

Agenda Item 14

Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 27 March 2013

APPLICATION NO.	P10/V2119
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	11.11.2010
PARISH	GARFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Matthew Barber
APPLICANT	J L Carter And Partners
SITE	Chadwicks Farm Garford Abingdon Oxfordshire, OX13 5PD
PROPOSAL	Change of use from agricultural to Class B8 (storage and distribution) (Retrospective). Construction of new service road, with formation of access to A338.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	442506/195204
OFFICER	Martin Deans

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The application site is comprised of two farm buildings at Chadwicks Farm, near Garford, and the fields to the east of the farm, between it and the A338. The site lies in the Lowland Vale. The application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of two modern farm buildings to storage use in connection with a business, Garden Games Ltd, at Chadwicks Farm. It also seeks planning permission to modify the entrance to the farm and to construct a new access road, approximately 700 metres in length, from the site to the A338. The new access road will cross a bridleway (no 6) and run to the south of, and parallel with, a byway open to all traffic (BOAT no 5). Between the bridleway and the A338 a mature tree and hedgerow runs alongside, and south of, the BOAT. Extracts from the application drawings are **attached** as appendix 1.

1.2 The application comes to committee because of the number of objection letters received from local residents

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The business obtained planning permission in 2005 to occupy two modern farm buildings at Chadwicks Farm with a floor space of approximately 700 sq.m (ref P04/V1358). The business has subsequently expanded into two other buildings with floor spaces of 380 sq.metres and 320 sq.metres, and which are used for storage.

2.2 This application was submitted in November 2010, but has been held in abeyance since early 2011 due to the significant changes that have been taking place in the government's approach to planning applications for business development. Officers have considered it prudent to do this whilst the full implications of the changes to government policy have been assessed. The most significant change in policy has been the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012. The original consultation process led to written responses from Garford Parish Meeting and neighbours. All respondents have been advised in writing that the application has been held in abeyance and is now progressing to committee.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Garford Parish Meeting no objection but request that certain matters be given consideration – a full copy of the response is **attached** as appendix 2.

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- 3.2 Local Residents – 11 letters of objection, one letter of observation and one letter of support have been received in response to the consultation process. The grounds for objection are:-
- The proposed access road will not prevent large commercial vehicles driving through Garford village to the detriment of safety
 - The proposed access road will be harmful to the rural tranquility of the BOAT, to the safety of the public using the BOAT, and to the quality of the wider landscape
 - The access road will allow for further business uses on the farm in the future
 - The proposed access onto the A338 will be dangerous due to its proximity to Venn Mill and predicted increases in traffic levels.
- 3.3 The County Engineer has considered the traffic and public safety issues surrounding the proposal and considers the proposed access road from the site to the A338 meets safety standards.
- 3.4 County Archaeologist – no objection subject to conditions
- 3.5 Principal Drainage Engineer – no objection subject to conditions
- 3.6 Environmental Health Officer – no objections
- 3.7 Arboricultural Officer – no objection subject to conditions
- 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 4.1 P04/V1358/COU - Approved (01/08/2005)
Retrospective application for change of use of building to form depot.
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- 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**
- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012 and replaced all previous PPG's and PPS's. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and an important part of this is sustainable economic growth. Planning should encourage, not inhibit, sustainable growth, and "significant weight" should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (paragraph 19). This includes economic growth in rural areas (paragraph 28).
- 5.2 Moreover, since 2010, there have been many speeches and articles by senior government ministers, including the Prime Minister, on the importance of economic growth and job creation, and the potential for the planning system to inhibit economic growth through the inappropriate application of planning policy. These speeches and articles can be given weight in that they show a consistent message from the government on the need for the planning system to prioritise economic growth in order to support the recovery of the economy.
- 5.3 In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, weight needs to be given to relevant policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 according to how consistent they are with the policies in the NPPF. One of the policies of the local plan relevant to this application is policy GS8, which deals with the conversion of non-vernacular farm buildings to business use. This allows conversion subject to caveats, including the visual appearance of the building, the sustainability of the proposal, and a limit on each farm yard of 500 sq.metres total floor space. In view of the strong support for economic

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growth in the NPPF, officers consider this policy is not consistent with the policies of the NPPF, and therefore has limited weight.

- 5.4 Other relevant local plan policies are DC5, which requires all development to be safe in terms of highway safety and public safety, and NE9, which seeks to protect the landscape character of the Lowland Vale.

