



WESTCOTT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

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Planning Department
Mole Valley District Council
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Surrey, RH4 1SJ

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Dear Sirs

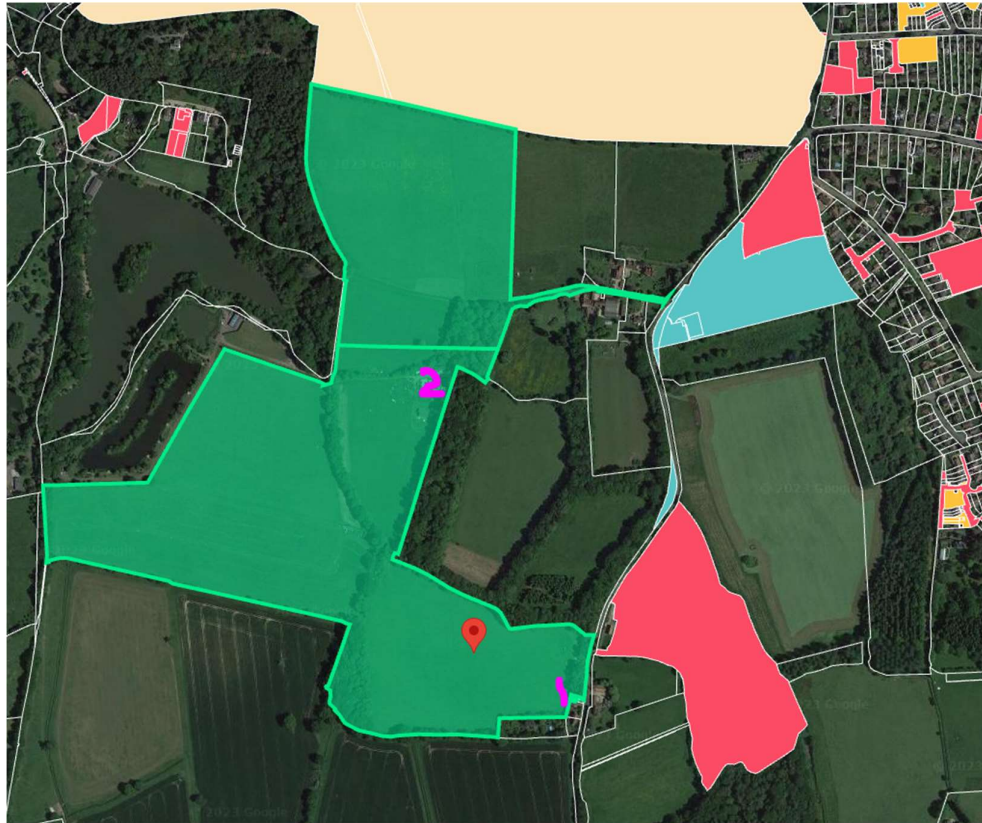
MO/2023/0731 and MO/2023/0806 – Home Farm, Coldharbour Lane, Westcott

I refer to the application above and write in my capacity as the lead for planning matters for Westcott Village Association (WVA).

WVA wish to express concern in relation to the two applications combined and in isolation of each other which fall in green belt, AONB and AGLV.

The two applications, which were submitted within a week of each other, fall within what we believe to be the same land ownership. The land ownership plan (taken from Land Registry) upon which both applications have been submitted extends to

c.88 acres. This is shaded green on the map below. For this reason we believe the applications should be considered and determined alongside each other.



MO/2023/0731/PLA (marked 1 on the aerial above)

Land at Coldharbour Lane, Dorking, Surrey

Erection of an agricultural building for the storage of hay, machinery and housing sheep with associated hardstanding and access track.

MO/2023/0806/PLA (marked 2 on the aerial above)

Home Farm, Coldharbour Lane, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3JG

Conversion of one redundant agricultural barn to 2 No. semi-detached residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and one studio/workshop (Use Class B1) to a single residential unit (Use Class C3).

