

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/20/0487

Cuckfield Golf Course, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
(Amended description 13/02/2020, additional plans received 10/03/2020) Variation to condition 2 relating to planning application DM/19/0964, to amend the internal layout of the proposed basement extension and the fenestration on the west side elevation.
Smythe

CONSULTATIONS

Parish Consultation

The Parish Council object to this application. The application is incomplete because there are no block plans and the floorplans are marked as 'preliminary', which suggests that they could change. The Parish Council query whether the storage should be classed as D2 leisure use if it is connected to the golf business and not B8, distribution and storage, as applied for.

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the proposed variation of Condition 2 of DM/19/0964, to amend the internal layout of the proposed basement extension to the clubhouse and the fenestration on the west side elevation at Cuckfield Golf Course, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CD/014/92 - Nine hole golf course including car park and alterations to access. Granted

CD/008/96 - Hard core maintenance and access track for golf course and fishing lakes. Formation of car park for fishing lakes. Refused

04/01051/FUL - Raising level of tees and reforming practice tees. Installation of water tank and ancillary shed. Refused

04/01541/FUL - Provision of new club house together with new access and parking. Refused

05/00274/FUL - Raising level of tees and reforming practice tees. Renovating greens 1/3/5/9. Granted

05/00322/FUL - Proposed new club house. Granted

DM/19/0964 - Alterations and additions to club house including removal of conservatory and proposed extensions to the side and rear elevations, extension of terrace to North side and provision of office/storage in the extended roof space. Extension to driving range enclosure. Revised drawings and planning statement with detail of ground levelling received 10th April. (Additional information received 20/5 and kitchen extraction details received 24/5 and 4/6). Amended Plans received 18th and 22nd July omitting staff accommodation and groundskeepers barn. Granted

DM/19/4897 - Alterations and additions to club house; lower ground floor side and rear extension into grass bank with paved patio above, removal of conservatory with replacement single storey side and rear extension and 3 storey west side extension with further attic conversion including new dormer windows. Withdrawn

REPRESENTATION RECEIVED

6 letters of representation have been received which raise the following concerns:

- Access track constructed without planning permission (*Officer Comments: this track does not form part of the current application.*)
- Previous approval (DM/19/0964) ignored a previous refusal on the site for a smaller clubhouse due the impact on the AONB and noise and disturbance (04/01541/FUL)
- The plans are marked "preliminary" (*Officer Comments: the application is considered against the plans submitted, should further amendment be wished to be made this would be considered under a subsequent application. Although the plans are labelled "preliminary" this does not alter the consideration of the application.*)
- The square meterage of basement floor has not been included on the plan (*Officer Comments: The proposed plans do not require the square meterage to be included.*)
- Not all floor and elevation plans have been submitted, were submitted under the original application on the same plan
- No block plan has been submitted, new entrance would result in changes to the landscaping (*Officer Comments: No changes are proposed to the previously approved block plan, and therefore an amended plan was not required.*)
- No amended application form was submitted under the original application to include the removal of elements of the proposal that were not considered acceptable at the time, this amended application form has not been submitted under the current application and is unclear whether these elements could be applied under the current application. (*Officer Comments: The previous application was amended and included the removal of a number of elements in order for the application to be considered favourably. The description of the application was amended and the application re-advertised at the time. This did not require an amended application form. The current application seeks permission to amend the previously approved extensions to the clubhouse.*)
- Unclear what the use of the store will be.
- Permitted development rights allow change of use of B8 units to offices and residential. (*Officer Comments: The proposal seeks permission to amend the previously approved plans for the extensions to the club house. This does not include the creation of a B8 unit.*)
- Noise and disturbance to neighbours
- Visual impact on the AONB
- Light pollution
- Increased traffic and impact on highway safety
- Impact on the countryside
- Out of keeping
- applicant is trying to get permission for an industrial composting plant in the centre of the AONB. (*Officer Comments: The proposal seeks permission to amend the previously approved plans for the extensions to the club house, and does not include any other development.*)

Following these letters of representation additional plans were submitted which include the other elevations and floor plans of the proposed building. The application was then re-advertised, 4 further letters of representation have been received which raise the following additional comments were received:

- no ground floor plan (*Officer Comments: a ground floor plan has been submitted.*)
- attic plan has been amended to include a shower tray in the proposed bathroom, therefore practical to use the attic as a self contained residential unit. (*Officer Comments: no changes have occurred to the internal layout of the proposed attic plan, the including of a shower tray is not considered to constitute development and does not change the use of the attic space which is controlled by a planning condition.*)
- No block plan has been submitted, new entrance would result in changes to the landscaping and require retaining walls (*Officer Comments: No changes are proposed to the previously approved block plan, and therefore an amended plan was not required. The proposed plans submitted include the proposed retaining walls.*)

- The raised fire escape for the ground floor have not been shown of the front or rear elevations (*Officer Comments: these elevations have been amended to included the raised fire escape.*)
- The drawing numbers do not correspond to those originally approved (*Officer Comments: the current drawing numbers are not required to correspond with the previous approved plans.*)

A letter of representation has been received from Cuckfield Parish Council, who raise the following comments:

'Further to Cuckfield Parish Council's Planning Committee meeting held on 12th March 2020, we would like to understand from Cuckfield Golf Course why there was a need to apply for change of use from D2 to B8, and state that we object to this proposed change.

