide a unilateral undertaking to sit alongside any permission setting out the expectations of guests. This includes reference to decommissioning the pool and surrounding area (now lying outside the red line site) and the erection of estate fencing to delineate the boundary of the garden area in this location. It will also propose quiet areas around the house between 9.00pm and 9.00am, restrict the delivery and collection of goods to between 9:00am and 6:00pm and establish designated smoking zones away from neighbouring homes.

At their nearest, neighbouring residents are separated by approximately 10m on the southern boundary of the property (now approximately 30 metres from the revised application site boundary).

## HIGHWAY ISSUES

The Parish Council and some of the neighbouring residents have raised concerns about the potential increase in traffic on narrow roads and the impact this may have on the safety of other residents in the area. It is accepted that access to the site is in places via a single track highway, not dissimilar to many other single track highways within the boundaries of the Park, but the holiday use wouldn't necessarily lead to a higher intensity of use than that possible under the permitted residential use, and may actually be likely to lead to less traffic in off-peak periods.

In his detailed response the Highway Officer does not raise an objection on highway safety grounds.

In view of the above, the concerns raised about increased traffic, and potential emissions, are not considered sufficient to warrant a recommendation of refusal of this application.

## OTHER MATTERS

Objections received have suggested that the swimming pool does not benefit from planning permission or listed building consent. Evidence suggests the pool has been in situ since at least 2006. The permission/consents granted in 2003 allowed for the construction of a pool enclosure (orangery) which, although part implemented, has not been completed. While it is currently an open air facility it is within the gift of the owner to complete this development without further reference to the Authority. It is not expedient for the Authority to insist that the permission for the enclosure of the pool is completed.

## OFFICERS COMMENTS

The principle of using this substantial country residence as holiday accommodation is one that accords with policy DMD44. While it is the intensity and type of use that tips the balance towards needing planning permission, the extent of that impact is finely balanced in comparison to that which could already occur as a large single dwelling. If, as a generous six bedroom residence, it were to be fully occupied by a family on a permanent basis that, in itself, could be intrusive to close neighbours. There is presently nothing that allows the Authority to control that level of use and, as a corollary, use (or times of use) of the extensive gardens and authorised pool area by family and guests. The house has not been occupied by the owner as a family residence in the most recent past.

However, the nature of use by a family unit could be argued to be different from that of separate groups of guests on a short term visit who may have less appreciation about the house, its setting and respect for neighbour amenity. By inference, their arrival on 'holiday' at the property may be expected to have a different impact and level of activity to all year round use by a family. There is no inference that the property would necessarily be used by a single group, however, as many of the facilities are shared it is likely that most booking would be expected to be single, large groups.

The key factor would appear to be judging whether the necessary change of use significantly changes that nature of the level of intensity or use of outside space beyond what is acceptable in this location.

It is considered that the re-use of the internal space within the property will have little direct impact on neighbouring residents. Similarly, there are no objections on highway safety grounds which would substantiate a reason for refusal concerning highway issues.

The outstanding matter is how the use of the outdoor space impacts on neighbouring residents. It is acknowledged that there are instances of recorded events causing disturbance to neighbours in the recent past. The Environmental Health Officer had previously raised concerns (based on the original application; use of the house and pool area) but is aware of the revised site boundary. Controlling the extent of the use of the outdoor space has to be seen to be reasonable and ultimately enforceable if conditions are to be applied. The applicant has suggested a unilateral undertaking seeking to restrict the times of use of the outdoor spaces by guests to avoid late evening or early morning use.

In view of the most recent comments from the Environmental Health Officer, it is also recommended that the location of designated smoking zones be included as part of the legal agreement and that there are additional conditions in place concerning noise levels and timing of deliveries.

## SITE INSPECTION

At its meeting on 7 February, the Development Management Committee resolved to hold a site inspection at the property in order to gain a better appreciation of the site and its proximity to neighbouring residents. This took place on 21 February 2020.

Members viewed the property and its grounds and in particular the location of the pool area, including the hot tub, patio and play equipment. Members also took the opportunity to view the site from one of the neighbouring properties.

## CONCLUSION

The applicant has taken on board the concerns raised by local residents. The revised site boundary (omitting the swimming pool area) has been presented to ensure that area is not part of the application site. The proposed boundary fencing and unilateral undertaking seeks to ensure that the pool is decommissioned, covered and that this area, in close proximity to neighbours on the southern boundary, is not available to guests. Furthermore, reasonable endeavours would be taken to secure compliance with the 'house rules', which include restricted times for other outdoor activities.

The heads of terms of the Unilateral Undertaking are now agreed. The document will be finalised if the recommendation is considered to be acceptable. This, and the removal of the pool area from the scheme, represent a significant change and improvement to the proposal in terms of its potential impact on the area and neighbouring residents. The Unilateral Undertaking will include the following;

- Swimming pool and associated plant to be decommissioned and covered prior to commencement of approved holiday use,
- Boundary fencing to be erected as approved prior to commencement of approved holiday use, and
- 'House rules' to be applied to all guests.

The Environmental Health Officer has withdrawn his objection to this scheme based on the amended details, and officers are now of the opinion that an objection based on the risk of disturbance and impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents would be difficult to substantiate given the reduced scheme now proposed and the Authority's ability to control the use and activities by condition and through the undertaking.

It is therefore considered appropriate to recommend that the application be approved with the proviso that the use should not commence until the pool area is decommissioned and fenced from the application site.

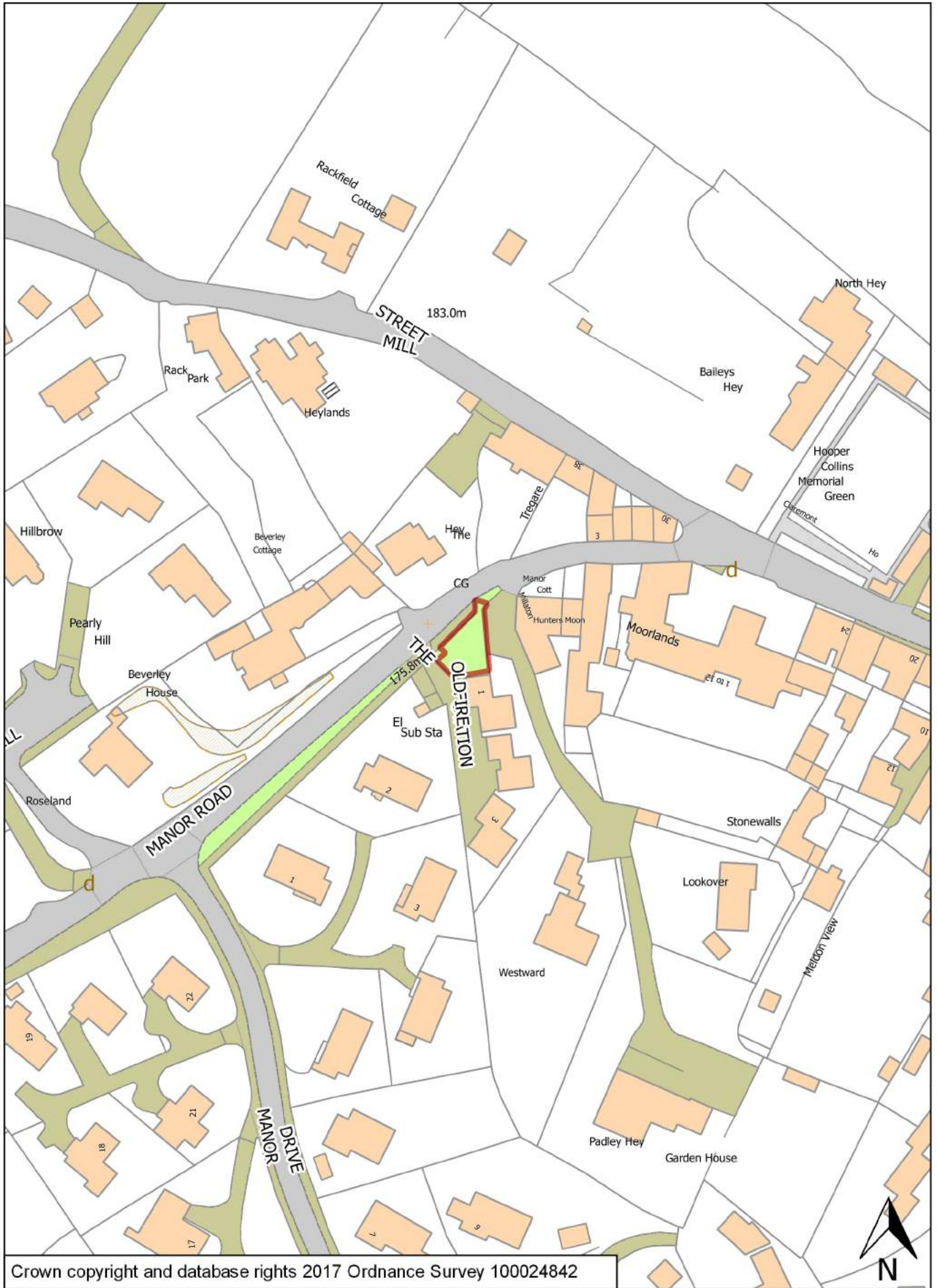
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# 0152/20 - The Old Fire Station, Manor Road, Chagford



