



Application Number and Registration Date	MO/2017/2197 (Detailed) 12-Dec-2017
Applicant	Mr I Jones
Case Officer	Mr Aidan Gardner
Amendments /amplifications	Amended by plan 17/029/3a dated 15/03/18. Amplified by traffic movement report dated 26/02/18 and by email dated 20/03/18.
Committee Date	4 April 2018
Ward(s)	Capel, Leigh & Newdigate Within 20m of Beare Green Ward
Proposal	Change of use of farmyard buildings to form catering unit with associated facilities.
Site Description	Hill House Farm, Misbrooks Green Road, Capel, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 4QQ

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

Summary

The site lies on the western side of Misbrooke Green Road and comprises Hill House Farm, a residential dwelling, together with a cluster of buildings to the south and a number of outlying fields. The land is Metropolitan Green Belt. Permission is sought for the change of use of one of the buildings to a catering unit with associated facilities. The main issues for consideration are: the acceptability of the re-use of this rural building in terms of Green Belt policy; the impact upon the rural character; neighbouring properties' amenities and highway safety. It has been judged that the proposal is an acceptable form of development and permission is therefore recommended.

1. Development Plan

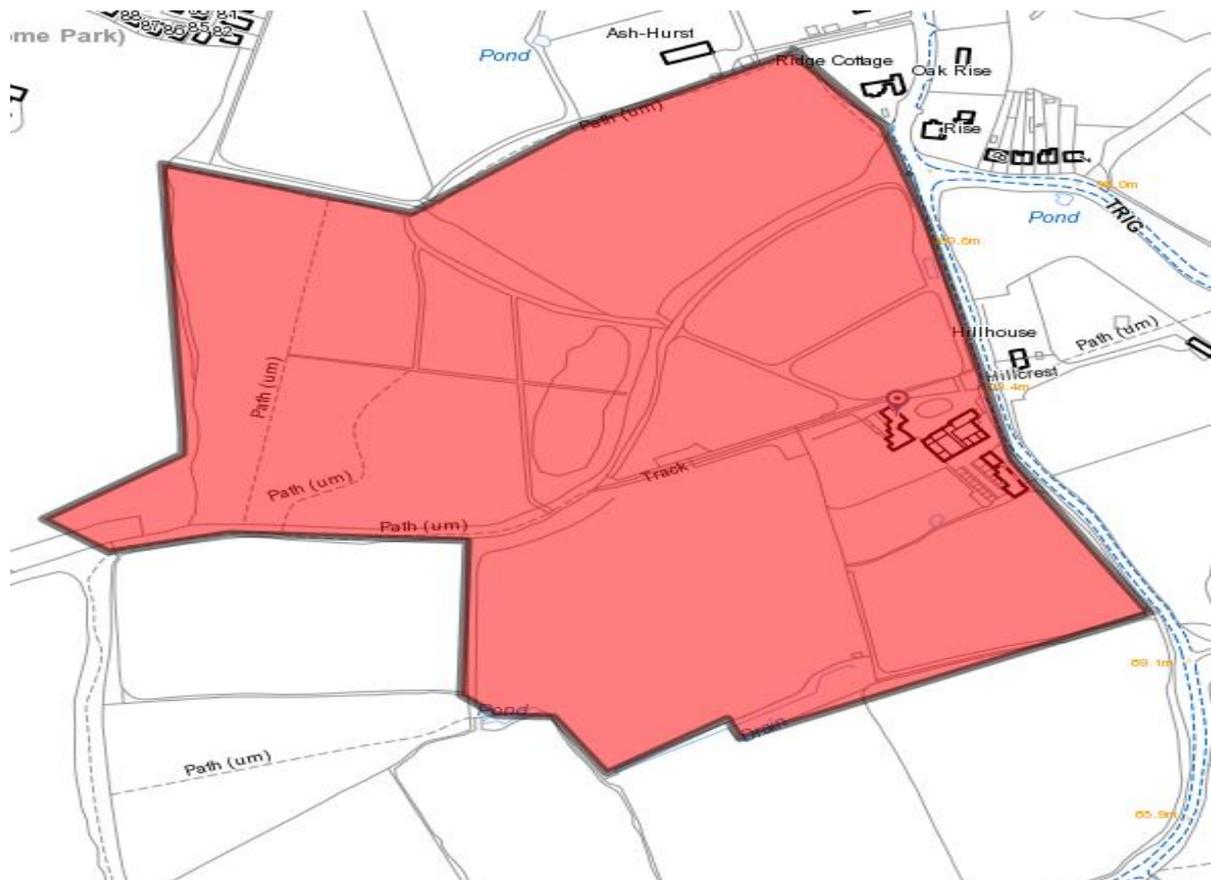
1.1. Metropolitan Green Belt

2. Relevant Planning History

MO/07/0683	Erection of model railway and associated engine shed.	Permitted 13/13/07. Building commenced.
MO/17/2194	Application under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 for removal of 12 metres of hedgerow to create new access.	Removal notice granted 15/03/18.
MO/17/2198	Formation of car park in association with existing land uses on the site, together with formation of access to Misbrooke Green Road.	Withdrawn 23/01/18.
MO/17/2199	Change of use of part of field to educational and recreational fixed tent camping with associated activities.	Current.

3. Description of Development

- 3.1. The site lies on the western side of Misbrooks Green Road and comprises Hill House Farm, a residential dwelling, together with a cluster of buildings to the south and a number of outlying fields. The land lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Vehicular access is taken from the front of the dwelling and leads to a parking courtyard which can accommodate several vehicles alongside the main building range.



- 3.2. The surrounding area is highly undulating and the site occupies rising ground. Misbrooks Green Road runs north to south adjacent to the eastern boundary. The sides of the road are marked by hedging. The area of the holding extends to some 17 hectares.
