

**County Council Development**

**Teignbridge District: Proposed extension to the existing visitor centre with associated public external space, new workshop building, a buried water treatment plant, and alterations to the public car park**

**Location: Stover Country Park, Access to Stover Country Park, Stover, Devon**

**Applicant: Devon County Council**

**Application No: 22/01311/DCR3**

**Date application received by Devon County Council: 29 June 2022**

**Report of the Chief Planner**

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 of the report (with any subsequent minor material changes to the conditions being agreed in consultation with the Chair and Local Member).**

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report relates to the extension of the existing visitor centre at Stover Country Park with associated external space for public use, a new workshop building, an underground water treatment plant and alterations to the public car park.
- 1.2 It is considered that the main material planning considerations in the determination of the proposed development are the benefits of the Stover restoration and improvement plan weighed against the impacts upon the local landscape, biodiversity, the highway, archaeology and the historic environment.
- 1.3 The planning application, representations received and consultation responses are available to view on the Council website under reference DCC/4311/2022 or by clicking on the following link:  
<https://planning.devon.gov.uk/PlanDisp.aspx?AppNo=DCC/4311/2022>.

**2. The Proposal/Background**

- 2.1 Stover Country Park is a nationally designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), near Newton Abbot. It is a Local Nature Reserve containing 114 acres of woodland, lake and marsh, heathland, grassland, and a substantial variety of wildlife which is open to the public for recreation and educational purposes. The park is located just south east of Drumbridges roundabout off the A38 and is accessed via the A382. The closest properties

to the application site are Stover Caravan and Motorhome Club site, approximately 31 metres away at the nearest point and properties on the other side of the A382 approximately 93 metres away.

2.2 The development subject of this report forms part of 3 current planning applications that have emerged from the Stover Park - Parkland Plan (2015). Amongst a number of aspirations and actions, the plan was primarily produced to identify ways to improve the “At Risk” status of the Registered Park and Garden – due to the deteriorating condition of specific structures and the loss of key landscape features and views. It also identified ways to improve the declared “Unfavourable Condition” of the Stover Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The other applications are for the dredging of Stover Lake, which specifically focuses on improving the status of the SSSI (determined under officer delegated powers), and the reinstatement of a section of the former 18<sup>th</sup> Century Serpentine Lake (see report CET/22/49 on this committee agenda). These proposals form part of one Heritage Lottery Fund Bid that has also secured separate funding contributions from the following: Highways England; funding for the Visitor Centre from DCC; and a small contribution from Bovey Tracey and Kingsteignton Town Council's (via Teignbridge District Councils use of Community Infrastructure Levy monies).

2.3 This report refers to the category of trees to be removed as part of the proposals. Category A trees are those of the highest value being defined as, *Trees of high quality and value capable of making a significant contribution to the area for 20 or more years.*

2.4 The application comprises of several aspects. These are detailed in the following paragraphs:

#### Visitor centre extension

2.5 An extension to the existing visitor centre is proposed to remodel and expand the central space of the building as well as a new entrance foyer, toilets and storage/plant areas. The works would also extend two existing office spaces on the south (front) elevation and provide a new lobby for staff access. At the front of the building a new public external space would be created. The removal of five trees is proposed to facilitate these works including one category A Monterey Pine. Two new Monterey Pines are proposed to be planted to mitigate this.

#### Workshop building

2.6 A new workshop building is proposed to the north of the existing visitor centre, in an existing wooded area, on the junction of three paths. The workshop is proposed to accommodate up to 8 people, a rangers workshop, a drying rooms and vehicle and equipment store. To facilitate this building 16 trees are proposed to be removed. This new shed would consolidate the five existing containers and sheds around the visitors centre and therefore are proposed to be removed as part of the permission. Replacement tree planting

is proposed to the rear of the workshop building as part of the parks felling license.

#### Car park improvements & attenuation basin

- 2.7 Alterations are proposed to the public car park including improvements to the layout to provide additional spaces, upgraded accessible parking bays, coach, motorcycle and bicycle parking and a pedestrian crossing point. To facilitate these works, 18 trees are proposed to be removed including four which are Category A.
- 2.8 As part of the car park works and drainage strategy, an attenuation basin (volume of 60m<sup>3</sup>) is proposed which would require excavation. These works would also require the removal of 5 trees including one Category A tree. Replacement tree planting is proposed around the car park as part of the parks felling license.

#### Water treatment plant

- 2.9 The application also includes a buried water treatment plant, located close to the existing path to the south east of the proposed workshop, to replace the existing Cess pit. A pump chamber would be positioned adjacent to the plant to convey flows along a rising main due to the predominantly flat site.

### **3. Consultation Responses**

- 3.1 Teigngrace Parish Council: Objection raised on the grounds of lack of sufficient supporting infrastructure (parking in particular). The Parish Council deems that the proposed additional parking spaces are inadequate and that the Park is being developed as an 'attraction', without providing the infrastructure that is required to match the demand as the majority of people will drive to the site. Concerns were raised that up to 50 cars have been seen to park in the road at the rear of Stover Park which has caused congestion in Teigngrace as well as causing congestions on the A382.
- 3.2 Teignbridge District Council: No objection. Supports the proposed improvements to Stover Country Park in principle. Further consideration should be given to the extent of tree loss within a SSSI identified in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment. Supportive of measures to reduce the extent of category A and B tree loss in order that the impact of the development on existing trees is minimised in accordance with Policies EN12 (Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows) and EN9 (Important Habitats and features) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 which require development to contribute to the protection and enhancement of woodlands, trees and hedgerows and resists the loss of woodland, and healthy trees and to take account of the importance of any affected habitats or features, in this case the SSSI designation of the site. Recommend condition to secure on site habitat enhancement to mitigate the impact of development through submission of a LEMP. It is considered that retention of the existing redundant buildings

behind the visitor centre would not enhance the historic landscape and its setting and therefore their removal would be preferable.

3.3 National Highways: No objection subject to condition.

The Transport Assessment forecasts that the development is likely to result in up to a 10% increase in annual visitor numbers and associated vehicular traffic. This is reflected in the proposed 10% increase in site car parking provision, from 70 to 77 spaces. Based on the predicted scale of additional traffic National Highways is satisfied the development is unlikely to result in an unacceptable impact on the safe operation of the A38 trunk road.

To ensure that the construction phase of the development will not result in an adverse impact on the safe operation of the A38, National Highways recommends a pre-commencement planning condition to ensure the submission of a detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan.