Scale 1:1,250



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3. Application No: **0152/20** District/Borough: **West Devon Borough**  
Application Type: **Full Planning Permission** Parish: **Chagford**  
Grid Ref: **SX698875** Officer: **Sassie Tickle**

Proposal: **Erection of office**

Location: **The Old Fire Station, Manor Road, Chagford**

Applicant: **Squirrel Design**

Recommendation **That permission be GRANTED**

**Condition(s)**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the Site Location Plan (LP494\_100), Block Plan (BP494\_100), and drawings 494.1.100 and 494.1.101 valid 16 March 2020; drawing 494.1.108 received 30 April 2020; and drawings 494.1.102A, 494.1.104A, 494.1.105A and 494.1.106A received 4 May 2020.
3. Prior to installation, samples of all proposed surfacing, external facing and roofing materials shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval; thereafter unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing, only approved surfacing, external facing and roofing materials shall be used in the development.
4. The premises shall be used for B1a (offices - other than a use within Class A2) purposes only and for no other purpose (including any purpose in Class B1a of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification
5. The business shall only operate in the premises during 'normal office hours' between the times of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday and 09.00 and 13.00 Saturdays. There shall be no working on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays.
6. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority all external windows in the development shall be of dark coloured powder coated aluminium construction and shall at all times thereafter be retained as dark coloured powder coated aluminium framed windows.
7. All new external timber on the building hereby approved shall be stained dark brown or black, not later than 30 days after the substantial completion of the development. Prior to the application of any timber stain, a sample of the stained timber showing the timber stain proposed to be used shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval; at all times thereafter only the approved timber stain shall be used on external timber on the building unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
8. The solar panels hereby approved shall be fitted with black outer frames unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, and shall be recessed into the flat roof. Upon becoming redundant, the solar panels shall be removed within a period of six months.

9. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be commenced until the detailed design of the proposed surface water drainage management system which will serve the development site for the full period of its construction has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This temporary surface water drainage management system must satisfactorily address both the rates and volumes, and quality, of the surface water runoff from the construction site.
10. No development shall start until a Method of Construction Statement, to include details of:
  - (a) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors
  - (b) loading and unloading of plant and materials
  - (c) storage of plant and materials
  - (d) programme of works (including measures for traffic management)
  - (e) provision of boundary hoarding behind any visibility zones
  - (f) hours of operation, which shall be between the times of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday and 09.00 and 13.00 Saturdays, with no working on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays.
 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented during the construction period
11. Within three months of the commencement of the development hereby permitted, details of the proposed landscaping and planting scheme shall be submitted to the Local planning Authority for approval. The landscaping and planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme within twelve months of the substantial completion of the development, or such longer period as the Local Planning Authority shall specify in writing. The landscaping and planting shall be maintained for a period of not less than five years from the date of the substantial completion of the development, such maintenance shall include the replacement of any trees or shrubs that die or are removed.

## Introduction

The site is currently a grassy bank that forms part of the site of the old fire station. The site is located on the edge of, but outside, the Chagford Conservation Area boundary. This application proposes a single-storey office building.

This application is a re-submission following refusal of application ref 0561/18, and the subsequent appeal which was dismissed. It seeks to address the concerns raised by the Inspector at appeal; namely the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, taking into account the setting of the Conservation Area and the wider character of Dartmoor National Park.

The application is presented to the Committee in light of previous refusals and strength of local objections to the scheme.

## Planning History

0561/18	Erection of office		
	Full Planning Permission	Refused	17 January 2019
	Appeal lodged: 03 June 19	Result: Dismissed	
0101/18	Erection of office		
	Full Planning Permission	Refused	11 May 2018

0656/15	Erection of an office		
	Full Planning Permission	Withdrawn	03 February 2016
3/08/188/96/03	Erection of a single dwelling		
	Full Planning Permission	Refused	05 November 1996
3/08/174/95/03	Erection of a single dwelling		
	Full Planning Permission	Refused	04 September 1995
3/08/233/94/02	Erection of three dwellings		
	Approval of Details	Approve Conditionally	07 February 1995
3/08/054/92/01	3 houses with highway access point, demolition of existing fire station alt/improvement to existing access adj Millaton & subdivision of Millaton into 2 dwelling		
	Outline Planning Permission	Grant Outline Conditionally	02 September 1992
03/08/0104/85	Erection of detached dwellinghouse		
	Outline Planning Permission	Refused	04 April 1985

### Consultations

Environment Agency:	Flood zone 1. Standing advice applies.
County EEC Directorate:	No objection on the following grounds: - illegal parking is an enforcement matter; neither illegal loading or parking constitute a sustainable reason for refusal - an enterprise of this limited scale will not attract significant volumes of traffic. With the existence of the Controlled Parking Zone, and no on-site vehicular parking, that there will be no vehicular movements, other than perhaps deliveries, directly to the site. - the NPPF makes clear that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. In this instance, the only access to the site itself is from the rear of an existing footway, and it would not be possible to sustain an argument on the grounds that the impact of the additional vehicles in the village could be considered to be 'severe'. - appeal decisions elsewhere in Devon have accepted proposals that rely on local off-site car parking arrangements. Similarly appeal decisions have accepted that adding additional traffic to very long queues in, for example, Exeter and Cullompton, were not considered severe.
West Devon Borough Council:	Does not wish to comment.

### Parish/Town Council Comments

Chagford PC:	Object on the following grounds: - Over intensification of site - Visibility of traffic (when leaving site) on to Manor Road
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If DNPA is minded to grant permission Chagford Parish Council would like to see the office tied to 2 The Old Fire Station.

Objection sustained following submission of amended plans - show the proposed building higher than the rear wall, which enforces original view that this is over development of the site.

### **Relevant Development Plan Policies**

COR1 - Sustainable Development Principles

COR18 - Providing for sustainable economic growth

COR2 - Settlement Strategies

DMD19 - Sustainable Communities

DMD1a - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

DMD1b - Delivering National Park purposes and protecting Dartmoor National Park's special qualities

DMD3 - Sustaining the quality of places in Dartmoor National Park

DMD4 - Protecting local amenity

DMD41 - Parking provision - Non Residential

DMD5 - National Park Landscape

DMD7 - Dartmoor's built environment

### **Representations**

73 letters of objection 21 letters of support 1 other letter

Objections:

- Residential area; not appropriate for a business use
- Lack of parking provision
- Dangerous due to lack of visibility down road
- Ugly building
- Should be left as green space
- Loss of significant views
- No need; Squirrel Design already has an office
- Potential future change of use
- Traffic problems on Manor Road
- Overdevelopment of site
- The design is too modern
- The design is unsympathetic to local area
- Ground stability concerns
- Other office spaces available
- Sewer capacity could be affected
- Scheme offers no public benefit
- Harm to setting of the Conservation Area
- Detrimental impact on neighbour amenity
- Impact of construction phase on local area and residents

Supporting comments:

- Local family business who support the town
- Investment into the town
- Skilled employment opportunities

- Application meets planning policy
- Design issues have been addressed
- Essential for growth of business
- High quality, sympathetic design
- Applicant has worked hard to address concerns
- Existing views maintained
- Good use of small vacant plot of previously developed land
- No impact on pedestrians or highway safety
- Sustainable location
- Low energy, sustainable, eco-friendly design
- Design in keeping with local area
- Improvement over original fire station building
- Design considerate to historic setting and neighbours
- Planted flat roof would maintain the green, open aspect

General observations:

- Site currently unmanaged / used as dog toilet
- Sufficient parking available elsewhere
- Effort made to lower impact of building
- Potential impact on neighbours; overshadowing, loss of light

**Observations**

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

This application proposes the erection of a 57sqm single storey office building for Squirrel Design.

