

This application was refused on two grounds:

1 The proposed two storey extension by virtue of its design materials, form and location will result in an incongruous and discordant form of development which is architecturally unrelated to the design and form of the existing building, and will be clearly visible from adjoining roads and public footpath, significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and paragraphs 17, 56, 58 and 60 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 The proposed development would create additional demand for car-parking, which could not be accommodated within the site, and overspill would then be forced onto Leigh Road, which is already heavily parked which could restrict manoeuvring of larger vehicles through the junction with Haine and Leigh Road obstructing the highway. The proposal would therefore have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety and capacity, contrary to paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

F/TH/14/0400 - Erection of two storey rear and single storey front extension together with area of hardstanding to rear without compliance of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference number F/TH/11/0554 for design amendments to windows position and front extension. Granted 12/06/14

F/TH/13/0407 - Erection of two storey rear and single storey front extension together with area of hardstanding to rear without compliance of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference number F/TH/11/0554 to allow changes to roof and insertion of velux windows. Granted 08/07/13

F/TH/11/0554 - Erection of two storey rear and single storey front extension together with area of hardstanding to rear. Granted 08/09/11

F/TH/08/1155 - Change of use of land to car park. Granted 08/12/08

OL/TH/05/0758 - Outline application for the erection of steel framed storage building, with access leading from Leigh Road. Granted 15/12/05

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning consent is sought for the erection of a two storey flat roof extension. The extension would run parallel to the southern site boundary, creating a "U" shaped building. The proposed extension would measure 14.6m x 7.5m, in addition there would be a link extension connecting the existing building to the proposed extension measuring 2.5m x 2.6m.

The proposed extension is proposed to be constructed galvanised and coated steel sheets in beige with a galvanised and coated steel sheet roof.

Located on part of the application site is an existing portacabin, (this does not appear to benefit from planning consent) which would need to be removed.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan (2006 Saved Policies)

- D1 - Design Principles
- D2 - Landscaping
- EC12 - Retention of Employment Sites
- TR12 - Cycling
- TR15 - Green Travel Plans
- TR16 - Car Parking Provision

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to surrounding occupiers and a site notice posted close to the site. No third party representations have been received.

CONSULTATIONS

KCC Highways and Transportation: Further comments: Following receipt of additional information provided by the applicant would concur that, if Saved Policy TR16 is the fall-back position, this would not appear to allow the provision of any additional parking for the proposed development. I also note the comments regarding existing parking restrictions in Leigh Road and it is accepted that the presence of the same enables enforcement and control of on-street parking on the highway. I understand that maintenance requirements such as refreshing road markings cannot be reasonably required as a planning obligation and would not meet the statutory tests. I therefore confirm that I would not recommend refusal of the proposals on highway grounds subject to the provision, implementation and maintenance of a Travel Plan.

Initial comments: Refusal recommended as the additional parking demand from the proposal is likely to exacerbate the existing situation in Leigh Road, with the potential for on-street parking closer to the junction with the A256 Haine Road which will also restrict the manoeuvring of larger vehicles through the junction and further obstruct the highway.

COMMENTS

This application is referred to the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Ash Ashbee if the application is recommended for refusal to consider the benefits of the scheme.

The main considerations in assessing the submitted scheme are the principle of development, the impact upon the character and appearance of the area, the impact upon living conditions of neighbouring property occupiers and the impact upon highway safety.

Principle

In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2014, planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the 'development plan' unless material

considerations indicate otherwise. The requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are a significant material consideration in this regard.

The site is within the town of Ramsgate and within an existing industrial estate that the Local Planning Authority seek to retain for employment purposes under saved policy EC12 of the Local Plan. The site is situated within the 'retention of employment sites' designated by the Thanet Local Plan, which seeks to retain sites within Thanet for B1, B8 and sometimes B2 use. In general terms the proposed development will expand an existing business within the designated employment site, and therefore is supported in principle by the policy. More specifically the applicant's agent has provided some background information relating to the business including that Watkins has been operating for 57 years and a total of 30 years from its current site. Watkins deal with mechanical, electrical and plumbing services to the construction industry in London and the south east. It is put forward by the agent that the extension is part of the expansion plan for improvements to the operation of the business and will increase competitiveness together and there would be an overall increase in terms of desk space of 2.

The extension would extend the existing building with a two storey flat roof extension projecting out into the car parking area. The development would therefore support the growth of an existing established business within Thanet. In principle therefore the provision of additional space is considered acceptable; subject to the details of the scheme.

Character and Appearance

Paragraph 80 of the NPPF places significant weight upon the need to support economic growth and productivity.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, sympathetic to local character and history, establish a strong sense of place and optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and create place that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Saved policy D1 of the Local Plan outlines that the design of all new proposals must respect or enhance the character and appearance of the area particularly in scale, massing, rhythm and use of materials.

The design of the extension will not match or reflect the existing building, it would be a two storey flat roof addition to an existing two storey pitched roof building within an industrial estate. The extension would be constructed in galvanised and coated steel sheet in contrast to the brick used in the construction of the main building. The two storey extension is large 14.5 metres (excluding the link extension) x 7.5 metres, with the two storey link extension measures 2.5m x 2.6m. The eaves will sit in line with the eaves height of the existing. The extension would be visible from Leigh Road, Haine Road and from a public footpath that is located to the south of the site. Whilst it is appreciated that landscaping may screen parts of the site it is considered that this provides limited screening and this would only be at certain points along the Haine Road and would be more limited within the winter months when the trees have limited foliage.

