

24th July 2018 PLANNING COMMITTEE

5e	18/0477	Reg'd:	04.05.18	Expires:	29.06.18	Ward:	C
Nei. Con. Exp:	06.06.18	BVPI Target	Minor other - 18	Number of Weeks on Cttee' Day:		On Target?	No

LOCATION: Land Adjacent to Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6YL

PROPOSAL: Installation of 6.5m pole with swift and bat habitat including 3no integral signs and associated hard and soft landscaping

TYPE: Full Planning Application

APPLICANT: Woking Borough Council

OFFICER: Komal Gorasia

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The applicant on the application is Woking Borough Council which falls outside the scope of delegated powers as set out by the Management Arrangements and Scheme of Delegation.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Installation of 6.5m pole with the following:

- 8no nesting compartments at the top of the pole for swifts
- 2no nesting chambers at the top of the pole for bats
- 3no integral signs attached to the pole (directional and distance signs to Woking's Twin Towns)
- Hard and soft landscaping measuring 2.53m in diameter (surrounded by stone work) at the base of the pole.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application relates to a small parcel of fully pedestrianised public land outside the main entrance to the Woking Borough Council Civic Offices (Gloucester Square), opposite the Victoria Entertainments Centre, closest to Victoria Way.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history to this site.

CONSULTATIONS

None

REPRESENTATIONS

None

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012):

Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Woking Core Strategy (2012):

CS7 - Biodiversity and nature conservation

CS21 - Design

CS24 - Woking's landscape and townscape

Woking Development Management Policies DPD (2016):

DM17 – Public Realm

DM18 – Advertising and Signs

PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development:

1. The proposal is for the installation of a pole with a swift and bat habitat including directional signs to Woking's Twin Towns: Amstelveen (Netherlands), Le Plessis-Robinson (France) and Rastatt (Germany). The aim of the proposal is to promote awareness and special relationships between towns, promoting understanding of different cultures and lifestyles. The swift and bat habitat will provide nesting chambers and compartments for species which are known to be in rapid decline; the habitats will promote awareness of such species and support the aims of 'Thamesway' where local community and the Council work together to establish a Swifts in Woking project in the Borough.
2. The aim of the proposal is in line with paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2012) which states "The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible" and the paragraph 5.25 of CS7: Biodiversity and nature conservation of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) which states "The Council will apply a design approach that enhances biodiversity where it is possible to do so". For the reasons highlighted above, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Impact on character and neighbouring amenity

3. Policy CS21: Design, seeks the creation of buildings and places that are "attractive with their own distinct identity", and which "respect and make a positive contribution to the streetscene 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". Policy CS24: Woking's Landscape and Townscape, similarly requires that "all development proposals will provide a positive benefit in terms of landscape and townscape character".
4. In this instance, the pole will be sited between two large buildings, respecting heights of the buildings whilst the design through sleek steel and stonework complements

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artwork and public realm improvements elsewhere within Woking Town Centre. The deliberate open position at the top of the entrance to the town centre allows for the pole to serve as a landmark gateway into the town centre when approached from the north. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal will be a positive contribution to Woking town centre and would enhance the character and appearance of the immediate public realm and wider area.

5. The proposal is sited significantly away from residential properties and thus is not considered to cause harm to the visual or residential amenities of local residents.

Principle of Signs

6. The application proposes the installation of 3no directional signs which will be sited on the pole, displaying the names of the twin town, their respective crests and distances (in km and miles). Given the location and size of each sign, they benefit from 'Deemed Consent' under Class 1 of Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and thus do not require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority. Nonetheless, the signs are deemed to be minimal and well designed as to ensure they do not prejudice the enjoyment of this part of the town centre in line with policy DM18: Advertising and Signs of the Woking Development Management Policies DPD (2016).

CONCLUSION

7. For the reasons highlighted above, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the grain and pattern of development in the surrounding area, respecting the character and appearance of the surrounding area and resulting in a visually acceptable structure within its setting. The proposal adequately preserves and enhances biodiversity in the borough. The principle of the development is therefore deemed acceptable and in compliance with Core Strategy (2012) policies CS7, CS21 and CS24, Woking DPD (2016) policies DM17 and DM18 and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Site visit photographs
2. Site Notice dated 24.05.2018

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission be granted 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:

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- Woking swift tower - general arrangement (W001 C)
- Swift and bat column section (W002 D)
- Swift and bat column details (W003 B)
- Wiring diagram (W004 A)
- Rendered view - close up
- Rendered view - whole tower
- Existing site location plan (0000A)
- Existing site block plan (0001A)
- Existing plan (0002A)
- Existing elevation (0003A)
- Proposed site location plan (1000A)
- Proposed site block plan (1001A)
- Proposed plan (1002A)
- Proposed elevation (1003A)
- Proposed view and planting preferences (1004A)
- Proposed stone artwork references (1005A)

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

3. The external materials to be used in the construction of the development hereby approved shall be as those specified on plans hereby approved and submitted application form, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and in accordance with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012.

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 paragraph 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.