

Planning Department
Hart District Council
Civic Offices
Harlington Way
Fleet
GU15 4AE

Cheyenne House
West Street
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7EQ

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering several lines of text.

6 February 2023

Dear Planning Department

Planning Application for Change of Use to External Storage at Land at Stillers Farm, Ewshot Lane, Ewshot, Farnham, GU10 5BT, Planning Portal Reference PP- 11877986

Please find enclosed a Full Planning Application relating to the site at Land at Stillers Farm, Ewshot, Farnham, GU10 5BT. The planning application seeks permission for:

Change of use of land to external storage yard, including erection of four storage containers, with associated surfacing.

This application seeks planning consent to allow for the use of the land to store building materials in association with a new construction business which intends to operate from the site.

This letter considers the proposals in relation to the local development plan policies, as well as those contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is set out under the following headings:

- Site and Surroundings
- The Proposals
- Planning Policy Context
- Planning Considerations
- Conclusion

The proposals are supported by the following application drawings:

Site Location Plan	TP(01)01
Existing and Proposed Block Plan	TP(01)02
Existing Site Plan	TP(01)03
Proposed Site Plan	TP(01)04
Proposed Elevations	TP(01)05

Site and Surroundings

Stillers Farm lies within open countryside to the east of Ewshot Lane, in Farnham. Fronting Ewshot Lane the wider site includes the Grade II listed farmhouse as well as a Grade II listed barn. In addition, there is now a complex of commercial buildings, some of which were formerly agricultural barns. These separate the application site visually from the listed buildings.

The site which is the subject of this application is located to the rear of the complex, behind a large commercial building which is currently in use as a car garage. The site location and photos of the site are provided below (Figures 1 to 4).

Figure 1. Site Location



Figure 2. Application site showing existing commercial building on boundary



Figure 3. Southern end of application site, looking back into wider commercial site



Figure 4. Southern end of application site



The application site can be accessed via Ewshot Lane (Figure 5), past the other commercial premises. There is also an access track to the north of the site which connects to Ewshot Lane further along the road.

Figure 5.
Access into site



Designations

The site is located within the countryside and is within a Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding. The site does not contain any buildings and is not within a conservation area, though, as noted above, there are two Grade II listed buildings in close proximity, albeit disconnected visually from the site by the modern buildings in commercial use.

It is identified in the SFRA as being within a Causal Area in terms of flooding.

Planning History

The site has a complex planning history, relating to both the farm itself and the business units. The applications which are most of relevance are detailed in the table below.

18/00527.AMCON	Variation of Condition 2 to allow alterations to the approved parking layout for staff, visitors and operational parking to the layout shown on the submitted plan 1200:PL2:O4C (attached to Planning Permission 17/02183/FUL dated 05/01/2018)	Refused 02/05/2018
17/02183/FUL	Proposed change of use of the existing building from storage of white goods to a vehicle repair workshop with associated parking (retrospective)	Granted 05/01/2018
16/03123/LDC	The use of the building for vehicle repairs and servicing along with use of the external yards for parking of vehicles for staff, customers and awaiting repair or servicing.	Refused 06/07/2017
16/03128/LDC	Parking of vehicles on the site in connection with the businesses in occupation including parking for staff, customers and parts delivery vehicles. The areas in question are noted on the enclosed plans and are in line with historical use of the site over the preceding 10 years.	Granted 19/05/2017
16/01168/LDC	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing use of the Old Dairy building as a car repair workshop	Refused 19/08/2016
16/00070/LDC	Use of the land to the side and rear of Unit 3, Stiller's Farm, for the storage of builder's plant. Equipment and buildings materials (Lawful Development Certificate for Existing Use)	Refused 08/03/2016
01/01417/COU	Change of use of stock building to storage for electrical appliances (as previously approved under temp PP 00/00174/TEMP 15/06/01)	Granted 24/12/2001

The Proposals

The proposals put forward in this application relate to the use of the site for storing building materials, associated with a building business. The business is not associated to any of those already on the wider site, and it will not be open to the public.

