

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
200323	14/05/2020	St Nicholas, Hurst	Hurst

Applicant	Ashridge Manor Garden Centre
Site Address	Ashridge Manor Garden Centre, Forest Road, Binfield, RG40 5QY
Proposal	Full planning application for the erection of a single storey extension to the sales area to include 2No roller doors and 2No security doors.
Type	Full
PS Category	21
Officer	Brian O'Donovan
Reason for determination by committee	Major application

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 13 May 2020
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY
<p>The application is before Committee as the application site measures an area of 3.74 hectares and therefore is within the Major Application site area threshold.</p> <p>The proposal for the erection of a single storey extension to the sales area to Ashridge Manor Garden Centre (including 2 No roller doors and 2 No security doors) is considered to be acceptable in principle and would not have a detrimental impact upon the character, appearance or openness of the countryside and would contribute positively to a sustainable rural enterprise. It has been demonstrated that no part of the development would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, upon highway safety and parking provision, biodiversity or trees/landscape. It is therefore recommended that this application is approved as it would accord with the NPPF and development plan policies for Wokingham Borough.</p>

PLANNING STATUS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Route • Countryside Location • Landscape Character Assessment • SSSI Impact Risk Zones • Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area Mitigation Zone (5-7km buffer)

RECOMMENDATION
<p>That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to</p> <p>A. Conditions and informative:</p> <p>1. Timescale</p> <p>The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p>

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Approved Plans

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered MLP/01, MLP/02, 12083 – 02, 12084 – 02 and 12085 - 02 received by the local planning authority on 07/02/2020. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. External Materials

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall be of a similar appearance to those used in the existing building unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

4. Garden Centre Use

No goods shall be sold from the extension other than agricultural, horticultural, forestry produce and other goods associated with domestic garden use, gardening and garden maintenance only. No other goods shall be sold, repaired or maintained in the approved structure.

Reason: The site is located in the countryside outside of the defined settlement and the restriction of goods sold is in order to ensure that the development does not lead to loss of or impact on the viability of existing local centres and shops in the locality. Relevant policy: Policy TB18 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

Informative:

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
160345	Full planning application for the erection of new building to provide retail space following demolition of existing building.	Approved 28.04.16
142759	Proposed erection of new building to provide retail floor space and replacement storage following demolition of existing storage buildings and terrapin.	Approved 05/12/14

F/2014/0372	Application for retention of maintenance building	Approved 14/04/14
CLE/2013/2548	Certificate for Lawful Development of land for parking and maintenance of coaches	Approved 03/02/14
F/2002/7332	Proposed erection of canopy over farm shop and sales area	Approved 17/10/02
F/1998/67212	Proposed change of use from farm to garden centre	Approved 19/05/98

CONSULTATION RESPONSES		
WBC Biodiversity		No objection
WBC Highways		No objection
WBC Tree & Landscape		No objection

REPRESENTATIONS		
St Nicholas Hurst Parish Council: No objection		
Local Members: No comments received		
Neighbours: No comments received		

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP11	Proposals outside development limits (including countryside)
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC07	Parking
	CC08	Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB18	Garden Centres and Other Small Rural Units Outside Development Limits

	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide – Section 4

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. The proposal is for the erection of a single storey extension to the sales area (including two roller doors and two security doors) to Ashridge Manor Garden Centre. The proposal is for a 5.2m deep extension to the southern elevation of the sales area to the Garden Centre. The proposal would create an additional 401sqm of floorspace. The proposal would integrate with the existing pitched roof form, including a continuation of the existing eaves and ridge height. The proposal is to be constructed in profiled sheet steel to match the existing materials to the premises.

