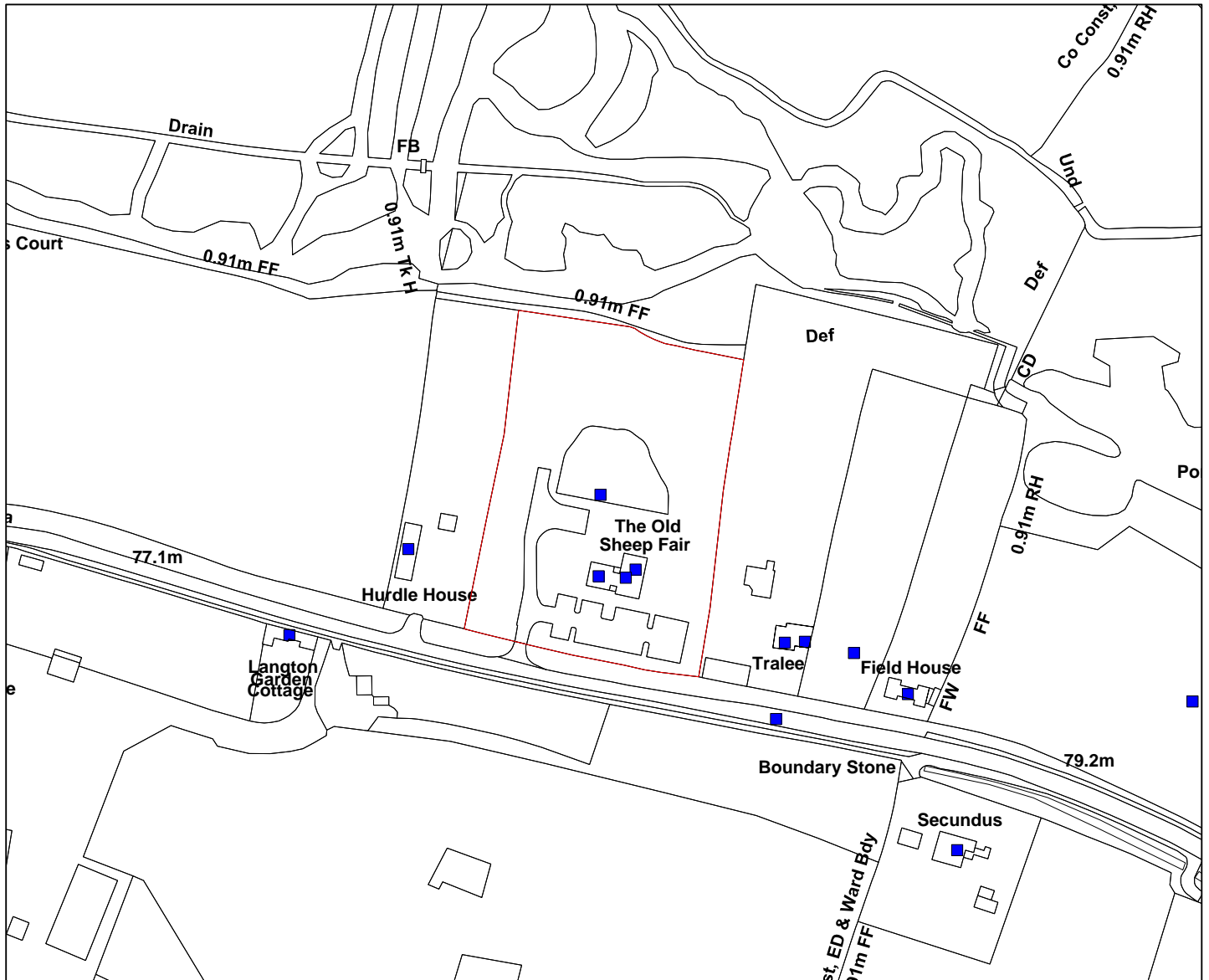


The Long Barn, Bishops Sutton Rd, Alresford

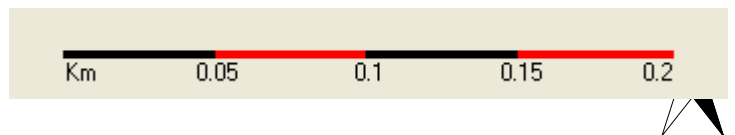


10/02580/FUL



Legend

Scale:



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Winchester City Council © 2007.

Organisation	Winchester City Council
Department	Development Services
Comments	
Date	27 January 2011
SLA Number	00018301

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

Item No: 3
Case No: 10/02580/FUL / W06446/06
Proposal Description: Construction of a mixed-use facilities building (410 sq m GEA) comprising sales area (Class A1 - 190 sq m net), two treatment rooms (Class D1 44 sq m net), gallery/events/meeting space (Sui Generis - 36 sq m net), kitchen, office space, plant room, storage, toilets and lift; external display/sales area (Class A1 - 907 sq m net); associated access, car parking and landscaping; regular holding of classes/seminars/events and serving of refreshments (PART RETROSPECTIVE)
Address: Long Barn Winchester Ltd The Long Barn Bishops Sutton Road Alresford Hampshire
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: New Alresford
Applicants Name: Struan Investments Limited & Long Barn Growers & Distillers
Case Officer: Mrs Julie Pinnock
Date Valid: 20 October 2010
Site Factors: New Alresford - Boundary amendments May 1999, Published November 2001
Within 50m of Listed Building
Site of Special Scientific Importance
Recommendation: Application Refused

General Comments

This application is reported to Committee because of the number of representations in support received.

