

Ms. T. Coleman
Director of Planning & Regeneration
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead House
Millmead
Guildford
Surrey
GU2 4BB

December 2023

Our Ref: J004688

Dear Ms Coleman,

**RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR THE DEMOLITION OF EXISTING
OUTBUILDING AND ERECTION OF OUTBUILDING CONTAINING GARAGE AT
GROUND FLOOR WITH STORAGE SPACE IN THE ROOFSpace AT PARK
BARN FARM, WISLEY COMMON, WOKING, GU23 6QS**

I refer to the above. WS Planning & Architecture have been instructed by Mr Alderson to submit a retrospective application for the demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of outbuilding containing garage at ground floor with storage space in the roofspace at Park Barn Farm, Wisley Common, Woking, GU23 6QS.

Please find enclosed the following drawings to support the request:

J004688 DD-01 Site Location Plan
J004688 DD-02 Site Block Plan
J004688 DD-03 Plans and Elevations

Application Site

The application site comprises a large dwelling with associated barns and garages/outbuildings in its surroundings. According to the Guildford Borough Council proposals map, the application site is located in the Green Belt, but not bounded by any other designations. Having examined the Environment Agency's long-term flood risk information, the site is in a mixture of Flood Zones, which will be explored later. The site does not have listed building status.

Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government's most up-to date vision for future growth. The document introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Ministerial Foreword highlights that "*sustainable development is about positive*

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growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations". The opening statement goes on to state that *"development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay"*.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 sets out the three over-arching objectives of sustainable development: *"the economic role, the social role and the environmental role"*.

Paragraph 10 states *"so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development"*.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that plans and decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of plan-making this means *"plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development"*. In terms of decision-taking this means *"approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay"* and *"where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date"*, permission should be granted unless the Framework provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.

Paragraph 38 highlights that *"local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way"*.

Chapter 11 of the NPPF is titled "Making Effective Use of Land" where *"planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions"*.

Chapter 12 refers to "Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places" and confirms that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Paragraph 131 states *"good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"*.

Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) *"will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development."*
- b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.*

- c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).*
- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit.*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

Paragraph 139 considers that *“development that is not well designed should be refused, especially when it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design”.*

Chapter 13 identifies the importance of “Protecting Green Belt Land”. Paragraph 142 states *“the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.*

Paragraph 152 states *“inappropriate development, is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.*

Paragraph 154 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, as per criteria (d), exceptions to this include *“the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces”.* Criteria (g) also refers to the limited infilling of partial / complete redevelopment of previously developed land, and would provide an exception to inappropriate development subject to its impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

National Design Guide (2021)

The latest update of the National Design Guide was published in January 2021 and illustrates how well-designed places can be achieved in practice.

The long-standing, fundamental principles for good design are that it is: fit for purpose; durable; and brings good delight. Hence, the underlying purpose for design quality and the quality of new development at all scales is to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities.

The guidance confirms that buildings are an important component of places and proposals for built development are a focus of the development management system. However, good design involves careful attention to other important components of place including layout, form, scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing.

Well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create their physical character. The ten characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of community and they work positively to address environmental issues affecting climate. The ten characteristics are context; identity; built form; movement; nature; public spaces; uses; homes and buildings; resources and lifespan.

Guildford Borough Council Local Plan (2003)

The Guildford Borough Council Local Plan was adopted in January 2003 and provides the planning framework for the Borough. It covers a wide range of spatial planning issues, including economic development, regeneration, housing, environmental protection, transport, health and education.

Policy G1 refers to 'General Standards of Development' where the Council will work to permit proposals if they comply with the relevant Local Plan policies and the requirements are met.

Policy G5 relates to 'Design Code' where development proposals that do not comply with the Council's design code will not be permitted.

Policy RE1 refers to 'Extent of the Green Belt' and highlights the extent of the Green Belt in the Borough.

Policy RE2 is titled 'Development within the Green Belt' which states development will be regarded as inappropriate with the exception of some purposes including agriculture and forestry and other essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation which would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015 – 2034 (2019)

In April 2019 Guildford Borough Council adopted their Local Plan: Strategy and Sites that sets out policies to guide decision-making on planning applications and identifies sites for development.

Policy P2 is titled 'Green Belt' where, in line with the NPPF, the construction of new buildings will be regarded as inappropriate unless it falls within the list of exemptions identified.

Policy D1 relates to 'Place Shaping'. It states all new development will be required to achieve high quality design that responds to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is set.

Proposal

The proposal comprises a retrospective application for the demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of outbuilding containing garage at ground floor with storage space in the roofspace. The material planning considerations are discussed in turn below.