3.4 Historic England: No objection to the application on heritage grounds.

Stover Park RPG was placed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register in 2009 due to several issues. The proposal forms part of a wider restoration plan, Restore Stover Park Project, which looks to continue the conservation, repair, and restoration of the park and its key features.

Historic England is supportive of the aspirations of the project and the proposals as part of that scope of works. It was noted that no assessment has been provided in respect of the registered park and garden, a designated heritage asset. However, due to the nature of the works and the limited impact, we do not wish to offer further detailed comment.

3.5 Natural England: No objection. Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC), South Dartmoor Woods SAC or Stover Park Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The application should be avoiding impacts on the category A and B trees where possible and provide opportunities for mitigation measures.

3.6 Devon Gardens Trust: No objection. The proposed development would have a less than substantial impact on the Grade II designed landscape of Stover Park, or the setting of any of its associated designated heritage assets. We consider that the proposed development would help to ensure a sustainable and beneficial future for the historic designed landscape.

3.7 DCC Highways: Noted the concerns expressed about the current parking situation. Based on the predicted scale of additional traffic, the Highway Authority is satisfied this won't represent a severe impact on the existing highway network. Noted that the proposed crossing point will need appropriate tactile paving and should be demarked to highlight its presence.

Additional information was requested in relation to a tracking drawing and carriageway specification. This information has subsequently been provided.

To ensure that the construction phase of the development will not result in an adverse impact on the A382, the Highway Authority recommends a pre-commencement planning condition for the submission of a detailed Construction Management Plan.

- 3.8 DCC Historic Environment: The proposal will cause less than substantial harm to the designated parkland and setting of the Listed Stover House and other Listed Buildings in its curtilage. The improved visitor facilities will enhance public access to and understanding of the historic park. Proposed changes to the planting regime in the area, associated with the Restoring Stover Park project, will enhance the Park and setting of the Listed Buildings.

The proposal is located in an area of archaeological potential containing earthworks associated with late medieval or post-medieval tin streaming as well as potential for prehistoric artefacts and palaeoenvironmental deposits. As such, the groundworks for the development, including excavations for services and drainage, have the potential to expose and destroy archaeological and artefactual deposits associated with these heritage assets. The impact of development upon the archaeological resource here should be mitigated by a programme of archaeological work that should investigate, record and analyse the archaeological evidence that will otherwise be destroyed by the proposed development. DCC Historic Environment recommends a pre-commencement condition to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work across the full site in accordance with a WSI to ensure that the archaeological works are agreed and implemented prior to any disturbance of archaeological deposits.

- 3.9 DCC Landscape: Supports the proposal in principle. The site has capacity to accommodate improvements without harming its wooded character and the quality of the natural, built and historic environment.

A key concern is the scale and type of tree loss. It is noted that efforts have been made to address the concern regarding tree loss. However, it has not been demonstrated that the design of the car park and drainage infrastructure was informed by the need to protect important trees and suggests that there is further scope to minimise impact on trees through conditions. Therefore, a series of conditions have been recommended including:

- Submission of a construction environmental management plan to include tree protection measure details and ensure impacts are mitigated during construction.
- Detailed design of the car park, attenuation basin, swale and water treatment plant to further reduce the level of tree removal.
- A landscaping scheme and landscape environmental management plan (LEMP).

- 3.10 DCC Ecology: Supports the improvements to the visitor centre and surrounding area in principle. It is noted that efforts have been made to address concerns regarding tree loss. Although, believes that there is further scope to minimise impact on important trees. Given the proposed improvements cannot be achieved without loss of some trees, a series of conditions are proposed to allow detailed design to explore further scope to minimise impacts to trees.

Potential impacts upon protected and non-protected species, specifically bats; dormice; badgers and bird were also identified. Conditions are recommended to mitigate impacts, prevent harm to species and provide ecological enhancements including through a Construction Management Measures (CEMP), repeating surveys for badgers, submission of a lighting strategy, provision of bat boxes, a LEMP and timing of vegetation clearance.

- 3.11 DCC Flood Risk: No in-principle objections to the current proposals for managing surface water however encouragement is given to the applicant to improve their existing surface water management. Conditions could be included for the detailed designs of the swale and the basin. If planning permission is granted a condition is recommended for a permanent surface water drainage strategy and surface water management strategy during construction.
- 3.12 DCC Road Safety: No comment.
- 3.13 DCC Public Health: No objection.
- 3.14 Dartmoor National Park Authority: No response received.
- 3.15 RSPB: No response received.
- 3.16 Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies: No response received.
- 3.17 Imerys Minerals LTD: No response received.
- 3.18 Sibelco UK Limited: No response received.
- 3.19 DCC Minerals Policy Team: No response received.
- 3.20 Teignbridge Environmental Health: No response received.
- 3.21 Environment Agency: Advised that as this application is a minor development, the EA are not a statutory consultee. Guidance information was provided.

#### **4. Advertisement/Representations**

- 4.1 The application was advertised in accordance with the statutory publicity arrangements by means of a site notice, notice in the press and notification of neighbours by letter. As a result of these procedures one comment has been

received from a member of the public in relation to the potential to improve the cycle parking facilities such as through the provision of a secure shelter.

## **5. Planning Policy Considerations**

- 5.1 In considering this application the County Council, as County Planning Authority, is required to have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan insofar as they are material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that where regard is to be had to the Development Plan, the determination shall be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan policies are summarised below and the most relevant are referred to in more detail in Section 6.
- 5.2 **Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033:** S1A Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development; S1 Sustainable Development Criteria; S2 Quality Development; S9 Sustainable Transport; S10 Transport Networks; S11 Pollution; S12 Tourism; S22 Countryside; WE11 Green Infrastructure ; EN2A Landscape Protection and Enhancement; EN4 Flood Risk; EN5 Heritage Assets; EN8 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement ; EN9 Important Habitats and Features; EN10 European Wildlife Sites; EN11 Legally Protected and Priority Species; EN12 Woodlands, Trees, and Hedgerows; EC12 Tourist Attractions

## **6. Comments/Issues**

- 6.1 It is considered that the main material planning considerations in the determination of the proposed development are the benefits of the Stover restoration and improvement plan weighed against the impacts of this development upon the local landscape, biodiversity, the highway, archaeology and the historic environment.