The site fronts Manor Road. It is a steeply sloping grassed verge with a tarmac footway alongside the road.

Squirrel Design are an established architectural practice who have been operating in Chagford for over 30 years. The existing business is located at basement level in the dwelling known as 2 Old Fire Station, Chagford. The existing space comprises a small open plan office suitable for two employees with meeting table in the centre. This application has been submitted to allow the business to grow and allow the occupants to take advantage of the living accommodation at basement level at 2 Old Fire Station.

SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY

The site is part of the Old Fire Station site which once housed a two storey granite and corrugated iron fire station that has now been demolished. The applicant has since maintained the site as an open grassed area.

An application for a similar proposal for a new office building in the same location was submitted in 2015 (ref: 0656/15). The principle of an office building in this location was accepted during this application, however the application was withdrawn as Officers had concerns regarding the design of the building. The applicant subsequently engaged with the Officers through the pre-application process and altered the design to remain more in-keeping with the locality.

A further application proposed a flat roof single storey building (to the rear - facing 1 The Old Fire Station) with dual pitch two-storey element fronting Manor Road (ref: 0101/18). This was

refused permission at the Development Management Committee on 4 May 2018.

Another subsequent application proposed a smaller building, with a 20% reduction in volume and the ridge realigned to be perpendicular to the garage at No1 The Old Fire Station (ref: 0561/18). This was refused permission at the Development Management Committee on 7 January 2019, and subsequently dismissed at appeal. The Planning Inspector's key concern was the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, taking into account the setting of the Conservation Area and the wider character of Dartmoor National Park.

## CURRENT PROPOSAL

The Inspector's report at appeal listed the issues and reasons for dismissal and this application presents a redesign that seeks to address these issues.

This revised submission retains the simple form previously presented, while seeking a reduction in the footprint and overall volume of the proposal, with the floor area reduced by 9sqm and the ridge height reduced by 1.58m. The proposal is now single storey throughout, and the roof arrangement has been modified to better respect the existing contours of the site. The ridge has been repositioned to the south adjacent to the garage of number one The Old Fire Station, and the planted roof to the north. The alignment of the proposal has also been adjusted so that it now runs parallel with the gable end of number one, rather than parallel to Manor Road. These amendments further reduce the impact of the building, ensuring that it does not interrupt views over the open moor or the view of Millaton when entering the town from the West, and creates additional space for landscaping.

Considerable local objection has been received to this scheme, in relation to various points, which are discussed as appropriate throughout this report.

## PRINCIPLE OF BUSINESS USE

Local Plan policy COR18 provides support for local employment and business opportunities, and within designated settlements recognises the opportunity to develop and expand existing businesses. It aims to direct employment opportunities to sustainable locations within or adjacent to existing settlements. The site is located within the Local Centre of Chagford, and it is within the settlement boundary, where one could expect to see new business premises located. Proposals for offices (B1a class use) can generally be accommodated within the built up areas of the National Park, and are not considered to be detrimental to the amenity of a residential area.

The proposal to erect a new office to assist in the growth of an established architectural practice fits comfortably with the policy aspiration outlined above, and is a development principle that officers support. Some objections were received in relation to the siting of an office in a residential area, however it is a type of use compatible with this sustainable location adjacent to the town centre and residential properties.

The Chagford Design Statement (2009) states the need "to ensure Chagford remains economically viable with a vibrant community spirit" and expresses a strong level of community support for existing shops and businesses and the provision of new facilities to 'cater for small and medium size business development'.

The Inspector's Report at appeal highlighted the lack of evidence to show that the provision of

the new office is essential for the future of Squirrel Design. The applicant states that the company is experiencing an increased workload, and the new office will accommodate more staff and equipment and allow more modern, eco-friendly and efficient ways of working. The new office would also free up space at 2 The Old Fire Station, and provide an independent office space owned by the company, giving certainty to the future of the practice.

Policy COR18 states the need for evidence that demand for new office space cannot be met by existing sites, and comments from objectors state the availability of other office spaces in the village centre and at Bellacouch Meadow. The applicant has rented office space in Chagford previously, but does not feel that it makes good economic or business sense to continue to do so, nor does it represent value or certainty for the long term future of the business. Furthermore the applicant comments that the limited accommodation available in Chagford fails to meet the needs of the business; namely an office space of a suitable size, layout and quality, which is energy efficient and adaptable to the business' evolving future needs. Officers consider this to be a policy compliant justification for the provision of a new office space for the company in this location.

## DESIGN & IMPACT ON BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment within the National Planning Policy Framework, establishing good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Policies COR1, COR3, COR4, DMD1b, DMD3 and DMD7 require new development to provide high quality, locally distinctive design that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of the built environment of Dartmoor National Park. Specifically, policy DMD7 requires new development to reinforce locally distinctive qualities of place through consideration of open spaces, uses, scale, height, alignment and design. This is reiterated in the Design Guide.

The site is a small plot of previously developed land flanking directly onto Manor Drive. It was previously occupied by the Old Fire Station, a corrugated metal building with a dual pitched roof, from which the design of this proposal has been informed. The site lies to the east of the village centre outside, but adjacent to, the Conservation Area, and is surrounded by a mix of historic and modern buildings. The nearest Listed Building is the old Moorlands Hotel, now converted into dwellings, located around 40m up Manor Road and out of direct sight.

The proposed single storey building is modest and comprises an office, meeting space and storage provision. The narrow site constraints, proximity to other buildings, and need to conserve existing views have informed the plan of the building. The proposed development would present a more dominant building than the currently vacant site, though not so dominant as the Old Fire Station previously present on the wider site. However, the detail and design proposed is high quality and would not detract from the character and appearance of the area (having regard to the scale of surrounding buildings and topography) and would secure this vacant previously developed site within the local centre with a new viable use to help support a local business.

The Inspector's Report at appeal raised concerns about the impact of the proposal on the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area. However, as the site lies outside the Conservation Area, it would be necessary to demonstrate 'harm' rather than the strict tests of 'preserving



and enhancing' that would apply to a site within the adjacent Conservation Area. The building presented has its own style which is neither pastiche nor overtly modern, and the use of traditional slate and granite facades helps to knit the development into its wider surroundings. It is therefore considered to be a contemporary solution which sits comfortably with the surrounding historic context, in keeping with design policies and guidance, and is therefore not considered to demonstrate harm to the adjacent Conservation Area.

The Inspector's Report stated that the simple design of the proposal reflects the traditional building forms near to the site. It did however raise specific concerns relating to the prominent and unsympathetic glazed gable end, the loss of a meaningful gap in the street scene and the loss of views of Millaton and the open moor. The applicant has addressed all of these concerns in this revised proposal. The gable end has been repositioned to the South adjacent to the garage of No1 The Old Fire Station, and associated glazing has been considerably reduced. This repositioning of the gable, together with reductions in the floor area and height of the proposal have further reduced the prominence of the building within the street scene, and ensure that significant views of both Millaton and the open moor are now entirely maintained. Increased landscaping and the green roof ensure that the feeling of green space on the site is maintained.

A number of local residents and the Parish Council have submitted comments raising concerns about the scale and size of the building relative to the plot, and associated impacts on neighbour amenity. The proposed building has, however, been reduced in size and volume and designed with windows facing away from neighbouring properties and the juxtaposition of respective buildings, and levels, is such that there should be no overbearing or loss of light. The size of the building has been justified by the applicant and is considered to be within the policy requirements of COR18 in terms of small scale business expansion.

## HIGHWAY SAFETY

No parking or vehicular access is proposed for this office. The Highway Authority has confirmed that their comments submitted for application 0561/18 equally apply to this application, and therefore has no objection to the proposal. The Planning Inspector also found there to be an acceptable level of parking proposed, with no severe impact on the road network.

