



Report to Wycombe Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	20/06339/FUL
Proposal:	Demolition of existing rear extensions and erection of storm porch to front, two storey rear extension and change of use of existing farmhouse from dwellinghouses (use class C3) to 6-bedroom hotel accommodation for guests in connection with use of Rackleys Farm as a wedding venue (use class C1)
Site Location:	Rackleys Farm Marlow Road Cadmore End Buckinghamshire HP14 3PP
Applicant:	Sargent Charitable Trust
Case Officer:	Miss Shama Hafiz
Ward(s) affected:	Chiltern Villages
Parish-Town Council:	Lane End Parish Council
Date valid application received:	9th June 2020
Statutory determination date:	4th August 2020
Recommendation	

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 The proposed development is for the demolition of existing rear extensions and erection of storm porch to front, two storey rear extension and change of use of existing farmhouse from dwellinghouse (use class C3) to 6-bedroom hotel accommodation for guests in connection with use of Rackleys Farm as a wedding venue (use class C1). This is considered acceptable in principle.
- 1.2 The design and appearance of the proposed development would respect the special character, appearance and enjoyment of the Chilterns AONB and rural amenities of the open countryside location including the public footpath which runs through part of the application site. The proposal has shown due regard to the historical, landscape and ecological interests of the site. It is considered to maintain an acceptable level of amenity for neighbouring residential properties in respect of noise and disturbance. The proposal is also considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and capacity.

- 1.3 The application is before Committee as the local Members, Councillor Mrs Jean Teesdale and Councillor Ian McEnnis raise concerns given the public interest.
- 1.4 The application is recommended for approval.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 This application seeks permission for the demolition of existing rear extensions the erection of a storm porch to front, two storey rear extension and change of use of existing farmhouse from dwellinghouses (use class C3) to 6-bedroom hotel accommodation for guests in connection with use of Rackleys Farm as a wedding venue (use class C1).
- 2.2 The proposal is for accommodation for use by the bridal party to stay during the wedding event. It comprises six bedrooms, a communal living, dining and kitchen area and WC. The laundry room provides the facilities for guests to use as well as staff use and a storage facility in the lean-to for the wedding venue tables close to the door on the South gable end of the main barn.
- 2.3 The supporting Design and Access Statement advises that the existing front elevation largely will be retained and upgraded thereby keeping the appearance and character of the farmhouse. The proposed rear extension with the incorporation of the two wings is designed to maximise views of the countryside from the living spaces and bedrooms and take full advantage of the southerly aspect. The external Bridal terrace on the South elevation will provide the Bridal Suite with a private space overlooking the Chiltern Hills.
- 2.4 The recently approved development of Rackleys farmyard to a wedding venue under a D2 is currently under implementation.
- 2.5 The Wedding Venue scheme comprised of a grouping of converted agricultural buildings around the courtyard area. These are made from brick and flint. The Farmhouse has white painted brick, UPVC windows and clay roof tiles with traditional brick chimneys. The Farmhouse is predominately surrounded by countryside fields to the rear and sides. The front of the building faces into the central courtyard space. The original farmhouse building has been extended to the rear.
- 2.6 The application site lies in the open countryside beyond the Green Belt and the Chilterns Area of Natural Beauty on the B482 on the periphery of Cadmore End which is 6 miles to the north of Marlow. It is located in non-residential zone 2 for BCC parking standards. The applicant owns adjacent fields totalling 3.35 hectares surrounding the site area which covers 0.58 hectares. A private drive provides access from the B482.
- 2.7 The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Planning Statement
 - b) Design and Access Statement
 - c) Ecology and Protected Species Appraisal
- 2.8 A rebuttal statement was submitted by the planning agent for the application responding to comments received as part of the representations.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 13/07165/FUL - Conversion of barn to a self-contained dwelling – Permitted

- 3.2 14/06301/FUL - Conversion of barns to self-contained 4 bed dwelling with associated parking – Permitted
- 3.3 16/07749/PNP3R – Details approved in respect of a Prior Notification (Part 3, Class R) for change of use of two existing detached buildings (Barn A & B) from Agricultural use to use class D2 (assembly and leisure).
- 3.4 17/08376/FUL - Demolition of single storey buildings on site and existing flat roof extension to main barn. Erection of single storey side extension to each end of west elevation, construction of mezzanine floor & basement area to main barn & single storey infill extension to south elevation of building B, all in connection with change of use of site to wedding venue including ground floor of farmhouse & Managers flat over, alteration to existing access & creation of associated car parking – Permitted