### Need & Principle

- 6.2 Stover Country Park has seen an increase in visitor pressure due to the growth of the local population as well as a higher demand for accessible open space as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In combination with Historic England placing the park 'at risk' in 2009 and Natural England declaring the SSSI as in 'unfavourable condition' in 2001, an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was submitted which included a wide range of projects including those within this application to increase the usability and attractiveness of the visitor centre and adjacent areas.
- 6.3 Stover Country Park is located outside the settlement limits of Newton Abbot and nearby villages and therefore, the site falls within what is defined as 'Countryside' in accordance with Policy S22 (Countryside) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033. This policy sets out that development here should be strictly managed to provide attractive, accessible and biodiverse landscapes, sustainable settlements and a resilient rural economy. The policy sets out a

number of limited uses which help to meet the aims including leisure and tourist uses and community facilities. It is recognised that the proposed scheme, through an improved visitors centre, provision of a community workshop building and improvements to the car park, would provide public benefits in relation to the leisure, tourism and community facility uses mentioned above and therefore the principle of the development aligns with Policy S22 (Countryside) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

- 6.4 Policy S22 (Countryside) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 also set outs that in assessing development proposals in the 'Countryside', particular account will be taken of:
- a) the distinctive characteristics and qualities of the Landscape Character Area;
  - b) the integrity of green infrastructure and biodiversity networks;
  - c) impact on overall travel patterns arising from the scale and type of development proposed; and
  - d) the need to ensure that development in the countryside does not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the South Hams SAC.
- These points will be addressed in the report below. In this case it is considered that the development would not conflict with the policy and provides benefits to those using the park for leisure, tourist and community uses.

- 6.5 Through the proposed improvements to the existing tourist attraction and indirectly, as part of the wider Stover improvements project (specifically the proposal to dredge the Stover Park's lake), this development enhances the environment of the park and seeks to increase the attractiveness of the area to visitors. Therefore, it is considered that the application aligns with Policies S12 (Tourism) and EC12 (Tourist Attractions) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

#### Design & Materials

- 6.6 An extension to the visitors centre is proposed on the east elevation of the existing building as well as 350sqm of new public external space to the front (south elevation) of the building to serve as a welcome and information point and gathering space. The proposed single storey extension would create an additional 98sqm of internal floor space.
- 6.7 The materials proposed include timber cladding to match the existing building and solid timber doors and windows. The new entrance foyer proposes a mono pitched roof with timber shingle covering to match the existing building. The remaining extension area proposes a flat roof covered with a single ply membrane.
- 6.8 The proposed extension to the visitors centre looks to open up the façade that faces the lake, by installing a transparent entrance foyer to create a more welcoming space for visitors within the centre. In addition, remodelling works are proposed to allow the central space within the building to be used more widely.



- 6.9 Policy EN9 (Important Habitats and Features) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 states that development which would likely harm a nationally important site will not be permitted unless it demonstrates a benefit to public interest which outweighs the harm, or where the benefits cannot be provided through an alternative, less harmful location, design or form of development. In relation to the location of the proposed workshop building, the Design and Access Statement sets out 5 site options which were appraised. The location proposed in this application, north of the existing visitor centre in an existing wooded area, was chosen due to its operational efficiency, security benefits, visitor use, landscape impact and compatibility with woodland management plans (planned tree thinning under their felling license to remove diseased Ash and Larch). This location is considered acceptable given the reasons specified for the other options to be discounted including: lack of utilities, remoteness, lack of security, limited space, noise impacts, access issues, larger levels of tree removal and blocking views from the visitor centre to the lake.
- 6.10 The proposed single storey workshop building consists of a community workshop, rangers workshop, drying room and vehicle and equipment store, creating an additional 183sqm of internal floor space. The materials proposed include vertical timber weatherboarding similar to the existing visitor centre and a profiled metal sheet roof covering to the pitched roof in matt brown/grey. The windows and doors are proposed as solid timber frames with a mix of boarded or glazed door panels to match existing. A garage door is also proposed on the west elevation to allow access to the vehicle store. This is proposed as a metal framed planed matched timber up and over single door in natural finish. It is recommended that submission of details in relation to the roofing colour is conditioned.
- 6.11 The application suggests that the proposed workshop building will consolidate the four containers/sheds currently located behind the visitors centre. The Stover Park Parkland Plan 2014 identifies “the slow and continuous encroachment of diverse development within the park boundary as compromising the historic integrity of the park”. It recommends “removal of inappropriate later additions to reinforce the unity and coherence of the designed landscape for the benefit of visitors”. These buildings do not enhance the historic landscape and its setting and are therefore considered inappropriate. They also do not benefit from planning permission. It is therefore recommended that a condition is imposed to ensure that these existing containers/sheds are removed once the workshop building is in place.
- 6.12 It is considered that the proposed design and materials reflect the style and materials of the existing building and fit within the parkland character. In addition, sufficient justification is made as to why the benefits cannot be provided through an alternative, less harmful location. Therefore the design and materials are in accordance with Policies S2 (Quality Development) and EN9 (Important Habitats and Features) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

## Landscape

- 6.13 The site is located within a historic Registered Park and Garden, which is legally protected. Dartmoor National Park is found just over 2km away, and the site falls within the Landscape Character Type - Lowland Plains and the Bovey Basin Devon Character Area. It is considered that there would be no impact upon the National Park during construction due to the scale of the development and the distance to the Park.
- 6.14 In total, the works set out within this application results in the removal of 44 trees, including 6 which are Category A. The applicant has made improvements to the original figure of 64 trees due to be removed through amendments to the location of the water treatment plant and configuration of the attenuation basin.
- 6.15 DCC's Landscape Officer, who supports the principle and aspiration of the scheme and welcomes the amendments made to reduce the loss of trees, still holds concerns regarding the level of tree removal proposed. In particular, it is a concern that the design of the car park and drainage infrastructure does not demonstrate consideration of the need to protect important trees and their root protection areas. Teignbridge District Council also supports measures to reduce the extent of tree loss and seeks further consideration on this issue.
- 6.16 As the development is located within a Country Park, it is accepted that tree removal is required in order to provide expansion/improvements. The project will provide public benefit, however, it is considered that there is further scope to minimise tree removal in the detailed design stage in order to reduce the impact on the Registered Park and Garden. Therefore, a pre-commencement condition is recommended to ensure that detailed design of the car park, attenuation basin, swale and water treatment plant explores further scope to minimise the impact of the development on important trees.
- 6.17 As part of this detailed design condition, an updated arboricultural impact assessment to reflect the changes to the application together with a and vegetation site clearance plan should be provided to ensure that the full level of vegetation clearance and protection measures are in place. This would help to clarify some inconsistencies within the plans and resolve issues where parts of the development, such as kerbstones, impinge on the root protection area.
- 6.18 A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) to include environmental protection measures during construction, including details about special construction methods (e.g. 'no dig' construction) should be provided to address concerns regarding damage to tree and root protection areas during excavation and building works.
- 6.19 Stover Country Park has obtained a felling license issued by the Forestry Commission. As part of this license, the area to the north of the visitor centre where the workshop is proposed to be located and the area to the west where the car park is located are subject to restocking before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2033. To

secure adequate compensation for the tree removal proposed, a condition is recommended to provide this at an earlier timescale through submission of a landscaping scheme.

