



Department for Communities and Local Government

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Please ask for: John Oakes
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Your ref: 0808/258456-1
Our ref: NPCU/EIASCR/ B1415/75300
Date: 8 June 2015

Dear Mr Frisby,

**Request for a Screening Direction
Proposed Residential Development, Land at former St. Leonards
Academy, Darwell Close, St. Leonards on Sea, TN38 9JP**

I refer to your letter, dated 20 March 2015, made pursuant to regulation 5(7) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/1824) ("the 2011 Regulations"), for the Secretary of State's screening direction on the matter of whether or not the development referred to above is 'EIA development' within the meaning of the 2011 Regulations.

The development proposed, residential development up to 210 dwellings at the former St. Leonards Academy, Darwell Close, St. Leonards on Sea, falls within the description at paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 to the 2011 Regulations. Since the proposal exceeds the threshold in column 2 of the table in Schedule 2 to the 2011 Regulations, the Secretary of State considers your client's proposal to be 'Schedule 2 development' within the meaning of the 2011 Regulations.

In the opinion of the Secretary of State having taken into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the 2011 Regulations, the proposal would **not** be likely to have significant effects on the environment, because of its nature, size and location having regard to the following points.

The proposal is for up to 210 dwellings on 9.5ha of land. The site lies on the western edge of Hastings on land that formerly comprised the buildings and grounds of St. Leonards Academy. It is noted that the site is a proposed allocation for residential development in the Hastings Development Plan Revised Proposed Submission Version 2014 and that this plan is well advanced but not yet finally adopted.

The Secretary of State has assessed all the evidence in this case and notes that the site is not within a sensitive area as defined by the Regulations and it is not protected under international or national legislation for its ecological, landscape, cultural or other value. He notes however, that the Combe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies close to the edge of the site and that the site is also adjacent to the Wishing Tree Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and Ancient Woodland known as Dogkennel Wood.

Whilst there will inevitably be some local impacts, including impacts on the ecological features referred to above, any adverse effects, even at their highest, are not likely to be significant for a residential development of this scale and nature. The Secretary of State believes any impacts would be likely to remain strictly local, and, within the context of this predominantly urban setting, the construction of an additional 210 dwellings would not be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

The Secretary of State has also considered any other potential environmental impacts from this proposal and believes there are no other likely significant effects in this case, (including potential heritage, visual, highways and flood risk effects) in this specific location, that either in isolation, or in combination with the above factors, would necessitate EIA. EIA is therefore not required.

Accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by the 2011 Regulations the Secretary of State hereby directs that the proposed development described in your request and the documents submitted with it, is **not** 'EIA development' within the meaning of the Regulations. Any permitted development rights which your proposal may enjoy under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (SI 418) are therefore unaffected.

You should take steps to ensure that this screening direction is placed on the Planning Register in compliance with the 2011 Regulations. I would be grateful if you could do so to ensure that the Secretary of State's view is publicly available.

You will bear in mind that the Secretary of State's opinion on the likelihood of the development having significant environmental effects is reached only for the purposes of this direction.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sam Batchelor at Hastings Borough Council, for his information.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Oakes BSc DipTP MRTPI
Senior Planning Manager
(With the authority of the Secretary of State)