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# Planning Statement

PREPARED FOR

**Mr T Johnson-Sabine  
Colestocks Farm Cottage  
Colestocks  
Honiton  
EX14 3JR**

**4 January 2021**

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**1. Terms of Reference**

1.1 Mr T Johnson-Sabine (the applicant) has instructed Acorus Rural Property Services Limited to assist with obtaining planning permission for improvements to access and provision of parking, siting of a polytunnel, and provision of tourist accommodation at Colestocks Farm Cottage, Colestocks.

**2. Disclaimer**

2.1 This report is for the sole use of the named client. While it may be shown to other professionals acting for them, the contents are not to be disclosed to nor made use of by any third party without our express prior written consent. Without such consent we can accept no responsibility to any third party.

Signed

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the signatory.

**Laura Wall MRICS MBIAC**

**Associate**

on behalf of Acorus Rural Property Services Limited

Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021



### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 The site at Colestocks Farm Cottage is situated in the village of Colestocks, approximately 6 miles west of Honiton. The holding comprises of a cottage and land, which is currently operated an organic flower farm, or rented out for grazing/forage. Access to the land is via an existing track adjacent to the cottage, however this access is limited by its width, making it restrictive for larger farm machinery and vehicles.
- 3.2 The proposal, which is the subject of this application, relates to the potential to widen the access track, incorporating part of the garden of the cottage, provision of parking and provision of tourist accommodation and associated infrastructure.
- 3.3 The Applicants' property, Colestocks Farm Cottage, does not currently have any designated parking area, and the proposed improved access track would provide both a domestic and agricultural access, suitable for all types of vehicles.
- 3.4 In addition, the Applicants are proposing to utilise a small proportion of the land within their ownership to diversify into providing low impact tourist accommodation
- 3.5 Consideration is given in this report to planning policy, the demand for tourist accommodation in the area and the potential impact the development may have on the surrounding area.

#### **4. The Proposal**

4.1 The proposed development relates to improvements to an existing access and provision of parking for the dwelling known as Colestocks Farm Cottage. In addition the application seeks permission for the siting of a polytunnel, and provision of 3no. units of tourist accommodation with associated infrastructure, in the form of shepherd huts, which will provide visitors with a high quality 'glamping' type experience in this area of the East Devon countryside.

##### Access

4.2 The proposal is to widen the access track down its entire length, as shown on the planning drawings. The proposal will 'relocate' the existing cottage garden boundary, to provide for the development.

4.3 It is understood that the track is not an adopted highway, and is unregistered currently on Land Registry. The Applicants however, are satisfied that they have a legal right of access over the track, which is supported in the title deeds of their property.

4.4 The track runs parallel to the neighbour's property, which is a listed building (Moneyglass Cottage), although is not within the same ownership.

4.5 The proposal is to provide an improved access track that would provide both a domestic and agricultural access, suitable for all types of vehicles. The track would be widened utilising part of the garden for the cottage.

4.6 As part of any proposal the Applicants would look to incorporate a thin strip of planting to safeguard the boundary of the adjoining listed building and to minimise any potential for impact on the heritage asset.

4.7 The track would remain a compacted hardcore track to ensure that no additional run-off is created, and any visual impact would be minimal.



#### Domestic Parking Provision

- 4.8 To the rear of Colestocks Farm Cottage it is proposed to provide 2no. parking spaces to be used by the residents of the cottage (The Applicant and his family).
- 4.9 The property, Colestocks Farm Cottage, does not currently have any designated parking area, and currently the Applicants have to park on the public highway, which is far from ideal, particularly as they have a young family.
- 4.10 The parking spaces would be situated so that there is no conflict with other vehicles using the access track, and it would not lead to a significant detrimental loss of amenity space.
- 4.11 The provision of domestic parking is deemed to have a positive highways benefit as it removes vehicles from potentially causing an obstruction on the public highway.
- 4.12 It is proposed that the parking area will also be compacted hardcore.

#### The Tourism Units

- 4.13 The proposed shepherd hut units are temporary, moveable structures which can be towed by a tractor to the desired location and removed if no longer required.
- 4.14 The units will have a footprint of approximately 17.5m<sup>2</sup> (2.4m x 7.3m). As detailed on the submitted drawings, the units will have a corrugated finish in grey/green with a black roof and window/door frames, reflecting the look of a typical agricultural building of this type and the rural nature of the area.
- 4.15 The interior of the unit will be fitted out to provide a double bed, a small seating area, storage and bathroom facilities.