The Parish Council has no particular issue with the development of the club house as it is small for the site, although we feel that the dark skies must be preserved and the noise kept to a minimum. Would MSDC consider restrictions to the use of the larger clubhouse to restrict the impact of noise?

There is support within the community for this expansion, although there are concerns relating to the track that has been created to access the lake, and the Parish Council would prefer to see this removed.'

The previous application, DM/19/0964, included extensions to the existing clubhouse and driving range enclosure and did not include a change of use to the property. The officer report for this application includes assessment of the impact of the proposal on the AONB and the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application property consists of a 9-hole golf course located off the northern side of Staplefield Road, outside the built up area of Cuckfield and within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The locality has a rural character with loose knit sporadic development, which comprise mainly of residential properties. The application property is located to the rear of a cluster of properties, which includes residential and commercial properties. The application property includes a carpark, clubhouse and driving range enclosure.

The Golf Course clubhouse is modest in size and is mainly single storey, with a basement that is accessed to the western side and used for machinery storage. This clubhouse is constructed in brick with timber weatherboarding on the ground floor, plain roof tiles and timber fenestration. To the front of the clubhouse is an the existing golf course carpark which gains access the highway via an access drive which is shared with the retail units which face onto the highway. The clubhouse and the carpark are located to the rear of these commercial properties which reduces the visibility of the clubhouse from public views for the highway with only the pitched hipped roof form of the building visible.

To the rear of the clubhouse the land is raised to create an outdoor terrace and a marquee, which although a temporary structure appears to be a permanent feature. The land of the golf course beyond falls away with wider view of the countryside. Two public footpaths extend through the golf course from north to south east which have view of the existing structures within the golf course.

The driving range enclosure which is located to the east of the clubhouse and positioned closer to the highway and is accessed by a path leading from the carpark. This enclosure has a shallow pitched roof and is constructed in timber with a metal roof. The land to the rear of the structure increases in height resulting in the part of the structure being obscured from view of the highway.

LIST OF POLICIES

DISTRICT PLAN (adopted March 2018)

DP16 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP26 - Character and Design

ANSTY AND STAPLEFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (made February 2017)

AS3 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

NATIONAL POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 is also a material consideration and paragraphs 8, 11, 38, 124, 127 & 172 are considered to be relevant to this application.

Other Planning Guidance

National Planning Policy Guidance

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

APPLICATION DETAILS

As this is a section 73 application, national advice is that the LPA should focus attention on any material changes since the previous permission.

The original application comprised of extensions to the existing clubhouse, a raised patio area to the rear of the clubhouse and extension to the driving range enclosure. The extensions to the clubhouse included a side extension to extend the basement and ground floor, single storey rear extensions. The extensions had roof forms reflect the existing pitched roof and included 6 No. dormer windows to allow the loft space to be used as a store and office.

The existing western side elevation includes a large loading bay door with a smaller door adjacent to it. The previously approved plans included a side basement extension to this elevation which included ladies and men's bathrooms and changing rooms with a door and window openings on the western side elevation.

The current proposal seeks to change the internal layout of the basement to move the bathrooms and changing rooms from this side elevation to allow store area within the basement to be accessed for buggies and larger storage equipment used for the maintenance of the golf course. This would also include a change to the fenestration on this elevation to a grey metal roller shutter loading door with 2 No additional doors and a window. To allow access the basement via these opening a retaining wall has been included which would extend up to some 3 metres from the side elevation of the building.

The proposal does not include any further enlargement to the basement area and the only external changes would be the openings on the western side elevation and the retaining wall.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

This application is made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary or remove conditions associated with a planning permission. The Act states that '*On such an application the local planning authority shall consider only the question of the conditions subject to which planning permission should be granted, and-*

(a) if they decide that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions differing from those subject to which the previous permission was granted, or that it should be granted unconditionally, they shall grant planning permission accordingly, and

(b) if they decide that planning permission should be granted subject to the same conditions as those subject to which the previous permission was granted, they shall refuse the application.'

There is therefore no need to reconsider the principle of the development in this case as planning permission has been granted for the development. The main issues for consideration are therefore considered to be the effect of the proposed changes to the approved plans on the AONB and design of the proposals.

Character and Design

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

"All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP27);*
- creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development."*

The proposed alterations to the fenestration and the resulting retaining wall are considered to be minor in nature and would be of a design and materials that is considered to be in keeping with the character and form of the existing building and the previously approved extensions. It is therefore considered that the proposed changes comply with policy DP26.

Impact on the AONB

Policy DP16 of the District Plan is relevant which states:

'Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;

- the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;*
- the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;*
- character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and*
- the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.*

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design.'

Policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan is similar in its aims requiring proposals to conserve and enhance the AONB.

Paragraph 172 of the NPPF states:

'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.'*

A similar ethos is found within The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan,

The AONB Unit has been consulted on the application however due to the minor nature of the proposal they have no comments to make on the proposed changes and leave the matter to the judgement of the Local Planning Authority.

Due to the minor nature of the proposed alterations to the fenestration and retaining wall, and that they would be viewed within the context built form of the existing clubhouse and the approved extensions. The proposal would not it would not cause harm to the landscape and would conserve natural beauty of the AONB and would comply with policy DP16 of the Mid Sussex District Plan and policy AS3 of the Ansty and Staplefield Neighbourhood Plan.

CONCLUSION

In summary, it is considered that the proposed amendments are acceptable and accord with the relevant policies of the Development Plan as set out above. As such this application can be approved, subject to the same conditions as previously, including the same time limit for implementation.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Katherine Williams