- 6.20 With the recommended conditions in place, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with Policies EN2A (Landscape Protection and Enhancement), EN9 (Important Habitats and Features), EN12 (Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows) and WE11 (Green Infrastructure) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 by demonstrating public benefit which outweighs the harm of the tree removal, when taking in account the replacement planting outlined.

### Ecology

- 6.21 There are a significant number of designated and non-designated sites within and around the proposed site; of most relevance are the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the nationally designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which provides protection for both habitats as well as flora and fauna, of particular importance are dragonflies. The site is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Policy EN9 (Important Habitats and Features) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 seeks to protect these designated sites and sets out that development which would likely harm a nationally important site will not be permitted unless it demonstrates a benefit to public interest which outweighs the harm, or where the benefits cannot be provided through an alternative, less harmful location, design or form of development. In addition, the policy requires losses to be mitigated where possible and where there are any unavoidable losses, these should be fully compensated.
- 6.22 In terms of impacts upon the European designated SAC, DCC's Ecologist has deemed that the proposed development will not lead to the loss, damage, or disturbance at a landscape scale to a network of potential greater horseshoe bat commuting routes. Nor will it lead to the loss damage or disturbance to a pinch point or an existing mitigation feature. This conclusion is based on the retention of other suitable commuting habitat throughout the wider Stover site, meaning the loss of tree associated with this application is unlikely to cause landscape scale impacts. In line with the South Hams SAC Habitats Regulations Assessment Guidance document (DCC et al., 2019), and given the above, there is unlikely to be a likely significant effect on the South Hams SAC.
- 6.23 Whilst concerns have been raised about the number of trees lost as a result of this proposal it is accepted that the development cannot be achieved without loss of some trees, and given the overall benefit to the wider SSSI it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms. Notwithstanding this it is considered appropriate that a planning condition be imposed to require the applicant to explore ways to further minimise the impact on trees.

- 6.24 European Protected Species - Following surveys, the development is expected to have limited impact on roosting bats. None the less, ecological enhancements are proposed in the form of three bat boxes on the extended visitor centre and one on the workshop building. Bats were recorded using all parts of the site during the activity surveys. The car park area recorded low levels of bats, and it is not deemed an important commuting or foraging resource when compared to the wider Stover Park. The impacts from lighting should be minimised through a lighting strategy. No dormice were recorded within the habitat to be removed to facilitate this development. However, the broadleaved woodland and scattered scrub with trees/shrubs within the wider Stover site, have been confirmed to support dormice through the 2019 dormouse surveys. A precautionary method of working with regards to dormice has been proposed during construction and should be conditioned through the CEMP.
- 6.25 Impacts upon other species – no of signs of badger setts were present during the site survey however the application proposes further surveys before any works commences. The application also proposes a loss of habitats suitable of supporting nesting birds. A condition is recommended to ensure vegetation clearance occurs outside of the bird nesting season, and that further badger surveys are carried out.
- 6.26 The Design and Access Statement acknowledges that the Country Park is a non-illuminated site in order to preserve the habitat for wildlife. However, due to requirements under Building Regulations for safety and security of personnel using the premises, the application proposes the installation of emergency building mounted external luminaire. This type of light has been chosen to minimise light pollution through high efficiency LED with zero upward light ratio to ensure minimum light spill and sky pollution. In order to preserve the habitat and bat flight lines identified, a condition is recommended for submission of a lighting strategy to ensure that external lighting is kept to a minimum.
- 6.27 In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain, it is considered that the usual requirement for Devon County Council's own developments to provide 10% net gain, will not be required for this individual application. In this case, it is the view of the County Ecologist that the wider benefits as result of the application to dredge the main Stover Lake, leading to significant improvements to the status of the SSSI, would provide overall Net Gain in compensation for biodiversity losses and impacts as a result of all 3 HLF bid projects from a biodiversity perspective.
- 6.28 With the recommended conditions in place, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policies EN8 (Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement), EN9 (Important Habitats and Features), EN10 (European Wildlife Sites), EN11 (Legally Protected and Priority Species), EN12 (Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows) and WE11 (Green Infrastructure) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 by demonstrating public benefit which outweighs the harm of the tree removal, when taking in account the replacement planting outlined above.

## Highways/Parking

- 6.29 Stover Country Park is located between 2 A-roads, the A38 dual carriageway to the northwest, and the A382 which bounds and provides access to the site from the southwest via an all-movement priority junction.
- 6.30 The application proposes alterations to the car park to provide 7 additional spaces, relocation and upgrades to the existing disabled parking bays, a coach drop off and parking area, an area for motorcycle parking and a pedestrian crossing point. A covered cycle shelter is also proposed to the west of the visitor centre to accommodate 10 bikes (including e-bike charging points). In addition, two secure storage spaces are proposed for 'tramper' vehicles (all-terrain mobility scooters).
- 6.31 The Transport Statement sets out that the existing sized car park is sufficient during typical conditions however can become full during peak periods. The Statement also sets out that the proposal is considered to yield a small number of additional trips to the park (10%) per annum which correlates to the 7 additional bays proposed.
- 6.32 An objection has been raised by Teigngrace Parish Council in relation to the lack of parking provided due to concerns that many cars park at the rear of the park which causes congestion in Teigngrace as well as congestion being caused on the A382. DCC's Highway Officer has confirmed that there is no statistical evidence to demonstrate that this parking causes a hazard. Records show there has been one "slight" personal injury collision at the access to Stover Country Park, reported to/by the police between 01/01/2017 and 31/12/2021. There have been no reported personal injury collisions on Teigngrace road, in the vicinity of the Country Park, during the same period. Therefore, DCC's Highway Officer concluded that a 10% increase in annual visitor numbers and associated vehicular traffic won't represent a severe impact on the existing highway network.
- 6.33 A comment was raised by a member of the public in relation to improving the cycle parking facilities at the park through provision of a secure shelter. This should be secured through condition.
- 6.34 During the construction period, all construction and delivery vehicles are proposed to use the access via the A382. In addition, all drivers would be made aware of routes to avoid traffic congestion and nuisance to the surround area. A Traffic Management Plan is proposed to be prepared by the contractor prior to works starting on site. Although the application does include a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), National Highways and DCC's Highway Officer have recommended a condition to ensure submission of a detailed CEMP to ensure that the construction phase of the development will not result in an adverse impact on the A382.