4.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

Principle and Location of Development

ALP: CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP9 (Sense of Place), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF), DM23 (Other Residential Uses), DM30 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality), DM44 (Development in the Countryside Outside of the Green Belt)

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)

- 4.1 Permission was granted at this site in July 2018 under planning ref. 17/08376/FUL. The proposal consisted of a series of extensions and alterations all in connection with the change use of the site including a collection of farm buildings to a wedding venue. The scheme also included the ground floor of the farmhouse with a managers flat over with access alterations and car parking for the redevelopment.
- 4.2 The Farmhouse, which originally as part of the above approved scheme was to be used as Managers accommodation at first floor and a preparation room for the Bridal Party at ground floor, was retained as a dwelling whilst being ancillary to the wedding venue use; this was in line with Policy H10 of the Local Plan at the time.
- 4.3 However, the new Wycombe District Local Plan was adopted in August 2019, and Policy H10 is no longer relevant.
- 4.4 This current proposal seeks the change of use of the farmhouse from a dwellinghouse to a C1 use in connection with Rackleys Farm as a wedding venue. The Managers accommodation can still be provided in an on-site form - this would be in close proximity to the venue by using Rackleys Bungalow, this property is also owned by the Trust, which is the dwelling located directly adjacent to the main access to the site.
- 4.5 In this regard, it should be noted that the new Wycombe District Local Plan no longer prevents the loss of existing dwellings and, therefore, the change of use of the original Farmhouse to C1 use is acceptable in principle, providing that the development complies with national policies in the NPPF for the location of main town centre uses under Policy DM23 (Other Residential Uses).
- 4.6 Section 7 of the NPPF relates to ensuring the vitality of town centres, with paragraphs 86 through 88 being the most relevant to this proposal. Paragraph 86 states: - 'Local

Planning Authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing town centre nor in accordance with an up to date plan’.

- 4.7 In this case, A C1 use would be considered a main town centre use, and therefore under normal circumstances the sequential test should be undertaken, however Paragraph 88 goes on to state:- ‘This sequential test approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development’.
- 4.8 The site is within a rural location and of a small scale, with the proposal being for the reuse of an existing dwellinghouse to provide a 6 bedroom hotel in association with the use of the farm as a wedding venue. It is therefore considered that the sequential test approach is not required in this instance and that, accordingly, the change of use is acceptable in principle.
- 4.9 It should be noted that preceding the above 2017 permission, a Prior Notification (Part 3, Class R) for change of use of two existing detached buildings (Barn A & B) from Agricultural use to use class D2 (assembly and leisure) was granted in December 2016. These permissions effectively allowed both barns to be used for assembly and leisure purposes; such uses could also include wedding receptions or similar.
- 4.10 The site already has permission accepted for use as a wedding venue. In view of the above and subject to compliance with all relevant planning policies, the proposed development is acceptable in principle.

Historic environment (the special character and appearance and enjoyment of the Chilterns AONB, including public rights of way)

ALP: CP9 (Sense of place), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF), DM30 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development) DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality), DM44 (Development in the Countryside Outside of the Green Belt)
DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure)

- 4.11 The application site is within the Chilterns AONB and the open countryside outside of the Green Belt.
- 4.12 With regards to the proposed materials and finishes for the development, it is noted that; the existing front elevation of the farmhouse will be retained however the UPVC framed windows are proposed to be replaced with painted hardwood windows to match the adjacent barn buildings. The lean-to part of the building also has flint work on the front elevation. The existing front elevation will be retained and updated so as to keep the appearance and character of the farmhouse akin to the surrounding buildings.
- 4.13 Moreover, the extensions to the farmhouse will also follow the above sympathetic detailing also incorporating the use of the weatherboard used on building A & building B of the wedding venue.

