



British Garden Centres

Planning Statement

Havant Garden Centre, Bartons Road, Havant,
PO9 5NA





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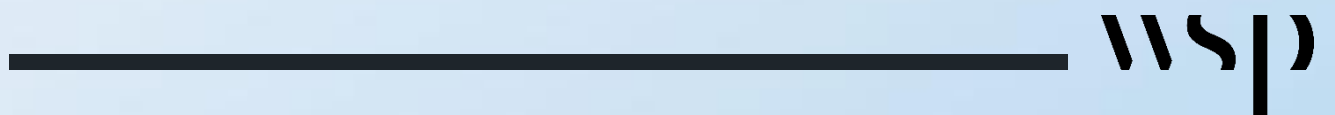


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1

INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. This Planning Statement supports a full planning application for the erection of an open sided canopy at Havant Garden Centre, Bartons Road in Havant.
- 1.1.2. The proposed canopy is required to further improve the existing garden centre and weatherproof existing outdoor retail sales area to better meet customer demand and experience. In turn, this will also help to safeguard the long-term future of the garden centre which is an important and well-established local business.
- 1.1.3. The purpose of this Planning Statement is to demonstrate that the proposed canopy represents appropriate development on the site and is in accordance with both national and local policy.
- 1.1.4. This Statement includes the following sections:
 - Section 2 sets out the context and planning history of the site.
 - Section 3 outlines the proposal.
 - Section 4 provides a summary of the relevant national and local planning policy.
 - Section 5 addresses the other key considerations of the scheme.
 - Section 6 sets out our conclusion.



2

THE SITE

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2. THE SITE

2.1.1. The following section provides background to the proposal, including a description of the application site and a review of the planning history.

2.2. SITE CONTEXT

2.2.1. The application site is part of the Havant Garden Centre located off Bartons Road. The site is an existing outdoor sales area, which comprises of hardstanding and moveable displays. The garden centre itself comprises of a two storey main garden centre building, and canopies extending to the south and the east of the main garden centre. There is a car park to the north of the garden centre. Figure 2.1 below shows the application site and the wider garden centre.

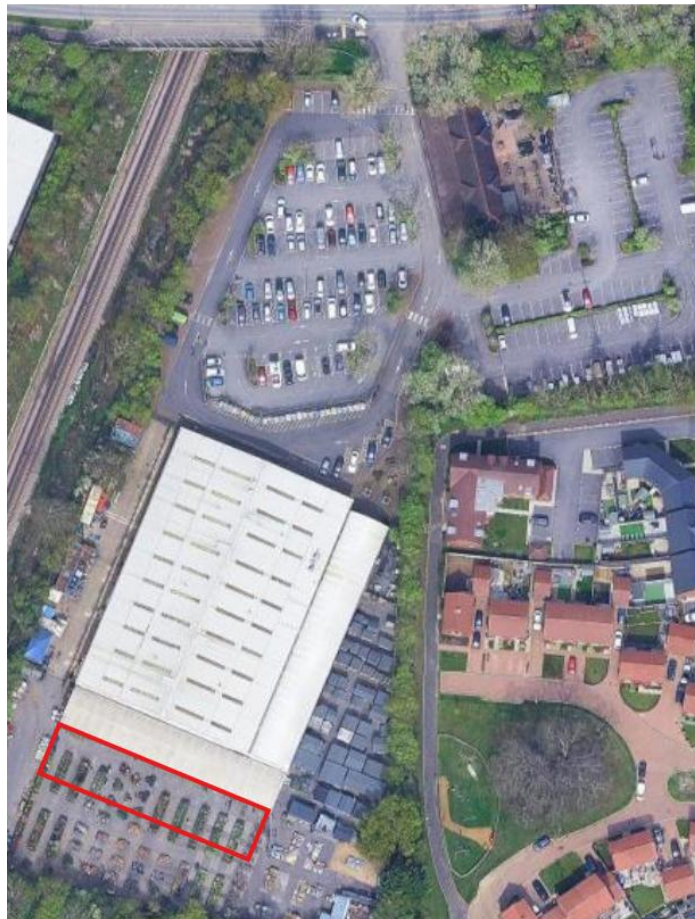


Figure 2.1: Site Location Plan

2.2.2. The application site is bordered by the existing garden centre building and external canopies to the north. The wider garden centre is well screened by trees to the east, west and south as shown in figure 2.1 above. The tree lines to the east and south appropriately screen the garden centre to residential development surrounding the centre. The site has a housing estate to the east, separated by a tree line. A second housing estate exists to the

