

**Shantock Nurseries
Shantock Lane
Bovingdon
Hertfordshire
HP3 0NG**

**Planning Application for the Change of Use from
Nursery to Car Park**

Prepared on behalf of

Shantock Nurseries

by

Malcolm Scott Consultants Limited

November 2023

Quality Management

	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3	Version 4
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Introduction

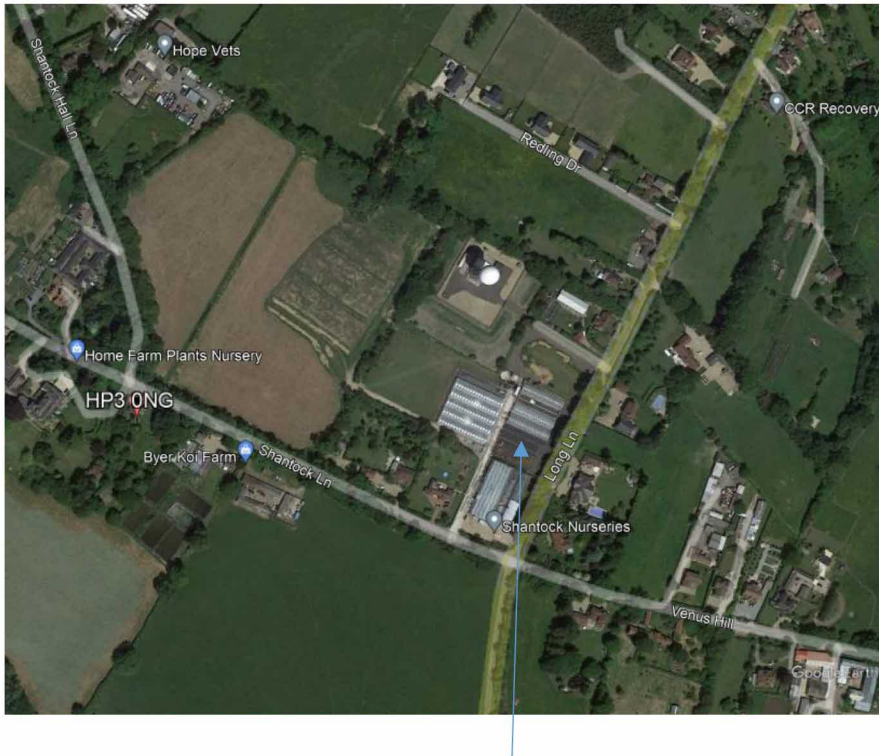
Malcolm Scott Consultants Ltd have been instructed by the owners of Shantock nurseries to submit a planning application for the retention of a vehicle parking area at their nursery on Shantock Lane. The following statement sets down the need for the parking area and an assessment of the relevant planning policies contained in the Dacorum Borough Council's adopted Core Strategy (2013).

1. The Site

Shantock Nurseries lies on the north-east side of Shantock Lane approximately 964m south of the settlement of Bovingdon. Shantock Lane has a 40 mph speed limit past the site.

The site lies in Flood Risk Zone 1.

The site amounts to approximately 5.4ha.



Aerial image showing location of Shantock Nurseries

2. The Background to the Proposed Development

Bryant Nurseries was established in 1959 and produced over 20 million plants in 2022 from their two sites: one at Water Lane on the edge of Bovingdon and one at Shantock Lane. The business employs 24 full time and 11 part-time staff. The plants are delivered throughout the UK.



***Existing production facilities at Water Lane
in one of the 108 production glasshouses***



Existing production facilities



Plants waiting to be dispatched

The nursery grows plants several months in advance of customers placing firm orders and therefore, inevitably, the actual number of plants required will depend upon the situation prevailing at the time with weather being one of the main factors as to how many plants are required. To avoid losing customers by not having sufficient plants in stock to meet customer orders several months down the line the nursery must grow what they anticipate to be the likely maximum demand and this leads to surplus stock later on. If surplus stock cannot be sold it is composted.

