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Development Management
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

3rd Floor
Regent House
65 Rodney Road
Cheltenham
GL50 1HX

01242 230066
www.ridge.co.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

HEATH BARN, SIBFORD GOWER

Please find attached a retrospective planning application for the change of use of land to form a vehicular access to Heath Barn and the associated works. The application package comprises the following documents:

- Completed forms and ownership certificates;
- Site Location and Block Plan;
- A Planning Statement as set out below; and,
- The statutory application fee of £462.00.

Planning permission (12/00141/F) was granted in March 2012 for the residential conversion of Heath Barn. As part of that application, permitted plan 5353-04a illustrates the "*approximate*" location of a vehicular access to serve the proposed barn conversion. The access is shown as running in a swan neck form from an existing field access on the B4035 to the proposed barn conversion, accessing the complex from the north between Heath Barn and a proposed garage.

Subsequently, planning permission (13/01552/F) was granted for alterations and extension to the garage permitted by 12/00141/F.

In August 2014 planning permission (14/00892/F) was granted for variations to planning permission 13/01552/F. Permitted plan 12-289(D) illustrates a revised positioning of the vehicular access track. The access continued to be shown to be served from the field access on the B4035, but rather than run between the garage and Heath Barn, the access track instead is shown as running to the west of the garage and serving the barn conversion complex from the south west, instead of the north. That change was a necessary consequence of the permitted amendments to the garage, which now provided vehicle access to the south of the building. Vehicular access to the garage could not otherwise have been physically possible without the revised routing of the access track.

That revised access has been implemented in accordance with permitted plan 12-289(D). However, attention has subsequently been drawn to the fact that the site location 'red line' plan did not include land to the west of the garage. The accompanying retrospective planning application is submitted to regularise that vehicular access arrangement.

The property does not fall within the Cotswolds AONB, it does not fall within the Oxford Green Belt, nor does it fall within any other designated landscape of acknowledged importance. Heath Barn is not a listed structure.

Policy ESD13 (Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement) of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) comprises the operative development plan policy relevant to the accompanying planning application. That policy requires development to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. It states proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside
- Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography
- Be inconsistent with local character
- Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity
- Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or
- Harm the historic value of the landscape.

Addressing that policy, it is evident the modest revised positioning of access serving Heath Barn results in no material change to the local landscape character. The track does not fall within a landscape of identified historic value. The track is not overtly visible from public vantage points and in any event, it is seen within the context of the existing residential barn conversion complex. The vehicular track, and use of land, are very much consistent with the character and appearance of that residential complex. As such, it does not result in any undue visual intrusion into open countryside, it does not result in demonstrable harm to any feature of landscape importance, topography or tranquillity. Comprising a functional part of the barn conversion complex, the revised routing of the track is wholly consistent with the setting of the buildings within the property.

The development subject of the accompanying planning application is, therefore, fully compatible with the provisions of Policy ESD13 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.

We trust the attached files will enable the prompt registration of the application and we look forward to the accompanying application receiving planning permission.

Yours faithfully

Mark Chadwick MRTPI
Partner
For Ridge and Partners LLP