

Working to Protect the New Forest



## PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reply to: - Brookley Farmhouse Sway Road Brockenhurst Hampshire SO427RX  
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Sent as attachment to Email to teampni.gsi.gov.uk

1 March 2016

MAP Duty Officer  
The Planning Inspectorate, Room 3/14,  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square, Temple Quay  
Bristol BS1 6PN.

Dear Sir,

### Appeal APP/B9506/W/16/3143828

**New dwelling; associated landscaping (demolition of existing outbuildings) MANOR FARM COTTAGE, FOREST ROAD, BURLEY, RINGWOOD, BH24 4DQ New Forest NPA no 15/00727 |**

1. New Forest Association (NFA) is dedicated to protecting and sustaining the unique character of the New Forest. Our members promoted the 1877 New Forest Act to secure the future of the New Forest and now we are the voice for the New Forest National Park - its friend and watchdog. We are an independent, campaigning charity based on its membership and volunteers. Further details may be found at [newforestassociation.org](http://newforestassociation.org)
2. The local economy is booming. The latest claimant count for New Forest District is 0.9%, for New Forest National Park it is estimated at 0.4% and for the immediate location of the site the count is 0.3% (no one under 21 years of age is on the list). The average property in the New Forest NP costs £531,162, compared with the typical property price nearby of £273,120. A home in the New Forest costs 14.2 times the local average wage, making it the least affordable of the National Parks.
3. It is fashionable to request amenities to justify their existence in financial terms. The special qualities of the New Forest National Park act as a magnet to investment into the economies of the South Hants built up area (the country's sixth biggest) and the Bournemouth/Poole built up area (the country's sixteenth biggest). Unquantifiable but potentially significant loss of employment in those areas through erosion of the Forest's special qualities needs to be balanced against the claimed value of every single local development.
4. The site is within the marked 400m zone around the New Forest Special Protection Area (strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive). The origins of the 400m zone stem from Natural England's comments on the developing plan of Hart District which contains part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

The Thames Basin Heaths site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting breeding populations of European importance of the species listed on Annex I of the Directive as Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark. (These are all ground or low shrub nesting birds) ..Natural England advised in the case of Thames Heaths that planning applications resulting in an increase in the number of dwellings within 5 kilometres of the SPA are, without 'avoidance measures', likely to have a significant effect on the SPA, within the meaning of the Habitat Regulations. **Natural England also advised that within 400 metres of the SPA 'avoidance measures' are unlikely to be effective and net residential development should be avoided.**

The New Forest site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting breeding populations of European importance of the species listed on Annex I of the Directive as Dartford Warbler, Honey Buzzard,

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Nightjar and Woodlark. (With the exception of the Honey Buzzard these are all ground or low shrub nesting birds). On inspecting the existing New Forest NPA core documents, the Inspector concluded "*The Habitats Regulations Assessment Report notes that the quantum of housing envisaged within the National Park is very different to that affecting the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Nevertheless, the inclusion of a '400 metre zone' as part of policy CP1 is helpful in alerting developers of the need for an appropriate assessment of proposals that could significantly disturb protected species within the New Forest SPA.*"

A key component of the development of the policy to mitigate damage to the New Forest Special Protection Area was that development around the SPA would be severely limited (the prevailing allocation was 220 additional dwelling over 20 years), that developments including additional holiday accommodation would be directed to the defined villages, and that replacement dwellings outside the defined villages would be restricted in size.

In October 2015, the New Forest NPA published the final version of the report *Research recommendations relating to impacts of recreation on ground-nesting birds in the New Forest National Park*. At 2.4 it reported that there had been a "marked decline" in the population of Woodlarks and a "marked decline" in the population of Dartford Warblers. It is further reported at 3.1 that "While the New Forest supports high numbers of ground nesting birds, densities (i.e. numbers per ha of heathland) of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler are comparatively low compared to other heathland areas in England."

NFA is alarmed by these findings, coupled with anecdotal evidence from members that numbers of other ground nesting birds (including snipe, lapwing and redshank) have also declined. NFA doubts that the current local core strategies are offering sufficient protection to the SPA and that at the very least all development within the 400M zone that is not strictly in accordance with the core strategies should be avoided.

NFA also has a concern that damage may occur to the SPA during the construction phase of such a large replacement dwelling.

5. It is against this background that an application is received to replace a typical jewel-like New Forest pastoral farm in a typical New Forest setting with *an elegant country house* and parkland. (The applicant is unable to resist using recent changes in Government policy to suggest an alternative unsuitable use (Design and Access Statement 1.4)).

Even if this were the finest building in the world it would still fail the requirement of NPPF 55 by being in the wrong place. The setting is quite wrong for an *elegant country house* of this magnitude and this bulk. Surely the architect recognises this? It undermines his credibility to accept this location as suitable and it suggests that the appealant is simply trying to maximise the value of a site that happens to have fallen his way. Why else was this site chosen?

The material gives cause for concern. Purbeck (Chilmark) stone, despite originating quite close to the New Forest, is foreign to the National Park and efforts have been made over the years to prevent even limited use in smaller dwelling in order to retain local distinctiveness. Worse still another or imitation stone (*using modern materials and techniques* - Design and Access statement paragraph 2.3)

Does this dwelling meet the criteria of being truly outstanding or innovative? Certainly the design is not innovative; by the applicant's own admission it's a modified off the shelf design from Staffordshire.

It is the contention of the NFA that the design is not truly outstanding, it is not outstanding, and it would not, in this location, meet the requirements of NFNPA DP1 *that All new development and uses of land within the New Forest National Park must uphold and promote the principles of sustainable development. New development proposals must demonstrate high quality design and construction which enhances local character and distinctiveness. This includes, but is not restricted to, ensuring:*

*a) development is appropriate and sympathetic in terms of scale, appearance, form, siting and layout*

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- b) development respects the natural and built environment, landscape character and biodiversity, and where appropriate makes provision for new tree planting;*
- c) materials are appropriate to the site and its setting;*

On visiting Burley the Inspector is invited to view *Hincheslea House* a few miles along the Brockenhurst Road. (NFA can arrange an external viewing). Rightly, no reference was made to NPPF paragraph 55 or its predecessor during the planning phase for *Hincheslea* but it is the contention of NFA that the building completed in 2007 is an example of large house several times better than the design submitted at this appeal.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Graham Baker'.

Graham Baker, NFA Planning Committee

Ref: <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/4233/Unemployed-Claimants-and-Residential-Unemployment-Rate>

Ref: Lloyds Bank National Parks Review November 2015

Ref: (2015) Research recommendations relating to impacts of recreation on ground-nesting birds in the New Forest National Park. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for the New Forest National Park Authority.