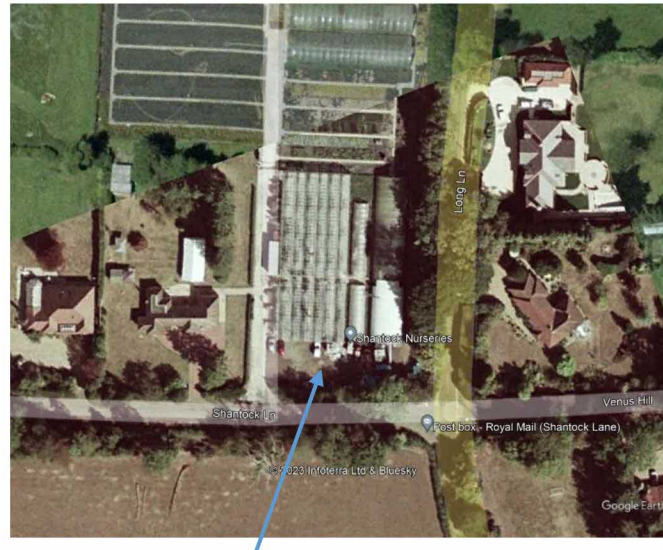


Surplus plant production awaiting composting

It is essential for Bryant Nurseries to find buyers for the surplus plant stock as the cost to the business is in excess of £0.25 million per annum. The surplus plant stock can be sold to local customers however such as landscape gardeners, local Councils, local businesses and domestic gardeners. Of the two nursery sites the Shantock Road site is better suited for this function and not the Water Lane site as the latter does not have the facilities for dealing with

customers other than some wholesale customers. The Shantock Road site grows approximately 750,000 plants per annum which are also sold wholesale as well as to visiting customers, local authorities, landscape gardeners and commercial businesses.

All deliveries to the nursery were made via the Shantock Lane site access, where in 1996 a vehicle parking area for approximately 14 vehicles was created along the southern length of the site.



The vehicle parking area in 1998.

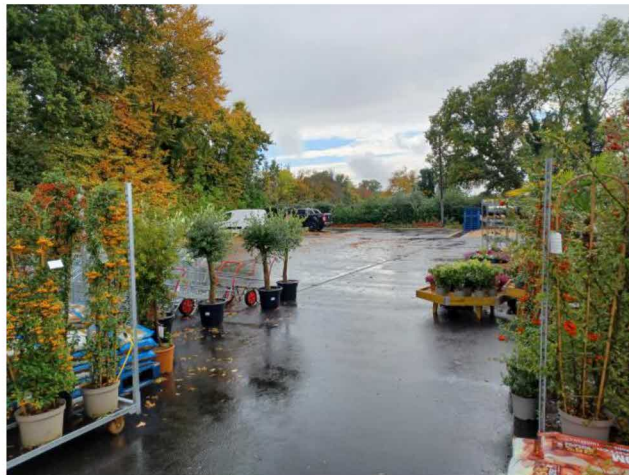
With the opening of the goods delivery and dispatch access on Long Lane at the northern end of the site in 2021 there are now very few deliveries using the Shantock Lane access and as a consequence the need for the nursery vehicle loading/offloading yard from this direction has declined significantly. At the same time, however, the demand for vehicle parking has increased with the growth in direct sales to landscape gardeners, domestic gardeners and local businesses such as pubs, hotels, golf clubs and so on. The approved, but yet to be implemented, glasshouse block of 2,784m² will also increase the need for 2 more staff parking spaces.

In addition, with the closure of a number of retail nurseries and plant centres in the locality (such as Garden Scene on Chapel Croft which was redeveloped for housing, Mediterranean Nursery in Flauden Lane which closed in 2021 and Stoney Lane Retail Nursery/Cash and Carry which also closed in 2021) more customers have visited Shantock Nurseries to buy plants.