Policy DMD41 sets out the parking provision for new non-residential development. For staff a maximum of 1 space is required per 100sqm floorspace. The proposed development is less than 100sqm therefore no minimum parking provision is required by this policy. 1 space is required per 28sqm for visitors. In this case, this equates to 2 parking spaces, which can easily be accommodated within Chagford's existing parking provision.

A number of representations have noted parking and vehicular movement as a concern in this application. This small scale office is unlikely to produce a large volume of traffic and it is considered that there is adequate parking available within the Chagford Local Centre. Enforcement of 'illegal' parking is a separate issue, not a planning consideration related to this application.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, while local concerns are recognised and acknowledged, a decision must be based on adopted local policy. This proposal is considered to present a sustainable form of development, securing this vacant previously developed site with a new viable use to meet the

needs of a long established local business. It is of a scale and form that respects its location and is a high quality design solution that will be a positive addition to this part of the settlement. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to appropriate

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# 0184/20 - Burrator Reservoir, Sheepstor



Scale 1:2,500



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4. Application No: **0184/20** District/Borough: **West Devon Borough**  
Application Type: **Full Planning Permission** Parish: **Burrator**  
Grid Ref: **SX550683** Officer: **Phil Twamley**

Proposal: **Installation of 25m lattice with two antennas, two 0.6m dishes, three equipment cabinets, electrical meter cabinet and temporary generator within fenced compound**

Location: **Burrator Reservoir, Sheepstor**

Applicant: **EE Ltd**

Recommendation **That permission be REFUSED**

### **Reason(s) for Refusal**

1. The proposed 25m tower, ground cabinets and compound, by reason of their size, appearance and siting, would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of this part of the Dartmoor National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies COR1, COR3, COR5, DMD1a, DMD1b, DMD3, DMD4, DMD7, DMD8 and DMD20 of the Dartmoor National Park Development Plan and the advice contained in the Dartmoor National Park Design Guide, the English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and National Planning Policy Framework 2019
2. The proposed 25m tower, ground cabinets and compound, by reason of their size, appearance and siting, would have a detrimental impact on the setting and appearance of two non-designated heritage assets. The development is therefore considered contrary to policies COR3, COR5, DMD7 and DMD8 of the Dartmoor National Park Development Plan and to the advice contained in the Dartmoor National Park Design Guide, the English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and National Planning Policy Framework 2019

### **Introduction**

The proposal relates to the Emergency Service Network, a national upgrade scheme for emergency services communications.

The development proposed includes the erection of a 25m lattice telecommunications tower with two antennas, two 0.6m dishes, three equipment cabinets, electrical meter cabinet and temporary generator within a fenced compound.

The site is located above the south west periphery of Burrator Reservoir, adjacent to the course of a leat and abandoned railway line now forming a track used as a footpath and cycle way.

The application is presented to the committee in view of the issues that it raises and the strength of opinion presented both for and against the proposal.

### **Planning History**

0597/19	Erection of 11m telegraph pole, two cabinets within a fenced compound		
	Telecoms. Notification	Prior Approval Refused	13 February 2020

0117/98	Change of use from disused railway to cyclepath, replacement of bridge over highway, construction of three cycleway gates, minor surface repairs and construction of small car park to provide two parking spaces for people with disabilities	Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally	15 February 1999
03/43/0848/78	Erection of an intake house	Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally	03 November 1978

### Consultations

West Devon Borough Council:	Does not wish to comment
County EEC Directorate:	No objection
Environment Agency:	Flood Risk Zone 1 - Standing advice applies
DNP - Ecology & Wildlife:	On the basis of the supplied plans and tree assessment, the proposed site is hard standing at the side of a track. Other than some pruning of overhanging branches, the only tree or shrub work is permanent removal of invasive non-native rhododendron, and coppicing of a hazel and young oak. There are no records of any designations, notable habitats or protected species on the site. There would be no ecological impacts associated with the construction works. Vegetation removal should take place outside of the bird nesting season.
	Based on published scientific reviews of the potential impacts of electromagnetic radiation on bats and invertebrates, there is no evidence that the operation of this mast would have any significant adverse impact. The nearest known bat roost is approximately 150m away. There is no mechanism for this roost to be affected at that distance.
	Nesting birds are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Works involving cutting or clearance of shrubs, hedges or other vegetation which may provide nesting sites for birds, should not be carried out during the bird breeding season (which typically lasts between 1 March and 15 September in any year). If works must take place within the bird breeding season appropriate measures must be taken including a survey by a suitably qualified person no more than 24 hours prior to the commencement of works to ensure there is no threat, disturbance or harm to the nests. If nesting birds are present then works should not commence until breeding has finished and all fledglings have departed the nest.
DNP - Trees & Landscape:	Comments to be reported at the meeting
DNP - Archaeology:	No direct impact on the structure of the Devonport Leat - no archaeological concerns.

### Parish/Town Council Comments

Burrator PC:	Does not wish to comment
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## **Relevant Development Plan Policies**

COR1 - Sustainable Development Principles

COR12 - Meeting the need for local infrastructure, community facilities and public services

COR2 - Settlement Strategies

COR3 - Protection of Dartmoor's special environmental qualities

COR4 - Design and sustainable development principles

COR5 - Protecting the historic built environment

COR6 - Protecting Dartmoor's Archaeology

DMD13 - Archaeology

DMD14 - Biodiversity and geological conservation

DMD1a - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

DMD1b - Delivering National Park purposes and protecting Dartmoor National Park's special qualities

DMD20 - Telecommunications development

DMD3 - Sustaining the quality of places in Dartmoor National Park

DMD4 - Protecting local amenity

DMD7 - Dartmoor's built environment

DMD8 - Changes to Historic Buildings

## **Representations**

10 letters of objection 4 letters of support

SUPPORT;

- good site, out of the way but will afford good coverage
- ample room for vehicle access and for new compound
- good opportunity for enhanced mobile phone coverage in and around Burrator and Sheepstor Village
- Burrator Reservoir is part of the area's critical infrastructure and communication coverage should be available to the emergency services
- as a frequent walker around the reservoir, I find current mobile phone coverage is non-existent except for just a few restricted areas
- strongly support the proposal for the mast and its associated cabinets and generator
- chosen site would have minimal impact on this sensitive location
- often walk around this area and the worry of not having a signal should my child have an epileptic fit and need help. There are a lot more ugly sights around. This would benefit a lot of people
- an invaluable asset to the emergency service and to all who love Burrator and surroundings move with today's generation and future proofing the area
- a lot of effort has gone into the low impact it will make but massive rewards for health

OBJECTIONS;

- putting a 25 metre lattice mast with two antenna will be a blot on the landscape anywhere near Burrator Reservoir
- a timber fence surround would not prevent people who wanted to climb it
- the area is too beautiful to be abused

- the scale, appearance and location of the proposed mast and associated equipment is significantly out of keeping with the character and natural beauty of the area
- the visual impact in both close proximity and from afar will be significantly detrimental to the character of the DNP
- phone signal can be found just metres away from the proposed location and in weighing up the impact of not having a signal against the damage and detriment to the character and appearance of Burrator I strongly object to this proposal
- there are still areas around Burrator where a mobile signal can be obtained
- a mast at Burrator will dramatically alter the countryside for the worse
- it will represent an unnatural design not in sympathy with its surroundings, in an area already under threat from mass footfall and over exploitation
- the greater availability of mobile phone connection will only increase the amount of visitors and recreational users who are now starting to have a significant impact on the environment and local area
- the unknown effect of electro-magnetic radiation and other high frequency discharges could have damaging effects to the fragile flora and fauna in the local area
- the mast has little 'reach' in the area. Its signal hardly penetrates the moor and does not even cover the whole road around Burrator Reservoir
- this mast and its associated cabinets is hugely over-engineered for such little advantage and therefore represents an unacceptable intrusion into this area of outstanding beauty
- this is a SIGNIFICANT departure to the proposals set out in the consultation which took place in June 2019 for a mast at Burrator reservoir. In particular the mast height has increased from 12 metres to 25 metres; b) the mast type has changed from pole to lattice type & c) ancillary site equipment now lists a generator. The local community has been misled on the scale of the development and visual impact that such a massive structure will have
- the visual impact of the installation of this mast will far outweigh any benefit that may or may not accrue in that: a) usage by emergency services would be minimal (where is the justification in number of callouts etc.); b) the area is not a total blind spot, a signal may be obtained by moving short distances; c) the attraction of the - Burrator area is in it's unique wildness of character and a unique sense of remoteness for a place so close to large urban settlements
- it is important that we rejoice in and protect this and other wilderness areas from the invasive pressure of "always on" modern living, we must keep them as a haven where those who want to can escape these pressure and re-connect with and enjoy nature in the raw, that is nature with all its perceived and actual risks. It is of immense benefit that here is an area of outstanding natural beauty with an aura of remoteness but also so accessible. I ask that you to continue protecting this area from encroaching technology and continue to enable and promote the mental and physical benefits that only nature on its own can provide here.

