



Arnside and Silverdale

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Lancaster City Council
Planning Services
Palatine Hall
Dalton Square
Lancaster LA1 1PJ

Dear Mr Rivet

RE: West Lindeth House, Silverdale – Planning Application References: 09/00371/CU, 09/00377/OUT and 09/00378/LB

The statutory and primary purpose of designation of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Lancaster City Council Core Strategy Policy E1 also quite clearly states that the Council will protect, conserve and enhance landscapes of national importance. Under Section 85 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 (AONBs) all Local Authorities must take due regard for the designation of the AONB in their decision making.

In the terms of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB Landscape Assessment, the key characteristics of Silverdale include:

- Low wooded limestone hills
- Open pasture and small sheltered paddocks
- Rough grazing land with species rich grassland and rocky outcrops
- Narrow lanes and a dense network of footpaths, often flanked by limestone walls
- Considerable semi-natural woodland and amenity planting
- Historic wells
- Victorian and Edwardian dwellings and more recent bungalow development

In line with the relevant policies in the Lancaster City Council Core Strategy, any development should be of high quality, good design and should demonstrate the highest levels of sustainability.

The Planning Sub Committee of the AONB Executive Committee has looked at the plans and associated documents for this application and wish to make the following comments.

The Committee feels that currently there is insufficient detail provided in the outline planning application to fully judge the impact of the proposed development.

The Committee understands that at present the building is not currently in use and therefore in danger of deterioration. The proposed development does offer an opportunity to bring an existing building back into use, potentially to meet local housing need and also to improve the outdated sewage systems, which could have an adverse impact on water quality. But in doing so it is imperative that the proposed development is sensitive to the landscape character of the area and does not compromise the historical significance of the existing building.

Lancaster City Council Core Strategy policy SC1 states that in assessing whether development proposals are as sustainable as possible, the Council will apply a set of principals, one of which states that ‘the site can be developed without the loss of harm to features of significant biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage importance’ and that ‘the proposed use would be appropriate to the character of the landscape’.

Policy E1 states Lancaster City Council will protect and enhance landscapes of national importance and makes particular reference to the AONB Management Plan.

The committee understands that West Lindeth House was designed by George Webster of Kendal and as such is historically significant and makes a significant contribution to the built heritage and character of the village of Silverdale. As part of the renovation every effort should be made to survey and subsequently retain features of historical significance and the renovation should be sensitive to the character of the building and landscape setting in accordance with AONB Management Plan objectives BE2.3: Raise awareness about the importance of enhancing the built environment of the AONB among developers and their clients, in order to encourage adoption of vernacular styles and good design and construction methods, which achieve sustainability objectives, support the distinctive character of settlements and are appropriate to the AONB designation; BE3.1: Encourage the survey of any historically significant buildings, features within them or in the affected curtilage prior to the implementation of conversion or improvement works; and BE3.2 Encourage the provision of appropriate advice on the repair and/or alteration of existing buildings in ways that conserve and enhance local distinctiveness and respect the landscape setting.

There is clearly an effort to use local materials including local stone render and slate roof, which the committee supports.

The grounds are mature and there are a large number of trees and mature shrubs within the site, particularly situated around the boundary, with a number of large mature trees of particular note. These trees make a significant contribution to the character of the local area and should be retained and protected. The proposed renovation works and new development could have significant implications for the trees and the committee recommends that more detailed survey and assessment works are carried out in consultation with the Lancaster City Council Tree Protection Officer in order to ensure that any notable trees are protected and new planting mitigates any losses. This should include a Tree Survey in accordance with the current *BS5837: Trees in relation to construction – Recommendations*.

The planning application asserts that there would be no reasonable likelihood of any protected or priority species being affected adversely. However, the committee understands that there are records of a Pipistrelle bat roost at this location. The applicant must take account of this roost and obtain specialist advice before undertaking any work that might affect the bats or their roosting place.

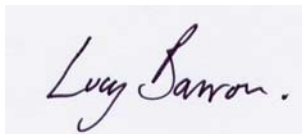
The committee supports the retention and restoration of the traditional limestone boundary wall as part of the proposed development in accordance with AONB Management Objective LR1.3: Encourage the retention and restoration of limestone walls.... None of the existing wall should be replaced by fencing.

The committee feels very strongly that the development should be in accordance with Lancaster City Council Core Strategy Policy SC1 and AONB Management Objective BE2.4: Promote high standards of energy and water efficiency and the use of renewable energy for all new and existing building development in the AONB. Encourage innovative solutions that allow the integration of energy and water efficient building and micro-generation technologies with the distinctive character of settlements.’

The committee refers the applicant to English Heritage guidance publication *Energy Conservation in Traditional Buildings* and other appropriate guidance for traditional buildings available from English Heritage available at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.18525> .

Lancaster City Council Core Strategy Policy SC3 on Rural Communities identifies Silverdale as a local service centre where an allowance of 10% of new homes can be made to accommodate development *to meet local needs in villages*. AONB Management Plan Objective C3.1 supports this and states: ‘Support the provision of affordable housing especially for young local families where need is demonstrated by a housing needs survey’, in order to promote community vibrancy and diversity. We would call upon Lancaster City Council to be convinced that the proposed development sufficiently meets this kind of local need and this should be clearly demonstrated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy Barron." The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Lucy Barron
AONB Manager