Principle of Development:

2. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise
3. The application site is outside of any defined settlement boundaries and is located within the countryside. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states in order to protect the separate identity of the settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposal outside of the development limits will not normally be permitted except where:
 - It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and
 - It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion away from the original buildings; and
 - It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement
4. The application site is an established garden centre and it is considered that the proposal would contribute to a sustainable rural enterprise. The proposed extension will be set within the existing coalescence of buildings on the application site. The proposal would extend from the southern elevation of the sales area building which was approved under application Ref. 160345.
5. Policy TB18 of the MDD Local Plan states that planning permission for the establishment or expansion of retail development outside development limits may be permitted where they demonstrate that
 - The proposal is connected to or adjacent to the primary holding

- The proposal is economically related to the primary holding and is ancillary to the primary existing use
- There would be no adverse impact on the vitality or viability of retail centres, neighbourhood or village shops within the locality

6. The use of the proposed extension is connected to the primary use of the garden centre, proposing to extend the existing sales area. The existing holding currently operates as a garden centre and therefore sells garden centre products. Thus, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the vitality or viability of nearby garden centres. A condition is to be imposed to ensure that the proposed use of the extension remains related to the garden centre use.
7. Therefore it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable subject to the material considerations set out below.

Character of the Area:

8. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is 'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design' and contributes 'to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings, including the use of appropriate landscaping'. The supporting text to policy CP3 also sets out that development should be of a high standard of design that can integrate with the character of the area as this is important to achieving sustainable development.
9. The application site is located within the countryside and consists of a number of commercial uses within the wider site. The proposed development would be for an extension to Ashridge Manor Garden Centre. The proposal is for an extension to the southern elevation of the sales area building which was approved Ref. 160345. This building was constructed to replace a previously demolished building and measures a floorspace of 2415sqm. It is a single storey metal clad utilitarian barn style building which includes a shallow pitched roof with a ridge height of 5.8m
10. The proposal is for an extension to the southern elevation of the aforementioned sales area structure. The proposed extension is to measure a depth of 5.2m and would extend across the full width of the existing southern elevation of the sales area building. The proposal is to integrate with the existing building type and roof form and would see a continuation of the existing ridge-line and is to be constructed in materials to match the existing. The proposal would create an additional 401sqm of floorspace to the sales area.
11. It is considered that the proposal would integrate seamlessly with the existing structure and would be a modest addition to the existing structure given the comparable floor spaces. The proposal is to be located within a coalescence of other buildings, is well contained within the application site and wider site and will not be prominent from any distant view. The roller shutters and security would also integrate with the host building to an acceptable degree. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the application site and surrounding area. The application is considered to adhere to Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Residential Amenities:

12. The proposed extension is not located within close proximity to any residential properties. Therefore, there are no concerns in relation to any potential impacts upon residential amenity to surrounding properties.

Highways/Pedestrian Safety and Parking Provision:

13. The proposed extension is to the existing sales area of the Garden Centre would not lead to the loss of any of the existing car parking provision for the application site. Highways Officers have reviewed the proposal and they have no concerns in relation to the proposal's impact upon the current level of parking provision, nor have they any concerns in relation to highway/pedestrian safety.

Flooding and Drainage:

14. The application site is located within flood zone 1. There are no areas in close proximity to the proposed extension which are at high risk of surface water flooding. Thus, it is considered that the proposed extension is acceptable in relation to drainage and flood risk.

Landscape and Trees:

15. There are no TPO's within or within close proximity to the application site. WBC Landscape and Tree Officers have reviewed the proposal and they have outlined that they have no objections. Thus, there are no concerns in relation to landscape and tree matters.

Ecology:

16. The host building is a metal framed building which is located within the wider garden centre and it is surrounded on all sides by hardstanding. The application site is within a habitat where bat roosts have previously been identified within the borough. However, WBC Ecology Officers have reviewed the proposal and have outlined that the host building is very unlikely to be suitable for use by roosting bats whilst the wider site is of low ecological value as it is predominantly comprised of hardstanding. Therefore, since bats and other protected species are unlikely to be affected by the proposed there are no concerns on ecological grounds.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

CONCLUSION

The proposed extension is considered to be acceptable in principle and would not have a detrimental impact upon the character, appearance or openness of the countryside and would contribute positively to a sustainable rural enterprise. The proposed development would adhere to Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB18 of the MDD Local Plan and the NPPF. Therefore, the proposal is recommend for approval subject to conditions.

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