



Forestry Commission
South East England Conservancy
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21 July 2006

Our Ref: EIA019900234

Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999:

Jeskyns Farm

Following submission of plans to carry out afforestation on part of the 147 hectares of Jeskyns Farm, Cobham, Kent the Forestry Commission (South East England Conservancy – the Regulatory arm of the Forestry Commission) requested the applicant to prepare an Environmental Statement in connection with their application. This falls under the Environmental Impact (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. The application is from the Thames Chase Team, Forest Enterprise (which is the Forestry Commission's land management agency).

The Forestry Commission has now considered the application and the information provided in the Environmental Statement. Comments following widespread consultation have also been considered. The Forestry Commission has now decided to give consent for the proposals subject to the following conditions:

- (a) *The work must be started between the 21 July 2006 and 21 July 2011;*
- (b) *No work shall be carried out after 21 July 2016;*
- (c) *Afforestation should be carried out only on the areas outlined on the plan attached at Appendix 1 (note: this is a revised version of that enclosed in the Environmental Statement and includes further changes which the applicant has proposed in the light of comments received during consultation).*
- (d) *Signage should be designed to discourage access via the village of Cobham. A plan for signposting access to the site will be agreed with the highways authorities to direct access to the site via the Henhurst Lane junction from the A2. A plan is to be agreed and implemented (subject to the realignment of the A2) before the site is formally opened to the public. All promotional literature pertaining to the site is to reinforce this principle.*
- (e) *As outlined in the application, a site management plan should be prepared for the site following the best practice outlined by the Green Flag Award. This should be completed by end March 2008 and reviewed at least every two years.*
- (f) *The habitat mix for the site should be extended to include an area (of at least 4 hectares) to be managed to provide key winter feeding for farmland birds which should include provision for the large seeds (such as barley) needed by corn buntings. The most suitable location appears to be the area west of Henhurst Road (area identified for condition (f) on the plan included at appendix 1), but, alternative locations are acceptable if agreed with farmland bird specialists and the Conservator.*
- (g) *In constructing the 'hard features' outlined in the proposals:*

- *Layout will follow the plan, subject to changes outlined in the annotations, shown in Appendix 1;*
- *Porous surfaces are used on all paths and tracks except the car park;*
- *Soil stripping is minimised but where inevitable this is relocated avoiding the mixing of top and sub soils; and*
- *The detailed design of hard surfaces and water features are agreed with the Environment Agency.*

(h) In preparing the site management plan the applicant considers management regimes, site signage, orchard layout and hard track designs which seek to minimise the perception of a country park and emphasise the agricultural character of the area.

(i) That the Phased Archaeological Evaluation Strategy agreed with Kent County Council is implemented and adhered to during the establishment and management of the site.

(j) The management of public access, including dogs, to minimise wildlife disturbance is considered in detail in the Management Plan for the site

(k) That the applicant works closely with neighbouring landowners to encourage and manage informal access to the rural environment and in particular to establish safe pedestrian and cycle access from southern Gravesend.

Appeals against the granting of this consent must be made to the High Court with a copy to the Conservator within 6 weeks of 21 July, the date we will publish details of our decision in local newspapers.

Alan Betts - Conservator
Forestry Commission – South East England Conservancy

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Jeskyns Design Plan.

Appendix 2: Summary of the reasons for the Forestry Commission's decision to give consent.

Appendix 3: Jeskyns Supplementary Statement: Applicants response to issues raised during consultation.

Copies of this document, the application, Environmental Statement and further information about the Jeskyns Project can be found on: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/northkent>

Further details about the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations on the Forestry Commission's website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6DFKBC>

Details of the Green Flag Award can be found on: <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/>