This application is also reported to Committee at the request of Councillor Cook whose request is appended in full to this report

Site Description

The site is situated outside the policy boundary of New Alresford, in designated countryside. The site measures 1.2ha. in area and is situated on the northern frontage of Bishops Sutton Road (B3047).

There is a difference in levels within the site, with the land sloping down away from the road towards the reed beds of Old Alresford Pond, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

To the west and east of the site, and both fronting Bishops Sutton Road, are residential dwellings 'Hurdle House' (a Grade II listed building) and 'Tralee'. To the south, on the opposite side of the road and set further to the west, is Langton Garden Cottage.

There is a footpath set back from the carriageway to the south side of Bishops Sutton Road, which provides a pedestrian link from the site to the centre of New Alresford.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

The barn type development which has been recently constructed is an attractive building, with a single vehicular access, and a parking area to the front of the barn, set behind a row of hedging to the road frontage.

Proposal

The proposal is in two parts. The first is to regularise aspects of the development (approved on application 01/02355/FUL) that were not built in accordance with the approved plans.

- Insertion of a mezzanine floor;
- External lighting;
- CCTV and alarm system;
- Air source heat pump sited to the rear of the building;
- Insertion of five rooflights;
- Minor changes to the doors and windows:-
 - i) Front - Southern doors widened to facilitate access
 - ii) Front - Glazing to the right of the entrance comprises 9 panes of plain glazing – georgian style windows and glazing bars omitted.
 - iii) Front - Simpler glazing detail above main entrance door - 20 small panes replaced by 3 larger panes;
 - iv) Rear - Single door to the rear replaced by double doors
 - v) Rear - Simpler glazing details - 20 small panes replaced by 3 larger panes
 - vi) Rear - timber screen to the left of the rear doors replaced with oak cladding
 - vii) Side - Glazing detail to the side elevations was 2.5m between dwarf wall and the eaves, this has been increased to 3m continuing to floor level, the windows can be folded and open (but not proposed to provide access or means of escape);
 - viii) Side - timber screen replaced with oak cladding
- Variation to ground levels which has resulted in slight increase in the height of the eaves.

The second is to change the use of the building to allow a mixed-used facilities building which would provide the following:

- A1 sales area on the ground floor and external display sales/ area;
- Sale of refreshments within an area, both inside the building, and outside in the plant terrace and courtyard;
- D1 beauty therapist rooms (one is currently in the use and a second is proposed) on the first floor;
- Use of building to host regular classes/seminars/events and serving refreshments
- Associated kitchen, office space, plant room, storage, toilets and lift

The total (as built) gross external floor area of the building is 410 sq.m. Internally the space on the ground floor for sales and refreshments measures approx 203 sq.m. First floor the beauty treatment rooms measure approx. 44 sq.m. and the gallery area for events is 36 sq.m. and two office areas at approx 12 sq.m. each.

Other aspects such as the access, car parking and landscaping are virtually the same as those approved on the application 01/02355/FUL), although form part of this application for completeness.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

The proposal would employ 5 full time and 3 part time staff, and it is proposed that the A1 retail and D1 use would be open between the hours of 0900 to 1730 Monday to Saturday and 0900 to 1700 Sundays and Bank Holidays. The application form also indicates that the other use would be open until 2100 Monday to Saturday and 1700 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Relevant Planning History

97/00089/FUL – W06446/02 - Market garden for produce, horticulture together with the erection of a facilities building with sales area, 1 no greenhouse and 6 no polytunnels and associated parking - Refused 29/05/1997 - Appeal Allowed 18/11/1997.

01/02355/FUL – W06446/03: Market garden for produce, horticulture, together with the erection of a facilities building with sales area, 1 no. greenhouse and 6 no. polytunnels (renewal of planning permission W06446/02) - Permitted 09/01/2002.

09/00899/FUL - W06446/04 Variation of condition 5 of planning permission W06446/03 (Design and Access Statement and Appendices updated on web site 11.06.2009) - Land Adj Hurdle House Bishops Sutton Road Alresford Hampshire - Application Permitted - 29/09/2009

Consultations

Drainage: No objection

“The application is to regularise additions to the building not authorised by the original consent. Storm water is going to soakaways which have Building Regs approval. Foul water is to go to a treatment plant to the west of the entrance, the pipe work has been inspected by a Building Control Officer however the plant itself has not yet been installed.

Provided that the foul water treatment plant obtains Building Regs approval, there will be no objection on drainage grounds.”

Economic Development: Support

The Council's Assistant Director, who is responsible for Economic Prosperity, has provided a detailed comment on the application. Comments relate to the attractive nature of the site, the owners entrepreneurial response to linkages with the community and commitment to growth/promotion of local produce.