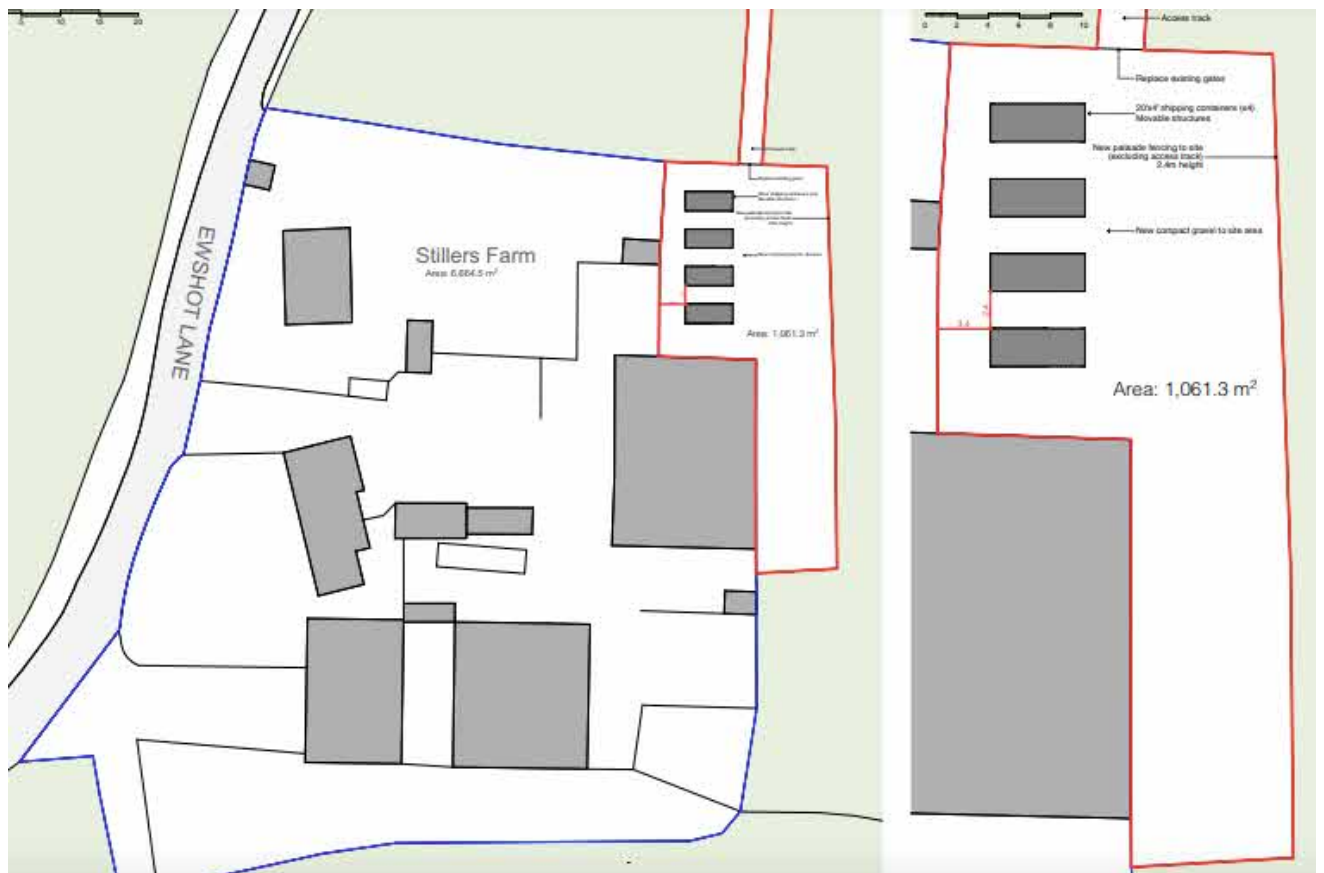


The scheme includes the erection of 4 storage containers to the eastern boundary of the site. The remainder of the site will be covered with compact gravel, with new perimeter fencing and a new gate to the access lane. An extract from the proposed site plan is included below (Figure 6.).

The containers will be 6.1 metres in length, 2.6 metres high, and 2.4 metres wide. A double door will be located on the front end of each container, facing into the site.

The containers will provide essential storage for building materials, providing an opportunity to tidy up the site, regulate the use and create a storage area that can be well managed and maintained into the future.

Figure 6. Proposed site plan



Surrounding the site will be a 2.4m palisade fence, replacing the existing poor quality fencing that is currently on site.



Access is proposed from the existing track to the north of the site, which connects to Ewshot Lane. This will be a dedicated access for the site and will ensure that there is no conflict with vehicles accessing the other commercial units and properties on the wider site.

Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 sets out the framework for how planning policies are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF remains a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The NPPF in Section 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development) establishes that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Further to this Paragraph 8 states that:

“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives”.

These include an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective all of which are the key threads running through the proposals for the Site.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Localism Act are the principle statutory considerations in town planning for England. In this regard, Section 38 of the 2004 Act requires local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with an adopted statutory development plan unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise.

