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Gina Wynter
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8 January 2024

Dear Ms Wynter

Orchard Farm Defford Road, Pershore, WR10 3BX
Planning Ref: W/23/02112/OUT
DBS326

Thank you for forwarding the Natural England Letter of 30 November to Wychavon District Council (NE Ref 456640). Regarding Natural England's comments on the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) report made on page 6 of this letter, I would like to respond to the six bullet points in turn.

- *Name and qualifications of the ALC surveyor*
The ALC report notes that it has been prepared by 'Daniel Baird Soil Consultancy Limited'. The assessment work, as with all Daniel Baird Soil Consultancy Limited work, was undertaken by Daniel Baird M.I. Soil Sci., BSc. Soil and Land Resources, MSc. Land Resource Management, ALC specialist since 1992, former ADAS Statutory ALC surveyor (Leeds Resource Planning Team).
- *Depth to Slowly Permeable Layer (SPL)*
In the ALC report table of data, horizons that are Slowly Permeable are noted SP. Slowly permeable horizons are found starting at a depth of between 20 and 30 cm below the surface.
- *Sampling Methodology*
Paragraph 6 describes the sampling methodology, sample points placed at 100m intersections of the OS grid. The field survey data at the end of the report also gives a grid reference for each sample point, recorded in field by GPS, giving a location to 1m. This paragraph also notes that some sample points had to be omitted because a very large number of horses were in the field and their behaviour was presenting a serious risk of injury. Survey density is therefore approximately one per hectare (Detailed ALC) for the

majority of the site, and reduced for the horse field (semi detailed ALC). There is no ambiguity regarding sample point locations and an additional plan is not required.

- *Pit Photo*

I do not have a photo of the pit, but have given a description of the subsoil structural conditions that supports the ALC assessment. Photographs of auger boring locations would serve no practical purpose.

- *Table 1 Data*

As Natural England correctly note, data in Table 1 of the report had been transposed. FCD should be 132. MD Wheat 109 and MD Potato 102. The ALC grading has been made on the basis of the correct figures (as per the ALC report paragraph 22). I have provided you with an updated report correcting the transposition in Table 1.

- *ALC Colour Key*

The ALC report plan gives a key and the colours used broadly follow the standard Natural England convention for mapping ALC grades (dark blue for Grade 1, light blue for grade 2, dark green for Grade 3a and light green for Grade 3b. Yellow and Brown for Grades 4 and 5). The plan is not ambiguous and the ALC Grade distribution at the site is clear.

As can be seen from the sample point locations, there is a missing row of sample points in a single field. It was necessary to leave the field before completing these sample points as the behaviour of the horses and ponies in the field (in excess of thirty by my estimation) was becoming increasingly dangerous with repeated, massed mock charges. For this field the sample point density gives a semi-detailed survey, lower than that for a detailed ALC assessment provided for the majority of the site.

A return to field is not considered necessary as no best and most versatile land has been found at any other part of the site, the field contains land disturbed by a former farmyard and farm buildings, and we have sample points to the north and south of each of the omitted points. The existing assessment is clear that all agricultural land within the site is ALC Grade 3b.

A revised report has been provided correcting the transposition of data in Table 1. As noted by Natural England the assessment of ALC grade presented in the report was not impacted by the transposition in Table 1.

I trust that with the revised report and this letter addressing their points, Natural England should have no more questions regarding the ALC assessment finding Grade 3b agricultural land.

Kind Regards



Daniel Baird M.I. Soil Sci.