

Application for Determination

Parish	Mettingham		
Reference	BA/2013/0207/FUL	Target date	04.09.2013
Location	Land at Marton House, Low Road, Mettingham, Bungay		
Proposal	Demolition of existing storage buildings and erection of two detached buildings providing office accommodation, ancillary staff facilities and secure storage in connection with existing builder's yard		
Applicant	Mr Anthony Sprake		
Recommendation	Refuse		
Reason referred to Committee	Request by Ward Member		

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The site under the ownership of the applicant contains a dwelling house and associated builder's storage yard within a small rural parish, Mettingham. The house and builder's yard sit facing Low Road to the south east and agricultural land surrounds. Low Road is a minor rural road which loops the main road running from Bungay to Beccles, the B1062. The site sits on the outer limit of the valley of the River Waveney. The land then steeply inclines to the south east up to the B1062. The application site itself contains the builder's yard only. A small number of dwellings sit to the south west end of Low Road, approximately 75m from the application site, offering a small scale and domestic character to the immediate vicinity. Larger properties and agricultural holdings dot the road to the east.
- 1.2 Currently a builder's business operates from the house and the yard. An office is located within the dwelling and a storage building covering approximately 60m² to the rear which is accessed via the private drive of the dwelling. The storage yard has a separate access to the south west and contains a number of small single storey covered sheds covering approximately 97m². The business employs 5 full time staff. The use operated without the benefit of planning consent for over 10 years. In 2012 a Certificate of Lawful Use was issued to regularise the use.
- 1.3 The application is for the proposed demolition of existing storage buildings within the storage yard and the erection of two detached buildings,

providing office accommodation (to replace the office accommodation within the house), ancillary staff facilities, and secure storage. Building A is proposed to be in two parts one section is proposed to be approximately 9.5m long, 5.3m wide and 5.7m to the ridge and is proposed to contain the a machinery store, the second element is proposed to be approximately 12m long, 8m wide and 4.6m to the ridge and is proposed to contain a reception, lobby, kitchen, office and staff room. Building B is proposed to be mono-pitched, and approximately 15m long, 5.3m wide and 4m to ridge at the front and 2.5m to the ridge at the rear and is proposed to contain secure storage and open fronted racks. The buildings are proposed to be constructed with brick plinths with green stained weatherboarding above. The roofs are proposed to be profiled steel sheet, powder coated grey. 2 parking areas are proposed to be located to the front of the secure storage, 1 to the front of the reception area and 3 to the side of the machinery store.

2 Site History

In 2012 a Certificate of Lawful Use Certificate was issued for the use of the land as a builders yard- BA/2010/0213/CLUED.

3 Consultation

Broads Society - No objection.

Parish Council - We consider the application should be approved as:

- The proposed application would improve the existing site and provide extra security and storage for the builder.
- However, although there would be no increase in traffic, there were concerns that this type of development might not be appropriate along a country lane.
- In addition, it was felt that the size and height of the office could be reduced to lessen the visual impact from the B1062.

District Member - This application should be determined by the Broads Authority Planning Committee for the following reasons (summarised below):

- The application appears sympathetic to its surroundings
- Would enhance the look of the site
- Machinery could in theory already be stored on site, they would be better covered in a purpose built building rather than being left visible
- The agricultural look of the proposed buildings would suit the countryside more than the existing layout
- Meets policies CS1 and CS18
- The proposal would enhance and improve, by consolidating a business with a good reputation built up over many years, by the applicant, a business that has brought employment to the Waveney valley and will continue to do so in years to come, conforming with the social and economic objectives of the NPPF.

- The proposal would enhance and improve, to tidy up the working environment while sustaining a safe working environment AND enhancing the surroundings on the periphery of the Broads area in which it sits and the outlook from across the valley, conforming to the environmental aims of the NPPF.
- The proposal would enhance and improve, by consolidating the business on one site this offers the opportunity to remove commercial use including an office, storage and car parking presently accommodated in the adjacent dwelling house weighing in favour of the proposed development
- The proposed development fully accords or exceeds with all the NPPF aims and objectives

Highways Authority - Due to CLU I don't think I can refuse this, therefore recommended condition:

Before the development is commenced details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the means to prevent the discharge of surface water from the development onto the highway. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the access is first used and shall be retained thereafter in its approved form.