- 6.35 With the proposed conditions in place, it is considered that the application is in accordance with Policies S1 (Sustainable Development Criteria), S9 (Sustainable Transport) and S10 (Transport Networks) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 through the promotion of cycling through provision of cycle parking including electric bike charging and a proportionate increase in car parking provision which will protect the A38 and A382 transport networks.

#### Impacts upon working and living conditions

- 6.36 Impacts would be focused around the 23 week construction phase of the development with increased noise levels from plant and machinery and vehicles visiting the site and from dust resulting from ground and construction works. General work hours have been provided with indication that it may be occasionally necessary to work outside of these. The application proposes a construction compound to the north west of the visitor centre via a separate access further north on the A382.
- 6.37 The closest residential properties to the application site are Stover Caravan and Motorhome Club site (approx. 31 metres) and properties on the other side of the A382 (approx. 93 metres).
- 6.38 During the construction period, the amenity of these neighbours could be affected, however, this will only be temporary. In addition, given the distance of to the properties beyond the A382, to the application site, it is considered that there will be limited impacts on living conditions.
- 6.39 Although a CEMP has been provided as part of this application, a condition is recommended for a detailed version to ensure that all impacts are mitigated and kept to a minimum.
- 6.40 Once the works proposed within this application have been carried out, the development is not considered to give rise to any additional harm to the living conditions of local residents. With the recommended condition in place, this application is considered to accord with Policies S1 (Sustainable Development Criteria) and S11 (Pollution) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

#### Flood Risk

- 6.41 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding. The application proposes to manage surface water runoff from the extension to the visitors centre through the use of SuDS planters to provide storage, flow control and water quality treatment. The surface water run off will then link into the existing site wide ditch system which currently serves the visitor centre and drains to the pond to the north. A drainage blanket is proposed under the new surfacing at the front of the visitor centre which will be collected and directed towards the existing ditch system.

- 6.42 The new workshop building is proposed to utilise SuDS rain gardens and planters before connecting into the adjacent ditch systems. This will limit the rates and volumes of surface water run off from the development and provide water quality treatment.
- 6.43 Due to the extension and upgrades to the car park as set out above, the application looks to provide a positive drainage system in order to manage surface water from increased impermeable surface area of the car park through an attenuation basin northeast of the existing car park. The existing area of woodland located between the A382 and car park generally slopes west to east. Therefore, a swale is proposed to intercept overland flows from the west, preventing surface water from flowing over the car park. The swale is proposed to be formed by the introduction of a shallow bund which would be achieved without the need to excavate below existing ground level and disturb existing trees. The exact alignment and details of the swale/bund are to be determined at the detailed design stage.
- 6.44 The Lead Local Flood Authority have no in-principle objections to the works proposed within this application, but do encourage improvements to their existing surface water management. A condition has been recommended to provide details for the permanent surface water drainage strategy (to include the detailed design of the swale and attenuation basin) as well as surface water management during the construction period. With this in place it is considered that the application accords with Policy EN4 (Flood Risk) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

#### Archaeology

- 6.45 The proposal is located in an area of archaeological potential. It contains earthworks associated with late medieval or post-medieval tin streaming as well as potential for prehistoric artefacts and palaeoenvironmental deposits to be exposed and destroyed during groundworks for the development, including excavations for services and drainage.
- 6.46 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological recording has been submitted, however this only relates to the parking areas and does not cover the groundworks required for electricity cabling and drainage. Therefore, impacts upon the archaeological resource here should be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work that would investigate, record, and analyse the archaeological evidence that would otherwise be destroyed by the proposed development. In this case it is recommended that this is secured through a pre-commencement condition of any grant of permission so that the development accords with paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Policy EN5 (Historic Assets) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

### Historic Environment

- 6.47 The application site falls within the Stover Estate, which is a Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden. The woodland and plantations around Stover Lake are referred to in the list description.
- 6.48 It is considered that negative impacts would likely be experienced during the 6-month construction period, from increased noise, tree loss and associated disturbance. These combined impacts are considered to result in less than substantial harm.
- 6.49 The NPPF states that great weight should be given to the conservation of historic assets and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The NPPF also states that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets (paragraph 197) and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. It also sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
- 6.50 When complete, this proposal will have a positive impact upon the Registered Park and Garden, which is currently 'at Risk' through improved woodland. The proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the designated parkland and setting of the Listed Stover House and other Listed Buildings in its curtilage. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policy EN5 (Heritage Assets) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 and paragraph 197 of the NPPF by protecting the area's heritage and enhancing the educational use of the centre.

### Other Environmental Considerations (Including Climate Change)

- 6.51 Paragraph 152 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that "the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate", while Devon County Council has declared a climate emergency and committed to facilitating the reduction of Devon's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050. The scope for individual planning applications to contribute to these initiatives will be dependent on the nature and scale of the development being proposed, and relevant considerations are outlined below.
- 6.52 The proposed works set out within this application require the removal of 44 trees which act as a mitigating measure for climate change. Their removal will result in less uptake of carbon from the atmosphere. However, the conditions set out within the report look to minimise this level of tree removal further and also includes the requirement for compensation planting/restocking which as part of the Park felling license will provide a larger number of additional trees than are being removed. The condition requests this earlier than 2033 due to the clear requirement to meet net-zero.



## Strategic Plan

- 6.53 By providing improved access and an expansion of a public education and leisure facility it is considered that the proposal will contribute to the aims of the Devon County Council Plan 2021 – 2025.

## **7. Reasons for Recommendation/Alternative Options Considered**

- 7.1 The Committee has the option of approving, deferring or refusing this planning application.
- 7.2 It is considered that the main impact of the proposed development is that due to the loss of trees. The loss of 44 trees (6 of which are Category A) is detailed in the report is a significant impact but for the development to proceed tree loss is unavoidable. The number of trees originally identified for removal has been reduced and some scope remains for further reduction. There is mitigation proposed in the form of replanting but clearly this will take several years to become effective. Considering the context of the setting of Stover Country Park, which contains 114 acres of woodland, the improvements to public accessibility offered by the scheme, the delivery of overall biodiversity improvements arising from the Restoring Stover Park project, and the control offered by the suggested planning conditions, it is considered that the planning balance is in favour of approving the application.

