

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/24/97810

Site Address: Land adjacent to Talat Villa, Upper Northam Drive, Hedge End, SO30 4BG

Case Officer: Rebecca Altman

Description: Application for retention of single storey building for business use (Use Class E (c))

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Countryside • Settlement Gap • Great crested newt amber zone (medium risk) • Airport safeguarding zone		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Z/30849/000/00 – adjoining Talat Villa - outline: erection of 11 detached houses and garages – refused 14/03/1989 • Z/17709/000/00 – adjacent Talat Villa – erection of one dwelling on land – refused 20/06/1977		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received.		
Parish Council:	No objection.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 11 September 2024 – photographs on file.		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance
Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are S4, S5, S6, DM1, DM11 and DM13.

Assessment:
Site and proposal The application seeks retention of a single-storey wooden building used by a Florist business. The building is located adjacent to a residential property known as Talat Villa, on the north-east side of Upper Northam Drive. The land behind the building is in use for caravan storage, a use which is understood to have been operating for a number of years and is immune from planning enforcement action. The building measures a maximum of 2.46m in height, 4.89m in depth and 5.93m in width. It is set back from the road frontage behind existing trees and a fence / gate. There is also a wooden storage unit in front of the fencing. The applicant has explained that the building is used as a workshop to prepare flower arrangements for customers, mainly funeral directors. The business operates predominantly online, with orders taken and flowers then prepared and delivered. The operating times are Monday to Friday 10am – 2pm. There is no parking on site and the

applicant has confirmed that vehicles are parked at the owners property to the east of the site.

Principle of the proposal: impact on the countryside and settlement gap

The site lies within the countryside where employment development is supported under policy S5 of the Local Plan if it comprises the extension or replacement of existing employment uses or re-use of existing buildings. Policy S6 relates to settlement gaps and allows new development provided that it would not have an urbanising impact or harm the separate identity of adjoining settlements.

Whilst the proposal does not specifically accord with Policy S5, the building is located on the edge of an existing employment site (caravan storage area), adjacent to a row of dwellings, and is of a modest scale and operation. The building is small in size and constructed of timber, and is located behind a border of trees, set back from the road. The site visit confirmed that the building is visually unobtrusive and has very little impact on the appearance or character of the area. Due to its modest size and location on an existing developed site, it is also not considered to harm the settlement gap. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the general objectives of Policies S5 and S6 and is acceptable.

The building also supports a local business, which can be seen as a positive benefit weighing in favour of its retention.

Access and parking

There is no vehicle access to the building and the applicant has confirmed that access by customers is limited as most of the orders are delivered. Parking for vehicles associated with the building takes place at one of the nearby residential properties. The Highway Authority has raised no objection, noting that given the small size of the unit, any trip generation is likely to be minimal and would not significantly impact on the local highway network.

Ecology and drainage

The Council's Ecologist has noted that there are records of various protected species near the site, including bats, hedgehogs and stag beetles, but as the building is already in place there is no new construction that could cause ecology impacts. The proposal is exempt from requiring 10% biodiversity net gain but there is the potential for enhancements to be made to benefit wildlife, such as the installation of a bat box or planting of species to attract pollinating insects. An informative note can be added to the decision to set out these recommendations.

No drainage information is submitted with the application but the applicant has confirmed that there are no toilet facilities within the building, and it is not considered that a building of this size would result in a significant increase in surface water run-off.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan

and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Conclusion: The building is modest in size and its appearance and operation is not considered to have any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, or result in an urbanising impact on the settlement gap. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐

Plans:

- TWAIF-JT-Plan ref.-05 (Location plan)
- TWAIF-JT-Plan ref. -04 (Site plan)
- TWAIF-JT-Plan ref. -02 (Elevations and floorplans)

The building shall only be used for purposes falling within Use Class E(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

Reason: To ensure that the character of the countryside is not adversely impacted by a more intensive business use, in accordance with policies S5 and DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036).

Note to applicant: There are opportunities for the site to be enhanced to benefit wildlife. The building may be suitable for a bat or bird box and additional planting could be provided to attract birds and pollinating insects. Further information about bat boxes can be found via the following link: [Home - Bat Conservation Trust \(bats.org.uk\)](http://bats.org.uk). Links to further advice are set out in the Ecologist's response to the application.