

22 MARCH 2022 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Section 4 - Decision-making

Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Woking Core Strategy (2012)

CS1 - A spatial strategy for Woking Borough

CS4 - Local and neighbourhood centres and shopping parades

CS13 - Older people and vulnerable groups

CS19 - Social and community infrastructure

CS20 - Heritage and conservation

CS21 - Design

CS25 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DM Policies DPD) (2016)

DM20 - Heritage assets and their settings

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Design (2015)

Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022)

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Heritage of Woking (2000)

Other Material Considerations

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (online resource)

National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places (October 2019) (NDG)

PLANNING ISSUES

01. The main planning considerations in determining this application are:

- Principle of development;
- Design and character, including the adjacent listed building; and
- Neighbouring amenity

having regard to the relevant policies of the Development Plan, other relevant material planning considerations and national planning policy and guidance.

Principle of development

02. The site falls within the Urban Area, as defined by the Proposals Map, in which the principle of alterations to existing buildings is acceptable. Moreover, the site relates to Moorcroft centre for the community, a form of social and community infrastructure. Community facilities play an important role, by providing a place for people to meet, and also offer services that are essential for education, health and well-being and support community cohesion and benefit the general quality of life of residents. Community facilities are particularly important in view of our ageing population and our reliance on the third sector (charity and

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voluntary organisations) and faith sectors to provide services to the community. The proposed development would improve access to this centre for the community and is therefore supported in principle by Policy CS19 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012).

03. Policy CS13 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) states that the Council will work with partners in consultation with the community to ensure access to key local services such as community facilities and will also seek to develop the roles of the community centres, both of which the proposed development would, in principle, support. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which, inter alia, promote social interaction and are safe and accessible. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should plan positively for the use of shared spaces and community facilities.

Design and character, including the adjacent listed building

04. Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) states, inter alia, that *“Proposals for new development should... Create buildings and places that are attractive with their own distinct identity; they should respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area in which they are situated, paying due regard to the scale, height, proportions, building lines, layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land”* and *“be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of any disability”*. Section 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving well-designed places.
05. The proposed development would see the removal of the more south-westerly of the two arched windows within the south-east elevation of the building (which faces towards the surface car park), together with the removal of the brickwork below the window. A new opening would be formed, the existing exterior timber pergola adapted to suit, and new white framed doors and window installed. At present the two arched windows within this south-east elevation have a visually pleasing symmetry, which is reinforced by the symmetry of the smaller windows either side, this symmetry would be rather disrupted by the proposed development because the two arched windows would no longer completely match. Nonetheless, above the newly formed doors, the overall dimensions and shape of the replacement arched window would match the other. The transom and mullions within the replacement window would also closely match the other. Whilst the sill of the replacement window would be higher than that of the other windows this is unavoidable due to the required clearance height of the newly formed doors.
06. The disruption of the existing visual symmetry between the two arched windows would be most apparent when facing towards the south-east elevation directly, such views being largely restricted to the surface car park and in which the existing exterior timber pergola would sit forwards of the replacement openings, thus reducing the impact of the disruption of visual symmetry. In views from the public realm of Old School Place, which are inherently more oblique, the existing visual symmetry of the two arched windows is less evident because of the partial screening afforded by the porch and exterior timber pergola. As such the visual impact of the proposed development in these views would be more limited. There would be no effect on the main public view of the

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building from Westfield Road, which contains two arched windows matching those within the subject south-east elevation.

Grade II listed The Old Cricketers & Cricketers Cottage

07. The site is adjacent to Grade II listed The Old Cricketers & Cricketers Cottage (to the south/south-east). Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Paragraphs 199 - 208 (incl.) of the NPPF set out the framework for decision making where proposals affect heritage assets. The only potential effect upon the listed building in this case would be an indirect effect (i.e., development within its setting). Policy CS20 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), Policy DM20 of the DM Policies DPD (2016) and SPG Heritage of Woking (2000) also constitute material considerations in respect of the setting of Grade II listed The Old Cricketers & Cricketers Cottage.
08. The replacement windows/doors would not extend or alter the existing scale and three-dimensional form of the building and would replicate the existing fenestration within the subject south-east elevation as far as practicable whilst also providing the requisite new access doors, which would be at ground floor level. Given these combined factors the proposed development would not cause any harm (i.e., would have a neutral effect) to the setting of Grade II listed The Old Cricketers & Cricketers Cottage.
09. Overall, whilst the disruption of the existing visual symmetry between the two arched windows within the south-east elevation of the building cannot be said to make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area, as required by Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), the proposal would mitigate the disruption of this visual symmetry as far as practicable whilst also providing the requisite new access doors. Furthermore, such alterations are relatively typical of buildings within use for social and community purposes, in which functional requirements change over time. In any case the small level of visual harm arising would be restricted to the less prominent south-east elevation and would be outweighed by the public benefit of improving accessibility to this centre for the community, a form of social and community infrastructure.

