Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/0836
Butlers Ghyll Farm, Pollards Way, Southwater, West Sussex, RH13 9AQ

DESCRIPTION:
Alterations to existing building to create new offices.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
None directly relevant to this application.

SITE AND SURROUNDS
The application site is located outside the built-up area boundary and within a countryside location. The site comprises the main offices and workshop of SCA contained within a large steel framed industrial building to the southeast of a larger commercial site. The remaining areas of the site are open and used for storage of the heavy plant and equipment used by the company.

The character of the surrounding area is a mixture of semi-rural and urban. The site is bound by the A24 to the west with the modern residential development located within the built-up area boundary of Southwater further to the west. To the north-east there is a caravan park and there are rural residential properties and farm buildings to the south and east.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
The application seeks to alter the existing building to create new offices within a new mezzanine level to the southern end of the building. The building would also be adapted to form new fenestration at ground and first floor levels to the south and eastern elevations.

The overall GIA of the existing building is 1673.6m^2 (1582m^2 to the ground floor and 91.6m^2 to the first floor). The proposed total GIA is 1802m^2 (1582m^2 to the ground floor and 220m^2 to the first floor), with the proposed office accommodation representing an additional 128.4m^2.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
Policy 9 - Employment Development
Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking

Southwater Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019-2031):
SNP14 – Adequate provision of car parking
SNP16 – Design

Southwater Parish Design Statement

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES
Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk.

Consultations:
INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS
HDC Environmental Health: No adverse comments to, conditions recommended.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES
WSCC Fire: Comment. Having viewed the plans for the planning application no DC/24/0836 for the alterations to existing building to create new offices, the nearest fire hydrant for the supply of water for firefighting is 980 metres away, 8900 metres further than the 90-metre distance required for a commerical premises. If an alternative supply of water for firefighting is to be considered it will need to conform with the details identified in Approved Document-B (AD-B) Volume 2: B5 section 16 and agreed with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

WSCC Highways: No Objection: -

The site is accessed from privately maintained Pollards Way/Drive which is a no-through road. This joins with publicly maintained highway at the A24 dual carriageway (via left in/left out only). The LHA has reviewed data supplied to WSCC by Sussex Police over a period of the last five years. There has been a recorded injury incident on A24. However, from inspection of incident data this was in the opposing dual carriageway (north bound) and not related to use of site access/junction with A24, which was previously improved under DC/18/2729.

It is not proposed to increase the footprint of the building, but rather to rationalise and improve office accommodation connected with the existing Southern Crane & Access use on site. In doing so an additional 128.4sqm floor space is internally proposed but no new staff or increase in vehicle movement to/from site is anticipated. It is not clear from the red edge plan where the existing staff parking/arrangements are – however, it does appear that there is sufficient space on site for vehicles to park and turn and this is some distance from the public highway.

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network,

Natural England: No Objection, concur with the conclusion of your authority's HRA appropriate assessment insofar that adverse effects on the integrity of the Arun Valley Designated sites can be ruled out, as such no objections subject to the: delivery, management and maintenance of measures identified in the water neutrality statement to achieve water neutrality.

Parish Comments:
Object, due to plans being omitted from the application and those submitted not clear. Issues with the water mitigation measures submitted. Lack of sufficient information to make an informed recommendation.

Representations:
None received.

Member Comments:
None received.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:
The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 10 of the HDPF, Rural Economic Development, states that sustainable rural economic development and enterprise within the district will be encouraged in order to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. In the countryside, development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle. Any development should be appropriate to the countryside location and must:

1. Contribute to the diverse and sustainable farming enterprises within the district or, in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, contribute to the wider rural economy and/or promote recreation in, and the enjoyment of, the countryside; and either

    a. Be contained wherever possible within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion or, in the case of an established rural industrial estate, within the existing boundaries of the estate; or

    b. Result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside particularly if there are exceptional cases where new or replacement buildings are involved. New buildings or development in the rural area will be acceptable provided that it supports sustainable economic growth towards balanced living and working communities and criteria a) has been considered first.

Policy 26 of the HDPF relates to countryside protection, stating that outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and meet a specified criterion, which includes enabling the sustainable development of rural areas.

The proposed office accommodation would be used in associated with the established existing occupant of the site and would be contained within the frame of the existing building. It is considered that the purpose and nature of the accommodation would not create any conflict with the above policies, with the development acceptable in principle, subject to detailed considerations.

Design and Appearance:

Policy 32 of the HDPF states that good design is a key element in sustainable development and seeks to ensure that development promotes a high standard of urban design, architecture, and landscape. Policy 33 of the HDPF states that development proposals should make efficient use of land, integrate effectively with the character of the surrounding area, use high quality and appropriate materials, retain landscaping where feasible (and mitigate loss if necessary) and ensure no conflict with the character of the surrounding town or landscape.

The proposal has been designed to fit within the volume of the existing building and as such there would be no increase in its scale or massing. A new principal entrance is proposed adjacent to the existing stepped/sloped access from the car parking. The southern elevation would be reclad and the eastern and western elevations would be partially re-clad. The existing building visually has a ground floor clad with smooth appearing cladding; this would be replicated by using two different profiles of insulated cladding panels. Large picture windows are proposed to allow for natural light. The building is situated next to the A24 and with a caravan park to the east. There is sufficient vegetation along the boundary with the A24 to ensure no views of the building from public vantage points, there is also a thick line of trees along the boundary with the caravan park to ensure views of the building are hidden and have limited visual impact.