The original parking capacity of 14 vehicles has proved inadequate and to avoid vehicles parking on Shantock Lane a small extension was laid down in 2022 for a further 17 vehicles (involving the removal of part of a polytunnel together with resurfacing the former hardcore/concrete yard to make it safer for visitors to use. The additional capacity has been based upon assessing vehicle arrivals over the past 3 years when it was found that the parking space that was originally constructed proved to be inadequate at peak times – please refer to Appendix 1.



***The car park as laid down in 1998 (resurfaced with gravel)
with the 2022 extension visible in the background***



The car park extension laid down in 2022

The following section assesses the extension to the vehicle parking area having regard to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan

3. The Town Planning Case

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that applications for planning permission are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan consists of the Dacorum Borough Council's adopted Core Strategy (September 2013). Material considerations include the NPPF (July 2021).

3.2 The Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the change of use (and resurfacing) of a nursery service yard to a vehicle parking area at Shantock Nurseries, Shantock Lane, Bovingdon.

3.3 The Development Plan

The nursery lies in the open countryside outside the boundary of a settlement and is in the Green Belt. The nursery site is not covered by any landscape or protected habitat designations.

The following comments are made in relation to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan.

Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy

A strategic objective of the Core Strategy is to promote a vibrant and prosperous economy including supporting rural enterprises.

Comment

Bryant Nurseries, who operate the Shantock Nurseries site and the Water Lane site employs in total 35 full and part-time staff and are a major contributor to creating a vibrant and prosperous rural economy. The proposed development is part of the continued investment in support of the business.

Policy NP1: Supporting Development

This policy states that the Council will take a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals that help to improve, inter alia, the economic conditions in Dacorum. The policy notes that if there is no policy relevant to the consideration of a planning application, or policies are out of date, then permission will be granted unless NPPF policies or material circumstances indicate otherwise. There are no specific policies concerning development at horticultural nurseries. The NPPF notes that, paragraph 84, decisions should enable the development of agricultural businesses. The proposed development is to assist in the continued success of Bryants Nurseries.

Policy CS1: Distribution of Development

This policy encourages development that supports the vitality and viability of local communities. Bryants Nurseries employs 35 people and development at the Shantock Nurseries site will continue to support the local community through providing jobs and inward capital investment.

Policy CS5: Green Belt

The proposed extension to the existing parking area for vehicles needs to be considered against its impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and upon the 5 purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

In terms of impact there is both a spatial and a visual element to be assessed. The proposed use of a former area of hardstanding and horticultural polytunnel which in total amount to 728m² out of a site area of some 54,000m² will, in spatial terms, have a very small impact. The hardcore already existed and has been used by vehicles for deliveries and dispatches of plants and growing materials for many years. The visual impact would relate to the presence of more vehicles being parked and given that the site is very well screened by mature perimeter planting there is little, if any, visual impact.



View of the extended vehicle parking area with surrounding mature planting



View looking east along Shantock Lane with the extended vehicle parking area to the left

In terms of the 5 purposes of included land in the Green Belt the use of 859m² for parking vehicles will have no adverse effect.

There are very special circumstances that support the proposed development being the need to accommodate increased visitors to the site including businesses collecting plants for re-sale. By being able to sell off surplus plant stock to visiting consumers and businesses this reduces the amount of plant waste and, given the closure of 3 local nurseries, provides the local community with a facility that has met a clear need over the past 3 years and which is expected to increase over the next few years.

Policy CS7: Rural Areas

This policy notes that agricultural businesses will be supported including uses associated with a diversification project. Bryants Nurseries have identified a means of disposing of surplus plant stock and by doing so this contributes to the continuing vitality and viability of the business. The proposed development is an essential part of this small diversification.