She also comments on access to the site, whether by car, or on foot/bike from Alresford, which provides a genuinely interesting and unusual experience for the visitor adding to local distinctiveness.

Winchester's Economic Strategy was adopted in June 2010, and will form part of the Local Development Framework. The proposal is supported for the following reasons:

“a) Growth, sale and promotion of local produce: the shop not only provides an outlet for Long Barn's own products, but includes a 'Made in Alresford' range provided by businesses based close by. Visitors can see lavender being grown before them, and enjoy finding out about the many varieties on the site. Moreover, the treatment room is occupied by a local beautician, workshops are run by local businesses (eg the

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

florist), and the construction of the building was by a Wickham firm. It therefore supports the Alresford economy very directly by providing an outlet for other growers and businesses. Alresford has staked its claim as a hub for local produce through its annual Watercress Festival, and Long Barn does a great deal to reinforce this. As the letters on the planning portal show, businesses in Alresford town centre do not see Long Barn as a threat so its 'out of town' location should not determine this application.

- b) Enhancement of Alresford's visitor economy: Winchester City Council has worked with New Alresford Town Council over many years to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more money in the town. Whilst the steam railway is a significant attraction, Alresford has sought to promote other experiences that increase the 'dwell time' of visitors or provide seasonal reasons to revisit. Long Barn has already been the focus on national media coverage and will continue to draw attention to the town as a result of the quality of its produce, and the flair with which the business presents itself. It will bring new visitors to Alresford, and the owners are committed to encouraging those visitors to walk into the town – and have offered to place visitor information at Long Barn to facilitate this. It should be understood that a business of this kind needs to provide a café facility on the premises, as this is now considered by visitors to be an essential part of the experience – as much so as the toilet provision. Winchester City Council has already acknowledged the importance of a café operation at Pinkmead Riding School to the south of the district in another recent retrospective application, and the same principles apply here in our view. Small scale events (eg the wreath making workshops) are also important in providing reasons for customers to return and build a long term relationship with the business.
- c) Benefit to the local community: Long Barn was established in Alresford before the business moved to its current premises. The owners care about their links with the local community. They have created six jobs, and have potential to create a further four for local people. Three of their staff are single parents able to work just five minutes away from their children's school. They bring in Sparsholt College students to help with the harvest (and give them relevant experience in return) and they welcome a regular flow of local older people (including wheelchair users) who enjoy the easy access to the shop and café facilities. They won recognition in October this year from the Alresford Society for the building itself ("for the most significant improvement in the built environment during the year") and for "the contribution of the associated business to the local economy and to tourism". Long Barn invites local choirs to sing and supports local charities through its events. As can be seen from the letters on the planning portal, it enjoys a wide spread of support from Alresford businesses and from individuals alike."

Also comments that the business addresses all eight of the key factors for success outlined in the Economic Strategy for the Winchester District 2010 – 2020.

Engineers: Highways: Raise objection

Requested a Transport Assessment although one was not submitted with the application. A further letter was submitted in support of the proposal by the applicant's agent, although this did not deal with traffic movements. Comments that the majority of users will use private motorcars to get to the site, which is largely contrary to the transport aims of PPG13.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

He advises the proposal would attract a contribution towards the Council's adopted Transport Policy. Without a transport assessment he is unable to determine the number of additional multi modal trips associated with the additional development, and therefore unable to calculate the amount of contribution sought.

Historic Environment: No objection

No objection to this proposal as it will not affect the setting of neighbouring grade II listed building, Hurdle House. Comments that one of the attractive characteristic features of a timber framed barn is the scale of roof when compared to the lower main body of the building. In my view such roofs should be uninterrupted and if I were to raise any objection at all it would be to remove the rooflights on the front elevation.

Landscape: No objection

"The site lies outside the Alresford Conservation Area and close to the Alresford Pond SSSI along the northern boundary. There are no public rights of way within the vicinity of the site. Existing boundary hedgerows provide containment and contribute to local character. Regarding the proposals as submitted, my only comments relate to the landscape/site layout plan (drwg no D9620 121 rev B) dated 3.08.2010. The proposed 8.00m wide buffer zone along the northern boundary needs to be compatible with SSSI management objectives close by and, in addition, should clearly state that existing vegetation should be retained and reinforced to ensure there is no adverse visual impact regarding proposed use of external areas. Advise confirmation of lighting details for the same reason. Further investigation regarding the feasibility of improving footpath links to the town centre via the northern boundary is advised. Subject to inclusion of this additional information, the scheme is considered acceptable in terms of landscape."

Strategic Planning: Raise objection

Outlined the key policy considerations and the planning history of the site, then go onto consider the key issues and conclusions which is quoted below:

"Key issues

1. The proposal is for an extension of town centre uses in an out of town location.

The proposed uses fall under the definition of town centre uses as set out in PPS4. Under **PPS 4 Policy EC14 and 15**, the application would require a sequential assessment if the extension exceeds 200m². It is not clear from the information provided whether the extension for town centre uses exceeds 200m².

