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Date: 25/01/2017

Dear 

Location: The Orchard, Forest Road, Effingham Junction, Leatherhead, KT24 5HE
Regarding: Erection of two detached houses, modification of The Orchard existing house and bungalow in rear garden.
Reference: 16/A/00891

Thank you for your pre-application enquiry received on 30 November 2016. In response to your enquiry I hope that you will find the following information helpful.

Site description / constraints:

- Green Belt, inside the identified settlement area of East Horsley
- Risk of flooding from surface water – 1 in 1,000 years
- 400m-5km buffer of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- there is a commercial garage (car sales / repairs / MOT's etc) to the front of the site, comprising a single storey building across the width of the site with forecourt parking.
- to the rear of the site is a two storey detached dwelling (The Orchard). This property is landlocked with no vehicular access and only a pedestrian access running down the side of the commercial premises to the front of the site. The property has a sizeable rear garden which backs on to the railway line.
- there are mature trees on both of the side boundaries of the dwelling site. These side boundaries form the ends of rear gardens of properties in Howard Road and Lovelace Close.
- surrounding properties are predominantly two storey detached and semi-detached residential dwellings of a mix of styles.
- the front of the site comprising the commercial garage premises and forecourt is contaminated land

Planning considerations:

There are two elements to the proposal:

- 1) the replacement of the garage premises to the front of the site with two detached dwellings and



the provision of a vehicular access to serve the existing dwellinghouse (The Orchard) to the rear.
2) the erection of a detached bungalow to the rear of the site, accessed via the new vehicular access from Forest Road.

It is noted that this pre-application enquiry follows an accompanying pre-application enquiry for a terrace of three dwellings on the front of the site (to replace the existing garage premises) - GBC ref: 16/A/00886.

Principle of development - loss of the existing use

These comments are as previously set out in relation to the accompanying pre-application enquiry 16/A/00886.

- Existing and allocated business, industrial and warehousing are safeguarded under saved local plan policy E3 which sets out that the loss of these premises will not be permitted unless:
 1. The retention of the land or premises has been explored fully without success; or
 2. The land or premises are unsuitably located in terms of its impact on the environment, levels of traffic movement, its accessibility to public transport and its link with the infrastructure, and its impact on the amenity of the area or adjoining occupiers.*And* there is suitably located land or premises either on the market or with outstanding planning permission, for any displaced firm.
- Paragraph 51 of the NPPF supports the change of use of commercial buildings currently in the B2 use classes to residential where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate. The loss of the B2 use is therefore acceptable in principle subject to complying with the relevant criteria discussed above. Paragraph 51 of the NPPF post dates the saved Local Plan and is therefore considered to carry greater weight when assessing the loss of the commercial use.
- The Council acknowledges that the borough is currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites and therefore there is an identified need for additional housing in the borough.
- However in order for the change of use of the existing B2 use class to be acceptable there must not be strong economic reasons why such a development would be inappropriate.

In this case the existing building appears to be currently occupied. The fact that the business premises is still in use is considered to be a strong indicator that the site is a viable business location. No information regarding this has been submitted with this pre-application enquiry. Therefore there is considered to be a strong economic reason to refuse the loss of the B use from the site.

Principle of development - Green Belt considerations

- the application site is located within the defined Settlement Boundary of East Horsley and is surrounded by built development. Policy RE3 of the saved Local Plan 2003 allows for small scale housing development appropriate to the scale of the locality and paragraph 89 of the NPPF allows for 'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing



development'.

- in this case the proposal would result in the demolition of the existing garage and the erection of two detached dwellings to the front of the site and the erection of a bungalow to the rear of the existing dwelling at The Orchard. It is difficult to assess the overall impact of the development as no elevations have been provided of the existing garage or the proposed houses.
- as with the accompanying pre-application enquiry for the front of the site, I would again raise concerns with the overall footprint of the development. The site plan shows that the two detached properties would cover a much deeper footprint than the existing garage building and by virtue of their two storey height, the buildings will be much taller and bulkier than the existing building.
- the footprint of the proposed bungalow is also substantial, almost filling the plot which is made up from a large proportion of the existing rear garden serving The Orchard.
- the scale of development shown on the submitted drawings would indicate that the overall harm to the openness of the Green Belt would be significantly greater than the existing development.

Design and layout

- the proposed detached dwellings would be considerably greater in depth when compared to the existing garage building, extending significantly beyond the front and rear elevations of the dwelling to the north of the site. The plot widths would also be very narrow in relation to the surrounding plot widths, with the proposed dwellings positioned much tighter to the plot boundaries compared to surrounding properties. Whilst it is acknowledged that this would allow for the provision of a vehicular access to serve The Orchard through the middle of the site, the resultant long narrow plots, depth of the dwellings and limited spacing to boundaries, would appear overly cramped and very much at odds with the character of the surroundings.
- whilst no elevational drawings have been provided at this stage it is clear that the dwellings would be at least two storeys in height and when combined with the significant footprint of the development it is considered the overall scale of the development would be out of keeping with the more modest properties to the north and south of the site.
- there is no specific objection to the provision of a vehicular access to serve The Orchard (subject to highways considerations). However, the scale of development to the front of the site would need to be reduced in order to accommodate this. It would be preferable to see the access to one side of the site, but with sufficient space retained to the side boundary and any adjacent buildings to allow for a landscaped buffer between the access and surrounding development.
- I have significant concerns regarding the provision of a detached bungalow to the rear of the site. In particular, the proposed access to serve the new bungalow will run in very close proximity to the side of the existing dwelling at The Orchard and the proposed subdivision of the rear garden will leave a very small garden retained for the existing two storey dwelling. Furthermore, the size of the footprint of the proposed bungalow would almost fill the plot, resulting in very limited spacing to boundaries and a limited garden area to serve the proposed bungalow. All of these elements would result in a very cramped and contrived form of development that would be at odds with the context and character of the surroundings.