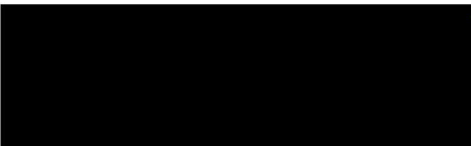
Material Considerations

The NPPF encourages rural enterprises to diversify and expand. The small-scale development being proposed is necessary for Bryant Nurseries to continue to expand.

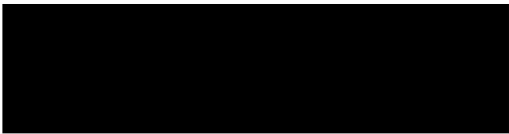
Conclusions

There is a clear need for the extra vehicle parking spaces both for the additional staff to be employed in the future when the approved glasshouse block is implemented and the increase in visitor numbers to the site. It is important that the business continues to invest in its facilities and this is supported at both the development Plan level and by the NPPF policies.

The proposed 728m² extension to the vehicle parking area utilises existing hardcore (503m²) which has been laid down for over 20 years and the base of a former polytunnel (225m²). The areas have been resurfaced for safety reasons as the hardcore was uneven. The area does not impact upon the openness of the Green Belt either in spatial or visual terms and it does not compromise the 5 purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

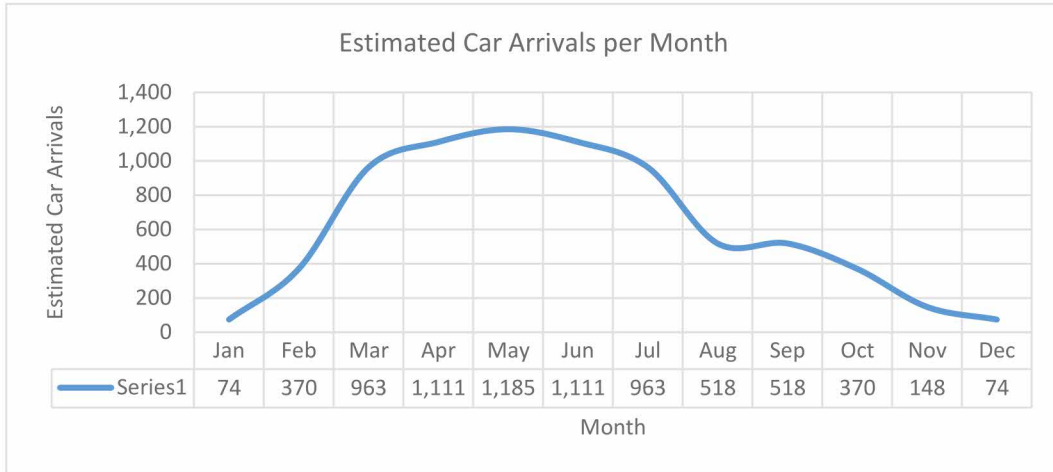


Appendix 1 : Calculation of required car parking capacity.



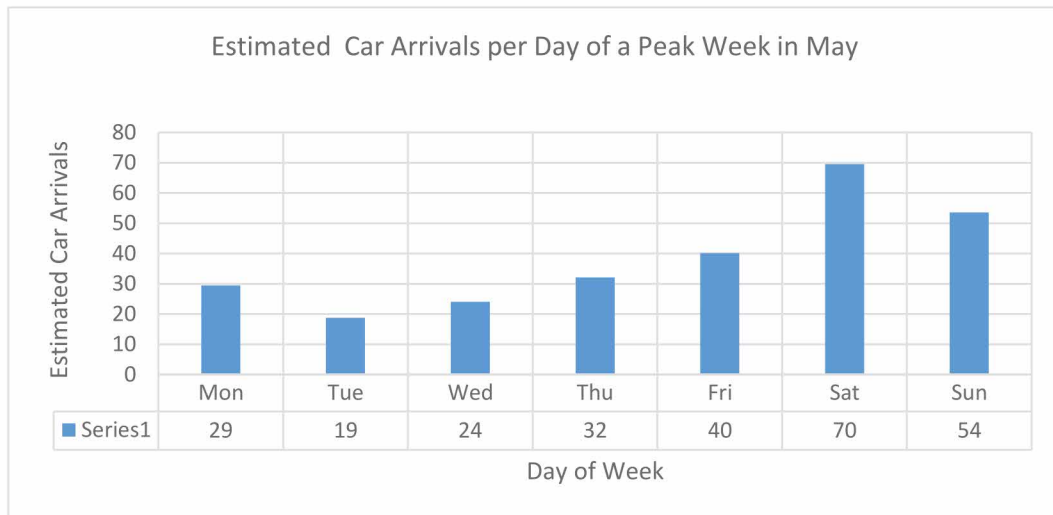
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Estimated Car arrivals	74	370	963	1,111	1,185	1,111	963	518	518	370	148	74	7,405
	1%	5%	13%	15%	16%	15%	13%	7%	7%	5%	2%	1%	100%

