

26 DCNE2003/3136/F - NEW DRIVING ELEMENTS TO BE LINKED INTO EXISTING TRACKS IN BIRCHAMS WOOD TO BE USED BY LAND ROVER EXPERIENCE AT SHEEP HILL AND HOLTS COPPICE, EASTNOR CASTLE ESTATE, EASTNOR, LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR8 1RD

For: Eastnor Castle Estate per Mr C F Knock, 22 Aston Court, Aston Ingham, Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7LS

Date Received:
16th October 2003

Ward:
Ledbury

Grid Ref:
72822, 36467

Expiry Date:
11th December 2003

Local Member: Councillor Mills & Councillor Stockton

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Sheep Hill, Eastnor is located to the north-west of Eastnor village within the Eastnor estate ground.
- 1.2 Planning permission is sought to create a track with various driving features such as ditch crosses, water trough, log roadway, rubicon, steps and articulation holes around an existing pasture field. A small car park and a 'Holts Matrix' measuring 110m x 90m will also be created within the field. All of these features will be linked into the existing tracks presently used by the Land Rover Experience.

2. Policies

PPG7 – The Countryside

Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy CTC1 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy CTC2 – Area of Great Landscape Value
Policy CTC3 – Nature Conservation
Policy CTC6 – Landscape Features
Policy CTC7 – Landscape Features
Policy CTC9 – Development Requirements
Policy CTC11 – Trees and Woodland
Policy A1 – Development on Agricultural Land
Policy A2 – Diversification

Malvern Hills District Local Plan

Employment Policy 9 – Further means of Rural Diversification
Landscape Policy 2 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Landscape Policy 3 – Area of Great Landscape Value
Landscape Policy 7 – Agricultural and Forestry Buildings and Roads
Landscape Policy 8 – Landscape Standards
Landscape Policy 9 – Landscape Features
Landscape Policy 11 – Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodlands
Landscape Policy 12 – Trees and Woodlands
Transport Policy 11 – Traffic Impact

Unitary Development Plan

S7 – Natural and Historic Heritage
E12 – Farm Diversification
E11 – Employment in the Countryside
LA1 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
LA2 – Landscape Character and Areas of Least Resilient to Change
LA5 – Protection of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

3. Planning History

3.1 None.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

4.1 Forestry Commission - No objection.

4.2 English Nature - No objection.

4.3 CPRE - No objection.

Internal Council Advice

4.4 Head of Engineering - No objection

4.5 Chief Conservation Officer raises concerns regarding the impact on the landscape but confirms that there are no ecological concerns.

5. Representations

5.1 Eastnor Parish Council comment - The Parish Council are always keen to secure local employment where possible, but hope the contractors will operate with consideration to those living in the village with regard to road use and noise.

5.2 One letter of objection has been received from Miss Jennifer Davies, Park Barn Farm, Nr Parkway, Ledbury, Herefordshire, the main points are:

1. Why extend track around this side of the estate?

2. Other tracks have this year been stoned and face onto the A417.
3. Previous applications on Sheep Hill for a phone mast were refused due to the impact of the track on the landscape.
4. The proposal is therefore contract to policies of both the Structure Plan and Malvern Hills District Local Plan.
- 5.3 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Northern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 Planning permission is sought to create a track around the perimeter of an existing pasture field at Sheep Hill, Eastnor.
- 6.2 The field is near the summit of Sheep Hill but forms its eastern escarpment. It is virtually enclosed by woodland and therefore is well screened within the landscape. However, there are views to the Malvern Hills to the east but at a considerable distance, which will make this modest development therefore relatively small in scale. The track and various humps and bumps will not intrude into the landscape. The Holts Matrix, which is a series of tracks within its 90 x 110m confines will be grasses and is sited at the lowest end of the field thereby reducing its impact. This will provide a network of tracks that contain elements that test the Land Rover vehicle's technical abilities. This new track will compliment the existing tracks used on Eastnor Estate and will not increase the through put of vehicles but help to compliment them with a more defined area. This complex will also help to consolidate the development of Land Rover at Eastnor for which new offices were approved last year at The Bothy adjacent to Eastnor Castle.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1 - A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission))**

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 - A06 (Development in accordance with approved plans)**

Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development.

- 3 - Prior to the use hereby approved commencing details of the materials to be used to form the new tracks and Holts Matrix shall be submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority.**

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.