Mike Deaton  
Chief Planner

## **Electoral Division: Bovey Rural**

### Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Hayley Stokes **HS**

Room No: 120, County Hall

Tel No: 01392 383000

**Background Paper**  
Casework File

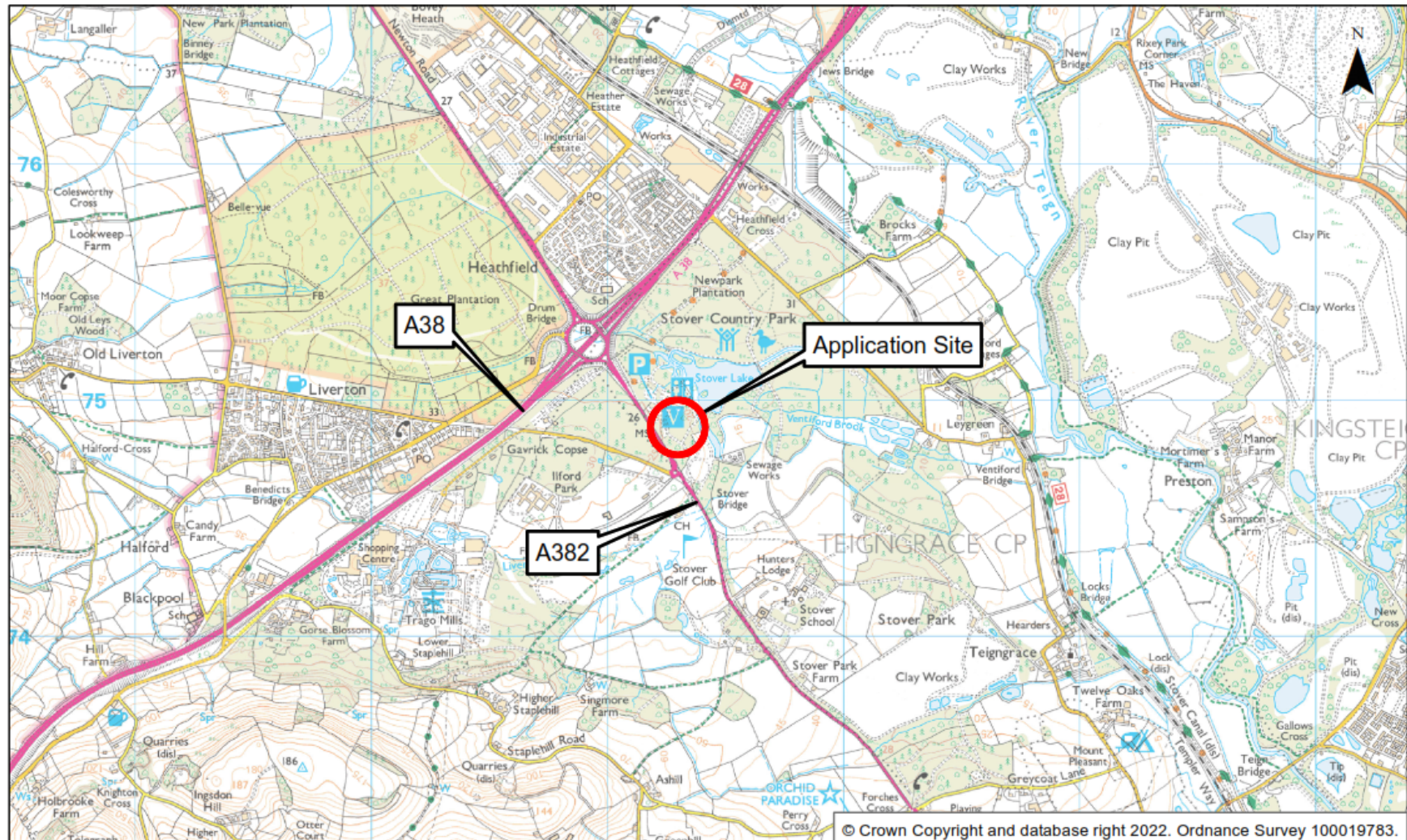
**Date**  
Current

**File Ref.**  
DCC/.../2011

ab020922dam

sc/cr/Proposed extension to the existing visitor centre Stover Country Park  
02 120922

## Location Plan



© Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey 100019783.



Climate Change,  
Environment  
and Transport

Development Management Committee

### Location Plan

County Council Development

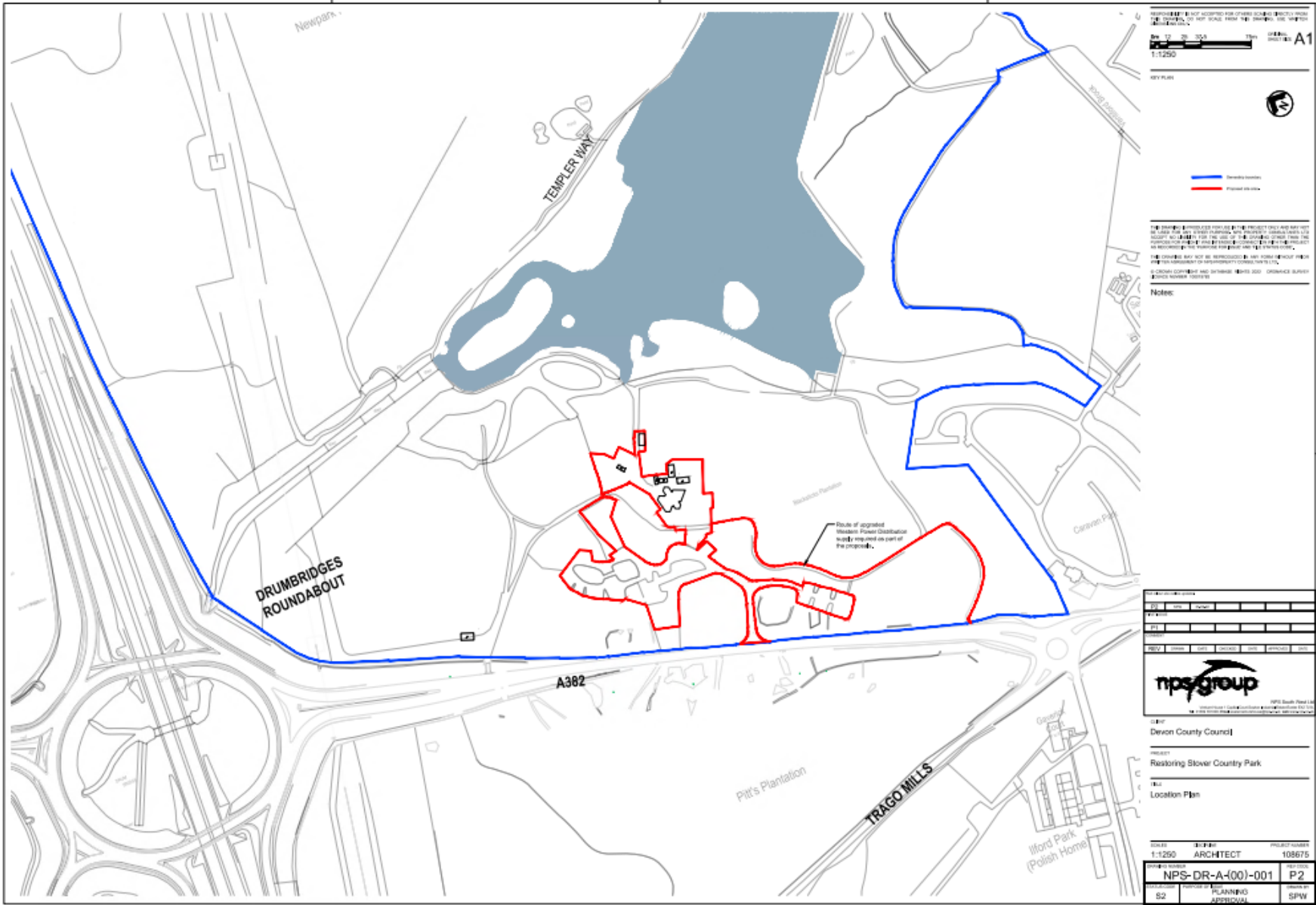
Teignbridge District Council: Extension to the existing visitor centre with associated public external space, new workshop building, a buried water treatment plant, and alterations to the public car park.  
Stover Country Park, Access To Stover Country Park, Lodge, Stover, Devon, TQ12 6QG