The previous permission restricted A1 use to primary sales of Long Barn products and by-products with other sales restricted to traditional gardening accessories. This use appears to have changed to encompass general A1 use and other uses which would normally be found within town centres. This may have a significant impact on other centres and therefore an impact assessment under **PPS4 Policy EC16** is required.

Policy SF.1 of the Local Plan only allows for town centre uses on an out of centre site where a need is demonstrated and no suitable alternative sites are available. This requirement for a need assessment has been superseded by the requirements of PPS4 as given above.

If the increase in town centre uses is over 200m² then a sequential test will be required

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

under PPS4. An impact assessment under EC16 is also required for the town centre uses. The Retail Assessment submitted with the application does not meet all the requirements of the sequential test and impact assessment set out within PPS4.

2. The site is located within the countryside where there is a presumption against non-essential development.

Under CE13, the Authority needs to be satisfied that the development is essential to the proper functioning of agriculture and that it has to be located within the countryside rather than an existing settlement. Further to this, under Policy CE16, any farm diversification scheme should be consistent with the rural characteristics of the holding [...], reuse existing buildings where possible, etc. The proposal does not meet all the requirements of a rural based enterprise in that the broadening to general A1 use and the introduction of the D1 use have not been demonstrated to be consistent with the characteristics of the holding.

Conclusion

This proposal is contrary to planning policy. We would have suggested that a condition is applied to any permission granted, to only allow products related to the holding to be sold on the site (restrict the A1 use), but the applicant has apparently made it clear that an unrestricted A1 use is sought and this in conjunction with history of the site indicates that such a condition is unlikely to be adhered to. We therefore advise that this application is contrary to planning policy. The proposal also risks setting precedent for substantial new retail use (largely unrelated to the holding) in the countryside.

We are aware that there is significant support for this proposal from an economic development point of view which will also need to be taken into account.

Environment Agency: No objection subject to informative advice

Comment that the development should be designed to ensure wastewater arising from this development is disposed of in line with current regulations and guidelines.

Natural England: No objection subject to conditions

Comment that alone or in connection with other plans or projects the proposal is unlikely to have a significant affect on the River Itchen SAC or the Alresford Pond or the SSSI.

Southern Water: No objection

Raise no objection to the use of private treatment plan and soakaways, comment on how the SUDS layout is to be accommodated in the proposed layout.

Representations:

New Alresford Parish Council

Object to the lighting as being too bright, to much and too long in this rural environment; Support the remainder of the proposal.

143 letters of representation received supporting the application for the following reasons

- Complements existing businesses
- Brings in visitors to the area to help support other businesses, encouraging spending in the area

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

- In keeping with Alresford,
- Long Barn is an asset to the town
- Refreshments would be welcomed by customers
- Boosts the local economy, businesses should be supported in these economic times
- Could not be located in the town but is close, easy to move between Long Barn and the town on foot
- Would not take away business from the town, provides complementary facilities
- Reduces pressure on town centre parking
- Attracts business and new investment to Alresford
- The events and classes provided are welcomed
- Adds to the amenities and services of Alresford
- Supports local producers/crafts people
- Won the Rose Bowl Award
- Provides local jobs and enabling the business to grow would provide further new jobs
- Would provide accessible tea and coffee facilities
- Alresford's only plant nursery, saves longer journeys
- People make special trips to this facility
- The application is key to the success of the business which enhances the local and national profile of Alresford
- Restricting Long Barn would have a negative effect on bringing people to Alresford
- Site attracts wildlife, maximises biodiversity

28 letters of representation received objecting to the application for the following reasons

- Out of character
- Negative impact on existing shops/businesses, in direct competition
- Impact on neighbours as a result of late opening hours
- Increase in traffic and noise
- Impact on the SSSI
- Negative impact of lighting in this location
- Not well connected to the town centre
- Intensification of the use and impact on the countryside
- Future user of the site could abuse the permission
- Precedent set for building in the countryside
- Poor pedestrian access
- Major departure from original planning permission

2 letters of comment received raising the following points

- Intensification of the use and impact on the countryside
- Impact of lighting, additional noise and traffic
- Brings in visitors, but provision of refreshments would impact existing retailers

Cllr Cook objects to the proposal for the following reasons:

- The development is in breach of the planning conditions
- Concern regarding the traffic access and poor pedestrian access,
- Impact on amenity of neighbours,

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

- Noise from traffic/people
- Would constitute over development within the countryside,
- Precedent for other commercial uses on this site

Cllr Power in the main supports the proposal, although objects to serving refreshments and lighting for the following reasons:

- Complements existing businesses
- Employs Local people
- Brings in visitors but provision of refreshments would impact upon existing retailers
- objection to the lighting

Steve Brine MP support: Comments that the proposal is an asset to the community and expansion would create jobs and bring in investment.