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main issue for members of committee to consider are first, the principle of the proposal; second, the highway safety and public safety of the proposed access road; and, third, the visual impact of the proposed access road. With regard to the first issue, officers consider the recent changes that have occurred in government policy have a significant bearing on this application. The proposal is for storage space to be used in connection with an established business on the site.
- 6.2 The business employs 12 full-time and two part-time staff, 11 of whom live in the Vale. In this regard, the business provides important support to the local economy. Although the floor space involved exceeds the limit contained in policy GS8, officers consider a blanket limit of this nature is not consistent with the NPPF and so should be given limited weight. The business has confirmed that the traffic generation figures produced for the application are still valid, because the business has not grown in the mean time due to the difficult economic conditions, and because many of the staff still share a car to work. Of all the main types of business, storage use generally has the least amount of staff and produces the least traffic. Thus the use of the two additional buildings typically generates up to nine additional vehicle movements per day (from 27 movements to 36 movements) in the busiest times of the year (spring and summer), and only six additional movements per day in autumn and winter. Consequently, the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable. Local concerns have been expressed regarding the likelihood of future changes of use of other buildings on the farm to business use. However, members of committee are aware that the potential of future applications is not usually material to the consideration of an individual planning application, except in particular cases where potential sites for a similar proposal can be identified. In this regard, there are other farm buildings on the site that could be converted to business use, but, if such an application is submitted in the future, it will be considered on its individual merits at that time. Officers therefore consider that this issue should be given limited weight at this time.
- 6.3 In terms of highway safety and public safety, the confirmation that the traffic generation from the business has not changed materially means that the assessment made by the county engineer in December 2010 is still considered to be valid. Highway safety standards have not changed in the intervening two years, Thus the proposed access road, 4.1 metres in width with four passing bays, is considered to be acceptable for the expected level and frequency of vehicles that will use it. The proposed access road will be used by vehicles for the business, but will also provides access for farm vehicles where appropriate, and is expected to provide a material benefit to the village from commercial vehicles not having to travel through the village. A condition is suggested to require the road to be built within one year of the date of planning permission.
- 6.4 A condition can be imposed on the permission to require all vehicles connected with the business to use the proposed access road. The proposed junction of the new access road and the A338 meets required visibility standards and is considered to be safe. In light of this, the county engineer has raised no objection, subject to conditions. The county engineer has requested that any planning permission be made personal to the applicants, but officers consider that the proposed new access road makes this condition unnecessary.

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- 6.5 The proposed road will cross a bridleway and run parallel to a BOAT. The degree of visibility at the junction of the proposed road and the bridleway is relatively good, which means users of both will have early warning of the proximity of others. Care needs to be exercised with proposed landscaping in this area to ensure that this degree of inter-visibility of users is maintained. Subject to conditions to control details such as materials, there is no reason to believe the safety of users of these public routes will be harmed.
- 6.6 Regarding the third issue, the surrounding landscape is part of the Lowland Vale landscape area, and is relatively flat with some areas of mature woodland and hedgerow. A mature tree and hedgerow runs parallel with the closest third of the new access road to the A338. New planting is proposed alongside the new road to provide a complimentary landscape treatment. The road itself will be visible to users of the public routes, but is likely to have a limited impact on the wider landscape. The benefits it will provide in terms of a reduction in the number of large vehicles travelling through the village also need to be given weight. Overall, officers consider the impact of the new road on the wider landscape to be acceptable.
- 7.0 **CONCLUSION**
- 7.1 The proposal does support the local economy, and is in accordance with government policy on this matter. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of highway and public safety. The proposed road will not cause harm to the wider landscape. For these reasons, the proposal is considered to comply with relevant policies of the development plan and the policies of the NPPF.
- 8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**
Planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:
- 1 : Approved plans
 - 2 : CN8[1] - Submission of Details (Full)
 - 3 : HY2[1] - Access in Accord.with Specified Plan within one year
 - 4 : HY15[1] - Access Only to Specified Road (Full)
 - 5 : LS2 – Implementation of Landscape Scheme

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PI.240 Chadwicks Farm, Garford. P10/V2119

The officer presented the report on a retrospective application for the change of use from agricultural to class B8 (storage and distribution), a new service road and access at Chadwicks Farm, Garford. The consultation responses, policy and guidance, and planning history were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

Updates to the report

- A further letter had been sent to the committee from a neighbour, expressing concern at the need for a new access road

Mrs Gay Campbell, a local resident, spoke objecting to the proposed new access. She was concerned that this road could lead to incremental development in this rural area. She had no objection to the retrospective application for the change of use at the farm.

Shaun Whitfield, the applicant's agent, spoke in favour of the application.

The committee considered that the change of use was acceptable but raised concerns at the proposed access road. Officers were asked to find out further information about the need for the road when access to the site was already in place through the village.

RESOLVED (unanimously by vote)

To defer consideration of application P10/V2119 to determine the need for the access road.

PI.241 Bankside, South Street, Blewbury P12/V2554/FUL

The officer presented the report on an application for a new dwelling adjacent to Bankside, South Street, Blewbury, including the demolition of a garage and widening the access. The consultation responses, policy and guidance, and planning history were detailed in the officer's report, which formed part of the agenda pack for this meeting.

