

CBC Planning Reference –	21/02755/FUL		
Site Name –	Brecon House (Lilley Brook House), Charlton Hill		
Summary of proposals -	Para 80 Residential Property, gatehouse and outbuildings		
Consultation Note Subject –	Landscape and Visual Matters		
Planning Case Officer –	Michelle Payne – Senior Planning Officer (Planning Applications)		
Landscape Comments Prepared By –	Stuart Ryder of Ryder Landscape Consultants		
Date of site visit —	3/3/22	Date of response	21/3/22
Recommendation –	Allow – subject to landscape conditions and removal of certain permitted development rights		

Dear Madam

Brecon House, Charlton Hill – Landscape and Visual Consultation Response

Thank you for appointing us to review the landscape and visual aspects of the submitted planning application and I pass a series of comments under the following nine headings;

1. Methodology
2. Site and surrounding's landscape character
3. Proposals for the site
4. Landscape effects
5. Views from A435 – Cirencester Road
6. Views from local PRow network
7. Views from wider AONB
8. Landscape Policy Compliance
9. Suggested Planning Conditions if consented

1. Methodology

Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) appointed Ryder Landscape Consultants to consider the submitted scheme and supporting documents in February 2022. My name is Stuart Ryder and I am an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect. I attended site on 3rd March, 2022, walked local Public Rights of Way and drove nearby highway corridors. I was unable to take site photography as the weather conditions were poor. However there was sufficient visibility to be able to judge the Site and the effect the proposals would have on landscape character and visual matters.

The site visit was unaccompanied but I had the following plans and report to inform me about the proposals;

- Davies Landscape Architects – Illustrative Masterplan DLA.1951.L.27.S13 dated 1 December 2021 and associated LVA Conclusions
- A collection of elevations and sections of the house and gate house
- Gloucestershire CC – Definitive Map for the area.

I have also looked at aerial photographs of the area and OS Mapping.

2. Site and surrounding's landscape character

The site is set within a steep sided valley which is part of the Cotswolds National Landscape¹ Escarpment landscape. It is wooded in part but predominately put to what appears to be improved grazing pasture although no stock was visible at the time of the visit.

The Site is accessed off the A435 Cirencester Road which reduces the sense of tranquillity in the immediate area but also provides the main potential public vantage point back to the proposed Site.

The Lilley Brook Golf Course is set to the west of the proposals on the opposite side of the A435 with the club house further north, down the hill. There is a large block of mature woodland immediately to the east of the Site that is called 'The Dingle' on some-OS Maps.

The Site is made up of a single elongated field parcel aligned north to south parallel to the A435. It is generally bounded by a mix of native trees and hedgerows and fences with a ribbon of existing trees on the steep bank down from the A435 to the presumed course of Lilley Brook.

There is an existing farmhouse type building set in similar fields to the north of the proposed Site and this is accessed off the A435 with its highway entrance marked by high visibility markers and highway modifications presumably to make access and egress easier for its residents and visitors.

3. Proposals for the Site

Two buildings with a 'gatehouse' of more traditional style design set at the end of a new road access off the A435 and the principal \$80 house set as a crescent within an open field location approximately 100m south of the road access. It is unclear from the Landscape Masterplan how the principal dwelling will be accessed by vehicles and where they would be parked if not internally garaged.

A collection of curvilinear paths (presumed mown grass surface) run across the Site with the single elongated field split into two at what from aerial photographs appears to be a former field boundary. The splitting of the field would be by native hedgerow.

Further planting is proposed predominately to the east and west sides of the Site with the central parts of the two fields left as open grass.

4. Landscape effects

The wider proposals are considered sufficiently in keeping with the surrounding landscape to not significantly alter the existing rural character, settlement form and in particular this deeply incised part of the Cotswolds National Landscape. There are similar buildings in the local landscape and their size, height and form will not appear incongruous within this location. The buildings' settings are relatively discrete and their overall landscape effect would appear more as farmsteads albeit the curved primary building will not look like a traditional farm building if viewed from close range.

The illustrative landscape mitigation appears to be in keeping with this side of the A435 landscape with the new tree planting augmenting the existing ribbon of trees along the east side of the Cirencester Hill corridor. The fringe of planting to the east appears appropriate and when established will be seen as an extension to the Dingle woodland block.

The Applicant's landscape advisors Davies Landscape have considered the effects of the proposals in their Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) – again dated December 2021. The overall conclusions of

¹ Preferred name for Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) thus called to reflect its national importance.

the LVA are not succinctly summarised but I consider that the landscape character of this part of the AONB escarpment would be conserved and on establishment of the mitigation planting would receive a **Minor, Positive and Permanent** change. This is largely from the quantum of new tree and hedge planting and the simplicity of the external realm proposals matching the rural landscape rather than trying to impose a 'grand new design' to emphasise the importance and scale of the house.

The retention of the simple, agricultural style fields needs to be ensured into the future through careful draughting of any planning conditions and supporting landscape maintenance and management plans (LMMP).

5. Views from the A435 Cirencester Road

It is difficult to see the proposed Site clearly from the A435 but a snatched view down the proposed site access to the Gatehouse will be achieved. This however is fleeting given that it will be taken from motor vehicles and there is little evidence of pedestrians walking up this busy road corridor when more attractive routes up the escarpment (including The Cotswolds Way) are available. The existing roadside planting screens open views to the Site field even in winter conditions and the additional planting belt will add to the screen further.