Relevant Planning Policy:

South East Plan 2009:

- SP.3** – Urban focus for development
- CC.4** – Sustainable Design & Construction
- RE.3** – Employment Land
- T.2** – Mobility Management
- T.4** - Parking
- NRM.4** – Flood Risk
- NRM.11** – Energy Efficiency/Renewables
- BE.4** – Role of Small Rural Towns
- SH.1** – Strategy for South Hampshire
- SH.3** – Employment Development
- SH.8** - Sustainability

Winchester District Local Plan Review

- DP.3** Sets out general design criteria for development
- DP.4** prevents development which would detract from or result in the loss of (amongst others) trees and hedgerows, water features.
- DP.9** Social and physical infrastructure
- DP.11** controls unneighbourly uses.
- CE.5** does not permit development which would harm landscape character
- CE.10** protects species and habitats of nature conservation importance.
- CE.13** allows for horticultural development for which a rural location is essential if there is no suitable alternative.
- CE.16** Allows for farm diversification schemes which are consistent with the characteristics of the holding [...]; reuse existing buildings wherever possible; can accommodate additional traffic without harming the character of rural roads; respect the local landscape character.
- SF.1** Focus development in Town Centres
- T1** Transport – development location
- T5** Transport – off-site transport contributions

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

- PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

PPS 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG13 Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance
New Alresford Design Statement - April 2008

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

The site is situated outside the defined policy boundary of New Alresford, therefore countryside policies of the local plan apply. The proposal seeks to regularise aspects of the development not authorised by 01/02355/FUL and 09/00899/FUL, which effectively allowed the construction of a facilities building to be used in association with the principal use of the land for growing market garden produce along with an area of ancillary sales within the building. This was subsequently varied when the land was to be used for lavender growing, and the ancillary sales was expanded to include the sale of lavender related products produced on the holding, although the area in which this could take place was restricted in both applications.

The building has not been built in accordance with the approved plans, and this has enabled the use of the building to be expanded to include a much larger area of sales, which is not limited to lavender related produced as per condition 05 of planning permission 09/00899/FUL. It also allows for the provision of two beauty therapists rooms, the re-location of the office space to the first floor mezzanine and the use of a first floor gallery for various events including classes, seminars and meeting space. On the ground floor, the ancillary sales area has been significantly increased, and now includes the general retail sales including the sale of plants, gardening goods, home wares and gifts. Refreshments to visiting members of the public are available, and it is proposed to provide indoor and outdoor seating to facilitate the consumption of the refreshments on the premises.

National and local plan policy seeks to protect the character of the countryside for its own sake. PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' advises that decisions should be based on sustainable development principles. It states at policy 1 (iii) that "Accessibility should be a key consideration in all development decisions. Most developments which are likely to generate large numbers of trips should be located in or next to towns or other service centres that are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, in line with the policies set out in PPG13."

It further goes on to state at policy 1 (iv) that "New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all."

PPS4 'Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' policy EC4.1 promotes competitive town centre environments, and goes on to say that local planning authorities should identify sites in town centres, or failing that edge of the centre, where such a need has been identified. Policy EC6.2 at paragraphs (a) and (b) advises local planning authorities

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

to (a) strictly control economic development in open countryside away from existing settlements, or areas allocated for such development; (b) identify local service centres and locate most new development in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing, services and other facilities can be provided together.

The Winchester District Local Plan, whilst pre-dating PPS4, was prepared having regard to the aims of Government Guidance (formerly provided in PPG6), and still continues to apply.

PPS4 has a range of development management policies. When town centre uses, that are not in a town centre and not in accordance with the development plan, policy EC.14.3, requires a sequential assessment to site selection to be undertaken for proposals over 200 sq.m. PPS4 then goes on to explain the considerations and impact assessment for consideration. It is recognised that the proposed increase in retail and leisure floor area is below the 200 sq.m. threshold. However the existing retail sales is limited to items produced in association with the holding and contained in an area of approx 170 sq.m (measured externally). The overall increase in unrestricted retail and leisure amounts to 410sq.m. gross external area.

The function of a sequential assessment, amongst other things, is to ensure that development does not affect the vitality and viability of town centres, and if located on an edge of a town centre location, what the impact will be on in-centre trade/turnover. Furthermore, if located on an edge of town centre location, is the proposal of an appropriate scale (in terms of gross floor area) in relation to the size of the local centre (New Alresford). Annex D of PPS4 sets out Town Centre Health check indicators.

PPS4 provides a definition on the term 'edge of centre' locations which for retail purposes means well connected and within easy walking distance of the primary shopping area and means within 300m. The supporting statement submitted with the application explains that the site is 470m from the east of the defined primary shopping area.

Policy CE.16 of the local plan deals with new rural enterprises which form part of farm diversification, and allows their use, if they are consistent with the characteristics of the holding, re-use existing buildings, accommodate additional traffic without harming the character of the rural roads, and respect the local landscape character. Paragraph 8.31 - 8.34 of the Local Plan refers to new shops in rural areas, commenting that they should be located within the settlements, although it acknowledges that it may be desirable to allow farm shops which principally sell goods produced on the holding. It goes on to further advise that the potential impact on nearby village shops, volume of traffic likely to be generated and access and parking arrangements should be considered.

The application is retrospective, and seeks to gain consent for the changes to the building, and the associated use of that building for a mixed use comprising A1 retail, D1 beauty therapy and events and seminars and the provision of a refreshments to those uses.

This is contrary to the aims of government guidance in PPS4 and PPS7, and contrary to saved policy CE.16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review, therefore the principle of development is not acceptable.

