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App No : 17/05605/FUL App Type : FUL

Application for : Partial demolition of an existing building and erection of extension to an existing workshop and erection of a new workshop building. Change of use of former training area to offices with associated alterations to fenestration/doors and part removal to create drive through with creation of 4 additional parking space serving new offices

At Timber Yard, Main Road, Walters Ash, Buckinghamshire

Date Received : 07/03/17 Applicant : Mr M Bryant

Target date for decision: 02/05/17

1. **Summary**

- 1.1. Permission is sought for the conversion of an existing building to office use, the extension of an existing building to provide further office space, and the erection of a detached workshop building. It is also proposed to remove part of an existing building to be demolished.
- 1.2. The proposed development is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It is acceptable in design terms and would not have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area or the amenities of surrounding properties, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. The application is therefore recommended for permission.

2. **The Application**

- 2.1. In 2014 permission was granted for the change of use of the majority of the site of a commercial riding establishment to a storage and distribution use for a business which supplies landscaping and fencing materials. The site area for that application did not include all of the equestrian buildings and land, although the remaining land associated with the former equestrian use was in the applicant's ownership.
- 2.2. The current application seeks permission for an extension for an office and a new workshop in conjunction with the existing storage and distribution use on land that was included in the 2012 application. The current application also includes an additional building, courtyard and parking area which was outside the original application site. It is proposed to convert the building to an office use. The agent has confirmed that, initially this office use is to be ancillary to the existing business using the wider site.
- 2.3. The building to be converted is a single storey building which was originally faced in brick but has more recently been clad in timber. The conversion would alter doors and windows and also create a covered passageway into the internal courtyard between this and one of the storage buildings. The office extension would add a section 5 x 8.5 metres onto the end of an existing brick building which is used in conjunction with the storage use. It would be clad in timber.
- 2.4. A detached workshop measuring 16 x 6 metres, with a mono-pitch roof with low eaves of 3 metres and high eaves of 3.6 metres, is proposed to the east of the existing yard. It would be a timber clad building.
- 2.5. The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Planning Statement
- 2.6. The agent has clarified that, the proposed offices created through the conversion are

to be used in connection with the existing storage and distribution use, not as a separate independent unit. However, in the long term the applicant wishes to retain the flexibility for the building to be occupied separately.

3. Working with the applicant/agent

3.1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Wycombe District Council (WDC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service,
- as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions, and,
- by adhering to the requirements of the Planning & Sustainability Customer Charter

3.2. In this instance

- the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit,
- The agent was asked to clarify the proposed use of the office conversion.
- The application was dealt with/approved without delay.
- The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

4. Relevant Planning History

4.1. 12/07953/FUL - Change of use of land and buildings from commercial riding establishment (school/livery) to storage & distribution of landscaping & fencing materials; increase in height of rear boundary wall to 2.4 m and landscaping. Permitted subject to planning obligation.

5. Issues and Policy considerations

Principle and Location of Development

ALP: GB2 (Green Belt), C7 (Re-use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Countryside)

CSDPD: CS1 (Overarching principles - sustainable development), CS2 (Main principles for location of development)

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)

Wycombe District Local Plan Regulation 19 Version (October 2017): CP1 (Sustainable Development), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation), DM42 (Managing Development in the Green Belt), DM45 (Conversion of Existing Buildings in the Green Belt and Other Rural Areas)

5.1. The site is located in the Green Belt and Chilterns AONB. There are three elements to the current proposals; the conversion of an existing building to office accommodation; the extension of an existing building to provide additional office space; the construction of a detached workshop building. The principle of the various elements must be assessed against both local and national policy.

5.2. The proposed office conversion would re-use an existing single storey building which was originally part of the riding school. This building, along with the enclosed courtyard to its west, and the area immediately to the south and east, did not form part of the application site in the 2012 application. The re-use of existing buildings, of a permanent and substantial construction, for alternative purposes, is in line with both national and local policy (the latter giving preference to employment generating uses). Therefore in principle this element of the application is acceptable.

