



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2025

by D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/24/3353451

25 Wrecclesham Hill, Farnham, Wrecclesham GU10 4JX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Timothy Brant-Coles on behalf of Brant Storage against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2023/00375.
 - The development proposed is Part Retrospective application for the change of use of land for storage containers for personal storage use for 58 containers, and the future expansion for a further 96 containers Total of 154 units of various sizes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Part Retrospective application for the change of use of land for storage containers for personal storage use for 58 containers, and the future expansion for a further 96 containers Total of 154 units of various sizes at 25 Wrecclesham Hill, Farnham, Wrecclesham GU10 4JX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WA/2023/00375, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Preliminary Matter

3. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a parcel of land which contains storage containers that are being used for personal storage. It is accessed by a track from Wrecclesham Hill which passes several light industrial units as well as a parcel of land being used for battery unit storage before reaching the appeal site. Beyond the appeal site is predominantly open fields which can be accessed by a public footpath at the end of the track.

5. The appeal proposes to increase the number of containers and reconfigure the layout of the existing containers to enable several rows which would be surrounded by hardstanding.
6. As the appeal site is already being used for the siting of storage containers, these already form part of the landscape albeit the site is not readily visible from Wrecclesham Hill due to the other light industrial units and vegetation that surround the site.
7. The increase in storage containers would be largely contained within the existing appeal site which is clearly already in commercial use. While the number of containers would increase, the existing screening by the surrounding units and vegetation as well as the proposed fencing and landscape would mean that the proposed development would not appear as an encroachment into the open countryside.
8. A minimal amount of associated paraphernalia is proposed such as security cameras and solar, motion triggered lights. Furthermore, the proposed containers are also low in height and coloured green which would not have a detrimental impact on the wider rural setting due to the very limited visibility.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. I find no conflict with Policy RE1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites February 2018, Policy DM15 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies March 2023 and Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is safeguarded and makes efficient use of land.
10. While not in the decision notice, the Council have referred to conflict with Policy FNP20 of the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2032 Updated for March 2020 Referendum January 2020 within the officer report. However, I find no conflict with this Policy which amongst other things, permits well designed new buildings for business uses.

Other Matters

11. I note that concerns have been raised in relation to increased vehicle movements, traffic and highway safety. However, the Council have found that the proposed development would not harm highway safety and I have no reason to conclude otherwise.

Conditions

12. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions in the event I were to allow the appeal. Where necessary, and in the interests of clarity and precision, I have slightly altered them to more closely reflect the advice in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.

13. Condition 1 is the standard condition which relates to the commencement of development and condition 2 specifies the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt. Conditions 3, 4, 5 and 6 are required in order to ensure that users of the footpath are safe, a construction management plan is provided, parking is provided and the access is sufficient in order to enable vehicles to leave and enter in a forward gear in the interests of highway safety.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

D Wilson

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
2. The plan numbers to which this permission relates are: Brant Storage Sustainability Appraisal (Undated), Planning Design and Access Statement (Dated Nov 2022), Self Storage Development (Dated Feb 2023), 1589/DP01 (Undated), 1589/DP05 (Undated), 1589/DP04 (Undated), 1589/DP02 (Undated), 1589/DP03 (Undated). The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. No material variation from these plans shall take place unless otherwise first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
3. A scheme to ensure the safety of users of the Public Footpath No. 22 Farnham, between the application site and Wrecclesham Hill, must be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and Countryside Access Team within six months of approval of this scheme. The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented and retained in perpetuity.
4. Within six months of approval, a plan must be submitted to and approved for the space to be laid out for vehicles to be parked and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter the parking and turning area shall be retained and maintained for their designated purpose.
5. Within six months of this planning application being approved, a Construction Transport Management Plan, to include details of: (a) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors (b) loading and unloading of plant and materials (c) storage of plant and materials (d) programme of works (including measures for traffic management) (e) provision of boundary hoarding behind any visibility zones (f) HGV deliveries and hours of operation (g) vehicle routing (h) measures to prevent the deposit of materials on the highway (i) before and after construction condition surveys of the access track between the site and Wrecclesham Hill and a commitment to fund the repair of any damage caused. (j) on-site turning for construction vehicles has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented during the construction of the development.
6. Within 6 months of this planning application being approved, space shall be laid out within the site in accordance with the approved plans (drawing no. 2022-6507-101) for vehicles to access the site and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter the access/turning areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.