

## 20 OCTOBER 2020 PLANNING COMMITTEE

6c PLAN/2020/0700

WARD: Horsell

LOCATION: Littlewicks, Carthouse Lane, Horsell, Woking, Surrey

PROPOSAL: Erection of palisade security gates to the main entrance. Existing chain link fence to be extended to join the new gate with the inclusion of a pedestrian access gate.

APPLICANT: Woking Borough Council

OFFICER: David Raper

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### **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:**

The applicant is Woking Borough Council.

### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposal is for the erection of palisade security gates to the main entrance. The proposal also includes the erection of chain link fencing and a pedestrian gate to join the gate with existing fencing. The fencing and gates would have a maximum height of 2.4m and a total width of 8.8m.

### **PLANNING STATUS**

- Green Belt
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Zone A (Within 400m)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

GRANT planning permission subject to conditions.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The proposal relates to a modern development of 7x light industrial units. Carthouse Lane is characterised by a mixture of commercial and residential premises and forms part of the Green Belt.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- PLAN/2011/0477 - Demolition of existing building and construction of a single storey warehouse and light industrial with ancillary sales unit, relocation of Butts Road Starter Units, associated external works and provision of allotments (amended layout and revised design of starter units to PLAN/2010/0033 dated 28 May 2010) – Permitted 09.08.2011
- PLAN/2010/0033 - Demolition of existing building and construction of a single storey warehouse and light industrial with ancillary sales unit, relocation of Butts Road Starter Units, associated external works and provision of allotments – Permitted 28.05.2020

### **CONSULTATIONS**

- **County Highway Authority:** No objection.

**REPRESENTATIONS**

None received.

**RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

National Planning Policy Framework (2019):

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development  
Section 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy  
Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities  
Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places  
Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land

Woking Core Strategy (2012):

CS1 – A Spatial Strategy for Woking Borough  
CS6 – Green Belt  
CS15 – Sustainable Economic Development  
CS18 – Transport and Accessibility  
CS21 – Design  
CS24 – Woking’s Landscape and Townscape  
CS25 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Woking Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016):

DM13 – Buildings in and Adjacent to the Green Belt

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

Woking Design (2015)

**PLANNING ISSUES**

Impact on Green Belt:

1. The NPPF (2019) sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Woking Core Strategy (2012) policy CS6 ‘Green Belt’ and Policy DM13 ‘Buildings in and adjacent to the Green Belt’ of the Development Management Policies DPD (2016) seek to prevent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF (2019) regards the erection of new buildings in the Green Belt as ‘inappropriate development’, except for a list of exceptions, and goes on to state that “*Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*” and that “*When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations*”.
2. The proposed gates and fencing would not fall within any of the exceptions listed in Paragraph 145 of the NPPF (2019). Whilst the gates and fencing would be relatively modest in extent, the proposal would fall within the definition of ‘inappropriate development’ in the Green Belt. The gates would have a maximum height of 2.4m and would be 6.2m in width with small sections of chain-link fencing either side. The fencing and gates would therefore have a very limited footprint and volume, compared to a conventional building for example and overall are considered to result in very

## 20 OCTOBER 2020 PLANNING COMMITTEE

limited harm and loss of openness to the Green Belt. Nonetheless, substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt.

3. As the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it remains to be considered whether 'Very Special Circumstances' (VSC) exist which clearly outweigh the harm otherwise caused by the development, by reason of its inappropriateness.
4. The proposal site comprises a modern development of 7x light industrial units intended as 'starter' units for small businesses; the site currently does not have any form of gates to restrict access into the site. The applicant has confirmed that the reason the gates and fencing are being proposed is for security reasons. The applicant states that there have been several instances of criminal damage, theft and attempted theft of goods and vehicles from the units. The applicant states that units are 'starter units' which are in high demand and tenants have approached the Council seeking help to secure their units. The gates and fencing would therefore help secure the units from theft and criminal damage.
5. In this context it is considered reasonable that the site should be secured by gates. It is borne in mind that Section 8 of the NPPF (2019) seeks to ensure that planning decisions aim to achieve safe places whilst Section 6 seeks to ensure that planning decisions should "...create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development". It is also noted that the other industrial premises along Carhouse Lane are all secured by similar gates.
6. It is therefore considered that significant weight should be given to the need to secure the proposal site in order to help minimise the potential for crime and to maintain the viability and attractiveness of the units for current and future occupiers.
7. Considering the limited harm to the Green Belt identified, it is considered that very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of the proposal's inappropriateness. In this context the proposal is considered acceptable in Green Belt terms.

### Impact on Character:

8. The proposal relates to a modern industrial estate and the proposed gates and fencing would be viewed in the context of the existing boundary fencing surrounding the site. Whilst in the Green Belt, this stretch of Carhouse Lane features entrances to other commercial premises with similar fencing and gates; the proposed development is not therefore considered to appear as an incongruous feature in the street scene. Overall the proposed gates and fencing is considered consistent with the commercial character of the proposal site and is considered to result in an acceptable impact on the character of the surrounding area.

### Highways Impact:

9. The proposed gates would be set-back from Carhouse Lane and the County Highway Authority has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection. The proposal is therefore considered to have an acceptable highways impact.

## 20 OCTOBER 2020 PLANNING COMMITTEE

### Impact on Neighbours:

10. There are no residential neighbours near the proposal site that would be unduly impacted upon by the proposed development.

### **CONCLUSION**

11. Overall, it is considered that very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of the proposal's inappropriateness. In this context the proposal is considered acceptable in Green Belt terms. The proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on the character of the area and on highways. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Site visit photographs
2. Consultation responses
3. Site Notices

### **RECOMMENDATION**

PERMIT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development for which permission is hereby granted must be commenced not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below:

Unnumbered plans named:

'Location Plan' received by the LPA on 03/09/2020

'Block Plan' received by the LPA on 03/09/2020

'Proposed fencing and gate plan elevation' received by the LPA on 03/09/2020

'Proposed fencing and gate plan' received by the LPA on 03/09/2020

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

### **Informatives**

1. The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).