- 4.16 Water will be provided either through connection to the mains supply from the land/dwelling or will be provided in tanks, if connection to the mains is not possible. Foul drainage will be in a new package treatment plant, and soakaway.

#### Scale and Siting

- 4.17 The proposal is currently to site three units on the holding. The proposal is to offer year round accommodation.
- 4.18 The Applicants are seeking permission for the three units to be positioned in the field set back from the residential properties of Colestock, as detailed on the planning drawings. This will minimise any potential impact on residential amenity.

#### Polytunnel

- 4.19 The Applicant, as detailed above, run a small horticultural business from the holding. They wish to erect a growing polytunnel to be used in association with this activity.
- 4.20 Whilst there is some argument to suggest that polytunnels are temporary, moveable, structures, which do not require planning permission, the proposed tunnel has been included in this planning application for consideration.
- 4.21 The polytunnel, will be typical in appearance, and will have a footprint of approximately 20m x 6m, and will be positioned as shown on the submitted planning drawings.



## 5. Planning Policy

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (introduced in March 2012 and revised in February 2019) seeks to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and to ensure it is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The applicants are seeking in this instance to operate their holding in a sustainable manner and are exploring opportunities to generate additional income.

5.2 Under section 6 headed 'Building a Strong, Competitive Economy' the NPPF conveys a number of policies, aims, objectives and guidance to local planning authorities which are deemed to be relevant to this proposal.

5.3 Paragraph 83 (Supporting a prosperous rural economy) states that planning policies should enable:

- the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.
- the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities.

5.4 Paragraph 84 goes on to state:

*Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.*

*In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).*

*The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.*

- 5.5 The key aims of the above have been considered with regard to the tourism element of this proposal. The proposal will support the applicants in the diversification of the holding and represents sustainable and economic development appropriate in a rural area, as well as generating additional visitor spend in and around the area.
- 5.6 In terms of the access and domestic parking, the proposal will benefit all parties, and seeks to ensure that the public highway is kept clear.

#### Local Planning Policy

- 5.7 The East Devon Local Plan 2013 to 2031 was adopted 28 January 2016, and contains planning policy through to 2031, seeking to ensure that East Devon remains an outstanding place to live, work and play. The following policy is deemed to be most relevant to this application:
- 5.8 In spite of its reference to Holiday Accommodation Parks, it is suggested that policy E19 of the Local Plan applies equally to smaller glamping proposals. Such proposals are supported subject to the following criteria:

*1. The proposal relates sensitively in scale and siting to the surroundings and includes extensive landscaping and visual screening to mitigate against adverse impacts. They do not affect habitats or protected species.*

*2. They are within, or in close proximity, to an existing settlement but would not have an adverse impact on the character or setting of that settlement or the amenities of adjoining residents.*



3. *They would not use the best and most versatile agricultural land.*
4. *They will be provided with adequate services and utilities.*
5. *Traffic generated by the proposal can be accommodated safely on the local highway network and safe highway access to the site can be achieved.*
6. *The development will be subject to the provisions of plan policy in terms of sustainable construction and on site renewable energy production.*

Comment

5.9 The scale, level and intensity of the development is compatible with the area and nearby settlements. As previously accepted, the proposal, through choice of siting, will not harm the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. There will be adequate parking provided on the holding. The proposed level of traffic generated will be minimal given the small scale nature of the proposal.

5.10 It is noted that the officer, in the pre-application response stated:

*'The site is in close proximity to the settlement of Colestocks and near Feniton and Payhembury where there are a range of amenities, including a main line station at Feniton. For daily living these amenities are too far away but for tourists I consider that walking or cycling would be an attractive option and reduce the need to travel by car'.*

5.11 The officer went on to state that:

*'Having regard to these consideration I am satisfied that the proposal is compatible with Policy E19. I am also satisfied that the proposal is compatible with the Payhembury Neighbourhood Plan, which contains no specific policies relating to this type of development'.*