south of the garden centre, which is connected to the eastern housing estate by a footpath. This southern housing estate is separated from the garden centre by another tree line, as well as the garden centres outdoor retail space. To the north of the site is Bartons Road, which provides access to the site. Beyond Bartons Road is a cul-de-sac housing estate and Bartons Green Recreation Ground. To the west of the site exists an industrial site with multiple warehouses of varying size and use. Most of the warehouses are used as storage and distribution. The site and the industrial estate are separated by a rail line

- 2.2.3. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, so is at low risk of flooding. The site is not within a conservation area. There is a grade II listed building to the north of the garden centre, located east of the car park. The listed building is named as Barn, Bartons road, and was first given listed building status in February 1984. The entrance to the building is separated from the car parking space by a patio/entrance ramp. Currently, an aquarium shop operates outside of this listed building. There are no Tree Preservation Orders located on site.

2.3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.3.1. The garden centre site has recent planning history, outlined in the list below:

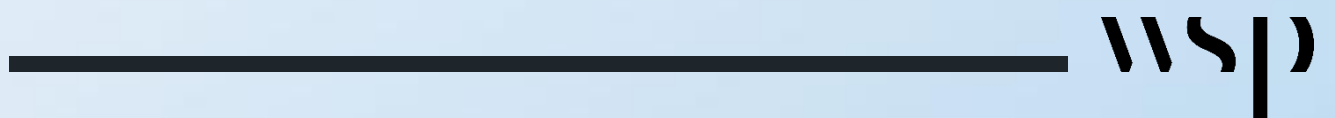
- *Erection of open-sided canopy and metal store to allow operation of hand vehicle wash facility.* Ref: APP/12/00114: Granted 29/10/2012.
- *Change of use of part of Dobbies Garden Centre to Veterinary Practice with associated external alterations.* Ref: APP/21/01406: Granted 08/04/2022.

- 2.3.2. Other recent applications in close proximity of the application site include the following:

- *Outline application for residential development (175 dwellings) with associated infrastructure.(01.12.16).* Ref: APP/15/01435. Granted 01/12/2016.
- *Residential development to provide 9 dwellinghouses along with the continued use of Eastleigh House as Class B1(a) offices and the demolition of outbuildings to the rear of the building.* Ref: APP/16/01077. Granted 21/01/2017
- *Landscaping scheme to create a new setting for Eastleigh House and 3No. single storey one bedroom terraced wheelchair accessible dwellings for the over 55s.* Ref: APP/21/00636.
- *Two storey side extension to existing warehouse (Class B8) and reconfiguration of car parking and relocation of cycle parking.* Ref: APP/22/00581. Granted 10/11/2022.
- *Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 55 dwellings; comprising 6No. 2 bed flats; 9 No. 2 bed houses; 33No. 3 bed houses; 6No. 4 bed houses and 1No. 5 bed house; together with access, landscaping, car parking and open space.* Ref: APP/14/00863. Granted 25/02/2015

3

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.3.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 572.5sqm open-sided canopy extending from the existing south elevation. The proposal does not look to amend the existing access to the garden centre, or existing car parking arrangements. Furthermore, the canopy will not result in the loss of any existing trees or hedgerows.
- 3.3.2. The garden centre has an existing canopy, which is L shaped and connects the front of the garden centre to the southern canopy. However, a large part of the outside sales area remains uncovered. The purpose of the current proposal is to provide an extended covered area to protect both existing plants and customers from the weather, providing a completely covered shopping experience. The plan below (**Figure 3.1**) shows the proposed canopy in blue.