- 4.14 The Entrance Porch will have a green oak frame, referencing the new frames used in the wedding venue timber structure and rafters. The living spaces maximise the views across the fields with a green oak framed full height glazing across the south and west elevations, which will be in keeping with the design rationale used on the front of building B. The existing structure has a 45 degree pitch which will be maintained.
- 4.15 As with the previous permission for use of the site as a wedding venue, the Conservation Officer has been consulted on this application proposal and has appraised the scheme.
- 4.16 The Conservation Officer acknowledges that Rackleys Farmhouse is not listed nor located within a conservation area. However, whilst not a designated heritage asset, it is recognised that the site contributes positively to local interest owing to its vernacular construction within an historic farmyard setting. Whilst the Conservation Officer notes that the extensions are fairly substantial, notwithstanding this the form and materials are appropriate for this structure and therefore can be considered as being in accordance with policy DM35 of the adopted Wycombe Local Plan.
- 4.17 The proposed change of use and extension of the farmhouse within the farmyard complex would continue to be regarded as a high quality redevelopment which would be a visual improvement together with the reuse tied in with the existing buildings. The holistic development of the site is considered appropriate to the setting of this rural location.
- 4.18 The public footpath is located some 80 metres to the east of the rear part of the main farmhouse.
- 4.19 The applicant has previously undertaken a significant level of hedgerow planting on the site. The agent has also advised that the approved details within the landscaping scheme (including tree planting and mitigation) for the previous approval are being undertaken as part of the implementation of the consent and will continue for this scheme. This arrangement can also be secured by condition.
- 4.20 In visual terms the views from the public footpath would be of a sympathetically modified farmhouse building. Therefore it is considered that the enjoyment of the users of the public footpath would not be diminished by the proposed development.
- 4.21 It is considered that the applicant has sought to demonstrate that the proposed redevelopment would be done sensitively and with full regard to the Chiltern AONB designation of the site.

Transport matters and parking

CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation), Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance
DSA: DM2 (Transport requirements of development sites)

- 4.22 The application has been subject to consultation with the Highway Authority which has confirmed that the proposed six bedrooms as part of the farmhouse extension will provide ancillary accommodation to the wedding venue and therefore does not increase the capacity of the venue. As a result therefore, the Highway Authority would not

expect the development to result in a significant increase in the number of vehicle trips associated with the site. So in essence it is anticipated that the changes by virtue of the proposed development will result in a net gain.

- 4.23 The Highway Authority acknowledges that in accordance with the Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance policy document, one parking space should be provided per bedroom. In this case, the development site will benefit from 59(no) parking spaces. In addition the site is accessed via a privately maintained access way and is distant from Marlow Road. Therefore, the Highway Authority do not have any concern about displaced parking occurring on the publically maintained Highway as a result of the implementation of the proposed scheme.
- 4.24 To conclude, the Highway Authority did not object to the sites access arrangement or parking provision for the wedding venue approved under planning permission 17/08376/FUL. This application has been considered by the Highway Authority who has undertaken an assessment in terms of the expected impact on the highway network including net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision. The Highway Authority therefore, is satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway.
- 4.25 Mindful of the above, the Highway Authority has confirmed that it raises no objections to the application and in this instance does not recommend any conditions to be include on any planning permission the Council may grant.

Amenity of visitors and neighbouring dwellings

ALP: DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality), DM40 (Internal space standards)

- 4.26 In terms of future use of the farmhouse for use by the bridal party at the wedding venue, the proposed layout offers sufficient internal and external facilities and amenity.
- 4.27 Beyond the application site, there is a very small number of residential properties within the vicinity, with the nearest being approximately Rackleys Bungalow (now being used as the managers accommodation) which is sited over 80 metres away from the nearest building within the farmyard complex. The distance between the buildings and these properties is such that overlooking is not considered to be an issue.
- 4.28 As part of the previous approval of the site being approved as a wedding venue, the Environmental Health Officer concluded, that the acoustic noise issues could be appropriately controlled with details being agreed by a noise condition. In addition the confirmed that the hours of operation for the wedding venue do not need to be controlled by any planning conditions that rather this element will be applied under licencing laws for the wedding venue.
- 4.29 Given that the farmhouse would be used in connection with the use of the site as a wedding venue, it is considered that the proposed development would continue to be acceptable in the above regards.