- 3.3. Permission is sought for the re-use of one of the farm buildings to the south of the residential element for a catering unit. The background to the proposal and details of the operation are set out in an amplifying letter, as follows:-

'I confirm that the applicant has occupied Hill House Farm since about 1998, and during that time have always had their own hens for eggs, and have periodically raised geese, chicken and turkey for the table. However, other than this previously they have had tenancy farmers on the land until 2014. After this they acquired their rare breed Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs. Since then, they have expanded the herd, and added a flock of rare breed Southdown sheep, which would have been a common sight in the area prior to the growth in popularity of more prevalent breeds. At present, the farm raises pigs, sheep and chickens.

The continuation of the farming operations on the site is fundamental to the applicant's plans. However, some diversification is necessary in order to maintain financial viability. As such, the applicant wishes to use existing farm buildings to process the farm's produce for local consumption.

The Applicant believes passionately in reconnecting agricultural operations to the consumer, to reinforce the farm at the heart of the community. The other applications amplify on this desire, but this application is fundamentally about having identifiable, low food miles Hill House Farm produce in local shops and on local tables and at local events

At present, the farm raises Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs, a designated rare breed. There are 9 breeding sows and 1 boar on site, producing 32 litters of between 5 and 12 piglets per year. These are raised and taken to slaughter in Farnborough, and the meat is processed off-site to produce half- and quarter-pigs, which are butchered and packed at the farm shop in Forest Green, as well as bacons and hams, to be then sold locally by the Applicant and his family. They also produce sausages at Bangers Galore in Horsham, which are also sold by the Applicant and his family. Currently the business is entirely direct-to-consumer through the Applicant's network of contacts, and via social media.

The business also has the support and input from Tim McEntire of The Food Float. Tim is employed by the business several days per week and distributes the produce in his refrigerated vehicle. Each pig sold produces around 300 sausages, 12 – 14 substantial joints of pork, and circa 72 rashers of traditional dry cured bacon. This mix can be altered to increase the volume of sausages and bacon, decrease the number of joints and produce hams instead of pork roasting joints, subject to customer needs and seasonality.

