

Planning Application 19/00663, Chennell Park

This application is for a substantial proposed extension and garage block and a large equestrian complex including stable and tractor blocks and a competition arena. Together these will have a significant and harmful impact on the AONB.

I object on the basis of the following material considerations:

- The failure to comply with Government Policy including the NPPF
- Failure to comply with the requirements of the Ashford Borough Council Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents, and the High Weald AONB Management Plan
- Harm to the AONB and landscape of the stable and tractor blocks, proposed competition arena and new highway access
- The scale and density of building in particular of the garage, stable and tractor blocks which will be highly visible and incongruous in the AONB landscape
- The harmful impact on nature conservation in the AONB of the stable and tractor blocks and the proposed competition arena
- The likely negative impact on Chennell Park Road of increased traffic from the equestrian complex
- Loss of heritage

Chennell Park is one of the ancient parkland estates in the AONB surrounding Tenterden that include the Ingledon, Heronden and Morghew estates. Its open parkland and unimproved grassland are part of the unique character and setting of the AONB and have helped shape Tenterden's landscape. Parkland is identified as a key characteristic of the AONB in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

Chennell Park is a traditionally built house in need of refurbishment set in garden and historic parkland. It is highly visible, with an open aspect across the fields from the town and two popular and well used public rights of way which pass very close to the house and its garden.

In law, regard needs to be given to the statutory purpose of the AONB and to consider whether this application will 'conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the area' as required by Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and Paragraph 9.37 of the Ashford Local Plan. NPPF paragraph 172 requires that in any decision 'great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty' in the AONB.

The application proposes a significant increase in size of the original house plus a substantially bigger garage block abutting directly onto Chennell Park Road. It also proposes a new additional entrance that will cross parkland to a field gate next to PROW AB22.

A proposed new paved route inside the old garden wall leads to an in-garden development of a substantial private equestrian complex including large stable and tractor blocks that will

also be used for equestrian vehicles. These are private leisure buildings rather than agricultural buildings, serve no local or housing need, and are significant enough in scale to invite future commercial use. There are no existing buildings on the proposed site and the blocks would be highly visible, incongruous and not be absorbed by or enhance the AONB landscape. Planning permission for the erection of private stables in domestic gardens is constrained by the general restrictions which apply to outbuildings in domestic gardens and do not contemplate the scale of these blocks let alone the AONB landscape setting.

The plans reference a competition arena to be built on existing unimproved grassland in the park. The application does not include a request for approval but this should be pre-emptively rejected as arenas “can appear alien and intrusive in the natural landscape”¹.

Together the house, garage block and equestrian complex including stable and tractor blocks would add substantial new built form and a significant increase in existing footprint and mass inconsistent with an important parkland landscape within the AONB.²

Planning permission should also be rejected for the proposed new entrance and driveway given the harm this would cause to the parkland. Although Chennell Park has in the past had a second entrance this was within the domestic curtilage about 50 metres north of the proposed entrance (see attached OS maps from 1870 and 1899 showing the location of the earlier second entrance).

If approved, this application would significantly harm the AONB and parkland landscape. This is before consideration of the potential impact on residents and the potential impact on biodiversity of light, noise, services, drainage, muck heap management and pollutant run off, and the likely introduction of silica, rubber, or other foreign material in the arena.³ None of these issues are addressed as they should be in the planning application. There is also no detail of the expected volume and type of horse-related traffic which is likely to be significant.

The planning application should therefore be rejected for the following reasons:

1. **AONB:** The application does not meet the requirements for permitted development in the AONB, does not conserve and enhance the character of the AONB⁴, and does not sit sympathetically within the wider landscape.⁵
2. **Scale and impact of the equestrian complex:** The site and scale of the proposed stable and barn blocks and the competition arena will have an incongruous and intrusive visual impact on the AONB⁶, and will result in significant harm to the

¹ Local Development Framework 2014, Stables, arenas and other horse related development SPD 3.1

² Policy HOU5 iv) ALP Housing Developments outside Settlements 6.61, 6.69, 6.70, Residential Extensions 6.75, Policy HOU8 Residential Extensions

³ NPPF Paragraph 180

⁴ Policy HOU5 Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside, Policy ENV3b Landscape Character and Design in the AONBs; the council shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONBs

⁵ Policy HOU5 f i)

⁶ Local Development Framework 2014, Stables, arenas and other horse related SPD 3.1

character of the area and the wider landscape and countryside setting⁷. It will also create potential nuisance and environmental impact arising from issues relating to waste management, toxic effluence, noise, light, and air-conditioning.

3. **Biodiversity:** No ecological information has been submitted with the application despite the obvious risk to biodiversity and biodiversity habitats⁸ on the site and adjoining areas⁹. The stable block is proposed on the site of an old pond (also shown on the attached maps) which may mean that natural drainage will create particular risk to amphibians and other fauna in the important wetland area about 250 metres away.¹⁰
4. **Trees:** Chennell Park contains mature veteran trees and remnants of historic tree avenues. Some trees and hedges have already been removed (although the application says they have not) and deliberate chainsaw damage from the erection of new fencing is evident on a mature oak. I therefore request a general TPO for the whole park and specific TPOs for the following ten trees potentially at risk from the proposed building works:¹¹
 - a. The Waterloo Cyprus in the garden near the proposed stable block
 - b. A large oak and a copper beech in the lower garden near the proposed tractor block
 - c. Four oak trees by the existing main entrance
 - d. Two oak trees and a lime tree near the proposed new entrance
5. **Character of the lane and traffic:** The intrusive, overbearing and bulky visual impact of the enlarged garage¹² and increased traffic on the southern end of Chennell Park Road will harm the distinctive character and appearance of this rural lane with its mixed verges, hedges and over-hanging trees¹³ and create traffic risk.
6. **Landscape heritage:** It is possible to see the name change to Chennell Park Farm as an attempt to rebrand the land for planning purposes and undermine the protected status of Chennell Park as parkland within the AONB. As Tenterden Town Council has noted, Chennell Park is not a farm; it has been described and managed as a private park for many centuries. The loss of traditional place-names should be rejected as it diminishes our historic landscape and Tenterden's intangible heritage.

⁷ Policy HOU10 b) Development of Residential Gardens

⁸ Policy HOU10 c), Policy ENV3a Landscape Character and Design

⁹ Policy ENV1; proposals for new development should identify and seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity and retain, conserve and enhance habitats.

¹⁰ Policy ENV3 a) Landscape Character and Design; all proposals shall demonstrate regard to natural patterns of drainage

¹¹ NPPF Paragraph 175 c), ALP Protecting Important Rural Features 9.52, Policy ENV3a b)

¹² ALP Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside 6.69, 6.75

¹³ ALP Protecting Important Rural Features 9.54, Policy ENV5 Protecting Important Rural Features

1870



1899