## **Observations**

### **PROPOSAL**

The proposal relates to the Emergency Service Network, a national upgrade programme for emergency services communications.

The key messages of the new Emergency Service Network (ESN), as provided by the applicant, are included below:

- ESN is providing critical national infrastructure to enable communications and interoperability for the police, fire and ambulance services in England, Scotland and Wales (including

extension into remote areas) to help them cut crime, fight fires and save lives.

- ESN will provide the same capability as Airwave as well as an integrated 4G mobile broadband data service using the latest generation of mobile technology.
- Government has provided £1bn of investment to build and operate ESN but support for the locating of new or enhanced equipment in rural locations will be vital to delivering the network by 2017, thereby improving public safety and reducing cost to the tax payer.
- In addition to the 3ES, ESN may offer a 4G mobile service to local EE customers, providing access to digital services that are increasingly essential to everyday life and business, and a 999 service to all mobile users. Other MNOs will have access to upgrade the new infrastructure should they wish to install their own equipment and offer services in future.
- Satellite solutions for backhaul are being considered where more cost-effective or timely.

The ESN development proposed includes the erection of a 25m lattice telecommunications tower with two antennas, two 0.6m dishes, three equipment cabinets, electrical meter cabinet and temporary generator within a fenced compound.

## PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

During a site visit relating to application 0597/19 (Telecommunications Notification - Objected to 13/02/20), Officers suggested that a site further north along the track above the reservoir with good tree coverage would provide an improved alternative to the visually exposed site put forward at the time. The current site is in the area as discussed. The recommendation at that time was not made in relation to any finalised scheme or to the development of a 25m lattice tower, ground equipment and compound as presented.

## SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Burrator Reservoir and the surrounding landscape are a significant draw for visitors to the National Park. The site is located in the heavily forested area of Yennadon Plantation, being land above the south west periphery of the reservoir, falling within the Upland River Valleys Landscape Character Type (LCT).

This LCT comprises the spectacular courses of Dartmoor's major rivers as they drain from the central moorland plateaux – namely the Taw, East & West Okement, Lyd, Tavy, Walkham, Meavy, Plym, Erme, Avon, Dean Burn, Dart, Bovey, Wray Brook and Teign. The rivers are characterised by clean, fast flowing water tumbling through steep, woodland cloaked valleys which form strong physical and ecological connections between Dartmoor's upland core and its surrounding lowlands.

The site is located adjacent to the course of a leat and abandoned railway line now forming a track used as a footpath and cycleway.

## DESIGN

The 25m lattice tower is proposed to be painted in black. The proposal includes the provision of ground based cabinets and equipment painted in Fir Green, shrouded in a 4.5m x 9.0m x 1.8m height fenced compound with access gate.

## HERITAGE

The proposed development site is directly adjacent to two local heritage assets namely, the



Princetown Railway (opened in 1883, converted and reused large sections of the Plymouth and Dartmoor Tramway north of Yelverton. The line failed to pay its way and was closed in 1956) and the Devonport Leat, (constructed from 1795-1802 to supply water to Plymouth Dock (Devonport)). The leat takes water from the West Dart, the Cowsic and the Blackabrook rivers to the north of Princetown and is over 43 kilometres in length. It is still a functional leat from the weir head intakes to the western end of Burrator Reservoir.

The line of the two heritage assets cross paths directly adjacent to the proposed site. Core strategy Policy COR5 and DMD Policy DMD8 establish the need to conserve and enhance the character, appearance, historic plan forms, integrity, and cultural associations that contribute to the special qualities and settings of the historic built environment. Core strategy Policy COR3, COR6 and DMD Policy DMD13 establish the requirement for development to avoid adverse impact on the integrity or setting of locally important historical and archaeological landscapes, features and artefacts.

The development of the proposed 25m tower, ground equipment and fenced compound is considered to introduce modern utilitarian form at odds with the locally valued and recorded heritage assets. The development is therefore considered contrary to policies COR3, COR5, DMD7 & DMD8.

## SITING AND APPEARANCE

As illustrated by the applicant's visual representations, the proposed location of the tower and fenced compound are unlikely present significant adverse impact in terms of landscape character and appearance when viewed from viewpoints away from the immediate area.

The tower and compound siting, being immediately adjacent to the track utilised by cyclists and walkers, would however introduce a dominant utilitarian feature in this area of the National Park when viewed from the immediate surrounds.

Policy DMD20 of the Local Plan aims to permit telecommunications equipment where the siting and external appearance of the apparatus would not damage the landscape character of the immediate vicinity or of the locality when viewed from publically accessible land. The adverse impact on the landscape character of the immediate vicinity when viewed from the publicly accessible land on approach and immediately adjacent to the site is considered to be significant and harmful.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant has provided an illustration of the improved ESN and mobile network coverage to be facilitated by the 25m lattice tower and compound. The illustration shows that much of the local area has existing 2G and 4G coverage with significant areas of overlapping. The roads and land surrounding the reservoir have partial coverage at present. The tower as proposed is intended to provide improved ESN coverage to two sections of road in the Lower Lowery area to the north of the reservoir, one stretch of road to the north of Sheepstor Village and patches of surrounding land in the immediate area of the reservoir where coverage is not comprehensive.

The primary justification for the tower is to enhance the ESN infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of Burrator Reservoir. Additional public benefits are likely to be achieved through the provision of improved mobile phone coverage to the wider area.

Four members of the public provided supportive representations related to the benefits of improved emergency services infrastructure and mobile phone coverage.

Ten members of the public provided objections to the proposal with many questioning the scale of the development in relation to the limited public benefit.

