

Application Number and Registration Date	MO/2018/2153 (Detailed) 05-Feb-2019
Applicant	Mr J Elias
Case Officer	Katrina Sullivan-Watkins
Amendments /amplifications	
Committee Date	5 June 2019
Ward(s)	Mickleham, Westhumble & Pixham Within 20m Brockham Betchworth Buckland
Proposal	Reinstatement of remnants of outbuildings Building 5 (Potting shed) and Buildings 11 and 12 (Gardeners shed).
Site Description	Land at the Firs, Pixham Lane, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1PH

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

Summary

The application site is a privately owned piece of garden land used as an allotment which historically formed part of the garden to the main Pixham Firs estate. It is accessed from a large driveway off the eastern side of Pixham Lane. This application seeks planning permission for the reinstatement of remnants of outbuildings which were uncovered following on-going maintenance of the site.

The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and has been assessed against national and local policies where it has been concluded that the principle of the development would be acceptable. The design of the proposed buildings would be acceptable within the Conservation Area and due to sufficient separation distances are not considered to give rise to any amenity issues to neighbouring properties.

1. Development Plan

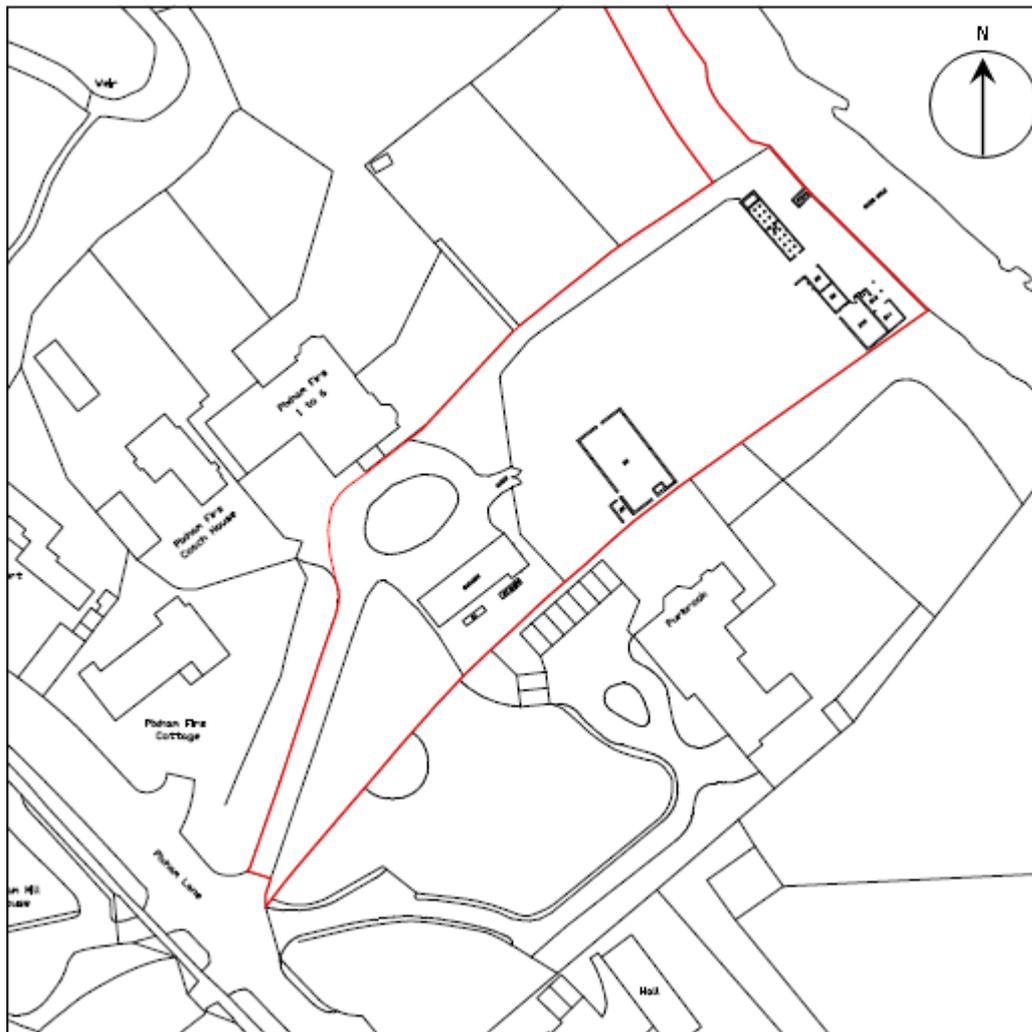
- 1.1. Metropolitan Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Area of Great Landscape Value, Conservation Area

2. Relevant Planning History

None relevant		
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3. Description of Development

- 3.1. The application site is a plot of garden land used as an allotment adjacent to the Pixham Firs development which is under private ownership. There is evidence of remnants of outbuildings which were heated glass houses and gardener's sheds belonging to the main Pixham Firs dwelling, which has now been converted into flats. The application site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.