The one note of concern I have with regard to views from the A435 is what the actual road entrance will look like. The existing farm house property's access to the north of the proposed Site has been modified with marker poles and coincides with painted highway markings presumably to assist in road safety for vehicles leaving the existing property. Will the new access be as obvious as the existing one to its north? and has the possibility of a shared access been explored to limit the amount of access points onto the A435 for both highway safety and landscape benefit grounds?

6. Views from the Cotswolds Way

There are no notable views to the Site from the Cotswolds Way and higher escarpment. I walked path routes on the west side of the A435 as accessed off Hartley Lane and found most long views truncated by existing woodland or planting on Lilley Brook Golf Course. This does not mean that there may not be long views to Site on a clearer day from somewhere on this national path but any visual impact is considered to be in keeping with other dispersed, bespoke properties that are in view from time to time from this path.

7. Views from the wider Cotswolds National Landscape

These have been considered from the west around Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common and found that the proposals would not influence local views from elevated parts of the escarpment from the west. From the east views are not anticipated given the presence of Wistley Grove and Long Covert mature woods that combine to block direct views from the PRoW network.

The low density of housing proposed and the simple treatment of the associated external realm means the unique and nationally important escarpment landscape will be conserved. The heavily folded and incised nature of the local topography assists in restricting visibility to the Site. However if illuminated too excessively it may actually be more notable at night.

8. Landscape Policy Compliance

The landscape planning policies that need to be considered are;

JCS SD6 – Landscape

Part 1 – The proposals can be considered in keeping with the character of the local landscape which protects its character so there is **compliance** with this part of the policy.

Part 2 – The proposals keep the broad landscape character of pasture fields and woodland and there is no apparent effects on historic landscape features or other features of local distinctiveness. There is considered to be **compliance** with this part of SD6.

Part 3 – An LVA has been submitted by the Applicant and landscape mitigation measures have been submitted. There is therefore **compliance** with this part of the policy with the caveat that the landscape mitigation measures are conditioned and are supported with a Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan (LMMP) that not only ensures the establishment of the proposed woodland and hedgerow planting but its long-term aftercare irrespective of who owns the property.

Overall there is **compliance** with the various parts of SD6 than conflict.

JCS SD7 – Cotswolds AONB

The proposals conserve and lead to a minor enhancement of the landscape character of this part of the AONB so there is **compliance** with this policy.

Cheltenham Plan L1 – Landscape and Setting

The proposals do not harm the setting of Leckhampton Hill or wider Cheltenham or significantly affect views into or out of acknowledged areas of importance such as the Cotswold escarpment or the crescents or race course in town. For these reasons they can be considered in **compliance** with this policy.

NPPF 174 a) – Valued Landscape and NPPF 176

The site is a valued landscape in its own right given it is part of the Cotswold National Landscape. Given the previous conclusion that the proposals lead to a minor enhancement of this part of the AONB there is **no conflict** with these particular NPPF policies. It is helped that the scale of development is minor compared to the overall extent of the Ste that will be falling into the long term LMMP.

9. Suggested planning conditions if consented

Should you be minded to grant planning consent for these proposals and notwithstanding the already submitted landscape proposals the following planning conditions are suggested;

- A. That a detailed hard and soft landscape mitigation scheme is submitted for consideration.
Reason – to ensure that the proposals maintain the landscape character and respect the valued landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- B. The hard landscape proposals should pay particular attention to the detail and character of the final proposed access off the A435. *Reason – to ensure that the proposals maintain the character of this particularly stretch of the A435 Cirencester Road whilst at the same time comply fully with Highway Safety.*
- C. The hard landscape proposals or Engineer's drawings should demonstrate the retention of the dominant ground profile on Site which is the steeply sloping valley sides without excessive and uncharacteristic cut platforms or raised additions such as mounds to deposit excess material – *In the interest of retaining landscape topography in this incised section of Cotswold Escarpment as part of the designated landscape.*

- D. The soft landscape proposals should seek to recreate a strong vegetative edge for both the east and west sides of the Site allowing room for future growth and maintenance of landscape and fields alike. *Reason – to ensure that the landscape proposals restrict sight to the proposals from the A435.*
- E. The soft landscape proposals should be implemented in the first growing season after the commencement of construction and replacement of dead, diseased or dying stock should be undertaken in accordance with an approved Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan for a minimum period of 10 years. *Reason – to ensure the establishment and subsequent aftercare quality of the landscape mitigation measures.*
- F. That no further tree felling is undertaken on site without the express written agreement of CBC’s Arboricultural Officer and after consideration of tree sensitive construction processes – *Reason to protect the remaining mature tree stock that contributes to the A435 tree line.*
- G. That a Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan (LMMP) is prepared for implementation by the new homeowner(s) and that an arrangement for continuation of the LMMP by future homeowners is entered into – *Reason – to reflect the importance of the soft landscape mitigation proposals for both the Cotswolds National Landscape and visual receptors on the adjacent A435 – Cirencester Road.*
- H. That a finalised, minimal impact, external lighting scheme is presented to the Local Planning Authority for approval and subsequent implementation - *Reason – to preserve the dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape.*
- I. That the current and future owners of the properties accept restrictions on typical General Permitted Development rights to reduce the risk of associated landscape and visual harm accruing through the development of peripheral features within the external space associated with the dwellings - *Reason – to preserve the landscape character of the Cotswolds National Landscape.*

I recognise that the suggested conditions could possibly be combined and may require re-wording to be enforceable but wished to explain the importance and reasoning behind them in this consultation response.

I trust you find these notes useful as you consider the determination of this application but should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Stuart Ryder

21/3/22