Flooding and drainage

ALP: DM39 (Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems)

- 4.30 A Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage Statement was prepared by Glanville Consultants Ltd as part of the previous application and has also been submitted with the application documents for this scheme. The report concluded that the site is considered to be at low risk from all sources of flooding. The report also concluded that flood risk will not increase either on-site or elsewhere as a result of the proposed development.
- 4.31 With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water has advised that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water, then there would have no objection. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Together with the above, the full advice received from Thames Water will be advised within an informative.
- 4.32 It is noted that a new borehole installation is proposed to be used for the farmhouse accommodation. The Thames Water Authority have advised that with regard to Waste Water Network and Sewage Treatment Works infrastructure capacity, that they would not have any objection to the above as part of the planning application, based on the information provided.

Ecology

ALP: DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure), DM13 (Conservation and enhancement of sites, habitats and species of biodiversity and geodiversity importance), DM14 (Biodiversity in development)

- 4.33 The Ecology Officer was consulted on the application and acknowledged that bats were found on site in 2017 but at that time the house (which is the subject of this application) was not assessed. It is clear however, that the building subject to this application has potential to contain features suitable for roosting in the areas which would be affected. Therefore, the Ecology Officer concluded that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was necessary to be carried out.
- 4.34 Subsequently an Ecology and protected species appraisal was submitted. The Ecology Officer resolved that this covers all the important issues and identifies appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures relating to the bats which are using the property and other wildlife. In this instance, a condition is required to ensure that the measures contained within section 5 (Mitigation and Enhancement) are followed.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

ALP: CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth)

- 4.35 The development is a type of development where CIL would be chargeable.

5.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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 (such as CIL if applicable), and,
- c. Any other material considerations

5.3 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the development plan policies.

6.0 Working with the applicant / agent

- 6.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2019) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments.
- 6.2 The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 6.3 In this instance, the applicant/agent was updated of the issues after the initial site visit, and was provided the opportunity to submit further information and details to the scheme and address issues.

7.0 Recommendation: Application Permitted, subject to the following conditions and informative(s)

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 19.806.PL.1200; 19.806.PL.1201; 19.806.PL.1202; 19.806.PL.1300/A; 19.806.PL.1301; 19.806.PL.1310; 19.806.PL.1500/A; 19.806.PL.1501; 19.806.PL.1510; 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. The materials to be used for the external surfaces, including walls, roofs, doors and windows shall be of the same colour, type and texture as those detailed within the application, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.
Reason: To secure a satisfactory external appearance.
4. Details of all screen and boundary walls, fences and any other means of enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development takes place. The development shall thereafter only be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the buildings hereby approved shall not be occupied until the details have been fully implemented. The screen and boundary walls, fences and any other means of enclosure which are part of the approved scheme shall

thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not adversely affect the privacy and visual amenities at present enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties, and to ensure a satisfactory environment within the development.

5. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees, plants or areas of turfing or seeding which, within a period of 3 years from the completion of the development, die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority first gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.

6. Prior to occupation, a report must be submitted which includes photographic evidence and a written certification from the project ecologist, demonstrating that all of the replacement features for bats (including the correct roofing felt) and the other wildlife enhancement measures have been installed correctly.

Reason: To ensure that bats are appropriately protected and that biodiversity is enhanced in accordance with law and planning policy.

INFORMATIVES

1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2019) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application. In this instance, the applicant/agent was updated of the issues after the initial site visit, and was provided the opportunity to submit further information and details to the scheme and address issues.

2. The applicant is advised the following on behalf of Thames Water Authority:
Waste Comments: With regard to Surface Water drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should you require further information please refer to our website.

Thames Water would recommend that petrol / oil interceptors be fitted in all car parking/washing/repair facilities. Failure to enforce the effective use of petrol / oil interceptors could result in oil-polluted discharges entering local watercourses. Thames Water would *advise that with regard to Waste Water Network and Sewage Treatment Works* infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.

Water Comments:

If you are planning on using mains water for construction purposes, it's important you let Thames Water know before you start using it, to avoid potential fines for improper usage. More information and how to apply can be found online at [thameswater.co.uk/building water](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/building-water). On the basis of information provided, Thames Water would advise that with regard to water network and water treatment infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx. 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.