date  
September 2022

scale  
1:20,000

Application No:  
DCC/4311/2022  
22/01311/DCR3

# Site Plan To CET/22/50



## **Planning Conditions**

### **STANDARD COMMENCEMENT**

1. The development shall commence within three years of the date of this permission.

REASON: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### **STRICT ACCORDANCE WITH PLANS**

2. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the details shown on the approved drawings and documents numbered, except as varied by the conditions below.
  - Location Plan - NPS-DR-A-(00)-001 Rev P2
  - Block Layout Plan – Proposed – NPS-DR-A-(00)-004 Rev P6
  - Visitor Centre Expansion - Floor Plan – Proposed – NPS-DR-A-(00)-010 Rev P3
  - Visitor Centre Expansion - Roof Plan – Proposed – NPS-DR-A-(00)-017 Rev P1
  - Visitor Centre Expansion - Elevations – Proposed – NPS-DR-A-(00)-011 Rev P3
  - Proposed Building Section A-A – NPS-DR-A-(00)-005 Rev P3
  - Proposed Building Section B-B – NPS-DR-A-(00)-012 Rev P2
  - Proposed Catchment Areas – 70084248-WSP-SK002 Rev P02
  - Proposed Drainage Strategy Plan – 70084248-WSP-SK003 Rev P05
  - Preliminary Design Site Clearance – 70084248-WSP-CPI-02 Rev P04
  - Community Workshop Building – Proposed Floor Plan and Block Plan – NPS-CW-XX-DR-A-0001 Rev P6
  - Community Workshop – Proposed Elevations – NPS-CW-XX-DR-A-0002 Rev P3
  - Drainage Layout Sheet 1 of 2 – NPS-ZZ-00-DR-C-062 Rev P02
  - Drainage Layout Sheet 2 of 2 – NPS-ZZ-00-DR-C-063 Rev P04
  - Proposed Landscape Plan – Visitor Centre area – NPS-DR-L-(00)-800 Rev P3
  - Proposed Landscape Plan – Workshop area – NPS-DR-L-(00)-801 Rev P6
  - Preliminary Design – General Arrangement - 70084248-WSP-CPI-01 Rev P04
  - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Doug Pratt Tree Consultancy) dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022
  - Air Quality Assessment (Kairus Ltd) dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022



- Construction Environment Management Plan (NPS Group) dated 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- Written Scheme of Investigation (Royal Haskoning DHV) dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022
- Ecological Impact Assessment (EcoLogic) dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- Landscape & Ecology Management Plan (NPS Group) dated June 2022
- Planning Application Report/Design and Access Statement (NPS Group) dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- Supplementary Information Report dated 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022
- Addendum to Arboricultural Impact Assessment 2215/AIA (Doug Pratt Tree Consultancy) dated 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022
- Addendum to Arboricultural Impact Assessment 2215/AIA (Doug Pratt Tree Consultancy) dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022
- Surface water drainage – cut off bund/swale justification (WSP) dated 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details.

## CONDITIONS (PRE-COMMENCEMENT)

### CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

3. No development (including ground works) or vegetation clearance works shall take place until a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

The plan shall provide the following:

- a) timetable/programme of works including the anticipated length of construction for each element of the development
- b) measures for construction traffic management [including routing of construction vehicles to and from the site, details of the number, type and frequency of construction vehicles accessing the site per day for each phase, including during the AM (0800-0900) and PM (1700-1800) network peak periods]
- c) days and hours of building operations and deliveries
- d) location of loading, unloading and storage of plant and materials
- e) final location of the contractor compound and facilities
- f) Provision of temporary boundary fencing/hoarding
- g) parking of vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors.

#### Ecological and Landscape Impacts

- (h) environmental protection measures during construction, including, but not limited to, the protection measures for vegetation/trees including location and type of any temporary tree protection fencing, identification of construction exclusion zone and fencing, signage to demarcate this; areas of construction and details of 'no dig' construction within roof protection areas of trees to be protected that

- require special construction to minimise impact on tree roots; which shall be in accordance with the BS5837:2012; precautionary measures to prevent harm to dormice;
- (i) timing and methods of all vegetation clearance; including no vegetation clearance to take place during the bird nesting season (01 March to 31 August, inclusive) unless the developer has been advised by a suitably qualified ecologist that the clearance will not disturb nesting birds and a record of this kept.
  - j) **Air Quality Impacts**  
measures to monitor and control the emission of dust and mud during construction, including any wheel washing facilities
  - k) **Waste Management**  
Recycling during construction
  - l) **Drainage**  
Detailed proposals for the management of surface water and silt runoff from the site during construction

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: To ensure adequate access and associated facilities are available for the construction traffic and to minimise the impact of construction on nearby residents, the local highway network and trees/vegetation in the interests of visual amenity and nature conservation, in accordance with Policies S1 (Sustainable Development Criteria), S10 (Transport Networks), S11 (Pollution) and EN12 (Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 and paragraph 174 of the NPPF and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

#### ECOLOGY

4. Prior to the commencement of any site works, a repeat survey for the presence of badgers on the site and surrounding suitable habitat, with associated mitigation/compensation measures, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Site works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved survey and any associated mitigation/compensation measures required.