It recognised however that the proposal is attractive to some local residents, as borne out

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

by the volume of support letters received. However these support letters note, amongst other things, that people make a special trip to this site, and it does not follow that they would then go onto Alresford Town Centre. Whilst it is possible to walk from the site into the town, this would take approx 5 - 10 minutes, which allows for crossing the busy road to access the footpath to the south of Bishops Sutton Road, and whilst some visiting members of the public would walk, it is highly probably that the majority of trips to this site would be by car. Those visitors by car would not leave their car at the site and walk into the town, and are unlikely to make linked trips to the town centre.

The application has sought to deal with the matter, by providing a retail assessment in support of the proposal. This retail assessment describes the premises as a plant centre, and that such establishments are in competition with other garden centres which do not constitute a main town centre use. However it later goes on to say that Long Barn Plant Nursery is not in competition with commercial garden centres.

The site is agricultural land, with a building allowed to service the use of this agricultural land and small ancillary sales of items produced on the holding. It is not a garden centre, and the majority of the goods for sale inside the building could be sold in the town centre. Furthermore the beauty therapy treatment rooms are typically a town centre use that should be provided within the existing centre.

PPS4 (policy EC.15.1) makes it clear that, in undertaking a sequential assessment flexibility by developers and operators should be a consideration, in terms of reducing the floor space of the development; innovative site layouts in multi storey developments with smaller footprints; reduced or re-configured car parking; and the scope for disaggregating specific parts of the retail or leisure use onto sequentially preferable sites.

It would be possible, in this case, to utilise more sequentially preferable sites, particularly for the retail and beauty therapists, and for some of the events and seminars undertaken at the site.

The retail assessment refers to this, but does not explore how the business could be more flexible and utilise more sequentially preferable sites. It only investigates one potential site (other than the application site) within Alresford Town Centre, which is the former Post Office, West Street, Alresford. And whilst the assessment of this site is undertaken in accordance with the Health Check Indicators for healthy town centres in Annex D of PPS4, the examination of other more appropriate town centre locations has not been explored by the applicant.

Furthermore, they state that the premises previously occupied by the applicants in East Street was forced to close due to higher levels of business rates that apply to companies who trade from more than one premises in Alresford. It is understood that if a business operates from more than one premises, and the combined rateable value exceed £18,000, then the business is not eligible from small business rate relief. Whilst it is accepted that this is a factor for the business operators, it is considered that this would not provide sufficient justification to grant permission contrary to policy.

The support for the proposal by the Council's Economic Development Officer is noted and whilst the benefits identified should be considered in the determination of this proposal, the general presumption against development in the countryside is a significant consideration in this application. Winchester's Economic Strategy was adopted in June

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

2010 and will form part of the Local Development Framework. However this has yet to be adopted for decision making purposes. The business model, if disaggregated as suggested in PPS4 could employ local staff in the town centre (as indeed it previously did) and staff involved in the horticultural activities of lavender production at the site and this would still accord with the aims of the Economic Strategy.

The majority of the external changes to the building are not in themselves harmful to the wider character of the area, which is discussed further below, but the proposed use is contrary to national and local plan policy, and according refusal is recommended.

The applicant's agent has suggested that they would be prepared to agree to the use of conditions to restrict the activity at the site. The beauty treatment rooms could be restricted to that use only by condition, and the opening hours restricted by condition. However the events/courses and seminars would be difficult to condition and difficult to enforce. Also it would be possible to restrict the nature of the sales by condition similar to that previously approved on application 09/00899/FUL:

"The areas shown for conservatory plants, general produce sales and covered open air sales on plan D9620.03 shall be used primarily for the display and sales of plants, etc. grown by Long Barn and Long Barn bi-products (products made by Long Barn using botanical ingredients, oils and extracts); no goods other than traditional gardening accessories such as pots, seeds, bulbs, plant containers, hand tools, gloves, raffia, twine, baskets, trugs and cloches shall be displayed or sold without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority."

However the range of goods for sale is tantamount to an unrestricted A1 use and the use of the building for the three aspects of development is contrary to national and local plan policy.

The application to increase retail floor area, along with beauty therapy facilities and the use of the building for events and seminars results in an unsustainable form of development outside the recognised settlement boundary of New Alresford to the detriment of the vitality and viability of the existing centre.

Design/layout

The design of the building has a pleasing appearance and is constructed of high quality materials. It is marginally higher than approved, and door openings and glazing has been altered. These do not compromise the overall design quality of the building.

To facilitate the use of the first floor, a number of rooflights have been erected to the front and rear of the building, the Head of Historic Environment comments that one of the attractive characteristics features of a timber framed barn is the scale of roof when compared to the lower main body of the building, and that such roofs should in her opinion not be uninterrupted. Whilst this comment is noted and it would be preferable for the roof to remain unaltered, the rooflights are not large, and sited quite low in the roof plane, and therefore do not dominant the roofscope and their overall impact is insufficient to sufficient to warrant a reason for refusal.

Car parking is provided to the front of the site and the surface is finished with gravel, between landscaped bays.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

Impact on the character of the area and neighbouring property

The proposal does seek to retain external features on the site, such as external lighting, CCTV, alarm system and an air source heat pump.