The farm also raises designated rare breed Southdown sheep, of which there are currently 28 ewes which are due to produce 44 lambs from 17 March 2018 onwards. There are an additional 14 Ewes which will be ready to lamb in spring 2019, and 13 wethers, which will be sold for meat during the coming months. Again, lambs are taken to slaughter in Farnborough, and the meat is processed off-site to produce half lambs, butchered and packed and sold as the pork is: direct to consumer using social media and through the Applicant's personal contacts. In 2017, the business sold 30 half-lambs in total.

There are 18 chickens, including Dorking breed, on site, producing eggs for consumption by the Applicant's family.

All produce is reared outside, and is therefore free range. The applicant only uses medicines on the animals where there is no alternative, which is a progressive approach to livestock management. Both the Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs and Southdown sheep are designated rare breeds and Hill House Farm is recognised by the relevant societies for these breeds as a centre for breeding, and on occasion has supplied piglets to other farms to enhance their breeding programs and broaden the gene pool within their stock. The pigs are fed on a mixed diet of both rolled oat pellets, green vegetables and fruit matter. This is a more natural way of rearing pigs and produces a more well-rounded and improved product.

The intention is for these uses to continue after the catering unit has been created.

In addition, the Applicant intends to use the farm to raise turkeys in 2018, using existing space on the farm, for sale off-site or for collection from site, the customer having ordered on-line. These will be sold on a social enterprise basis through local schools and groups (Dorking RFC and Newdigate Scouts, to name but two), and 10% of all profit from the sales of these items will be gifted back to the groups and schools concerned. The Applicant has already agreed this with Dorking RFC and Newdigate Scouts, and once permission is received they will begin to approach the local primary schools to agree an arrangement with them.

The catering unit is to be used for the processing of meat products raised on site: Around 75% of all produce used in the unit, including fruits and vegetables from the walled garden will originate from Hill House Farm, enabling them to produce a product with almost zero food miles.

The intention is to produce products including bacon, sausages, hams, pulled pork, butchered and packed pork, sausage rolls, pork pies, butchered and packed lamb. These will be sold in local shops, and at local events, for example Newdigate Spring Show, Surrey County Show, Dorking Mini Rugby Festival, Capel Car Show, The Country Brocante at Cowdray Park, Mud Kids at Sondes Place Farm, to name but a few.

At Christmas time, the Applicant plans to sell turkeys, hams and "pigs in blankets" via the aforementioned social enterprise route through local schools and not-for-profit groups, donating 10% of the net profits back to the groups concerned. These will be prepared off-site for sale, and stored cold.

Longer term the Applicant hopes to build a small wholesale business, supplying local farm shops such as Village Greens at Ockley and Denbies, once the Applicant has established a consistent level of high quality product that they can regularly supply.

In total, the Applicant intends to process (per annum) 30-80 pigs, 20-30 lambs and 100 turkeys.

The "associated facilities" described in the application description are simply washing, rest and storage facilities which will be required for employees working in the unit. These are clearly described on the drawings, and do not relate to any of the other applications for the site.

There is no intention to create a "farm shop" or other retail outlet on-site. Incidental collection of produce will be by-appointment only.

Similarly, the Applicant notes that slaughtering operations are highly regulated, and has no desire or intention to extend operations on-site to include animal slaughter. The farm will continue to use the facility in Farnborough, which is the closest to the site.

Smells from cooking and food preparation in a small catering unit are unlikely to detract from the existing smells commonly associated with the on-going agricultural use on the property.'

- 3.4. The application building forms one end of a larger building range and is of white painted brickwork with pitched roof. The total floor space involved is around 110 square metres. The external alterations proposed are modest and are confined to the blocking up of a window and the provision of a replacement roller door. The layout plan shows about half of the floor space used for the catering unit with the remainder given over to storage, lockers and toilet/wash facilities.



- 3.5. The Council is currently considering an application for use of part of a field at the site for educational and fixed tent camping and associated activities (MO/17/2199). An application to form an access to Misbrooks Green Road and form a parking area adjacent – MO/17/2198 – was withdrawn in January 2018.

4. Consultations

- 4.1. SCC Highways: The County Highway has undertaken an assessment in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision and are satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and

operation of the adjoining public highway. The County Highway Authority therefore has no highway requirements.