5.3. It is the applicant's intention to use the converted office space in connection with the existing landscape supply business operating from the wider site. However, the agent has confirmed that in the long term the applicant wishes to retain the flexibility

for this to be occupied separately and would not wish to see a condition restricting its occupation. Given that it did not form part of the application site in 2012, that conversion complies with the relevant local and national policies on re-use of building, and that the building can be accessed separately from the main yard, a restrictive condition would not be reasonable in this instance.

- 5.4. The extension would be a relatively modest addition of 42.5 square metres to provide further office accommodation ancillary to the storage and distribution use. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the extension or alteration of a building is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original size of the building. In this instance the scale of the extension is not disproportionate to the original single storey brick building, or in the context of the wider site, and as such is acceptable in principle.
- 5.5. The same paragraph of the NPPF also states that the limited infilling or partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development is not inappropriate.
- 5.6. The plans indicate that part of the existing building to the west would be removed. This is the end section of the former stable building which sits in the centre of the site and runs roughly north to south. Subject to the removal of this end of the building the erection of the new workshop building would not result in an increase in either footprint or volume of building on the site and as such would not have any significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt and is therefore judged to be acceptable in principle.

Transport matters and parking

ALP: T2 (On – site parking and servicing),

CSDPD: CS16 (Transport), CS20

Draft New Local Plan: DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

- 5.7. The site is served by an existing access which has now been upgraded to the required specification in accordance with the requirements of the 2014 permission. The main traffic movements associated with the existing use are large delivery lorries bringing goods to the site, then delivery lorries taking smaller loads from the site for delivery to customers. In addition there are movements associated with staff arriving and leaving the site at the beginning and end of the working day.
- 5.8. The proposed conversion, extension and workshop would provide additional accommodation for the existing business, primarily for staff to work at the site. This would therefore result in some additional traffic movement to and from the site. The Highway Authority was consulted on the application and has not raised any objection in terms of traffic generation, either in terms of intensification of the use of the access, or the increase in traffic on the highway network. Reference back to the 2012 application indicates that the B8 use resulted in a reduction in traffic movements compared to the previous riding establishment use, and as such a refusal on traffic impact grounds would be difficult to substantiate.
- 5.9. Given the removal of part of the existing building the workshop and office extension are not considered to require the provision of additional parking. The office conversion is shown to be provided with four spaces, and the alterations to the building also provide for a covered access through to the internal courtyard which has potential to provide additional parking space. A pure B1 office use would require the provision of 5 spaces and as such there is sufficient space available within the site for parking in connection with the conversion.
- 5.10. The main yard is gated, however the access to the parking area for the converted building is between the main entrance and the gates and there would therefore be no impediment to accessing this parking area if the office conversion was occupied

independently.

Raising the quality of place making and design, Landscape and visual Impact

ALP: G3 (General design policy), G8 (Detailed Design Guidance and Local Amenity), G10 (Landscaping), L1 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), C7 (Re-use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Countryside)

CSDPD: CS17 (Environmental Assets), CS19 (Raising the quality of place shaping and design)

Draft New Local Plan: CP9 (Sense of place), DM30 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), DM35 (Placemaking and design quality)

- 5.11. The former training / lecture theatre area is a single storey timber clad building with timber windows and a felt roof. The proposed conversion entails alterations to the fenestration and cladding of the exterior of the existing building in timber. The works retain the character of the existing building and would not have any adverse impact on the character of the area.
- 5.12. The office extension would be an addition to an existing functional brick building and is proposed to be clad in timber boarding. It would have a similar height and roof profile to the existing brick building and the use of timber cladding is in keeping with both rural outbuildings generally and the appearance of other buildings on the site. There is no objection in design terms to the extension.
- 5.13. The proposed workshop would be 6 x 16 metres with a mono-pitch roof, with low eaves to the rear (facing the main road) 3 metres high and 3.6 metres to the front (facing into the site). It would be clad in timber boarding and would have no openings except in the west elevation. The building is considered to be of an acceptable design and appearance for this rural location and with its relatively low height would not be unduly obtrusive. It is noted that the area where it would be sited can at present be used for external storage up to 4 metres high. The building would not be significantly higher than the close boarded fence with currently bounds this area and would not therefore, have any adverse impact on the rural character or appearance of the area.