The CCTV, alarm system and air source heat pump are considered acceptable. The CCTV and alarm are sited inconspicuously on the building for site security. The Air source heat pump is to the rear of the building and is proposed to be screened. It is a sufficient distance from neighbours not to cause noise nuisance, and cannot be seen.

The lighting however to the car park area and at the site entrance is very prominent when switched on. Within the car park there is bollard lighting, at the site entrance, and the door entrance there are lanterns mounted on posts. Cumulatively the impact of this lighting is very noticeable and results in unacceptable impact on the countryside. The applicant acknowledges that the lighting is bright, and does not leave it on overnight, and they verbally confirmed that it was switched off at 5p.m or 5.30 p.m. when they leave the premises. However the site is proposed to be open until 9.00p.m. for events and seminars then the lighting would be on, and this would result in an unacceptable visual impact on the countryside harmful to the rural character of the area.

When assessing the previous application, to allow a variation of the range of goods sold from the site, it was not considered that the change would result in a significantly greater impact to the occupiers of the adjoining dwelling than the authorised use of the building as a market garden with ancillary sales.

The consideration now, in terms of neighbour amenity, must be whether the increased activity at the site, as a result of the retail and leisure uses, has an affect to the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings sufficient to warrant a reason for refusal. As discussed above, externally there are little changes to the visual appearance of the building. The proposal would allow a more intensive use of the site, and the opening hours for the retail and beauty therapy are proposed to be 9.00 – 5.30 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 9.00 – 5.00 p.m. Sundays and Bank Holidays. The use of the building for events and seminars is proposed until 9.00 p.m.

The use of the land for growing and harvesting lavender however is unrestricted, and there could be people engaged lawfully in this activity at any time. The issue therefore is whether the volume and type of traffic, and the associated coming and goings connected to the proposed uses is sufficient to demonstrate material harm to the occupiers of adjacent dwellings.

Officers consider that this in itself could not be substantiated. The dwelling to the west 'Hurdle House' is a detached grade II listed building, which is situated approx. 68m from the side elevation of the building, whilst the dwelling to the east 'Tralee' is situated slightly closer to the east elevation at approx. 54m, and it is proposed that refreshments would be served in the outdoor area to the east side of the Long Barn. There is however a straw bale wall that has been constructed under permitted development that encloses this outdoor seating and plant display area, and a mature hedge along the eastern boundary. Consequently given the degree of separation between the commercial activity and closest neighbours, a refusal on the basis of an un-neighbourly effect could not be substantiated.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

Landscape/Trees

The landscape architect has commented on the landscape plans and in principle raises no objection. However she does comment about the 8.00m wide buffer zone along the northern boundary commenting that it should be compatible with the SSSI management objectives. Further, she comments on the opportunity to improve the footpath which links the site to the town centre. If, in other respects, the proposal was acceptable then consideration could be given to requiring an off-site highway contribution towards this purpose.

Highways/Parking

The Highway Engineer has raised an objection to the proposal, principally on the sites' location outside the defined settlement boundary, which on sustainability grounds does not accord with PPG13. The objectives of PPG13 are to:

1. promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;
2. promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and
3. reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

In order to achieve this one of the objectives, when considering planning applications in rural areas, is to locate most development for housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and services in local service centres. Paragraph 35 – 36 of PPG13 deal specifically with retail and leisure uses and re-affirm the site selection process of preference for town centre locations, and consideration to edge of town centre locations, when there is a clear established need.

The Highway Engineer has also advised that no transport assessment was submitted with the application, and it is not therefore possible to calculate the additional trips that will be generated as a result of this proposal. He advises that the proposal, if approved, would generate additional trips over that approved and that a highway contribution is required in accordance with Hampshire County Councils Transport Policy. It is not possible to calculate this without the transport assessment.

Conclusion

It is acknowledged that the proposal has generated significant local support, although it should be noted, that whilst not on the same scale, there is also significant opposition to the proposal. Whilst the level of support is noted this in itself would not override national and local plan policy objections to the development.

Recommendation

Application Refused for the following reasons:-

- 1 The proposal is contrary to PPS4, PPS7, and PPG13 and Policy SF.1 and CE.16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review in that the proposed increase in retail floor space along with beauty therapy facilities and leisure uses for events and seminars, would result in an unsustainable form of development outside the recognised settlement boundary of New Alresford to the detriment of the vitality and viability of the existing centre.
- 2 The proposal involves development that cannot be reconciled with national planning policy guidance in PPG13 in that it would result in development that would be located in the countryside away from existing urban areas and would thus be over-reliant on the

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 17 February 2011

private car for access and transport purposes. This would result in an unacceptable increase in the number and length of car journeys to the detriment of the environment and the locality. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies T.1 and T.5 of the Winchester District Local Plan (Review).

3 The proposal is contrary to Policy DP.9 and T.5 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review in that it fails to make adequate provision for improvements to transport and the highway network in accordance with Hampshire County Council's Transport Contributions Policy 2007, such provision being required in order to mitigate for the additional transport needs and burden imposed on the existing network arising from this development.

