

Pondtail Justification Letter Ref - A2

Following our meeting on site at Pondtail Wood with the Planning Officer, South-Downs Ranger, Tree Officer and 2 representatives from the Forestry commission, we have reconsidered our application for an agricultural barn and made adjustments to the original design (SDNP/20/01731/FUL) and its position, to allow for the comments and advice provided.

Our original plans showed a barn measuring 20m long by 10m wide and with a ridge height of 5.4m. It was suggested that we reconsider this size of structure so we have reduced the length to 13m and the width to 7.5m. This reduction in length and width takes the overall square meterage from 200sqm to 97.5sqm, over 50% reduction in the size of the original proposed barn.

Following advice from the ecologist and Forestry commission, we have also adjusted the position of the proposed building so that it would be on an existing clear area and not require the removal of ANY trees or shrubs.

During our discussion on site I touched upon the vast amount of equipment we have and how it is all vital when safely managing forest areas. All equipment for Forestry operations is specialist and costly to purchase. There has been a vast increase in rural crime and the theft of such equipment so we must be able to house the machinery in an appropriate, enclosed and secure building. It is also often required that clear space is available within the building for machinery maintenance.

To further reduce the size of the barn would result in additional covered storage space being required and/or increased vehicular movements and visits to site. Unfortunately it is not possible to leave any valuables out and unsecured.

Concerns were expressed regarding the external finish of the building and how it may effect the woodland surroundings. To help the new building settle into its surroundings we therefore now plan to clad the 4 external walls with vertical timber softwood boarding, on top of the green metal clad panels. Through our thinning out of the woodland we plan to use materials sourced from the felled trees to clad the building. Our plan being to allow the boarding to naturally darken with age to see the barn blend in to the area. (For ease of use we will not be applying timber boarding to the roller doors).

We have retained the original eaves and ridge height so as to have the required height of door frame to allow access for tractors and forestry equipment and also to allow adequate roof pitch for both rain run-off and angle of the solar panels for maximum electricity output.

On the subject of power supply, it was noted by some who commented on the previous application that the barn would have 3 phase power and this caused concern that the barn would be for industrial usage. I would like to confirm that there will not be a 3 phase power supply in the building. The solar power system with battery storage will be the primary source of power.

Due to the difficult past that the site has endured it will require careful future management. Established woodland in general requires regular pruning, thinning and selective clearing to promote healthy growth to the strongest trees. Pondtail has, in the last 2 years received 5

acres (2000 trees) of newly planted pine and native broadleaf saplings which need regular maintenance. In addition to these new trees we also have approximately 1500 hazel coppice stumps which we plan to prune annually in 5 sections so as to produce a yearly crop which can be both stored and used onsite as well as sold locally.

We have now been granted a 10 year felling licence and have also created a comprehensive woodland management plan which will see the continued replanting of the trees and careful considered maintenance of the remaining woodland.

Over the next decade we will selectively fell trees to promote the regeneration of the woodland and boost wildlife habitat. With assistance of the Ecologists at Phlorum, we have identified many species of insects, birds and plants which we aim to assist through our ongoing maintenance works.

Watering of the trees has been a challenge with no water supply and the stream and pond dry up in the summer. We therefore plan to collect all run-off from the roof which will be stored on site and used to water the 2000 newly planted trees during the drier summer months. Watering the trees became a particular challenge in the dry summer of 2020 when we lost 400 of the new saplings. These have now been replaced with inspections made by the forestry commission but it highlighted the need for a constant water source, we therefore plan to install a borehole in addition to harvesting the rain water.

Within our design and access statement we detail the number of vehicle trips to the site. Since taking ownership of Pondtail we have become regular users of the entrance to the woodland which leads directly off the B2117 Muddleswood Road. The entrance is secured by a pair of metal gates, 5.4m wide and set 2.4m from the side of the road. The gates being set back, provide a 6m wide safe area to pull off the road. Whilst we only plan to have 2 vehicles using the entrance during working hours, the dimensions of the entrance is equal to that of the Singing Hills Golf Club (and its many members) which has its main entrance 50yards to the east on the opposite side of the B2117.

Following our previous application, the SDNP requested on the 7th May 2020 information or documentation on Ecosystems services statement, Forestry diversification statement and Landscape appraisal/study.

On the 8th of May 2020 James Callaway of Parker Dann responded to the Authority's request for a Forestry diversification statement pointing out that the proposed barn is for forestry purposes. He also made the point that a Landscape Appraisal/Study is contained within Section 6.0 in the Planning Statement. The Authority confirmed that these requirements had been met and no further information was required. On further request from the SDNPA we had an Ecological Appraisal/Ecosystems Services Statement carried out by Phlorum, Ecology Consultants along with a further survey of the proposed site of the building.

I do hope these reasonable adjustments to the proposal are met with approval by the SDNPA. Pondtail is a wonderful part of the West Sussex countryside and we take great pleasure in protecting and preserving the site for future generations.

