

22nd December 2021

Planning Department
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Town Hall
The Parade
Epsom Surrey
KT18 5BY

Dear Sir/Madam

Hobbledown Children's Farm, Horton Lane, Epsom KT19 8PT - Retrospective Planning Application for the erection of perimeter boundary fencing and installation of gas tank holder. Planning Portal Reference PP-10284838.

On behalf of our clients Hobbledown Ltd, Laister Planning Limited (LPL) is instructed to submit the enclosed full retrospective planning application for the erection of perimeter boundary fencing and installation of gas tank holder at Hobbledown Children's Farm, Horton Lane, Epsom. The proposed description of development is as follows:

"Erection of perimeter boundary timber fencing, relocation of entrance gates and installation of gas tank holder (Retrospective)."

The planning application is supported by the following documents:

- Completed Application Form and Certificates;
- CIL Additional Information Form
- This Cover Letter;
- 'Location Plan' Drawing; Drwg. No. 188-0.011 Rev. 03
- 'Proposed Site Plan' Drawing; Drwg. No. 188-3.011 Rev. 02
- Fence Elevation Details
- Gas Tank Holder details
- Relevant Planning Application Fee: £234

This application has been submitted via the Planning Portal, application reference PP-10284838 and fee paid online by the applicants.

Hobbledown Children's Farm is a family attraction comprising of a fantasy themed adventure park and zoo with indoor and outdoor children's play areas and apparatus on a site of approximately (20.24 hectares (50 acres)). Hobbledown is located on the edge of Horton Country Park, to the south of Chessington, west of Ewell and, and north west of Epsom.

The site has drawn attention from the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's planning enforcement department, with matters of perceived breaches of planning control at the site being clarified in emails from Mehdi Rezaie (Head of Development Management (Interim)) on the 12th and 18th August 2021. The application therefore seeks to regularise matters in relation to works that have been carried out to perimeter fencing and gated access to the service yard area on the north-eastern corner boundary of the Hobbledown site, and also the installation of a Gas Holder within the service yard area again in the north-eastern corner of the site.

Any proposed development must be judged against the relevant Development Plan and other government planning policy and guidance. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 together require that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purpose of this application and development management decisions, the Epsom and Ewell adopted Local Plan comprises of the Core Strategy, adopted in July 2007, and the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD), adopted in September 2015. A review of the Local Plan is underway, and preparation of the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan 2017-2037 has commenced. However, this is at an early stage and further very much focussed on housing growth and is therefore not relevant to this current application.

Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD), advises that support will be given to proposals which make a positive contribution to the Borough's visual character and appearance. In assessing such proposals, the following are considered:

- compatibility with local character and the relationship to the existing townscape and wider landscape;
- the surrounding historic and natural environment;
- the setting of the proposal site and its connection to its surroundings; and
- the inclusion of locally distinctive features and use of appropriate materials

Policy DM10 of the DMPD states that development proposals will be required to incorporate good design. Further In respect of residential amenity Policy DM10 seeks to safeguard residential amenities in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight/sunlight and, noise and disturbance.

The application relates to the functional service yard area, which supports the wider operations of the established farm park business; including operations relating to animal welfare and the general on-going maintenance and upkeep of the visitor attraction site. This part of the Farm Park site contains a range of buildings of typical functional agricultural design, with buildings along the boundary being generally of timber cladding finish under corrugated sheet roofing.

The site is bounded to the north by McKenzie Way, with the boundary of the Long Grove Conservation Area (part of the Epsom Hospitals Cluster Conservation Areas) lying beyond to the north.

The fencing that has been installed consists of close-board fencing, painted black to reflect the dark colouring of existing timber buildings located within the boundaries of the Hobbledown site, that has been affixed to the fencing which previously formed the boundary of this part of the site. The typical height of the fence is 2m and its alignment is detailed on the accompanying 'Proposed Site Plan' drawing (Drwg. No. 188-3.011 Rev. 02).

The fencing was installed following the operators of Hobbledown becoming aware of third-party observations and complaints regarding the unsightly visual appearance of the existing service yard area at the site. In response to the complaints the service yard was tidied up and the fencing installed to provide screening of the essential service yard and associated activities. Additional planting has also been introduced on the inner boundary which once established will provide additional screening at a higher level.

The fencing is in contrast to the green metal and wavey board timber clad fencing that was previously in place, which did not fully screen the area. The replacement fence is functional, and provides effective screening to the service yard does not appear out-of-place in the context of the timber buildings along the boundary of the Hobbledown site.

The fencing is also considered key in addressing the complaints that have been raised in terms of the unsightly nature of the service yard area.

Any visual harm caused by the fencing is not considered to be significant, or to the detriment of the visual amenities of the site or the wider street-scene setting. The fencing further provides an effective screen of the working service yard area, positively impacting on the general visual appearance of the site, when viewed from the adjacent highway, by eliminating views of general storage and on-going business operations of the site.

Further fencing continues within the site along the north-western boundary of the service yard area at a height of ~2.3m, again with the intentions of screening views of the service yard area from glimpsed views that may be experienced from along the route of the Public Right of Way that runs along the northern boundary of the Hobbledown site.

It is also proposed to relocate the existing boundary gates a further 2m into the site (as shown on Drwg. No. 188-3.011 Rev. 02), to allow for a larger area for vehicles to pull off the main carriageway before entering the site. This would be to the benefit of highway safety and the immediate road network, avoiding potential disruptions and obstructions of the carriageway when larger delivery vehicles are attending the site and are not able to immediately enter at times when the gates are closed. This resolves a known existing issue.

Aside from the relocating of the entrance gates, the boundary fencing does not change the boundary's alignment, affect pedestrian or vehicular access arrangements or visibility at the point of access and is therefore not considered to be the detriment of the safety and convenience of highway users.

Overall, the fencing is considered to be of benefit the visual amenities of the site and its wider setting, not only sustaining the character and appearance of the area, but also enhancing visual amenities through appropriate screening of the service yard area.

Turning to the second element of the application, a concrete plinth has been constructed within the service yard area to facilitate the installation of an above ground Gas Holder, required to provide heating for the site. The Gas Holder is of typical appearance for such installations. It is screened by the existing perimeter fencing and natural screening and close-boarded fencing to the field side boundaries and is not generally visible beyond the boundaries of the site.

Given this limited visibility the Gas Holder is not considered to result in detrimental impacts on the visual amenities site or its wider setting, thereby sustaining the existing character and general appearance of the area. Further, that any perceived visual harm

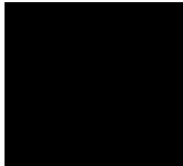
would not be so significant that it would outweigh the benefit to the existing well-established business, in supporting its continued successful operations.

Overall, the development is considered to be appropriate within the context of the site and is not considered to be to the detriment of the surrounding historic and natural environment. The development utilises materials that are sympathetic to the context of the Farm Park site and its wider setting. Further, given the nature, scale and siting of the proposals it is considered that they would not give rise to any issues in relation to detrimental impacts on ecology or neighbour amenity, and can therefore be considered acceptable in these regards.

We hope that officers would agree that the proposals are in broad compliance with the provisions and aims with policies of the Development Plan and are appropriate, and that therefore the application can be determined to a positive outcome.

We trust the above details are sufficient to enable the Council to register the application and we look forward to receiving your response in due course; however, should you require any further details or clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely
for Laister Planning Ltd



Bob Neville
Senior Planner