4 The siting, type and number of lighting columns and bollards at the site is very prominent and results in an intrusive and over-lit feature harmful to the rural character of this countryside location contrary to policy CE.5, CE.16, DP.3 and DP.4 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review.

Informatives

1.The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Winchester District Local Plan Review 2006: DP.3, DP.4, DP.9, DP.11, CE.5, CE.10, CE.13, CE.16, T.1, T5, SF.1

South East Plan 2009: SP.3, CC.4, RE.3, T.2, T.4, NRM.4, NRM.11, BE.4, SH.1, SH.3, SH.8

Ms Julie Pinnock BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI
Planning Control Team Manager- East Winchester City Council
City Offices
Colebrook Street
Hampshire
SO23 9LJ

5th November 2010

Dear Ms Pinnock,

**Subject: Planning Application Reference 10/02580/FUL-W0644606
The Long Barn, -Bishops Sutton Road, New Alresford
Construction of mixed road development (Part retrospective)**

I write to state an objection to the Planning Application for the construction of a mixed development (Part Retrospective) on the site adjacent to Hurdle House in Bishops Sutton Road. My grounds for objection are that the applicants are in serious breach of the planning conditions that were imposed when the current permission to vary condition 5 of planning permission W06446/03 was granted. However, I am aware that the site developments and current commercial activity onsite, albeit in breach of the planning conditions, has widespread popular support among many residents in New Alresford.

The degree of popular support for this commercial development will undoubtedly have been influenced by the excellent public relations and marketing expertise of the proprietors, which has recently been helped by the award of a prestigious architectural award from the Alresford Society. While few recent buildings were eligible to compete for this award, the resulting front-page press publicity was a considerable public relations help to the applicants in encouraging local support for their undertaking. Nonetheless, this application has to be judged against the material planning considerations that apply, the site history and the significant breaches in the agreed planning conditions.

You will be aware that I opposed the application to vary the original conditions for this site on the following grounds;

Access – Access to the site is from the fast and narrow road, which is unsuitable for extra traffic generated by over commercialisation of the site. It could be dangerous for cars turning either way onto this road.

Pedestrian access is along a narrow and unkempt footpath on both sides of the road, with the need to cross from the better footpath across this fast flowing road.

Traffic consideration –the traffic flow into the narrow East Street town entrance is difficult. This road carries all vehicular movements into and from the town from/to the rural hinterland along the A31 towards Four Marks / Alton.

Impact on Amenity of Neighbouring Properties- The potential for a significant impact on the neighbour properties with an increase in Commercial activity on the site.

At the meeting considering this variation application I drew particular attention to the potential for over development of this countryside site, which seemed to me to be a real possibility and *likely to be in a business plan for the site*. In the event, the committee did not accept my representations and forecast, but imposed the current conditions that were designed to control such development. Unfortunately for the site neighbours my forecast has shown to be entirely accurate, which is why the current retrospective application is currently being considered.

Apart from the breach in the planning conditions there are the specific planning issues to explore, as we are now faced with the actuality of a commercial undertaking that has been established on the site and appears to be both popular and to be successfully trading. One of these issues has not, in my judgment, ever been properly addressed by the Highways Unit by means of gathering evidence of traffic movements past the site, with a professional assessment of the likely increase directly related to a commercial business at Long Barn. Hence on this occasion I would urge that a serious effort is made to assess the traffic impact of the business currently on site, before the committee considers the application.

The current application includes the following services which the neighbours state have an impact on their homes, which are located in the countryside and originally were adjacent to a quiet field, with minimal sales activity during the daylight hours. These are as follows;

External lighting
Alarm system (potential noise)
Heat Unit
Traffic/parking noise
People noise/ during outdoor events

The significance of these nuisances is a matter for judgment, but it is reasonable to point out that this commercial business in this countryside location is the result of 'planning creep', growing from permission to allow a minor business to trade with minimal traffic movements or people noise. A reasonable question to consider is; if the full of extent of the eventual business that was intended for the site was known at the start of the process, would the Planning Inspector have over ruled the City Council *on appeal*, to allow even a small scale retail operation on this site?

There seem to me to be three issues to consider, which are as follows;

- a. Would a precedence be established should the City Council give retrospective permission and thereby be seen to condone what have been clear and significant breaches in the Planning Conditions imposed and agreed in good faith, when the Variation Application was allowed?
- b. Is it reasonable to allow an exception be made to normal planning and enforcement rules to allow this successful business undertaking to continue on site, on the grounds that the business is popular, has created local jobs and is supported by the New Alresford Chamber of Commerce (except the lights), the Alresford Society and the Chamber of Commerce.
- c. Is it valid to consider the potential traffic and trading problems that would arise if this Trust owned site were eventually to be taken over by say a Major Nursery /Garden Centre / or Super Market Chain - once the commercial status of the site is established so close to the New Alresford Town Centre.

In conclusion, I request that this controversial application be referred to the DC Planning Committee for consideration of the issues drawn to your attention in this letter. This is not an application that can be determined under officer-delegated powers

Yours sincerely

Simon Cook
City Councillor-The Alresfords
733870