Amenity of existing residents

ALP: G8 (Detailed design guidance and local amenity),

CSDPD: CS19 (Raising the quality of place shaping and design)

Draft New Local Plan: DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

- 5.14. The conversion would not have any adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding properties given the degree of separation and that there are no changes to the size of the building envelope. There are existing buildings to both the south and east which screen it from wider view. Office use is by definition compatible with residential development.
- 5.15. The office extension would be over 20 metres from the boundary with the nearest dwelling to the north east and would not result in any undue loss of light or privacy, or undue noise and disturbance.
- 5.16. The proposed workshop would be between 10 and 17 metres from the site boundary and would not therefore result in loss of light to nearby dwellings. The main issue with regard to this building is the potential for noise and disturbance associated with the proposed workshop use. It is intended that it would be used for the manufacture of gates and trellis to complement the existing business which includes the distribution of fencing products. This would require the use of a band saw, circular saw, nail gun and tenon and mortice machine.
- 5.17. There is therefore potential for this to create noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties. Environmental Services were consulted on the application and have not raised any objections. Conditions could be used to require the approval of a scheme of sound insulation for the building, the approval of any ventilation or extraction

equipment, and to limit the hours of use. Permission should not be refused where the imposition of conditions could address potential harm and it is therefore considered that, subject to the imposition of such conditions the development would be acceptable in terms of its relationship to and impact upon nearby residential properties.

Weighing and balancing of issues – overall assessment

- 5.18. This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 5.19. In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- (a) Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material
 - (b) Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (in this case, CIL)
 - (c) Any other material considerations
- 5.20. As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the development plan.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended).
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers J399-P20, J399-P21, 17102 001, 17102 002, 8487 001 and 8487 002 unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.
Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.
- 3 Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, a schedule and/or samples of the materials and finishes for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work to the external finish of the development takes place. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: To secure a satisfactory external appearance.
- 4 The workshop hereby permitted shall be used ancillary to the use of the wider site for storage and distribution purposes and shall at no time be severed and occupied as a separate independent unit without the prior express permission of the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To allow the LPA to control the future use of the site and fully assess the impact of the creation of independent units on the amenity of the surrounding area.

- 5 On site working at the premises shall be restricted to the hours of 07:00 to 19:00, Mondays to Fridays, and 08:00 to 12:30 on Saturdays, and there shall be no on-site working at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays.
Reason: In the interests of the amenities of adjoining residents.
- 6 The scheme for parking, garaging and manoeuvring indicated on the submitted plans shall be laid out prior to the initial occupation of the office conversion hereby permitted and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose.
Reason: To enable vehicles to draw off, park and turn clear of the highway to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the adjoining highway.
- 7 A scheme of sound insulation for the workshop building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any construction of that building above foundation level takes place. Thereafter, the building shall not be occupied until the approved scheme has been fully implemented.
Reason: To protect the occupants of nearby residential properties from noise disturbance.
- 8 Details of the height, position, design and materials of any extraction vent to be provided in connection with the workshop shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to its installation. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: In order to safeguard the amenities of adjoining properties.
- 9 Details of the air ventilation systems for the workshop building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is first occupied. The facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved details before the development is occupied and retained as such.
Reason: To protect the amenities of the occupiers of residential accommodation in the vicinity
- 10 Prior to the commencement of the construction of the workshop building the parts of the building shown to be demolished on drawing no. J399-P21 to be removed shall be demolished and the materials removed from the site.
Reason: To preserve the openness of the Green Belt as, in permitting a new building on the site, the Council has had regard to the benefits of the removal of this building when assessing the impact on openness.

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Wycombe District Council (WDC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:
- offering a pre-application advice service,
 - as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions, and,
 - by adhering to the requirements of the Planning & Sustainability Customer Charter.
- In this instance the agent was asked to clarify certain matters with regard to the proposed use. Thereafter the application was considered by the planning committee.
- 2 The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health Section of the Environment Service on 01494 421737 at the Council Offices.