In this instance, the development plan for Hart comprises the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 and the Saved Policies from the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996 - 2006. The relevant policies from the Local Development Plan include:

- Policy SD1: Sustainable Development
- Policy ED1: New Employment
- Policy ED2: Safeguarding Employment Land and Premises (B use classes)
- Policy ED3: The Rural Economy
- Policy NBE1: Development in the Countryside
- Policy NBE2: Landscape



Policy NBE5: Managing Flood Risk
Policy NBE8: Historic Environment
Policy INF3: Transport
Saved Policy GEN1: General Policy for Development
Saved Policy GEN2: General Policy for Changes of Use
Saved Policy GEN6: Noisy/Un-Neighbourly Developments
Saved Policy CON3: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

Policy NBE1 is the principal policy when assessing the appropriateness of development within the countryside. It confirms that development proposals will only be accepted where they meet a number of criteria. This includes providing business floorspace to support rural enterprises, converting redundant agricultural buildings for appropriate uses, or where the development is located on previously developed land suitable for the proposed use.

In this instance, the proposals represent the provision of storage to support a rural enterprise. In such cases Policy NBE1 then references the need to also comply with Policy ED3.

This policy also seeks to support the rural economy and proposals for economic uses in the countryside. The policy supports development proposals for the provision of business floorspace that would enable the establishment of rural enterprise, and it specifically references the acceptability of land uses falling within the B category, including B8 (storage and distribution), which the proposals would fall within.

The acceptability of the principle of the proposed use in the countryside is therefore confirmed and complies with the intentions of Policy ED3. Permitting the application would allow a new building business to operate in the local area, generating money and employment for the local economy.

This is further supported by Policy ED1. This policy states that employment proposals for B use classes be supported in the countryside provided they comply with Policies NBE1 and ED3, which has already been demonstrated.

Notwithstanding this, Policy ED3 further requires the proposal to be of an appropriate scale in terms of its impact on the landscape, residential amenity, accessibility and impact on the local highway network. These issues will be addressed in the sections below.



Heritage Impact

In line with the NPPF and local Policy NBE8, development proposals should conserve or enhance heritage assets and their setting. The location of the site and the storage containers has been arrived at following an assessment of the site in relation to its impact on the nearby listed buildings.

The site is located to the rear of the wider site, separated from the listed buildings by the other units on site. Consequently, the impact of the scheme will be limited and will have no greater impact on the setting of these buildings than the existing units surrounding them. The proposals therefore conserve the existing setting of the listed buildings, in line with policy requirements.

Landscape and Ecology

There are no trees or planting on site at present and the majority of the grassed area has become covered with building debris over time and consequently offers little to no ecological or landscape value.

It is anticipated that the proposals will have a positive impact on the landscape character by replacing the poor quality fencing and clearing the site of existing debris.

The site sits to the rear of an existing complex of commercial units and is therefore the provision of storage containers is entirely in keeping with the character of the immediately surrounding landscape.

The proposals will therefore have no detrimental impact on landscape or ecology features and nor will the scheme cause any harm to the character of the surrounding area. There is consequently no conflict with Policy ED3, NBE2 or NBE4 in this regard.

Residential Amenity

In line with Policy ED3, an assessment of the proposals and their potential impact on residential amenity has been undertaken. The site is located to the rear of the existing commercial units, a significant distance from any residential properties. The containers will be storing building materials accessed only by the applicant and not open to the public. Consequently, journeys to and from the site will be minimal, as will the movement of materials. This will ensure that noise pollution is minimal and only during working hours.

As the proposals are only for the storage of materials, with no construction taking place on site, there also won't be any issues in terms of air pollution.



As such, it is not anticipated that there will be any negative impact on residential amenity as a result of the proposals.

Highways

The site benefits from a dedicated access which will not be in conflict with any other users of the wider site. There is adequate space within the site for vehicles to access the units, park, and exit without any issue.

The access track joins Ewshot Lane where there is sufficient visibility to be able to turn onto and off the lane without issue. The proposals therefore comply with Policy ED3 and INF3.

Conclusions

The application proposes the following development:

Change of use of land to external storage yard, including erection of four storage containers, with associated surfacing.

The site is located to the rear of an existing complex of commercial units and the proposed change of use is therefore entirely in keeping with the surrounding land uses. The proposals seek to tidy up and regularise the use of the site and provide storage space for a well-established local business enterprise which will help to support the rural economy.

The proposals have been demonstrated to comply with both local and national planning policy and we would therefore, respectfully, request that planning permission is granted.

I trust that the application is in order, but should you require anything further do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Scott BA (Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI
Managing Director