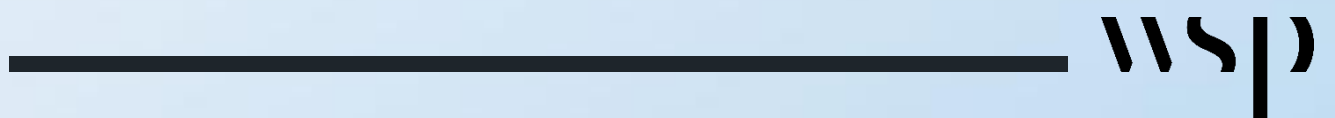
Figure 3.1: Proposed canopy

- 3.3.3. The proposed canopy will be single storey in height, constructed of a steel frame, with a fire-retardant fabric (FR PVC). This design will be in keeping with the existing canopies and garden centre on site, with a lightweight arched roof structure typical of garden centre canopies.

- 3.3.4. The proposed canopy will be attached to the existing canopy to the south of the main garden centre building. The proposed canopy will extend south.

4

PLANNING POLICY



4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1.1. In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) Section 38(6), the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Other material considerations include the NPPF (2024) and the associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 4.1.2. The Development Plan for Havant is the Local Plan Core Strategy adopted in 2011, and the Local Plan Sites Allocation adopted in July 2018. The Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 was being developed to replace the existing local plans, but was withdrawn in 2021.
- 4.1.3. Havant Borough Council are currently working on producing an updated local to replace the existing local plans. The emerging local plan is expected to be adopted in late 2027. The emerging local plan is currently under preparation of the pre-submission plan, with pre-submission consultation expected to take place in late 2026. Whilst not currently adopted, the emerging local plan little some weight in the determination of this application.

4.2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Havant Borough Core Strategy 2011

- **Policy DM10 (Pollution)** states that development should demonstrate that it will not harm human health or safety, breach national air quality standards, or adversely affect the water environment. External lighting must be strictly limited to what is necessary for security and operation.
- **Policy CS11 (Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough)** requires development to protect, and where possible, enhance the borough's designated landscape, habitats and biological features.
- **Policy CS16 (High Quality Design)** requires all development to achieve a high standard of design that creates attractive, functional places. Proposals must positively respond to local character by respecting natural and historic features, integrating landscaping and biodiversity, and reflecting local building forms, materials and proportions.
- **Policy DM20 (Historic Assets)** requires developments to conserve and enhance Havant Borough's historic assets.

Havant Borough Local Plan (Sites Allocation) 2018

- **Policy AL1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)** requires the Council to take a positive and proactive approach to proposals, approving applications that accord with the Local Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and granting permission where policies are absent or out of date unless adverse impacts would significantly outweigh the benefits or the NPPF indicates restriction.

- **Policy AL3 (Town, District and Local Centres)** seeks to support the vitality and viability of centres by encouraging main town centre uses, protecting primary and secondary frontages, retaining minimum retail proportions, promoting pedestrian active uses, and ensuring well designed shopfronts, with flexibility allowed where vacancy levels exceed thresholds.

Emerging Local Plan (Building A Better Future Plan)

- **Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy)** directs development to existing urban areas and brownfield land, avoids high risk flood areas, and seeks to protect the natural environment while supporting sustainable, accessible growth.
- **Policy 12 (High Quality Design)** requires development to achieve high quality, sustainable design that respects local character, protects amenity, and incorporates landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.
- **Policy 15 (Low Carbon Development)** requires new development to follow a fabric first, energy efficient approach, achieve low heating and energy demand, and incorporate onsite renewable energy generation.
- **Policy 16 (Preventing Overheating)** requires proposals to minimise overheating by following the cooling hierarchy, avoiding reliance on air conditioning, and incorporating shading, ventilation and green infrastructure.
- **Policy 27 (Drainage)** requires sustainable drainage systems, runoff restricted to greenfield rates, and designs that avoid increasing flood risk and account for climate change impacts.
- **Policy 30 (Heritage and the Historic Environment)** requires proposals affecting heritage assets must prioritise their conservation, recognising these assets as irreplaceable and giving great weight to their protection. Schemes should first seek to avoid harm or loss of significance, and where harm is unavoidable, applicants must provide clear and convincing justification.
- **Policy 43 (Amenity and Pollution)** ensures development does not cause harm through noise, odour, contamination, lighting or other pollutants, and protects the amenity of existing and future occupiers.
- **Policy 47 (Accessibility, Transport and Parking)** seeks well connected, sustainable development that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport, with safe access, integrated parking and support for EV infrastructure

4.3. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2024)

- 4.3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sections and policies of particular relevance to this proposal are listed below:
- 4.3.2. Paragraph 8 confirms that this means that the planning system has three overarching objectives including economic, social and environmental objectives.