Metropolitan Green Belt

The application site is situated in the Metropolitan Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. The NPPF (2023) highlights that the Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt and the protection of its essential characteristics. Although new development is regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, there are exceptions to this including the replacement of an existing building for another building provided it is in the same use and is not materially larger than the building it replaces, as well as the redevelopment of Previously Developed Land. The land is unarguably Previously Developed, and as such the principle of developing the site is clear. The proposal also includes the replacement of an existing building, and as such further displays the acceptability of the Principle of Development, subject to the below considerations.

Harm to the openness of the Green Belt can be broken-down in to some key categories, being, the spatial impact, the visual impact, the duration of development and the degree of activity likely to be generated, in accordance with recent Court of Appeal and Supreme Court Judgements (*Turner v SSCLG & East Dorset Council [2016] EWCA Civ 466* and *Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) & Oxton Farm v North Yorkshire CC & Darrington Quarry Ltd [2018] EWCA Civ 489*).

In terms of the spatial impact, the proposal seeks to replace the previously existing outbuilding with another. Whilst the outbuilding is materially larger, the outbuilding utilises the footprint of that previously existing, thus resulting in a spatial increase that is not considered as substantial. Therefore, from a spatial perspective, there would be a relatively minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

In relation to the visual impact, it is key to understand the surroundings of the application site. The outbuilding features within a well developed plot, consisting of numerous existing outbuildings, large barns, and a large dwelling. The relatively small increase spatially would not appear out of line within its surroundings, and as such the Green Belt. Additionally, the high-quality design utilises mostly a timber based exterior that provides a more rural feel than other building materials. Furthermore, the application site is surrounded by substantial woodland and vegetation, which provides a clear buffer to the surroundings. The utilisation of soft landscaping could also be conditioned to supplement the Green Belt surroundings and thus allow for a positive impact to the openness of the Green Belt. It is therefore considered that there would be no undue visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt, given the relatively small spatial increase in combination with the developed surroundings, and the substantial existing vegetation.

When considering the duration of development, it is of course clear that the development would be permanent. However, it is the case that this replaces a previous permanent structure, and thus, no harm is identified in this aspect.

With regard to the degree of activity likely to be generated, the outbuilding replaces that previous, and whilst involves some storage space within the upper floor, the building would remain as utilised by those who already occupy and utilise the site. The degree of activity generated would therefore likely not be of an increase to that previous. No harm to the openness of the Green Belt is therefore identified in this aspect.

It is therefore considered that there would be no undue harm to the openness of the Green Belt, and that therefore the replacement of an existing building within 'previously developed land' would not be inappropriate development.

Design & Character

Policy D1 of the Guildford Borough Council Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (2019) refers to place shaping and requires new development to be of high quality. The outbuilding has been designed in accordance with Policy D1 to ensure the openness of the Green Belt is maintained, and the character and appearance of the surrounding area is protected.

The design features mostly natural timber-based panelling, which provides an attractive aesthetic in line with the more rural surroundings, whilst also utilising traditional clay tiles that result in an overall high-quality design. This design is in line with the more rural surroundings, and vegetation that surrounds the site, that would therefore not result in an 'out-of-character' development.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy G1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003) sets out the general standards for development to provide an appropriate environment for future occupiers whilst not adversely impacting upon the amenity of occupants of existing nearby buildings. Due to the nature of this proposal, there will be no negative impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

The outbuilding is surrounded by neighbours owned by the applicants, and as such, no nearby neighbours would be affected.

Flood Risk

It is noted that the application site partially lies within FZ 2 & 3. In this regard, a separate document 'Flood Risk Assessment' has been prepared and submitted which provides an overview of this matter. In this instance it is considered that Flood Risk is not an issue.

Summary

This proposal comprises a retrospective application for the demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of outbuilding containing garage at ground floor with storage space in the roofspace at Park Barn Farm, Wisley Common, Woking, GU23 6QS.

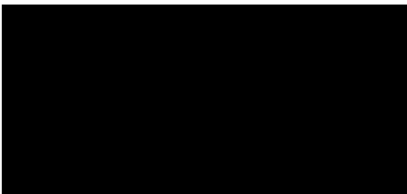
The application site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt, however, utilises a replacement outbuilding within previously developed land that is of a design and scale that results in no undue harm to the openness of the Green Belt as to warrant refusal of the application.

Furthermore, the outbuilding features a high-quality design that is in line with the character of the surrounding area, whilst not being of undue impact to any neighbouring amenity, and as such, in line with the relevant policies of Guildford Borough Council's Local Plan.

The proposal therefore adheres to the relevant central government guidance contained within the NPPF and the PPG, as well as the local planning policy guidance contained in the Guildford Borough Council Local Plan (2003) and the Guildford Borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015 – 2034 (2019).

For the reasons stated within this letter, it is requested that the officer appointed to determine this application, look upon the proposal favourably.

Yours sincerely,



Felix Smithson
Graduate Planner