The design and appearance of the extension has not altered since the previous refusal. Within the applicants Planning, Design & Access Statement it is stated that the applicant has looked at other design options to address the reason for refusal. Additional information has also been received from the applicant's agent following discussions with officers about concerns on the design of the proposed extension. They advise that the applicants are a well established business within Thanet who are well placed to help with wider housing delivery. They have confirmed that a brick built extension with a tiled roof to match the host building would be economically unviable and it is fundamental that the new extension is cost effective for the applicant to construct. They also advise that the site is within an designated employment site where extensions and new developments for business use are proactively supported by both national and local planning policies. They highlight that there are various designs and materials within the employment site and that the adjoining site has been allocated for employment but the policy is not prescriptive on design/materials for the allocated site. They note that the site beyond the allocated employment site has outline planning permission for residential development and once this is built the application site would only be visible from the employment site. They also advise that the proposal is part of a scheme of business improvements and would create 2 extra jobs.

It is recognised that policies should not be prescriptive in imposing design styles to new development it is imperative that they respond to the build which they are being attached to in order to give some visual continuity and cohesion to the result scheme. Whilst it is appreciated that the design may have been led by economic reasons this is not a planning reasons to accept an extension that would not add to the overall quality of the area or be visually attractive contrary to the aims of the NPPF and saved policy D1.

The proposal would appear clearly as an extension by virtue of its design and appearance and use of materials. Whilst seen as an extension it is considered that any addition should have some visual and design cohesion with the building to which it is attaching; it is contended that this addition does not. Whilst the industrial building to the rear of the application site utilises cladding this building has a deep brick plinth around the bottom section of the building and is not wholly clad. There have been no significant changes to the proposal or the policy context since the previous refusal. Given the topography of the site, its location adjacent a main thoroughfare, with very limited field boundaries, very close to a public right of way. The officer stance therefore remains the same that the extensions design and appearance is not appropriate to the building to which it is attached. It is considered that given the size of the extension, use of material, its prominence and visibility from the public realm would not be compliant with the aims of policy D1 or paragraphs 127 and 130 of the NPPF.

The extension would create a 'U' shape building, extending a little further back then the corresponding projection, it is however not considered to result in the loss of open space between buildings.

Whilst I note that the applicants have stated that the extension will not been seen if the site is development to the side (within the employment allocation), this is not the subject of a current applicant nor is there an extant consent in place. Its ability, therefore, to come forward is not guaranteed. It is considered that limited weight can be attached to this

argument and this is not an acceptable justification in it self, a high standard of design would need to be achieved regardless of whether this site were developed.

Overall the proposal is not considered to be appropriate in terms of its design to the existing building to which it will be attached furthermore the economic benefits; the creation of two jobs would not overcome the material harm and is therefore not in accordance with Policy D1 or the aims of the NPPF and in particular paragraphs 127 & 130.

Living Conditions

Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

The proposal will not cause any significant alteration in the existing relationship between the existing office building to the east.

The application site is located a significant distance from the allocated housing land and furthermore it is separated by another parcel of land which is allocated for retention of employment within the emerging local plan

The impact upon the neighbouring and future occupiers of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and the NPPF.

Highways and Transportation

The previous application raised a highway objection and one of the reasons for refusal was formed on this basis. No additional parking is proposed as part of the development and one space would be lost through the erection of the extension.

Within the supporting statement it is confirmed that there is 29 parking spaces and based on the adopted car parking standards the existing floor area would generate a need for 12.2 car parking spaces - indicating a current over provision of 17 car parking spaces. The new extension would require 4.6 car parking spaces, giving a total required by the policy of 16.8 car parking standards. The applicant has also carried out a survey to establish how staff travel to the site. 60 employees are based at the site, 5 of which are part time and 15 are site based and on average spend 50% of their time there. The majority of the workforce drive to the site whilst 3 people car share, 3 people walk and 2 come by bike.

Initially this proposal also attracted a highway objection on the basis of the development resulting in additional on-street parking which would likely be closer to the junction with the A256 which would then restrict manoeuvring of larger vehicles through the junction and obstruct the highway. Following additional information provided by the applicants agent to demonstrate that the proposal would be in accordance with policy TR16 and that if the Traffic Regulation Order- double yellow lines close to the junction with Leigh Road and Haine Road were enforced this would remove the highway hazard. KCC Highways and Transportation have confirmed that they can remove their objection subject to the provision, implementation and maintenance of a Travel Plan.

The impact upon highway safety is therefore now considered to be acceptable subject to condition.

Conclusion

This application seeks to address the reasons for refusal under planning reference number F/TH/18/0662. The proposal as such remains as previously submitted by the applicants agent has put forward justification to try address these two reasons.

It is appreciated that the applicant wishes to expand their business and the extension would provide a meeting space and archive/storage and training area for existing members of staff. In principle the Local Planning Authority are supportive of the expansion of local business, however this needs to be weighed against the other impacts of the proposal.

Following the receipt of further information KCC Highways and Transportation have confirmed that their concerns have been addressed adequately subject to a condition relating to a travel plan.

Whilst justification has been put forward for the design of the extension, officers consider that this holds limited weight to override long established planning policies and extension would not be of sufficiently high standard of design to comply with policy D1 or the requirements of the NPPF.

On balance the economic benefits however do not outweigh the significant visual harm upon the area and therefore it is recommended that the application is refused.

It is therefore recommended that Members refuse the application.

Case Officer

Gill Richardson

TITLE:

F/TH/18/1615

Project

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