- 4.3.3. The economic objective seeks to build a strong, competitive and responsive economy by ensuring sufficient, right types of land are available in the right places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
- 4.3.4. The social objective seeks to support vibrant, healthy and strong communities through ensuring the delivery of sufficient housing, promoting a well-designed and safe built environment with accessible services and open spaces that support health, social and cultural wellbeing.
- 4.3.5. The environmental objective seeks to protect and enhance the built, natural and historic environment, help to improve biodiversity and use natural resources prudently, make effective use of land, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 4.3.6. Chapter 4 of the NPPF relates to decision-making, and paragraph 39 states that local planning authorities should:

“Work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”
- 4.3.7. Chapter 6 seeks to build a strong and competitive economy, with paragraph 85 confirming that

“planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, and confirms that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity.”
- 4.3.8. Chapter 7 relates to supporting the vitality of town centres. Paragraph 90 states that

“Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.”
- 4.3.9. Chapter 12 seeks to achieve well-designed places, noting that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 131 states that

“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”
- 4.3.10. Chapter 14 covers the requirement for development to meet the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. Paragraph 170 states that

“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where



development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.”

5

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS



5. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1.1. The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a 572.5sqm open-sided canopy over an existing external retail sales area as part of Havant Garden Centre. The site has an established commercial use and forms part of a long-standing garden centre operation, which is recognised as an important local business contributing to the local economy and providing valued retail services to residents.
- 5.1.2. The development is limited to a lightweight canopy structure that covers an area already in active retail use. As such, the proposal does not introduce any new built footprint, does not increase vehicular movements, and does not alter the primary function of the garden centre. The canopy will enhance operational efficiency by protecting plants, stock, and customers from adverse weather, thereby supporting the continued viability and long-term resilience of the business. This is consistent with the NPPF 2024 (paragraph 90 c), which places significant weight on proposals that enable established businesses to adapt and grow to remain competitive and productive
- 5.1.3. The principle of development is supported by Policy AL1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), which requires the Council to take a positive and proactive approach to appropriate proposals. The development is located on an existing and well-established retail site. The proposal will not change the use of the well-established garden centre.
- 5.1.4. The development is located on previously developed land, accords with the existing site layout, and represents a proportionate and beneficial enhancement to the current retail offer.
- 5.1.5. The proposal does not conflict with national or local planning policy, which this planning statement goes on to demonstrate. The proposed canopy will benefit customers by providing access to the garden centre's full services in all weather conditions, providing a more desirable shopping environment and experience.
- 5.1.6. The development represents an appropriate and policy-compliant enhancement to an existing commercial site, and the principle of development is firmly established.

5.2. DESIGN, LAYOUT AND AMENITY

- 5.2.1. The proposed canopy has been designed to be in keeping with the other canopies at the garden centre and other regional and national garden centre buildings. The proposed canopies are designed so to blend in with the existing garden centre site and the existing canopies previously approved at the site. They will not dominate the existing Garden Centre building and will appear subservient to it. The canopies will be largely screened by existing greenery bordering the site. The proposed canopies will not cause harm to the existing

character of the landscape the wider area because of their design, which has carefully considered the impact on local character and visual amenity.

- 5.2.2. The canopy is set back from the main road, and not within close proximity to existing nearby residential developments. The canopy does not introduce new floorspace, simply covering existing retail floorspace. There are existing hedges and greenery to the east and south providing screening and privacy, therefore the proposed canopy therefore does not impact on the amenity of local residents.
- 5.2.3. The proposal therefore complies with Policy 12 of the emerging Local Plan Policy 12 (High Quality Design), in achieving high quality, sustainable design that respects local character, protects amenity.

5.3. ECOLOGY AND TREES

- 5.3.1. The site is considered to be 'de minimis' with regard to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and therefore is exempt from BNG. The site comprises entirely of hardstanding and therefore will not have any adverse impacts on Biodiversity of trees. The proposal will not remove or harm any habitats and is therefore in accordance with Policy CS11 (Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough) of the Havant Local Plan Core Strategy.

