

Northney Farm Tea Room wishes to appeal against the decision made by Havant Borough Council regarding our application for retrospective use of barn as mixed use tea room and education/exhibition space, change of use of Agricultural Land to extend the existing car park, and amendment to existing seating arrangements with increase in covers from 80 to 100.

Following discussions with Council officers, the scope of the application was reduced to remove any proposals for amplified music. Therefore, this aspect should not have formed part of the officer's considerations.

It should also be noted that the Highway Authority had no objections to the arrangements for vehicles and therefore the extension to the car park has not been refused within the case officer's report.

Therefore the appeal is based on the two aspects identified within the reasons for refusal, namely the intensification of use and the proposed outside seating.

Regarding the first reason for refusal, policies DM10 and CS16 describe the Council's attitudes to managing noise from development, and state that development should not cause unacceptable harm. The Tea Room has always been mindful of managing noise, particularly with regard to farm animals kept in the adjacent field, and which are nearer than any people. The professional noise survey undertaken confirms that with the small increase in patrons, the overall noise levels would continue to be below the BS8233:2014 criteria.

As stated previously, we have removed any application for amplified sound. Regarding patrons using the outside space, when the previous application (APP/21/01075) was made, there was no comment from the Environmental Health Officer with any concerns that patrons needed to leave the building to access the toilets – no changes are proposed to this procedure. Furthermore, no changes have been made to the opening hours since this application was approved.

The Council refers to the potential impact on the amenity of the neighbouring Meadowsweet property, as their property is adjoined to the barn, and could be used as a habitable room. This is incorrect, as any changes to this space would require Listed Building Consent, and therefore it is not possible for this space to be considered a potentially habitable room.

Regarding the second reason for refusal, the Council allege that this application would be harmful to the peace and tranquility of Northney village. This is not correct. The tea room is part of a large farm complex that has large and noisy vehicle movements throughout the day and night. This includes articulated lorries making deliveries, large milk tankers collecting milk, tractors and telehandlers moving about the farm and smaller delivery vehicles and staff vehicles. The operations commence at 4.30am when the milking of cows starts, and continues until late in evening – the bulk tanker currently makes its collection at 10.00pm every other day. These operations can often mean in excess of 30 large and noisy vehicle movements a day. This is in comparison to the Tea Room, which on average has two deliveries a day from external suppliers, all during office hours, and no further deliveries will be required in order to service the additional number of covers.

The Council have previously described the location as semi-rural (in APP/21/01075) and this more adequately describes the position. The Council's data on vehicle movements show that 2530 vehicles use Northney Road to access the village each day (Hayling Island Transport Assessment Addendum

January 2020) – it is therefore likely that the additional 20 covers at the Tea Room would increase traffic flows, and the associated intensity of development, by less than 1%. This cannot be considered to cause ‘substantial harm’ to neighbours that would warrant refusal of an application under policy CS16.

Regarding the third reason for refusal, the Council’s concern regarding this has not taken account of the Permitted Development Rights at this location to the north of the Tea Room buildings. There is a Permitted Development Right to provide one moveable structure within the curtilage of a building used for a purpose within Class E(b) sale of food and drink etc. This Permitted Development Right would allow for, and has previously been used for, the erection of a marquee in this location. Whilst we are seeking permission to use this area, it will be used on a limited basis when the desire for outside seating is at its greatest – for the majority of the year, the space to the east of the Tea Room building will be sufficient to meet the needs of customers. The farm played a full part in the creation of the Northney and Tye Village Design Statement, and agrees that the views to the east are important at this location, and have therefore protected them throughout the various changes in farming practices that have taken place.

Separate to responding to the individual points made above, is the consideration of the overall planning balance when making the decision. Firstly, the National Planning Policy Framework clearly articulates in section 84 that decisions should enable ‘sustainable growth....of business in rural areas’, ‘the development and diversification of agricultural....businesses’, and ‘development of accessible local services and community facilities’. Northney Farm Tea Room is at the centre of the village, and a well-established hub for village life, providing a warm space, a meeting space and a gathering place for significant occasions such as wakes.

The Northney Farm Tea Room barn has now been used for many years as an education and exhibition venue. The farm hosts many school visits – the only working farm within the Borough of Havant to do so – and is host to events such as the Hayling Island Arts Trail. All of these demonstrate the value of the business to local people, and that its development should be supported by the Council. The application seeks to regularise use of the barn for Tea Room customers at times when it is not being used for these activities and events.

More locally, the proposals support Havant Borough Council’s Policy CS12 which states development should support the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Appropriate to the....understanding and enjoyment of the area. The Tea Room regularly hosts education events provided by Chichester Harbour Conservancy to improve understanding of the area, and how people can access the AONB safely and without damage to the flora and fauna.

Out of the 132 representations made there were... (73 in favour; 58 against; 1 neutral). The majority of the objections were objecting because of the possibility of amplified music, this has been withdrawn from the application so we are sure that the vast majority would now be supportive.

In summary, we believe that a decision to grant this application should have made. This because the NPPF and Local Strategies support the development of the existing business, and that any potential harm has been sufficiently mitigated by the changes to the application and the current planning conditions that are already in place.

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