## CONCLUSION

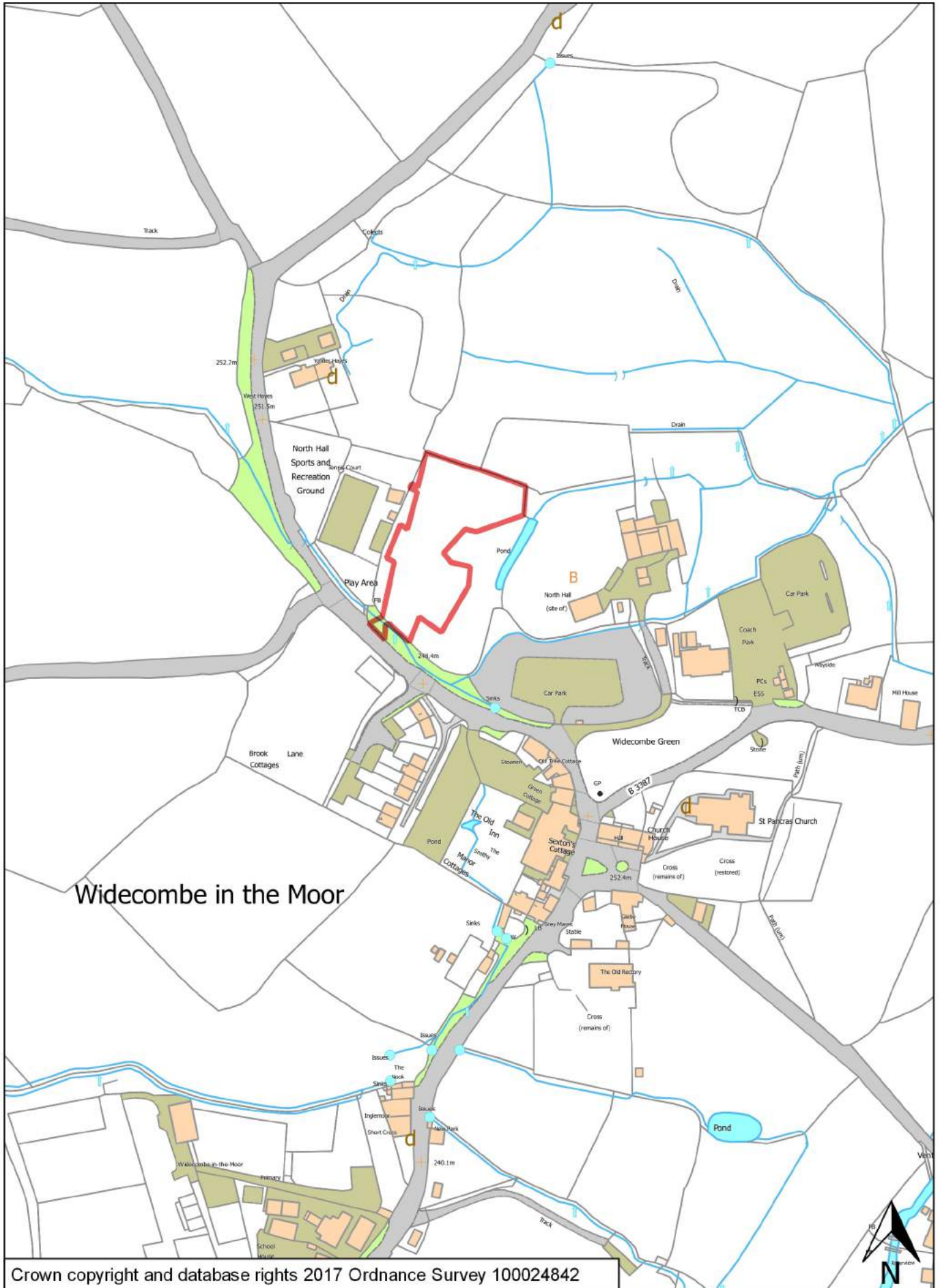
The Authority remains committed to the principle of finding an appropriate solution to facilitate the delivery of the EE Emergency Services Network in this area. The siting and appearance of the development as currently proposed would however have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the immediate vicinity that includes two locally significant heritage assets. The proposal is recommended for refusal.

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# 0550/19 - Hayes Field, Widecombe-in-the-Moor



Scale 1:2,500



5. Application No: **0550/19** District/Borough: **Teignbridge District**  
Application Type: **Full Planning Permission** Parish: **Widcombe-in-the-Moor**  
Grid Ref: **SX717769** Officer: **Christopher Hart**

Proposal: **Erection of new Community Hall, associated new access point, parking and break-out space**

Location: **Hayes Field, Widcombe-in-the-Moor**

Applicant: **Widcombe Community Hall CIO**

Recommendation **That, subject to the consideration of any further comments in respect of the revised plans, permission be GRANTED**

### **Condition(s)**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with following approved drawings: site location plan 204-WCH-00, 200-WCH-01, 201-WCH-02, 202-WCH-02, 203-WCH-04, 211-WCH-00, WCH-210-R02, WCH-222-R03, C-GA-100 Rev P2 and C-GA-105 Rev P1
3. No groundworks shall start until a Method of Construction Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall include details of:
  - (i) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors
  - (ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials
  - (iii) storage of plant and materials
  - (iv) programme of works (including measures for traffic management)
  - (v) hours of operation and deliveries to site
4. The works shall only proceed in accordance with the agreed details.
4. No development shall take place until a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) are submitted and approved in writing, and carried out in accordance with a timetable for implementation as approved. The scheme shall include the recommendations of the ecological appraisal (Devon Wildlife Consultants, November 2019) and include a lighting plan and surface water management plan. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
5. No works to construct the hall shall be commenced until the access, visibility splays, turning area and access drainage have been provided in accordance with the approved drawings.
6. Details of the proposed landscaping and planting scheme shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping and planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme within twelve months of the commencement of the development, or such longer period as the Local Planning Authority shall specify in writing. The landscaping and planting shall be maintained for a period of five years from the date of the commencement of the development, such maintenance shall include the replacement of any trees or shrubs that die or are removed.

7. A detailed schedule of the materials and finishes to be used on the approved building and its surroundings shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the construction of the access, bridge, driveway, car park and hall. This shall include samples of the roof material, cladding, details of render finishes, stone cladding, window/exterior door units, verge/soffit details, rainwater goods, photo voltaic panels, boundary fence design, driveway/car park surface materials, kerbs and proposed exterior lighting units.
8. The approved lighting scheme shall only be operated when the hall is in use and at no other time.

### **Introduction**

The application proposes the erection of new village hall on an area of undeveloped land just off the centre of the village adjacent to the existing recreation ground. It includes a new access opposite Brook Lane Cottages.

The application is presented to the committee in view of the concerns raised by local residents in respect of the impact of the development in this location.

### **Planning History**

05/06/0721/91	Timber portable building as spectator shelter on existing playing field Full Planning Permission	Grant Unconditionally 08 May 1991
05/06/2785/88	Addition of flood lighting to existing multi-sport hard court Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally 03 November 1988
05/06/1227/80	Proposed change of use from waste land/overflow car park to playing field Change of Use	Grant Unconditionally 06 June 1980
05/03/1643/06	Alterations and renewal of outbuildings Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally 03 December 1976
05/03/1643/06	Alterations and renewal of outbuildings Full Planning Permission	Grant Conditionally 03 December 1976

### **Consultations**

Teignbridge District Council:	No objection
County EEC Directorate:	The site has been the subject of pre-application discussions with the planning authority and, in principle, there are no objections to the proposed development from a highway safety point of view. Although adequate visibility from the access is shown on one of the submitted plans, the visibility splay is not shown to be within the applicant's control on the red edged application drawings. This being the case, the highway authority is not able to control the provision and maintenance of the visibility splays by means of a condition if it is not shown within the application site.
Environment Agency:	Flood zone 1 - standing advice applies
DNP - Ecology & Wildlife:	An ecological appraisal has been submitted. The survey methods, presentation of results and recommendations are mostly satisfactory.

The development will result in the permanent loss of mainly species-poor semi-improved grassland with some species-poor rush pasture. There was no evidence of reptiles or badgers on the site. Bat activity survey showed moderate levels of foraging and commuting. Nine species of bats were recorded with Bat activity concentrated especially foraging over the wetland in the SE corner of the site, and commuting along the E boundary.

The eastern boundary flight corridor should be protected from any increase in lighting; an acceptable minimum width of 5m. The submitted lighting plan is supported where there is minimal external light spill, specifying 'bat friendly' LED and general low level design subject to agreed details. I suggest that consideration is given to whether interior light spill via glazing on the SE elevation could affect the required dark corridor. We cannot accept as mitigation a statement that opaque blinds will be used at night, as this is not an enforceable planning condition. It may be that the light spill from these windows is not an issue or could be minimised through specification of recessed light fittings and/or low transmissivity glazing.

There appear to be variations between the proposed site layout plan and drainage strategy plan. These are not consistent with the land management plan document and recommendations in the ecological appraisal. The principles in all of these are broadly acceptable on ecology grounds, but the details will need to be resolved. For example, the drainage strategy plan (as part of the FRA) shows what appears to be a 'utilitarian', rectilinear surface water attenuation structure (SuDS) in an area shown on the layout block plan for 'wild flower planting'. The SuDS could be better integrated and designed to deliver biodiversity benefit, mitigate for some of the loss of wetland habitat elsewhere on site and be more visually in keeping. These points should be addressed through a landscape and environmental management plan (LEMP), which should be made a planning condition.

Construction impacts have been given some consideration in the ecology assessment, but no detail has been provided around the work affecting the watercourse, or the protection of undeveloped wetland areas within the field. These concerns could be addressed through a construction and environmental management plan (CEMP), which should be made a planning condition.

The ecology assessment has not considered the stream as an environmental receptor, nor the possible construction impacts and mitigation to protect water quality and associated biodiversity. A clear span bridge crossing would

have been preferable, but there may be technical reasons why this is not possible. The culverted crossing should be designed such that its construction and operation does not pose a barrier to fish and sediment transport.

The proposed development is acceptable in principle on ecology grounds, and is to be commended for retaining and enhancing boundary features and the main wetland area, and incorporating some enhancements for biodiversity.

