

From: National Forest Planning <planning@nationalforest.org>
Sent: 09 August 2021 16:38:09 UTC+00:00
To: "Planning Folder New" <PlanningFolderNew@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk>
Subject: 21/00787/OUT Land North East Of Ashby Road Markfield Leicestershire LE67 9UB

Dear Rhiannon,

Thank you for consulting the National Forest Company (NFC) in relation to the above outline application for residential development of up to 93 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and SUDs.

The site area amounts to 3.66ha and is located primarily within the administrative area of Charnwood Borough Council. In accordance with the National Forest Strategy 2014-2024, Policy 21 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy and policy CS12 of the Charnwood Core Strategy, 20% of this area (or 0.73ha) should be provided as dedicated woodland planting. There is no indication of the provision of woodland planting on the Illustrative Masterplan or Public Open Space Plans. The proposal would provide for a total of 1.3ha of Public Open Space and therefore there is capacity to provide the necessary woodland planting. The Design and Access Statement outlines that the requirement to provide 20% woodland planting is regarded as a 'constraint' and 'opportunity'. The NFC considers that the latter is more appropriate with attendant benefits including noise attenuation for future occupants from the adjoining A50. Page 55 of the Design and Access Statement outlines that 'Although the precise details of open space provision are to be determined at detailed design stage, the Illustrative Layout shows how the open space provision could include a Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), pedestrian links, reinstated historic hedgerows, the whole of the National Forest Planting requirement, and a sensitively designed SUDs strategy'. There is insufficient detail in the Illustrative Layout, with only indicative proposed planting indicated.

The retention of the valuable mature trees on the southern boundary of the site with Ashby Road and the existing trees and hedgerows within the site is welcome. The only other indicative planting area is then along the northern boundary which would be a narrow belt of planting not equating to the required 0.73ha. The Indicative Masterplan provides for mainly parkland style planting which is welcome but will not provide any noise attenuation and the site has capacity for dedicated woodland development. These matters should be raised with the applicant and the precise area of proposed National Forest Planting clarified. A condition should be applied to ensure that subsequent reserved matters applications reflect the agreed illustrative masterplan in respect of woodland provision.

The NFC notes that the site is the subject of a 1949 LCC TPO in relation to the trees on the site including beech, copper beech and silver birch, Scots and Corsican pine. It is important that the protection and management of the existing trees is secured through condition in accordance with BS5837 (2012) Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations.

The NFC welcome the reference in the Design and Access Statement that timber elements could also be introduced on gable ends and/or porches to complement a National Forest inspired character in addition to the use of timber post and rail fencing. A condition should be applied to ensure that these features are secured in future reserved matters applications.

The proposed footpath through the site begins at the entrance and terminates at the proposed LEAP. There is a missed opportunity in not providing a connection to the Altar Stones Nature Reserve or Jubilee Playing Fields to the north west. Similarly, there is a public footpath to the east of the site which would enable access to areas of the National Forest to the north of Markfield.

In summary,

- The requirement for 0.73ha of dedicated woodland planting needs to be identified on the illustrative masterplan
- The protection of the existing trees needs to be conditioned alongside the proposed use of materials to reflect the location within the National Forest
- Further consideration should be given to improve the connectivity of the site with the surrounding footpath network

Kind regards,

David

David Kelly | Planning Officer