5.4. HIGHWAY SAFETY

- 5.4.1. The proposal does not alter the existing access to the site or parking arrangements, which have been in situ for a significant period of time. The proposal seeks to provide cover over the external sales area to improve customer experience. Given that there would be no increase in the retail floor area it is considered that the proposal would not have material impact on traffic generation at the site and as such it will not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

5.5. FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 5.5.1. The application site is located in flood zone 1 and therefore at the lowest risk of flooding. The site is made up of existing hardstanding, which the proposal will not alter or extend. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy 27 (Drainage) as the canopy will not increase the risk of flooding on the site, or the wider area.

5.6. HERITAGE

- 5.6.1. The application site is located in close proximity to a grade II listed building (known as The Barn), located approximately 141m north of the proposed development site. The proposed development does not propose any alterations to the grade II listed building site, or impact access or parking utilised by the building. The Barn is in the northeastern most point of the garden centre site, whilst the proposed development is located in the southwestern area of the site. The proposed development is well screened from the listed building by trees and the existing garden centre main building. As the proposed canopy would not protrude the

main garden centre building, and match the width of the existing canopy which the proposed canopy extends from, the proposed canopy will not be visible from the perspective of the listed building. Therefore due to the distance from the proposal to the listed building, the intervening existing buildings and screening the proposal does not harmfully impact the setting of the listed building. As there are no proposed alterations to the listed building, or any adverse impact to the setting of the listed building, the proposed development complies with policies DM20 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy), and Policy 30 of the Havant Building a Better Future Plan.

5.7. BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

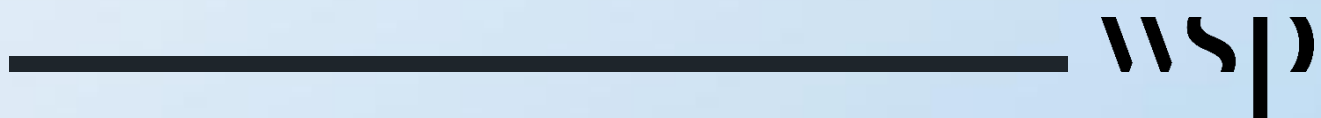
- 5.7.1. Havant Garden Centre is a well-established retail destination, which BGC wish to further invest in to help retain existing, and attract new, customers. The proposed canopy will allow customers to access the garden centres goods in all weather conditions, providing a more desirable shopping environment and experience. The canopy will also help to protect existing stock from poor weather conditions often leading to damages and loss of stock, impacting the viability of the garden centre. As such, the proposal will provide significant benefits to the garden centre's long-term success and viability of a key local business and therefore benefitting the local economy.

5.8. SUMMARY

- 5.8.1. The proposed canopy has been designed to respect the character and amenity of the site and surrounding areas, in accordance with local and national policy. This planning statement has also been demonstrated that they will not have any adverse impacts on highway, ecology, arboriculture, or flood risk, and will result in economic benefits for the economy.

6

CONCLUSION



6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1. The proposed development consists of an open sided canopy extending from the existing Havant Garden Centre. The development provides a practical improvement to the existing outdoor retail area by offering weather protection for customers and stock, thereby supporting the continued viability of this longstanding local business.
- 6.1.2. As the canopy is located entirely within the existing site, it does not increase the garden centre's built footprint, and does not alter access, parking, or the wider site layout, the proposal remains consistent with both national and local planning policy that encourage sustainable economic growth and the adaptation of existing commercial facilities.
- 6.1.3. This Statement has considered the current proposals against local and national planning policy, demonstrating the suitability and acceptability of the proposals for the following reasons:
- No adverse impact on neighbouring amenity due to the existing use of the site and bordering tree lines
 - No significant increase in traffic flow along Bartons Road
 - The canopies will cover hardstanding, and therefore no impacts on surrounding trees or loss of ecological features
 - No increase in flood risk on the site or the wider area as the site is currently hardstanding
 - No adverse impact on the Grade II listed building as the canopy shall be screened by existing developments and trees
 - Aligns with the established character of the surrounding environment and the built form
- 6.1.4. In view of the above and having regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within the NPPF, the application is considered to accord with the Development Plan and other material considerations. It is therefore concluded that planning permission should be granted.



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