- as mentioned above, the side boundaries of the site are currently comprised of mature trees. These make an important contribution to the character of the area and would provide important screening of any proposed development to the neighbouring residential properties. The proposal shows the bungalow would be positioned in very close proximity to these trees, particularly on the northern boundary. I therefore have concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on the established tree line and the amenity it provides to surrounding residents.
- due to the lack of any elevational drawings it is not possible to provide any comments on the proposed design of the dwellings.
- notwithstanding this, given the constraints of the site, I am not convinced that any form of new dwelling to the rear of the site could be supported by the Council.

Neighbour amenity

- due to the significant depth of the proposed dwellings to the front of the site and their proximity to the side boundaries, I am concerned the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on the neighbouring dwellings to the north and south of the site in terms of overbearing impact and loss of light.
- it is noted that the property to the south has a mixed use of shop at ground floor and residential flat above. There is particular concern regarding the impact of the proposal on the rear windows to the residential flat and the rear garden.
- due to the separation distances to the dwelling to the east, The Orchard, the two proposed dwellings to the front of the site would not have a detrimental impact on their residential amenity.
- there is however concern regarding the proposed access drive to serve the proposed bungalow to the rear, running in such close proximity to the side of this dwelling and its garden and subsequent concerns regarding noise and disturbance.
- the proposal will also result in a significant reduction in the garden area for The Orchard.
- as the new dwelling to the rear is proposed to be a bungalow, I do not have concerns regarding the impact of this element of the proposal on neighbouring amenity, in terms of an overbearing impact or loss of light or privacy resulting from this proposed building. However, it would need to be ensured that the relationship between the bungalow and the existing dwelling at The Orchard would not result in unacceptable overlooking between these two dwellings.

Car parking and highways

- the parking provision shown for each dwelling appears to be sufficient, in accordance with the Council's Vehicle Parking Standards SPD.
- there is a requirement to provide covered and secure cycle parking, this need to be located close to entrances for accessibility and security.



- it is noted that a new central access is proposed. We would seek comments from Surrey County Council regarding highway safety and capacity. They provide their own pre-application service if you want further advice on this issue.

Surface Water Flooding

- the site is shown on our mapping system as being within an area of surface water flooding risk - 1 in 1000. We would advise that you seek independent advice from a drainage consultant in order to ensure that any future proposal does not make the current situation worse.
- the Council has produced Surface Water Management Plans, please refer to these documents

Contaminated land

- our records show that this site is designated as contaminated land.
- any subsequent application should include a phase one contaminated land survey and any recommended additional surveys.
- if you require further information regarding this please contact our Environmental Health Team directly.

Sustainability

- as set out in the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2011, there is a requirement to achieve a 10 percent reduction in carbon emissions through the use of on site low or zero carbon technologies and include water efficiency measures in line with building regulations.
- this information can be submitted with the application or can be secured by condition.

Trees and ecology

- without the benefit of additional information regarding these elements it is not possible to provide full comments on these matters.
- as noted above, there are mature trees towards the rear of the site. We would expect to see a full Arboricultural Report and landscaping scheme submitted with any subsequent application.
- given the semi-rural location of the site and the fact that the existing building is to be removed a bat survey should be undertaken to assess the impact of the loss of the building. Any further recommended surveys should be undertaken prior to submission of any future application.

S.106 requirements:

Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area

- the site lies within the 400m to 5km buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. All net new dwellings will be required to contribute to the provision of avoidance measures (SANG and SAMM) through a financial contribution in line with the Council's adopted tariff. More details can be found on the Council's website.



- Note: The SANG tariff excludes the minimum legal costs (approx. £670) and monitoring fee (£500 per point in time monitored) per obligation, but includes the SPA access management contribution. Please refer to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy (2009-2016) for further information.

Suggested amendments:

- detailed justification needs to be put forward in terms of the loss of the existing business use at the site.
- overall scale of development should be reduced. It is considered that a pair of two storey semi-detached dwellings to the front of the site would be more appropriate in this location, with the proposed new vehicular access moved to one side. The height and depth of the dwellings and spacing to boundaries should be commensurate with the depth of the buildings to the north and south of the site.
- the proposed bungalow to the rear of the site should be omitted from the scheme.
- surveys would need to be carried out regarding trees, land contamination and bats.
- I would be happy to consider an amended scheme with more detailed information through a fresh pre-application enquiry.

Validation requirements:

Please review the Council's local validation list and local validation checklist, available on the Council's website at www.guildford.gov.uk

Estimated timescale for application:

This would be a minor application and therefore has a target determination period of 8 weeks.

Relevant planning history:

None relevant.

Conclusion:

Please note that this advice represents officers' informal opinion based upon the information you have provided. It is given without prejudice to any decision the Council may make on any subsequent formal planning application. A planning application will be the subject of publicity and consultation in accordance with the Council's procedures. These and other matters which may subsequently come to light, may result in additional issues being raised that are pertinent to the determination of the application.



Yours sincerely

Miss K Williams
Planning Officer
Planning Services