Suffolk County Council - Awaiting response

Environmental Health - Awaiting response

4 Representation

None

5 Policies

- 5.1 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and have been found to be consistent and can therefore be afforded full weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

Core Strategy (CS) (2007)

[Core Strategy \(Adopted Sept 2007\).pdf](#)

CS1- Protection of Environmental and Cultural Assets

CS16- Access and Transportation

CS18- Development in Sustainable Locations

CS22- Preservation of Employment Sites

Development Management Plan DPD (DMP) (2011)

[DMP DPD - Adoption version.pdf](#)

DP1- Natural Environment
DP2- Landscape and Trees
DP4- Design
DP11- Access on Land

- 5.2 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have been found to lack full consistency with the NPPF and therefore those aspects of the NPPF may need to be given some weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

Development Management Plan DPD (DMP) (2011)

DP18- Protecting General Employment
DP28- Amenity

- 5.3 Material Planning Consideration

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

[NPPF](#)

6 Assessment

- 6.1 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are the principle of the development, impact on the landscape, design, highways, trees, ecology, and neighbouring amenity.

Principle

- 6.2 In terms of the principle of the development it is acknowledged that the use of the builder's yard has been established and was regularised via a Certificate of Lawful Use and it is considered reasonable for the operator to want to consolidate the business into one site and to expand. Policy DP18 of the Development Management Policies DPD seeks to protect existing employment uses. The NPPF seeks to support economic growth in rural areas and promotes the development of land-based rural businesses. There is therefore clear support for the principle of the use in a rural area at both local and national levels

- 6.3 Notwithstanding the above, the application site is situated within the Broads Executive Area and the NPPF is clear in outlining that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection. It is therefore important to ensure that any development is appropriate in landscape terms. It is considered that the support for rural prosperity and the need to balance this with landscape protection is also reflected within the NPPF, where paragraph 14 specifically identifies the Broads as an area where development should be restricted. This approach is also taken in the Development Management Policies DPD.

Landscape

- 6.4 The Broads Authority Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) describes the area as:

'Overall a calm and tranquil pastoral area with a strong visual and physical connection between north and south of the river. West of Wainford Road is however subject to greater visual and noise impacts from built development and traffic... The valley sides are quite pronounced in part, particularly to the south between Wainford and Benstead...The openness of the area and the steepness of the valley sides means development on the upland has significant visual impact' LCA (2006).

- 6.5 The Waveney Valley is pronounced in this area due to the sloping valley sides. The grazing marshes of the valley floor are tranquil and open making any development within this area visually prominent. A number of larger agricultural units, such as the maltings and silos to the north of the application site are visually prominent.
- 6.6 In terms of the application site, the existing use on the site is relatively modest in terms of visual impact both from the road and from the open Marshes. It is considered that the additional accommodation on the site represents a significant intensification on the yard in terms of built development. The existing storage facilities on the site are relatively low key and modest as regards their visual impact, they are low in height and in the main consist of informal storage. The buildings which do exist are single storey with low flat pitch roofs. These are barely visible above the hedge line from the marshes or road. It is considered that the proposed new buildings will have a significant additional visual impact over the existing situation.
- 6.7 In terms of the built development within the yard which accommodates the use, this comprises the 97m² of sheds and other buildings. The application proposal comprises new buildings with a footprint of 225m² which represents a substantial increase in built development; there is also in addition the new first floor accommodation which adds a further 80m² of new floorspace. It is acknowledged that these new buildings will also replace the 60m² storage building to the rear of the dwelling and the office within the dwelling. However, it is still considered, overall and on balance, that this represents a substantial expansion and intensification. The applicant has provided a table setting out the existing and proposed floor areas and this is attached at Appendix 2.
- 6.8 Although it is appreciated that there are other large agricultural buildings within the immediate vicinity these are considered to have a closer and more significant cultural link to uses in the countryside and are of an agricultural rather than an industrial character.
- 6.9 For proposals which represent such an increase in built development, officers would expect to see more substantial boundary screening and landscape enhancements to be submitted as part of the scheme. It is therefore considered that there would be an adverse impact on the landscape character contrary to the objectives of the NPPF and Development Management Policies, particularly CS1 and DP2, which are fully consistent with the

objectives of the NPPF. It is acknowledged, however, that this could be agreed via planning condition.

- 6.10 In addition, although the principle of moving the office accommodation away from the dwelling and into the main site is considered acceptable, there would be concerns regarding the total separation of the uses. Currently this is a business use directly associated with a residential property, however the expansion as proposed would create a business unit capable of operating on a stand-alone basis. This would be of a very different character to either the existing character or the prevailing local character, and would have an adverse effect on this character. Overall and on balance it is considered that this level of industrial activity is not appropriate for the area. Whilst the retention of the link between the dwelling and the business could be secured by a Section 106 Agreement or Planning Condition it is not considered that this would overcome the policy objection.

Design

- 6.11 In terms of detailed design the proposed buildings are industrial in appearance and are considered to be out of character with the mainly domestic ribbon development to the end of Low Road in terms of both scale and appearance. The low pitched roofs proposed also conflict visually with this domestic character. The layout of the buildings also maximises the visual impact of them when viewed from the marshes and road as they virtually take up the complete width of the site. The form and scale of the buildings are therefore considered to have an adverse impact on the domestic character of the immediate vicinity and wider views from the grazing marsh contrary to Development Management Policies, particularly DP4, which is fully consistent with the objectives of the NPPF.