4.2. Environmental Health Department – recommend condition requiring a noise survey to be carried out prior to commencement, in the interests of the amenities of nearby residents.

4.3. Mole Valley Access Group – no objections.

5. **Representations**

5.1. 16 representations have been received including one from Capel Parish Council. The following summarised points are raised:-:

- Loss of hedgerow

Officer comment: A hedgerow removal notice has been granted (under MO/17/2194). However, this does not have any bearing upon the current application.

- Lack of visibility along the road;

Officer comment: The Highway Authority is raising no objections to the proposal in the light of the additional information provided by the applicant.

- No information has been provided about the proposed operation of the catering unit;

Officer comment: Further information has been supplied, as set out in section 4 above.

- The application should be considered together with that for the camping proposal as it would seem that the shower facilities would be used by the campers and food would also be provided to them from the catering unit

Officer comment: The agent has provided the following clarification over this query:

‘The showers are for farm staff using the catering unit, for hygiene purposes. The proposed fixed tents (under the campsite application MO/17/2199) would have integral showers, so there will be no need for campers to use these facilities. There may be some sale of uncooked food from the catering unit to the users of the camping, but this would be incidental to each use. There is no intention to use the catering unit for providing cooked food or a restaurant for the camping use - the camping application has its own cooking provision. The users of the camping would be encouraged to cook Hill House Farm sausages in the camping area, but the catering unit isn't going to be a restaurant, canteen or takeaway.’

Officer Comment: It is considered that the two applications are capable of being considered as separate entities where different planning considerations apply.

- Cooking smells from the proposed use. Further, extraction ducts have been fitted to the eastern elevation where they could be a nuisance to neighbouring occupiers;

Officer comment: Environmental Health have been consulted on the use and have not raised concerns over cooking smells;

- The access to the highway has not been included in the red edging of the application site;

Officer comment: The plans have been amended to extend the red edging to the highway.

- The lawful use of the application building should be considered – it may not be in agricultural use
- The proposal cannot be regarded as a farm diversification scheme since the applicant has only operated as a hobby farm for the last 3-4 years

Officer comment: The NPPF allows for the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt: the re-use of a specific use is not indicated.

- A new access has been formed to the south of the main entrance and this would be unacceptable if used for the catering use

Officer comment: This has been investigated by the enforcement officer and it has been established that the gate has been in position for many years but had become covered with undergrowth. Notwithstanding this point, the access to be used for the catering use is the main entrance.

- A restriction on hours should be imposed.

Officer comment: This is covered by a condition below.

6. Main Planning Policies

6.1. Government Guidance

6.2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy
Section 9 = Protecting Green Belt land.

6.3. Mole Valley Core Strategy

6.4. CS13 – Landscape Character/

6.5. Mole Valley Local Plan

ENV22 – General Development Control Criteria
RUD19 – Re-use and adaptation of Rural Buildings

6.6. Capel Neighbourhood Development Plan

CA-ESDQ2 Not worsen drainage problems
CA-ESDQ3 Design and character

7. Main Planning Issues

- 7.1. The main planning issues for consideration are:
- Principle of the conversion;
 - Impact on the character and appearance of the area
 - Impact on the amenities of nearby properties
 - Traffic.

Principle of conversion.

- 7.2. Guidance about development in the Green Belt is contained in the NPPF. Paragraph 89 sets out those categories of development that are deemed not to be inappropriate development. In paragraph 90, it is advised that certain other forms of development need also not be inappropriate provided that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Among the categories listed is the following:-

The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

- 7.3. The building is in a good state of repair and of robust construction and is suitable for conversion. It is therefore considered that the proposal is compliant with the NPPF.
- 7.4. Policy RUD19 of the Mole Valley Local Plan permits the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings provided that a number of criteria are met. These are considered in turn below:
- 7.5. *The buildings are substantial and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction*

The building is of sound construction and no major reconstruction works would be required; most of the conversion works would be internal. The majority of existing openings would be retained with minimal additions. Therefore, it is considered that the impact on the fabric of the building is acceptable.