Updates to the report

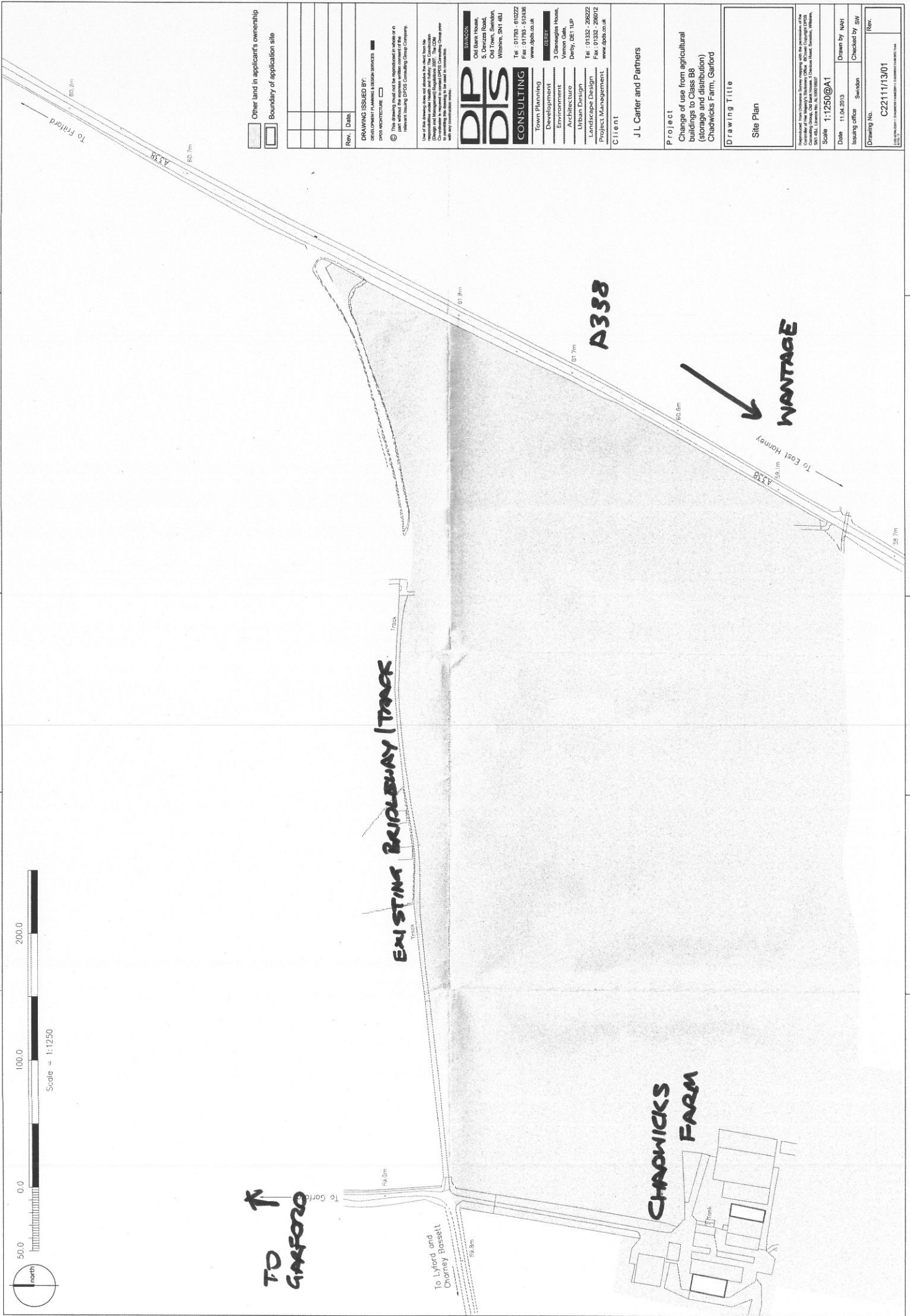
- amended plans had been submitted proposing a slab level 300mm lower to reduce the ridge height in comparison to nearby properties

Charlotte Carey, a local resident, spoke objecting to the application. Her concerns included:

- the scale and mass of the proposed dwelling resulting in a property that would over dominate its neighbours
- the safety of the access to the property and the adequacy of the visibility splays
- the need to retain landscaping along the bank
- the need to reduce the ridge height

Mike Orr, the applicant's agent, spoke in favour of the application.

The committee supported this application but asked that condition 12 was strengthened so that no construction took place above the slab level until that level was checked and further construction authorised by the council.



Other land in applicant's ownership
 Boundary of application site

Rev.	Date

DRAWING ISSUED BY:
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Client
 J.L. Carter and Partners

Project
 Change of use from agricultural buildings to Class B8 (storage and distribution) Chadwicks Farm, Garford

Drawing Title
 Site Plan

Scale 1:1250@A1

Date 11.04.2013

Issuing office Swindon

Drawn by N.H.

Checked by S.W.

Drawing No. C22111/13/01

Rev.