

## **Application 20/00761/FUL**

### **Vine Cottage, Curridge**

This application has sought to comprehensively address the matters raised by Councillors and neighbours during the determination of application (19/00317/FUL). That application was recommended for approval by officers but subsequently refused at committee.

#### Landscape Impact

The site has been used historically for sand extraction and has since been restored. The site forms a transition between open fields and woodland to the south and the groups of dwellings to the north and east of the site. Therefore, the site does not have the appearance of traditional open countryside.

The existing bunds will be re-profiled to soften the slopes from a 1 in 4 gradient to a 1 in 3. This will aid in creating the appearance of the bunds to a more natural feature within the landscape, further enhanced by a wildflower seed mix.

The pond will appear as a natural feature, as aquatic planting within the pond and marginal planting around the edges of the pond will soften the appearance of the water body.

It is considered that the pond together with the soft planting proposed would preserve the character and appearance of the site within the North Wessex Downs AONB in accordance with Policies CS13 and CS19.

#### Ecology/Trees

The proposal incorporates substantial biodiversity enhancements to the landscape setting in the form of bee banks, reptile/amphibian refuge, removal of the laurel hedge and its replacement with a native hedge, the protection of existing trees, wildflower meadows, aquatic and marginal planting in accordance with Policy CS17. The Council's Ecologist and Tree Officer has no objections to the scheme.

It is confirmed that no trees have been removed from the application site nor is there any intention to remove any trees as part of this application.

### Drainage

Concerns have again been raised by the PC and neighbours in relation potential flooding implications of the development. Our two experts, both highly experienced professionals, have provided formal statements to confirm that the proposed pond design does not pose any flood risk whatsoever to the surrounding area, neighbouring properties or the road.

It is confirmed that the bunds are not water retaining structures.

Alternative locations were considered for the soakaways but for the proposal to operate efficiently they need to be sited on land which is lower than the pond, hence the location chosen.

The structure of the bunds is based on advice provided from a Reservoir Panel Engineer who specialises in the safety of reservoir banks – even though the bunds are not water retaining.

Full details of the inspection and maintenance routine is contained within the supporting documents. These documents have been specified in the conditions which would be attached to any permission granted.

It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS16 and the Council's Drainage Engineer has no objections.

### Summary

This proposal will greatly enhance the landscape setting of the site through the numerous soft landscaping and biodiversity enhancements proposed and we therefore hope you are able to support the Officer's recommendation for approval.