## 6. Other Planning Considerations

### Tourism Demand

- 6.1 Tourism contributes over £9.4 billion to the South West economy with 1 in 10 jobs being tourist related. Just in Devon, tourism provides £2.6 billion to our economy as well as 73,000 jobs and 5,000+ businesses.
- 6.2 The proposed development involves the provision of tourist accommodation. As stated above, such diversification will bring additional economic benefits not only to the site but also the economy in the surrounding area.
- 6.3 Data from South West Tourism shows that in 2008 Devon 10% of the total visit stays were in self-catering accommodation.
- 6.4 'Towards Tourism 2015' is a strategy for tourism in the South West and part of its aims is to create an industry which is markedly less seasonal and achieves higher visitor satisfaction rates.
- 6.5 The accommodation will be available to visitors who wish to enjoy the Devon countryside. There are numerous public footpaths in the vicinity – providing a range of walks in the local countryside. By providing high quality accommodation with on and off-site facilities it is hoped that the development will encourage an extension to the normal holiday periods and provide accommodation which visitors will want to return to.

### Highways and Parking Facilities

- 6.7 The existing access from the public highway and the existing farm track is deemed to need improvement, and these proposals form part of the application.

- 6.8 The improved access track will lead to a new parking area for the existing property, and also lead to a separate parking area for those staying in the tourist accommodation. The parking area, will also provide sufficient space to allow vehicles to turn around and leave the site in a forward motion.
- 6.9 The improved track will also serve the agricultural/horticultural activities on the holding.
- 6.10 This proposal will generate some additional traffic entering and leaving the holding. On the basis of 2-4 movements (average 3 movements) per day for each of the units, it is deemed that the local road network is capable of supporting this minimal increase in traffic.
- 6.11 The impact of any additional traffic will be mitigated to a large extent due to the following:
- Traffic will enter the site at different times during the day and week and therefore the overall impact of the traffic is spread.
  - It is expected that the accommodation in part will be used by people visiting the area for walking, using footpaths from the site and therefore reducing the number of additional journeys to the site.

#### Landscape Impact

- 6.12 The development is deemed to have a minimal landscape impact. The track will be widened but the general appearance will remain the same, as the garden wall will be rebuilt, and the surface will remain as a hardcore compacted surface.
- 6.13 In terms of the polytunnel, the structure will be comparable to many other similar structures which are found in agricultural/rural settings.



6.14 The tourism units will be largely screened from public view by existing hedgerow and tree screening. The temporary nature of the structures, the choice of colour and material and the provision of existing screening mean that there will not be a detrimental impact on the landscape or views from public vantage points.

6.15 Below are photographs of the siting of the huts, taken in December 2020 when vegetation is at its least, and the existing boundary features can be seen.











- 6.16 The below photograph was also taken from the public footpath to the north, towards the site (indicated by red arrow), however this view is minimal and largely obstructed by existing vegetation.





### Historic Buildings

- 6.17 The neighbouring property, Moneyglass Cottage is Grade II listed. The proposal is deemed to have no significant effect on the listed structures, as the proposed locations for the shepherd hut are well screened, and the access will lead to benefits for users, including those of the public highway, and has been designed to provide a buffer area to protect the listed building and its boundary.
- 6.18 It is suggested that the setting of the listed buildings will not be affected.
- 6.19 A separate heritage statement has been produced to consider any potential affects on the listed buildings.

### Impact on Land Use

- 6.20 The proposed development will not result in the significant loss of any agricultural land. The siting of the structures will require a small area to utilised, as will the parking area for visitors. The remaining land will continued to be farmed (grazed, mowing etc) as it is currently.

## **7. Pre-application Consultation**

- 7.1 The Applicants approached East Devon District Council for pre-application consultation regarding the proposals at Colestocks Farm Cottage. The planning officer (Andrew Digby) suggested in an initial response that the was likely to be support for the proposals set out, providing consideration was given to issues such as the listed building
- 7.3 As detailed above, the proposal is deemed to fall in line with the relevant national and local planning policies and the pre-application advice received.



## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The development proposed will provide enhanced access and parking facilities, not only for the existing dwelling, but also for the proposed agricultural/horticultural activities and proposed tourism units.
- 8.2 The pre-application consultation comments and advice provided by the planning officer have been taken into account and the proposed development reflects the advice received.
- 8.3 The proposals accord with national and local planning policy and will have no adverse effect on the surrounding area or environment.
- 8.4 In considering the above, this application should be fully supported.

**Laura Wall MRICS MBIAC**

**on behalf of Acorus Rural Property Services Limited**