

Workhouse Cottages,
Workhouse Lane,
Little Horkesley,
Colchester CO6 4DS

3 August 2010

Colchester Borough Council,
(Attn David Whybrow)
PO Box 889,
Rowan House,
33 Sheepen Road,
Colchester CO3 3WG
Dear Mr Whybrow,

Application No: 101543

Location: Lower Park, Colchester Road , Dedham, Colchester CO7 6HG

Proposal: Listed building application for a swimming pool, stables and replacement storage barn

On receiving this application I referred back to the Dedham Vale Society letter of 7 June 2009 in response to application 090661, which was withdrawn, and sought to identify how the original application had been modified to reflect the protests expressed at that time. The only new element appeared to be the discovery of buildings to be demolished to make way for the stable block. However, I am advised that the building referred to was a Summer House which in the 1930s/40s was removed to Tendring where for many years it saw service as a cricket pavilion – all that remains being a hard standing.

Lower Park is a listed building, in a conservation area and, most importantly being in Dedham, at the very heart of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – any application must therefore be subject to very close scrutiny.

Colchester Borough Council have in their Local Development Framework documents has set out very clearly the protection to be offered to the AONB:

Core Development Strategy ENV1 commits CBC “to ensure that developments that have an adverse impact on the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will not be supported”. This development given its location and scale and, in spite of proposed screening by trees, must have an adverse impact.

Development Policy DP 20 states that CBC will only support development in the AONB if:

- (i) Makes a positive contribution to the special landscape and qualities;
- (ii) Does not adversely affect the character, quality of views and distinctiveness of the AONB or threaten public enjoyment of these views;
- (iii) Supports the wider environmental, social and economic objectives as set out in the Dedham Vale AONB and River Stour Management Plan.

It is impossible to see how the building of such a large stable block and swimming pool in the heart of an AONB can in any way meet the requirement of DP20.

Development Policy DP 22 Equestrian Activities states that planning permission will only be supported for related developments if it can be demonstrated that the proposal:

- (i) Is satisfactory in scale and level of activity, and in keeping with its location and surroundings;
- (ii) Will not result in sporadic development leading to an intensification of buildings in the countryside;
- (iii) Is related to an existing dwelling in the countryside or will lead to pressure for the development of a new dwelling.

A development of this size, four stables and a large storage facility, would appear to be excessive unless a potential need for further expansion was envisaged – at some point the need for more stabling or accommodation of staff could be identified.

A major problem in the AONB is that individuals buy a property with the clear long term intention of changing to meet their needs – this is influencing the AONB and, amongst other things, the housing stock which is available to future generations.

Change to meet individual needs at a particular moment in time must be resisted if we are going to pass on the Vale with love to future generations in good order.

Yours sincerely

Roger Drury

DVS Essex Planning Secretary