- 7.6. *The associated uses of land surrounding the buildings would not materially harm the amenities or character of the area*

There are existing area of hardstanding to the north of the application building that could be used for parking and collection of products. The proposed conversion incorporates storage space within the building. The conversion involves a building in the midst of a building cluster. It is concluded that there would be no material harm to the amenities or character of the area.

- 7.7. *The use, form, bulk and general design of the building is in keeping with its surroundings*

It is considered that the proposed residential re-use of the building would be in keeping with its surroundings. The proposed use would be low key and contained within the existing building.

- 7.8. *The conversion would not lead to a dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town and village vitality*

The proposed re-use of the building is small scale and would only give rise to one additional full-time and one additional part time job. It is not considered that this use would lead to a dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice the vitality of nearby towns and villages.

- 7.9. *The use can be contained within the building, without need for extension or external storage, other than such provisions which can be made without any adverse effect on the building, its surroundings or the openness of the Green Belt*

No extensions to the building are proposed and therefore the impact on the countryside would be limited.

7.10. *Impact of traffic generated on highway safety and environmental character of country roads*

It is considered that any additional traffic generation from the site would be minimal and would not have a significant impact on the character of country roads. No objections are raised by the Highway Authority.

7.11. It is concluded that the proposal would not conflict with the guidance contained within the NPPF and therefore would not comprise inappropriate development. It would also not conflict with policy RUD19.

7.12. Support for rural enterprise forms a lynchpin of the NPPF. Paragraph 28 states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:-

- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Impact on the character and appearance of the rural area

7.13. The proposal involves the re-use of an existing building with minimal alterations. Therefore, it is considered that there would be minimal impact on the character of the area.

Impact on the amenities of nearby properties

7.14. Given the position of the existing building and the separation distances from the nearest residential properties, it is considered that the amenities of the occupiers would not be significantly affected. On the advice of Environmental Health Department, a condition is recommended that would require a noise survey to be carried out prior to the commencement of the use.

Highway

7.15. The County Highway Authority raised concerns initially on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided on the likely level of traffic that would use the existing access

7.16. The applicant subsequently provided a survey of the anticipated traffic movements to and from the site. Having reviewed the information, the County Highway Authority is now satisfied on the basis that the additional traffic generated would be of a very low order. They therefore have no highway concerns.

Conclusion

7.17. It has been concluded that the proposal represents an acceptable re-use of a rural building that would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would also be consistent with the government's aims of fostering the rural economy, as articulated in the NPPF. There would be minimal impact on the character of the rural area and the amenities of neighbouring properties would not be significantly affected. The proposal is also considered acceptable in highway terms. A recommendation to grant permission is therefore made.

8. Recommendation

Permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and completed in all respects strictly in accordance with the submitted documents and plan numbers 17/029/2b and 3a (as amended 15/03/18) contained within the application and no variations shall take place.

Reason: To accord with the terms of the submitted application and to ensure minimal impact on local amenity and the environment in accordance with Mole Valley Core Strategy policy CS14 and Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22.

3. Prior to commencement of the use hereby permitted, an assessment of the acoustic impact arising from the operation of all internally and externally located plant shall be undertaken in accordance with BS 4142: 2014. The assessment shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority together with a scheme of attenuation measures to ensure the rating level of noise emitted from the proposed plant shall be least 3db below background. The scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A post installation noise assessment shall be carried out where required to confirm compliance with the noise criteria and additional steps to mitigate noise shall be taken, as necessary. The details as approved shall be implemented prior to occupation of the development and thereafter be permanently retained.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the local area and ensure a satisfactory environment for occupiers of the new development in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy

4. The application building shall be used for the preparation of meat products only from animals reared at Hill House Farm and at no times shall retail sales be carried out from the premises.

Reason: To accord with the terms of the application and to restrict the use of the premises in the interests of the amenities of the locality in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22.

5. The food processing use hereby permitted shall not be carried out except between the hours of 0800 - 1800 Monday to Friday.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the area, and in particular the amenities of neighbouring residential properties in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22.

6. No floodlights or other forms of external lighting shall be installed on the site within the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority/.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the locality, including the amenities of neighbouring residential properties, in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV57 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.