Neighbouring amenity

10. Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) states that "*Proposals for new development should...Achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties, avoiding significant harmful impact in terms of loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight, or an overbearing effect due to bulk, proximity or outlook*". More detailed guidance is provided within SPDs Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022) and Design (2015).
11. The replacement windows/doors would not extend or alter the existing scale and three-dimensional form of the building and would therefore not give rise to any loss of daylight or sunlight, or to any overbearing effect. In respect of privacy the new doors would be at ground floor level and face out towards the surface car park and the replacement window (above the new doors) would

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replicate the dimensions and shape of the existing arched window, thus there would be no loss of privacy.

Local Finance Considerations

12. No gross floorspace would result. The proposed development would not be Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable.

Conclusion

13. In conclusion the principle of development is acceptable and supported by Policies CS13 and CS19 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) and the NPPF. Whilst the disruption of the existing visual symmetry between the two arched windows within the south-east elevation of the building cannot be said to make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area, as required by Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), the proposal would mitigate the disruption of this visual symmetry as far as practicable whilst also providing the requisite new access doors. Furthermore, such alterations are relatively typical of buildings within use for social and community purposes, in which functional requirements change over time. In any case the small level of visual harm arising would be restricted to the less prominent south-east elevation and would be outweighed by the public benefit of improving accessibility to this centre for the community, a form of social and community infrastructure. The proposed development would not cause any harm (i.e., would have a neutral effect) to the setting of Grade II listed The Old Cricketers & Cricketers Cottage and there would be no material impact on neighbouring amenity.
14. Overall, the proposed development complies with Policies CS1, CS4, CS13, CS19, CS20, CS21 and CS25 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), Policy DM20 of the DM Policies DPD (2016), SPDs Design (2015) and Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022), SPG Heritage of Woking (2000), Sections 2, 4, 8, 12 and 16 of the NPPF (2021), the PPG and the NDG and is recommended for approval. In considering this application the Council has had regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. In making the recommendation to grant planning permission it is considered that the application is, overall, in accordance with the Development Plan of the area.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Site visit photographs

Site and Press Notices (Development under Regulation 3)

Site and Press Notices (Development affecting a listed building or its setting)

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

01. The development hereby permitted must be commenced not later than three years from 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).

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02. The development hereby permitted must be carried out only in accordance with the following approved plans numbered / titled:

-705-P001 (showing location plan, block plan floor plan), dated 15/11/21 (rec'd by LPA 27.01.2022).

-705-P002 (showing existing and proposed elevations), dated 15/11/21 (rec'd by LPA 27.01.2022).

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

03. The external finishes of the development hereby permitted must only be as shown/annotated on the approved plans listed within condition 02 of this notice and as stated within Section 7 (Materials) of the submitted application form. The development hereby permitted must thereafter be permanently maintained as such unless the Local Planning Authority first agrees in writing to any variation.

Reason: To protect the character, appearance and visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), SPD Design (2015) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Informatives

01. This statement is provided in accordance with Article 35(2) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Woking Borough Council seeks to take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals. The Council works with applicants in a positive and proactive manner by:
- Offering a planning pre-application advice service; and
 - Where possible officers will seek minor amendments and/or additional information to overcome issues identified during the application process.
- The application was considered to be acceptable as initially submitted.
02. The applicant is advised that Council officers may undertake inspections without prior warning to check compliance with approved plans and to establish that all planning conditions are being complied with in full. Inspections may be undertaken both during and after construction.
03. The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, works which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours: 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m. Monday to Friday; 8.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. Saturday; and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.