The CEMP and LEMP will need to address the points raised above, specifically:

- Mitigation of impacts of in-stream working to construct crossing.
- Mitigation as necessary to limit internal light spill from windows on SE elevation.
- Demonstration that a dark corridor (<0.5 lux) of at least 5m width can be maintained along the E boundary.
- Design of SuDS to maximise biodiversity benefit and integrate with other proposals for grassland and wetland mitigation on this part of the site.
- Protection of retained wetland habitat during construction.

#### DNP - Trees & Landscape:

The application is to build a new community hall on land in Widecombe. The site for the hall is a pastoral field enclosed by banks with mixed hedges growing on top. Several trees are growing on these banks. The building and car park are set away from the boundaries and it should have no impact on the trees or hedges growing along the eastern, northern and western boundaries.

Access into the site will be from the road to the south. A small section of bank and hedge will have to be removed to create the access. If the hedge is assessed against the criteria set out in the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 the hedge would be classed as 'important' because it appears on the Widecombe tithe map, see attached. There is a general presumption against the removal of 'important' hedges.

A small stream runs along the road between the site and the road. This is a special feature of the village and adds to its character.

The pastoral field system is likely to be medieval, it is reasonably intact although its integrity has been compromised by the modern housing to the north, the play area and car park to the west and the modern farm buildings to the east.

The building is large and has a modern design that does not appear to reflect the character of the village or the

traditional buildings found in the village.

Landscape character

Landscape Character Type - 2D Moorland Edge Slopes

The land immediately around the site is gently rolling agricultural land comprising medium sized fields enclosed by Devon hedge banks. Isolated and linear groups of trees are growing on these hedge banks. Broadleaved woodlands grow on the lower slopes of river valleys. There is a sparse settlement pattern with scattered isolated farms and nucleated villages and hamlets. The site lies within the nucleated settlement of Widecombe. It is a pastoral landscape and there is a strong historic sense of place and history enhanced by the intricate pattern of medieval fields.

The Landscape character Assessment lists valued attributes for Moorland Edge Slopes as;

- A rich and intricate landscape full of contrasts.
- Strong pattern of medieval fields with prominent Devon hedgebanks and drystone walls.
- Pastoral character of fields contrasting with heathy moorland.
- Strong vernacular of granite colourwash and slate.
- Spectacular views to the moorland core of Dartmoor as well as surrounding countryside outside the National Park.
- Features associated with the area's mining heritage and historic land use.

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DMD para 3.45 states that Widecombe is a moorland village and its landscape setting is fundamental to its basic character.

DMD5 states that development proposals should conserve and/or enhance the character and special qualities of the Dartmoor landscape by:

- respecting the valued attributes of landscape character types identified in the Dartmoor National Park Landscape Character Assessment;
- ensuring that location, site layout, scale and design conserves and/or enhances what is special or locally distinctive about landscape character;
- retaining, integrating or enhancing distinctive local natural, semi-natural or cultural features;
- avoiding unsympathetic development that will harm the wider landscape or introduce or increase light pollution;
- respecting the tranquillity and sense of remoteness of Dartmoor.

The policy is very clear that development should conserve



and/or enhance the character of Dartmoor's landscape. The development will change the character of the local landscape which will have a detrimental impact on the character of the pastoral field, the historic field system and on the character of the stream and roadside verge. The development will be contrary to DMD5

Whilst the building will have an impact on the character of the local landscape, if there is a need for a community building and there is overwhelming support for a new hall this is probably a good site for it.

#### Visual amenity

The building will be very visible in the landscape particularly from the road to the south west. There are also distant views from the high ground to the east, although these views are screened to a large extent by the trees growing along the eastern boundary of the site. The new hall will be seen in association with other buildings.

#### DNP - Archaeology:

Work undertaken on North Hall Manor adjacent and to the east of the proposed development site indicated the potential for the presence of silted up fish ponds in Hayes Field. Accordingly, gradiometer and metric earthwork survey were required at a pre-determination stage of the application, as per paragraph 189 of the NPPF, in order to enable informed advice to be developed regarding any necessary archaeological mitigation. Both surveys indicate a low potential for the presence of heritage assets on the site. Accordingly, there are no archaeological concerns.

#### Devon County Council (Flood Risk):

The applicant has produced an above ground attenuation based surface water drainage strategy but proposed to offer infiltration facilities should infiltration testing confirm the suitability of soakaways. The applicant should note that in accordance with the SuDS Management Train, surface water should be managed at source in the first instance. The applicant will therefore be required to explore the use of a variety of above-ground source control components across the whole site to avoid managing all of the surface water from the proposed development at one concentrated point (e.g. a single attenuation pond). Examples of these source control components could include permeable paving (which could be underdrained), formalised tree pits or other bioretention features such as rain gardens, as well as green roofs, swales and filter drains. An ordinary watercourse runs through this site, so if any temporary or permanent works need to take place within this watercourse to facilitate the proposed development (such as an access culvert or bridge), Land Drainage Consent must be obtained from Devon County Council's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team prior to any works commencing.

DNP - Building Conservation  
Officer:

There are no in-principle objections to the above planning application, from a surface water drainage perspective, subject to conditions covering the above matters.

Widecombe-in-the-Moor has an historic medieval core centred on the church and village green. Four routes lead to the outlying farms and hamlets much as they did historically. The views of Widecombe in the Moor's moorland valley setting are outstanding; from the high ground east and west, the views and glimpses from the village towards the moorland heights are striking and highlight the village's isolated position within the open moorland.

The open spaces and views play a significant part in the settlements essential qualities and characteristics. The view from the village green looking north-west across the development site towards Hamel Down have been identified in the Character Appraisal. The Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village and there is a distinctive rural setting to the Conservation Area, from which some of its significance derives. The setting is the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced

The proposed site is just outside the Conservation Area of Widecombe - enlarged in 1993 to include the area adjacent to Hayes Field; the site of medieval moated manor house, North Hall Manor that has recently been excavated.

There has been pre-application advice which identified Hayes field as being a suitable location for a community centre. Its position adjacent to the archaeological site, North Hall Manor put certain conditions on the site prior to any development. However a walkover survey, geophysics and coring did not reveal any associated archaeology. The proposed site sits just outside of the Conservation Area and is adjacent to a car park and the North Hall Sports and Recreation Ground. A stream separates the field boundary from the road. The field is bounded by hedging on the remaining three sides and there would be limited views afforded to and from the site.

Whilst there have been intrusions on this historic core; the sympathetic local needs development and the less so Café on the Green, which along with the toilet block is not well integrated into the village scene, it is felt that any new development would need to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the heritage assets, their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. In order to conserve and enhance and not detract from what is a unique and valued vista as seen from the many approaches across the moor.

The height, size and massing of the proposal will mean it will be a prominent feature within the village and wider landscape. There are no references made to local materials in the proposal and in its current form is at odds with local design.

Widcombe in the Moor is one of 25 Conservation Areas on Dartmoor, designated because of their special architectural or historic interest. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, they are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 says that in determining applications the local planning authority should take account of: the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any proposal.

Policy COR5 The character, appearance, historic plan forms, settlement patterns, integrity local distinctiveness and cultural associations that contribute to the special qualities and settings of the historic built environment and historic parks and gardens should be considered and enhanced.

The adopted Local Plan 2013 - Part 3 paragraph 3.1.3 states rural settlements have limited scope to sustain new development. Proposals at those places will be small scale and intended to provide housing and other services needed within the locality .

The building of a large community hall is within the setting of the Conservation Area, albeit not within the Conservation Area itself. The three categories of harm recognised in NPPF are; substantial, less than substantial and no harm, The proposed development would affect the setting of the Conservation Area resulting in less than substantial harm. This harm should be weighed against the public benefits.

South West Water:

No objection.

## **Parish/Town Council Comments**

Widcombe PC: Widcombe Parish Council supports this application. However, it requests that DNPA considers the lighting to ensure it is sensitive to neighbouring properties. For example, it has been suggested that the lighting is set back from the roadside to the cattle grid. The Parish Council also requests that consideration is given to parking which may also impact neighbouring properties.