It is considered that the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable in this location and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the site or wider surrounding area, in accordance with the above policies.

Amenity Impacts:

Policy 33(2) of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The building is located outside of any built-up area and is within countryside with sporadic development surrounding the application site to the eastern side of the A24, including a caravan park and a residential dwelling. The site is well screening along the eastern boundary by a thick tree line which serves to soften the appearance of the existing building. This relationship together with the siting of the proposed ground and first floor fenestration would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity. The nature of the proposed accommodation would not be expected to result in significant potential for harmful levels of noise or disturbance, particularly in the context of existing activities taking place at the site and background noise level as emanating from the A24.

The submitted plans do not include any external plant or machinery in connection with the proposed office accommodation, and any such future installation may require planning permission in its own right. It is not therefore considered necessary to impose any conditions in this regard.

The amenity impacts of the proposal are therefore considered acceptable and in accordance with the above policy.

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework states that transport access and ease of movement is a key factor in the performance of the local economy. The need for sustainable transport and safe access is vital to improve development across the district. Policy 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework states that development that involved the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere. Adequate parking facilities must be provided within the developments to meet the needs of the anticipated users.

The application is not accompanied by a plan to demonstrate the existing or proposed staff parking arrangements. The building is though part of a larger site with substantial areas of hardstanding, part of which to the south-western corner appears to provide parking for private vehicles. It is considered that the overall scale of the site and nature of the proposal is such that there is sufficient space for parking and manoeuvring. The proposal would not be expected to have any adverse impacts on the highway network or highway safety, and the proposal is acceptable in these regards.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

The submitted Water Neutrality Statement outlines that the existing baseline water consumption is 978.6 l/d, with the current employment figure of 28 people. The proposed water consumption rate, using the maximum consumption rates for fittings, would be 1223.25 l/d, which is an additional 244.65l/d over the existing baseline. Water reduction measures are proposed through retrofitting in the existing building, with these measures able to reduce the water usage to 25.37 l/p/d. Based on the default occupancy of 35, the water usage is therefore calculated to be 887.95l/d (25.37 x 35). Through the installation of water efficient fixtures and fittings within the building, the proposed water usage can be reduced by 90.65 l/d over the existing baseline. Therefore, making the proposal water neutral.

Natural England were consulted on the water strategy following the carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment by officers, and raised no objection, subject to the delivery, management and maintenance of measures identified in the water neutrality statement to achieve water neutrality. The information available and the mitigation measures proposed are considered to provide the necessary certainty to demonstrate that the proposed development would be water neutral. Appropriate mitigation measures have been demonstrated and are considered sufficient to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the interest features of the Arun Valley SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites from the development either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 185 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats and species).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). This requires that development must achieve at least 10% BNG on all habitats within the development site.

The applicant submitted a BNG statement which stated that the scheme falls under the Environment Act 2021 in terms of BNG and as such the scheme falls under the de minimis exemption, in that the development does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metre of onsite habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerow. It is therefore considered that the requirement for 10% BNG is not applicable for this scheme, which is wholly contained within the footprint of an existing building.

Other Considerations:

The comments of the Parish Council are noted. The submitted plans and documents are considered sufficient to accurately and clearly set out the nature and extent of the proposal, and no further information in this regard is needed before the application is determined.

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Pre-Occupation Condition**: Notwithstanding the information submitted, no part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a detailed lighting scheme shall has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting scheme shall be in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professional's Guidance notes for the reduction of obstructive light and shall have been designed by a suitably qualified person in accordance with the recommendations. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme and thereafter retained as such.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the site and surrounds in accordance with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Pre-Occupation Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in full accordance with the water neutrality strategy (Water Neutrality Statement received 30.05.2024). The office accommodation hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until evidence has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority that the approved water neutrality strategy has been implemented in full. The evidence shall include the specification of fittings and appliances used, evidence of their installation, and completion of the as built Part G water calculator or equivalent. The installed measures shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the development is water neutral to avoid an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SACSPA and Ramsar sites in accordance with Policy 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), Paragraphs 185 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

5 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

6 **Regulatory Condition**: No works for the implementation of the development hereby approved shall take place outside of 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank, or public Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjacent occupiers in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including

planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/24/0836
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Floor plan	Proposed Ground and First	2.05	05.06.2024
Location & Block plan		2.01 REV A	30.05.2024
Floor plan	Existing Ground and First	1.01	05.06.2024
Elevation plan	Existing	1.02	10.06.2024
Elevation plan	Proposed	2.04 REV A	30.05.2024
Supporting Statement	Water Neutrality	NONE	30.05.2024
Supporting Statement	Biodiversity Net Gain	24001	30.05.2024
Design & Access Statement		NONE	30.05.2024
Supporting Docs	Application Form	NONE	30.05.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Bethan Tinning Date: 02.08.2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 05.08.2024