Highways

- 6.12 In terms of the impact on highways, the Highways Authority has not objected to the application due to the established use. They had originally expressed concerns due to the impact of the increase in use of the site entrance which would result from the separation of the domestic and commercial use, particularly given that currently, the site entrance is obscured (being screened by a tall boundary treatment) meaning that forward visibility is seriously constrained and the applicant does not propose improvements to address this. They do not, however, raise a formal objection.
- 6.13 It is the case that there is an established use here, and the CLEUD authorises the use of the existing yard (with its 97m² of buildings) which is accessed directly off Low Road; in addition there is use of the domestic access to Marton House, again off Low Road, to access the storage building (of 60m²), office within the dwelling and for the parking of staff vehicles. In terms of the two accesses, the access to the dwelling is of a modern standard with visibility splays (albeit that sideways visibility is blocked by a domestic boundary wall), whilst the access to the yard comprises simply an opening in a lleylandii hedge and does not meet acceptable visibility standards.

- 6.14 The relocation of all these uses to the new yard would result in increased use of the yard access and there will be an adverse impact on highway safety, particularly given the expansion of the operation. It would be difficult, however, to justify a refusal of permission on highways grounds in the absence of a formal objection from the Highways Authority.

Trees

- 6.15 There are two large Oak trees and an Ash on the western boundary of the site which overhang the site. There is also a well maintained hedge on the site frontage comprising both Elm and Leyland Cypress.
- 6.16 Although it is acknowledged that it is the applicant's intention to retain the trees and hedges currently it is unclear whether the development would have a detrimental effect on them as a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement has not been submitted. It is considered that the trees and hedging along with additional planting should be retained ensuring the retention of a viable 'green' screen along this boundary with open countryside. As the impact on the existing vegetation is unclear and as there is no additional appropriate planting proposed the development is considered to be contrary to Development Management Policies, particularly DP2, which is fully consistent with the objectives of the NPPF.

Ecology

- 6.17 Although it is acknowledged that the proposal itself is unlikely to have an adverse impact on either Protected Species or habitat of importance, the NPPF encourages the incorporation biodiversity enhancements which are proportionate to the amount of development proposed. It is considered that appropriate enhancements could be included but have not been formally submitted, contrary to Development Management Policies, particularly DP1, which is fully consistent with the objectives of the NPPF.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.18 Given the existing established use of the site and as the buildings may enclose any existing noise that currently takes place, externally it is not considered that there would be significant impacts on neighbouring amenity. This is consistent with Development Management Policies, particularly Policy DP28, which is fully consistent with the objectives of the NPPF.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Whilst the principle of consolidating the use of the business at one site and providing appropriate office and storage facilities is considered acceptable in principle it is considered that the proposed intensification of use and significant increase in built development would have a detrimental impact on the landscape character and is inappropriate in this rural location which is afforded equivalent landscape protection of a National Park. There are concerns over the impact on highway safety. It is not considered that sufficient information has been supplied to be able to properly assess the impact on trees. It is also not considered that appropriate landscape or biodiversity

enhancements have been included. Accordingly, this application is being recommended for refusal.

8 Recommendation

8.1 Refuse.

9 Reasons for Recommendation

9.1 In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the development is not acceptable in respect of Planning Policy and in particular the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CS1, CS16, CS18 and CS22 of the Core Strategy (2007) and DP1, DP2, DP4, DP11, DP18, and DP28 of the Development Management Policies DPD (2011).

List of Appendices: APPENDIX 1: Site Location Plan
APPENDIX 2: Use % table submitted by applicant

Background papers: Application File BA/2013/0207/FUL and BA/2010/0213/CLUED and BA/2013/0207/FUL

Author: Kayleigh Wood

Date of report: 29 August 2013

APPENDIX 1

BA/2013/0207/FUL - Marton House, Low Road, Mettingham
Demolition of existing storage buildings and erection of two detached buildings providing office accommodation, ancillary staff facilities and secure storage in connection with existing builder's yard.



APPENDIX 2

The areas of Marton House which are used for the business , and existing storage at the yard, compared to those proposed are as follows (in square metres):

Use		at Marton House		in proposed reduced scheme
Machinery store/secure storage		60		85
Reception		11.5(ground floor office)		22
Stairs, lobby, kitchen, wc		24		22
1st floor office		1st floor office 25.5 (office over garage)		21
Staff room				14
		Existing at Yard		Proposed at Yard
Single storey secure storage		97 (total of covered storage)		37
Open fronted racks				30
		218	TOTAL	231

*The areas are reasonably comparable, with the difference largely due to the machinery store, which is a facility that does not exist at present, as the machines are stored on sites where they are being used.