

Development description Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and associated yards and landscape restoration of cleared area; replacement farm buildings and yard area with associated new access link to existing farm track, drainage infrastructure, and landscape works	App. Ref 24/01203/FUL
Site address Manor Farm, Pound Lane, Yarlington, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 8DG	Response date 06.02.2025
Environment Team response by Charles Potterton (Consultant Landscape Architect)	Case Officer Simon Fox
Summary response	
No Objection or comments	
No Objection – subject to conditions / comments below	X
Object in principle	
Not acceptable in its current format	
Detailed response	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am familiar with this scheme and have visited the site on a number of occasions, specifically for the purposes of this and the pre-application submission. 2. The proposals cover two main areas. The demolition of a number of existing buildings located in an elevated position on the edge of the village of Yarlington and, secondly, the construction of a number of new buildings, yard and access track in a more or less central position between the existing buildings (to be demolished) to the east and Hicks Lane to the west. 3. At the pre-app stage I noted that this was a working agricultural landscape with numerous other agricultural buildings within it. 'Scattered farmsteads' to include farm buildings of a range of types, styles and sizes, are a part of the baseline character of this working agrarian landscape. Manor Farm, Marylands Farm, Parsonage Farm, Eastwood Farm, Shatwell Farm, Mount Pleasant Farm, Tor View Farm and so on. 4. It is worth noting that the scheme has been refined and improved through the pre-application and full application stages. A number of suggestions were made in terms of arrangement, alignment and design of the buildings as well as the extent and content of the wider scheme of mitigation. 5. The Yarlington Sleights are clearly a distinctive local landscape feature and are correctly assessed in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as being a part of a 'valued landscape' that includes Yarlington Village. They are also 'locally valued'. However, they are not covered by any specific landscape designation and are part of a wider ranging series of very similar valleys and ridges that spread across the landscape in this area. 	

6. Yarlinton village contains a number of Listed Buildings but is not a Conservation Area. There can be little doubt that the removal of the existing buildings would be a significant positive intervention for the character and appearance of the village as a whole. Likewise, the restoration of the land profile and associated greening up of the hillside, plus additional planting should also be seen as positives.
7. In respect of **visual impact**, the assessment looks at various categories of receptor / viewer from a range of distances, elevations and types of location. It is accepted practice to select a representative group of assessment points and through the process I have agreed the broad suite of these with the applicant. The overall results of the assessment are given in Table 4 on pages 33/34.
8. I find the 'reporting' system which includes a range of magnitudes / effects in the same bracket i.e. 'varying low, medium, high' to be less clear to the reader what the actual effects on each receptor might be. However, that might be seen as more of a personal preference as the LVIA correctly reports higher levels of adverse effect to the closer range receptors i.e. those using the footpaths passing in front of or immediately behind the scheme. The duration or extent of the visual impact on those users would, in the main, be quite limited and need to also include the positive effects of the removal of the unsightly existing buildings in the same views.
9. The scheme will clearly be visible from a number of points on the closest public rights of way. However, also as set out in the LVIA, the consideration needs to be on a kinetic or sequential experience of the view, as one moves around in the landscape as there are also many parts the existing path network where the scheme won't be visible.
10. The 'rest points' that have been added to the wider scheme will also help to frame particularly attractive viewpoints and these could also include interpretation and waymark information.
11. Walking through this landscape, there are many instances of existing farm buildings as this is a working agricultural landscape and farm buildings are a defining characteristic. For example, as one walks towards the village, traversing to or from the village on WN31/9, the buildings will be visible, but at the same time, another part of the view is looking southwards out to the wider panorama. Likewise, from WN 31/10, again there will be some views of the buildings but for the most part, existing hedgerow and blocks of vegetation will screen the new scheme, even in winter months.
12. Local topography and existing vegetation combine to afford some framed views looking uphill towards the sleights from Yarlinton village itself and those views will be significantly improved by removal of the existing buildings.

13. It is also logical that year 1 effects will be greater than those assessed at year 15 when the landscape scheme could be said to be 'effective'. The fine grain detail of the planting scheme, which should include some significantly large trees at the outset and a higher percentage of evergreen species, could be achieved via an appropriately worded condition.
14. I also consider that further work could be done, via condition, in terms of the colour choices for cladding and roofs of the buildings (to look specifically at the local colour palette using Environmental Colour Analysis which should also address all elements of materiality for the proposed structures. This will also help visually break up the outline of the buildings by pixelating the colour scheme and this has been used very successfully on other schemes where different elevations can be specifically treated in direct response to the direction and elevation of the viewer and the nature of the background (i.e. sky, trees or grassland).
15. Lighting needs to be carefully considered and controlled in terms of the type and location of individual installations and also the hours of usage. This must be covered by carefully worded conditions covering fine detail such as cowl and shroud design, height of lighting to ensure that sources of light are hidden where possible and are as low as possible and targeted at very specific areas. The key is to avoid 'glow' and I am confident this can be achieved by using the various published guidance documents.
16. As reported in the the LVIA, there are a range of initially relatively high adverse effects, but overall, I believe that a more robust and informed colour palette for the buildings, coupled with the extensive planting scheme would ultimately reduce these harms to acceptable levels.
17. Given the distances involved, I do not believe that the scheme will affect the views to or from Cadbury Castle some 5k to the south-west.
18. **Landscape character.** There is no doubt that the primary issue with the scheme relates to its relationship with the Sleights. Paragraph 2.33 bp 4 of the LVIA notes that '*Yarlington Sleights; Values relate to the noted landform and relationship with wider rural landscape. Sensitivity – Medium/high*'. Further, at 5.7, the LVIA notes that the magnitude of change is '*Low*'. I consider that this is an underestimation when the simple fact is that these new built elements are being introduced where there previously were none.
19. However, this then has to be counter balanced with the fact that the wider receiving landscape already includes many similar elements as part of its baseline. This is a working agricultural landscape, and functional agricultural buildings are what one would expect to see in it. it is my opinion that on successful establishment of the mitigation, harms would reduce to acceptable levels.

20. Mitigation measures include gently flowing mounds and extensive woodland planting, together with wider hedge restoration. It is acknowledged that any planting scheme will have less impact in the early years of its growth, but by year 15 it will be sufficiently established to perform its primary mitigation function. As noted earlier, the mitigation scheme has evolved through the application process to include more hedgerow restoration and the creation of framed rest / view points.
21. I do not believe that the relationship between Galhampton and Yarlinton would be compromised by the scheme as there is a gap of some 1.5k between the two villages. Similarly, I do not believe that this scheme would have any effect on the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, nor would it harm the wider landscape between the Sleights and other important landscape features such as Cadbury Castle.
22. In landscape terms, the broader context of this being agricultural development in an agricultural landscape is a vitally important factor. Both negative and positive elements need to be carefully weighed in the planning balance.
23. My overall conclusion is that whilst there are a range of adverse effects, some at the higher end of the scale as a result of this proposal, there is an overall balance that needs to be struck with the harms from the new buildings, which will reduce over time, being counter-balanced with the landscape benefits in the area around Manor Farm.
24. I am supportive of the overall project but consider that suitably worded conditions must be applied in order to control various elements such as lighting, building colour(s), materials and the specific content and timing of the landscape scheme.

Charles Potterton BA DipLA CMLI
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6th February 2025