REASON: To minimise the impacts on protected species in accordance with Policy EN9 (Important Habitats and Features) of the Teignbridge Local Plan and paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

## DETAILED DESIGN

5. No development shall take place (including groundworks) until detailed designs of the car park, attenuation basin, swale and water treatment plant as shown on the Proposed Drainage Strategy Plan (70084248-WSP-SK003 Rev P05), Drainage Layout Sheet 2 of 2 (NPS-ZZ-00-DR-C-063 Rev P04) and Preliminary Design – General Arrangement (70084248-WSP-CPI-01 Rev P04) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. An updated arboricultural impact assessment and vegetation site clearance plan, taking into account the proposed changes, should also be submitted and approved by the County Planning Authority. The updated plans and documents should reduce the number of trees affected/removed by the development.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

REASON: In order to minimise the level of tree removal within the Registered Park and Garden and SSSI in accordance with Policies EN8 (Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement), EN9 (Important Habitats and Features) and EN12 (Woodlands, Trees, and Hedgerows) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

## DETAILS OF MATERIALS

6. No development shall take place until details of the community workshop building roofing material and colour as indicated on the Community Workshop – Proposed Elevations plan (NPS-CW-XX-DR-A-0002 P3) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure the development is in keeping with the character and appearance of the Park in accordance with Policy S2 (Quality Development) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

## LANDSCAPING SCHEME

7. No development shall take place until a Landscaping Scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The scheme shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a) schedules of tree, plants/grass, giving species, planting sizes and proposed numbers and densities;
  - b) written specifications, including methods for establishing and protecting new vegetation during a 5 year maintenance period;
  - c) detailed layout and construction details of all roads, parking areas, visitor entrance and details of hard surfacing's, edgings and kerbs;
  - d) details regarding any permanent structures, including furniture and signage

The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. The timetable to implement the landscaping shall be agreed with the County Planning Authority.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. The approved scheme shall be maintained for a minimum period of five years. Any tree, plant or grassed area, or any replacement of it, that is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies within five years of the date of planting or seeding shall be replaced with the same or similar species in the same location.

REASON: To protect the character and appearance of the Registered Park and Garden and SSSI in accordance with Policies EN8 (Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement), EN9 (Important Habitats and Features) and EN12 (Woodlands, Trees, and Hedgerows) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

## LANDSCAPE

8. No development shall take place until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

The LEMP shall include:

- a) details of habitat creation and management
- b) treatment and retention of existing landscape features including trees and hedgerows

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved LEMP. Planting and landscaping shall be maintained.

REASON: To ensure that protected species, habitats and the local landscape are conserved and enhanced in accordance with Policies EN2A (Landscape Protection and Enhancement); EN8 (Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement); EN9 (Important Habitats and Features); EN10 (European Wildlife Sites); EN11 (Legally Protected and Priority Species) EN12 (Woodlands, trees and hedgerows); WE11 (Green infrastructure); and S2 (Quality development) of the Teignbridge Local Plan.

## ARCHEOLOGY

9. No development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an updated written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The WSI shall include test-pitting and a suitable programme of work as taking the form of the archaeological monitoring of certain groundworks associated with the proposed development to allow for the identification, investigation and



recording of any exposed archaeological, artefactual and palaeoenvironmental deposits. The results of the fieldwork and any post-excavation analysis undertaken would need to be presented in an appropriately detailed and illustrated report, and any finds and archive deposited in accordance with relevant national and local guidelines.

The development shall be carried out at all times in accordance with the approved scheme as agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

REASON: 'To ensure, in accordance with paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and the supporting text in paragraph 5.17 of the Teignbridge Local Plan Policy EN5 (adopted 2013), that an appropriate record is made of archaeological evidence that may be affected by the development.

## DRAINAGE

10. No development shall commence until the following drainage information has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

(a) A detailed drainage design which demonstrates an improvement to the existing management of surface water.

(b) Proposals for the adoption and maintenance of the permanent surface water drainage system.

(c) A plan indicating how exceedance flows will be safely managed at the site.

REASON: To ensure the proposed surface water drainage system will operate effectively and will not cause an increase in flood risk either on the site, adjacent land or downstream in line with SuDS for Devon Guidance (2017) and national policies, including NPPF and PPG.

## SECURE CYCLE PARKING

11. Prior to the occupation of the extension to the Visitor Centre the secure cycle parking, as indicated on the Visitor Centre Expansion – Floor Plan – Proposed (NPS-DR-A-(00)-010 Rev P3), shall be provided in accordance with a detailed scheme that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

REASON: To improve the cycle parking facilities at the Park in order to promote cycling/sustainable travel to the facility, in accordance with Policies S1 (Sustainable Development Criteria) and S9 (Sustainable Transport) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.

## LIGHTING

12. Prior to the installation of any new external lighting a lighting strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The external lighting shall be provided only in accordance with the approved strategy or such alternative scheme that might be subsequently agreed by the County Planning Authority.

REASON: To minimise the visual impact of the site on the surrounding landscape and limit impacts upon protected species, in accordance with policies EN2A (Landscape Protection and Enhancement); EN8 (Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement); EN9 (Important Habitats and Features); EN10 (European Wildlife Sites); EN11 (Legally Protected and Priority Species) of the Teignbridge Local Plan.

## CONDITIONS (OPERATIONAL)

### REMOVAL OF ANCILLARY SHEDS/CONTAINERS

13. Within one month of first use of the workshop building, the five existing containers/sheds shown in red on the Block Layout Plan – Proposed (NPS-DR-A-(00)-004 P6) shall be removed from the site, and the County Planning Authority shall be notified in writing when this has taken place.

REASON: To enhance the character of the built and natural environment of the Park and respond to the context of the surrounding area in accordance with Policies S2 (Quality Development) and EN2A (Landscape Protection and Enhancement) of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033.