## **Relevant Development Plan Policies**

COR1 - Sustainable Development Principles  
COR11 - Retaining tranquillity  
COR12 - Meeting the need for local infrastructure, community facilities and public services  
COR13 - Providing for high standards of accessibility and design  
COR2 - Settlement Strategies  
COR3 - Protection of Dartmoor's special environmental qualities  
COR4 - Design and sustainable development principles  
COR5 - Protecting the historic built environment  
COR6 - Protecting Dartmoor's Archaeology  
COR7 - Providing for the conservation of Dartmoor's varied plant and animal life and geology  
DMD13 - Archaeology  
DMD14 - Biodiversity and geological conservation  
DMD19 - Sustainable Communities  
DMD1a - Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
DMD1b - Delivering National Park purposes and protecting Dartmoor National Park's special qualities  
DMD31 - Provision of new recreational and leisure facilities  
DMD4 - Protecting local amenity  
DMD5 - National Park Landscape  
DMD7 - Dartmoor's built environment

## **Representations**

7 letters of objection 20 letters of support

Objections;

The proposed development will have a harmful impact on wildlife using the site. The proposed mitigation is not acceptable. Lack of parking is already a problem in the village - this development will exacerbate this problem and encourage more traffic. The need for a new village hall is questioned - the existing hall is considered to be adequate. It would be better to put the hall closer to the primary school. The loss of the roadside hedgerow is of concern. The new access will lead to further disturbance to adjacent residents.

The design is not considered appropriate and will be visible from distant views. The building will impact on existing drainage and may lead to further pollution.

The financial impact on existing businesses and amenities is questioned as is the

alternative use of the building if the project fails.

Support;

There is support for a modern, accessible new hall which could be used by the pre-school/school and be an asset for future generations. The existing hall is not fully accessible. It is a well-researched project with community support.

## **Observations**

### FEASIBILITY STUDY

The desire to provide a new community hall was first muted at a public meeting in 2016. The current facility forms part of the Church House in the centre of the village, owned by the National Trust. This hall is positioned on the first floor of that building and has limited facilities and restricted accessibility.

The feasibility study identified the need for a multi-use hall with additional space to serve a range of existing community uses including school activities. Three potential sites were investigated within the village – Hayes Field proved to be the optimum location in terms of accessibility to the village centre with a landowner willing to engage in the process. It is also in close proximity to other village recreation facilities.

### SITE LOCATION/CHARACTERISTICS/DESIGN

The Hayes Field is adjacent to the Widcombe-in-the-Moor conservation area. It lies across the road from the recently constructed affordable housing development at Brook Lane Cottages and east of the North Hall recreation ground.

It is an undeveloped grazed pasture field enclosed by mature vegetation/hedgerows. An open stream runs along the southern boundary adjacent to the roadside. The site is adjacent to the North Hall Manor, a medieval manor site.

### PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission to erect a new community village hall with a footprint of 340sqm comprised of the following elements;

- Main hall 151sqm
- Multi-use room 34sqm
- Kitchen 24sqm
- Storage 59sqm

The building will be positioned in the north west corner of the field with associated car parking and new access and bridge across the roadside stream opposite Brook Lane Cottages. The remainder of the field to the east of the building will be retained and managed as wildlife habitat to include a drainage swale.

The building has been designed to accommodate a 120 seated audience with a stage. The multi-use room is designed to be available independently of the main hall. A kitchen, bar servery and storage area compliments the facilities. Outside there will be a small parking area linked to the highway to the south west. All facilities are designed to be fully accessible.

The building will be of concrete construction, faced with local granite and low maintenance

weatherboarding under a profiled steel roof. The main hall is to 8m tall to its apex with surrounding lean-to roofing for the storage area, kitchen toilets and multi-use room. It is designed to be highly energy efficient with the use of solar pv collectors to supplement the energy requirements.

Revisions have been made to the design of the proposed access bridge. It is now proposed to dress the bridge parapets in granite with wooden safety railings. The access and parking will be finished with crushed rolled stone. A minimal lighting scheme has been agreed.

## POLICY

The sustainability of Dartmoor's settlements is predicated on retaining and enhancing those facilities which contribute to social cohesion. Policies COR12 and DMD19 specifically seek to retain those facilities which support a vibrant community including shops, pubs, school and community meeting places – all vital to maintaining healthy communities. Widecombe-in-the-Moor is a well visited village but also retains a large resident population; the village providing the focal point for one of the National Park's largest parishes.

As a designated Rural Settlement the village retains a range of facilities and a diverse population but has a degree of isolation through its location approx. 10km from Bovey Tracey and 7km from Ashburton respectively. The proposed new hall would actively support the community aspirations for the future, providing a purpose built facility to cater for a variety of existing and future needs.

The opportunity to enhance community facilities should be balanced against those policies (COR1, DMD1a, 1b) that seek to promote sustainable development and protect the character of the National Park and those which promote high quality, sustainable design (COR4, DMD4, DMD7), minimising harm in the local and wider landscape (COR3, DMD5) whilst maintaining a diverse landscape and mitigating against adverse impacts on biodiversity (COR7 DMD14) and flood risk (COR9).

The proposed development is presented as sustainable development in that it provides a local facility for the resident community preventing unnecessary travel to similar facilities in other settlements. The building is designed to be energy efficient, and placed on a site where the impact on the local and wider National Park is minimised. Biodiversity and drainage issues are addressed through suitable mitigation.

## DRAINAGE

The water course running across the frontage of the site is not designated as a main river. The site lies in flood zone 1 where flood risk is considered to be minimal and where development can be undertaken without risk to other properties. Surface water from the development will be collected by on-site rain water pipes with water passing to an above ground swale area. Water will be discharged by controlled flow to the existing water course.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (DCC) has no objection to the works and has asked that drainage issues are appropriately managed during the construction phase and into the future.

## HIGHWAYS

The development requires a new access on the public highway on the southern boundary. This requires a new bridge over the existing open stream and driveway linking to a parking

area adjacent to the hall. The details of the bridge have been revised to include granite faced parapets topped by safety railings – a design which fits comfortably in this rural location. The Highway Authority has not raised an objection but notes that part of the proposed visibility splay (to the western side) lies outside of the applicant's control. This applies to land owned by the Authority. The applicant will need to manage vegetation growth on this side by agreement.

## BIODIVERSITY

The existing field has been assessed for its biodiversity value. The development would result in the loss of mainly species poor semi-improved grassland with some species poor rush pasture. It is recognised that this could provide habitat for protected species, particularly the mature boundary hedgerows. A management plan has been presented to show how the existing hedgerows will be managed and enhanced. The retained meadow will be sown with grass and seed mixes to encourage wider biodiversity with a light grazing regime. The proposed lighting scheme will minimise disturbance to wildlife. Conditions are suggested which will protect wildlife during the construction phase. The building is a sufficient distance from the eastern boundary to allow for a 5m wide dark corridor to be accommodated.

## REPRESENTATIONS

The need for a new village hall has been assessed by the community with extensive consultation on a range of alternatives. The existing facility remains available however it has limited accessibility and is unsuitable for a number of existing uses due to its size and location. Being part of an existing listed building it is not easy to adapt for future needs. The hall is not, in itself, intended to be an attraction but primarily aimed at meeting the needs of residents. It is accepted that it may have a wider appeal and inevitably be a more attractive venue however, the additional traffic generated is not considered to be disproportionate to that already experienced. It will be closer to existing residential properties where there may be a degree of additional disturbance however it is also close to the existing village, shops, cafes and public house – all part of the busy centre of this well-visited village. It is not considered to be a facility which will compete with other commercial outlets.

The objections are counterbalanced by a number of positive responses from residents who are in favour of the new facility.

## SUMMARY

This is a project which has been well researched and, in the main, supported by the wider community of Widecombe-in-the-Moor. While there are existing hall facilities in the village and at neighbouring Leusdon, both are aging facilities with limited accessibility. This proposed hall will allow for a wider range of community activities, will be centrally placed in the village, well related to the village primary school (approx. 250m to the south west) and existing recreation facilities on the adjacent site.

While the development will use part of an undeveloped field it is well-related to other development in this location. Mitigation measures are proposed to enhance the remaining habitat and biodiversity.

## CONCLUSION

This is considered to be a development which meets sustainability objectives in that it will

enhance local leisure opportunities, improve village infrastructure and support the economic and well-being of the resident community. These factors offset the limited harm resulting from the development of this site.

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**CHRISTOPHER HART**