59%

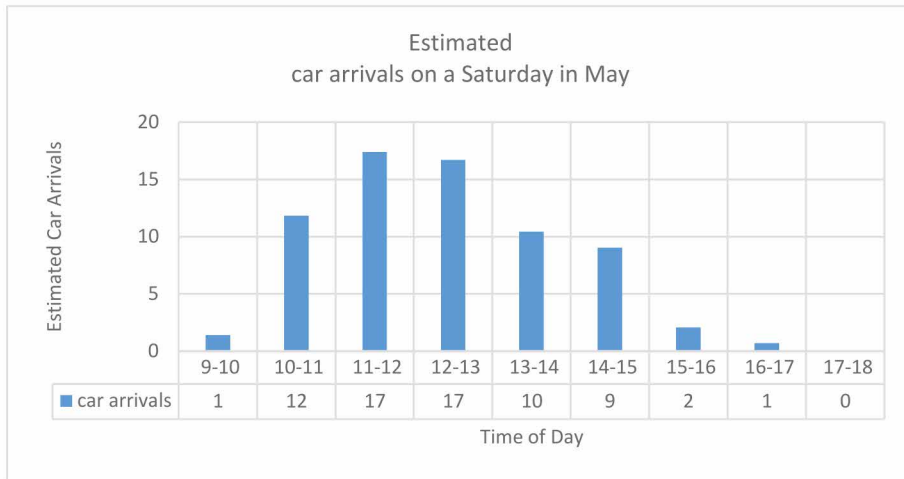


Peak month 1,185
per week 268

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
Estimated Car arrivals	29	19	24	32	40	70	54	268
	11%	7%	9%	12%	15%	26%	20%	100%



Car arrivals on a Saturday			Car arrivals on a Monday		
time of day	car arrivals	%	time of day	car arrivals	%
9-10	1	2%	9-10	4	13%
10-11	12	17%	10-11	4	15%
11-12	17	25%	11-12	5	16%
12-13	17	24%	12-13	4	15%
13-14	10	15%	13-14	4	15%
14-15	9	13%	14-15	4	13%
15-16	2	3%	15-16	2	8%
16-17	1	1%	16-17	1	4%
17-18	0	0%	17-18	0	1%
	<u>70</u>	<u>100%</u>		<u>29</u>	<u>100%</u>



parking spaces needed

	customers	nursery/ retail staff	total	no provided	surplus/ deficit
9-10	1	3	4	21	-17
10-11	10	5	15	21	-6
11-12	14	5	19	21	-2
12-13	14	5	19	21	-2
13-14	9	4	13	21	-8
14-15	8	4	12	21	-9
15-16	2	3	5	21	-16
16-17	1	2	3	21	-18
17-18	0	2	2	21	-19
	<u>58</u>				

MSC2211/CP/ST

February 2023

(Feb 2023.CoU.statement.shantock.cp)