Our concerns are:-

1. Neither application demonstrates an holistic approach to delivering a viable future for the whole predominantly agricultural land holding upon which these two applications have been submitted within a week of each other.
2. In the context of point 1 above, a strength of case for residential conversion (development) of a “redundant” agricultural barn to two residential units

(MO/2023/0806) has not been made. It has become clear that this would lead to fragmentation of a landholding and replacement with a new barn and access track in a new location (MO/2023/0731). Policy RUD12 below refers:-

POLICY RUD12 - DEVELOPMENT ON FRAGMENTED AGRICULTURAL LAND

The Council will not permit development that would result in the fragmentation of agricultural or horticultural holdings so as to seriously undermine the economic viability of the remaining holdings. In considering proposals for new agricultural buildings on parcels of land which were formerly part of a larger agricultural holding, the Council will require clear cut evidence to demonstrate that they are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit and are otherwise acceptable in terms of Policy RUD13 and RUD14.

3. for the new 450 sq m barn in MO/2023/0731 – in section 1.1 of the planning statement it is stated “*the applicant has recently acquired16.7 acres....*” but there is no red line plan indicating the full extent of the application boundary. In section 3.5 of the same statement it is confirmed that “*The land has recently been acquired with the intention of establishing an agricultural business and with an option to increase the size of the holding by adding further land from the same vendor when it becomes available. That does not detract from the fact that the building is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on the unit as it stands today*”. The linkage between these two applications is therefore confirmed. The applicant refers to Policy RUD 14 but, in the context of the linkage with MO/2023/0806, we question points 2, 3 and 6 of this Policy. Is a new 450 sq m barn with a roof ridge height of c.6m reasonably necessary for a 16.7 acre holding? We know it replaces an existing “redundant” barn of 223 sq m with a roof ridge height of c.6m (MO/2023/0806)

POLICY RUD14 - AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING PLANNING PERMISSION

New agricultural, horticultural or forestry buildings will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development:

1. **is to be sited on agricultural land which is in use for agriculture for the purposes of a trade or business;**
2. **is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the holding;**
3. **would not detract significantly from the appearance and openness of the countryside;**
4. **would not cause unacceptable levels of noise, effluent discharge or damage to Sites of Nature Conservation Importance identified in Policies ENV9, ENV10, ENV11, ENV12 and ENV13;**
5. **would not adversely affect the amenities of any nearby residential properties;**
6. **does not replace buildings converted to non-agricultural uses which could reasonably have continued in agricultural use;**

- 7. would not generate volumes of traffic that would prejudice highway safety or cause significant harm to the environmental character of country roads.**

Subject to the above, the Council where possible will require that new agricultural or forestry buildings:

- 1. are well-related in terms of their location, size and colour to existing agricultural buildings;**
 - 2. avoid prominent locations and blend into the landscape;**
 - 3. are located near an existing dwelling on the holding if their use requires surveillance.**
4. We wonder how MO/2023/0806 can make a case to convert the agricultural building that was converted to a workshop/ office building in 2018 into a residential unit. The planning history for Home Farm does not suggest that the change of use to workshop/ office building has yet been regularised. We accept that the existing printing business wishes to relocate to Dorking but, assuming the business use of this building had been regularised, we do not accept the proposed change of use without evidence of proper marketing to identify a replacement business tenant.
5. Section 4.3 of the Planning Statement for MO/2023/0806 states *“It is intended that the main farmhouse and farm holding will remain under the control of the current owner Mrs Linda Gotto but that the three converted properties will become private residences divorced from the estate”*. This is further confirmation of the linkage of the two applications, in particular what is stated in section 3.5 of the planning statement for MO/2023/0731.

Turning to the planning history for Home Farm, the information which is available on MVDC’s planning portal is as follows:-

MO/2011/0363 - Erection of a single storey dwelling (at location 2 above) - was withdrawn.

MO/2014/1767 - Erect 1 No. single storey detached dwelling for a rural worker to replace existing temporary mobile home (at location 2 on the plan above). Was approved with conditions.

We have noted from the Planning Statement and its various supporting materials in application MO/2023/0806 that the mobile home is still there together with various containers. And, given Section 4.3 of the Planning Statement for MO/2023/0806, is it the case that there would need to be an application for the rural worker restriction to be lifted?

As stated above, we can find no planning history for the barns, specifically MO/2018/1284 – Approval of the conversion of one agricultural building to a studio/workshop (Use Class B1) - which is referred to in the Planning Statement for MO/2023/0806.

If minded to approve, we urge you to consider these aspects of both of these applications very carefully with the input of Surrey Hills AONB Officer and MVDC's Conservation Officer as required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Leaver', written in a cursive style.

James Leaver

Planning Lead, Westcott Village Association