- 3.2. The current application seeks to reinstate outbuildings to be used as a potting shed and garden shed which will then be used to store gardening equipment to enable the applicant to preserve and enhance the historic garden land.



- 3.3. Building 5 is proposed to become a potting shed with a compostable toilet. It would sit in the existing footprint of the remnants of the previous building and have a floor area of 7.6 square metres. It would have a width of 2.5 metres and a depth of 3.05 metres. The building would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of 3.45 metres.
- 3.4. Buildings 11 and 12 are proposed to become a gardeners shed. It would sit in the existing footprint of the original building and its height would be 4.3 metres in line with the existing wall. It would be 3.6 metres wide by 7.8 metres in length.



Building 5 north west elevation



Building 5 south west elevation



Building 5 south east elevation



Building 5 north east elevation



Buildings 11 & 12 south west elevation



Buildings 11 & 12 north west elevation



Buildings 11 & 12 north east elevation



Buildings 11 & 12 south east elevation

4. Consultations

- 4.1. Historic Environment Officer - *I have no objection to the principle of reinstating these two garden structures subject to some minor changes to the window/door detailing.*

The application site was once a complex of heated glass houses and gardeners sheds belonging to Pixham Firs. This area of the garden fell into disuse and became overgrown during the latter part of the C 20th, with most of the glazed and timber

structures collapsing, in most cases leaving the footprint, heating pipework/ducting and low level brick plinths. The most substantial structure still standing is a garden wall, chimney stack and remnants of the hearth used to heat the glass houses. Historic Ordnance Survey mapping at 25 inch to the mile and 6 inch to the mile scale indicate these structures existed up until at least 1938.

The largest of the buildings to be reinstated is a store building to the northeast of the standing garden wall. Other than the extant chimney and low level brickwork indicating the size of the footprint, evidence of the 'lean-to' form of the roof exists on the upper brick courses of the wall. The proposed reinstatement reflects this scale and form but the roof lights (size/design) and entrance doors (size/design) require amendments before full support can be provided. The roof lights should be reduced in size and be of a traditional C 19th design (if they are necessary at all). The entrance door should be reduced in width and simplified to a painted timber, vertical board (ledged and braced) design. The applicant has agreed to amend the plans to this effect for consideration prior to a decision being made.

Similarly the brick/timber store/WC to the southeast of the site, on the footprint of another small building, is acceptable to me. Overall the reinstatement of these garden buildings is consistent with the historic use of this garden and is considered to preserve the character of the conservation area

5. Representations

5.1. 7 representations were received raising the following summarised concerns:

- Further wildlife disruption would be regrettable
- The application to construct a toilet would put the Victorian sewer system under stress

Officer Comment: The applicant has advised that the toilet in the potting shed would be a compostable toilet which would not require connection to the sewer system.

- The statement of the land being preserved for future generations is confusing as the land was used for a kitchen garden for the manor house
- If 'enjoyment for future generations' means an increase in visitors it would result in a loss of privacy and an increase in traffic

Officer Comment: The applicant has advised that the reinstatement of buildings for use in the garden area would be for private use.

- The proposed buildings would be inappropriate development
- The buildings would result in overlooking issues
- Reinstatement of orangery resembles a small bungalow with windows and chimney and may be used for private accommodation at some time

Officer Comment: There is evidence of a chimney on the remnants of buildings 11 and 12, it would not be a new feature.

- Clear attempt to create a residential property at the rear of their garden

Officer Comment: This application is for the reinstatement of buildings to be used as a gardeners shed and potters shed.

- The proposed shed and toilet is located close to the boundary and will overlook neighbouring properties

6. Main Planning Policies

- 6.1. Government Guidance – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
 Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
 Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 6.2. Mole Valley Core Strategy
 CS13 – Landscape Character
 CS14 – Townscape, Urban Design and the Historic Environment
- 6.3. Mole Valley Local Plan
 ENV22 – General Development Control Criteria
 ENV23 – Respect for Setting
 ENV39 – Development in Conservation Areas
- 6.4. Supplementary Documents
 National Planning Policy Guidance

7. Main Planning Issues

- 7.1. The main planning issues for consideration are the principle of development; the impact upon the Conservation Area and visual amenity of the Green Belt; Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and the impact on flood risk.

Principle of Development

- 7.2. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Section 13 of the NPPF sets out the Government's approach towards protecting Green Belt Land. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states '*Inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*'. The NPPF advises that Local Planning Authorities should '*regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt*' and that very special circumstances will only exist if the harm caused by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm are clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 7.3. The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is to be regarded as inappropriate development, unless for a number of specifically identified exceptions outlined in paragraph 145 of the NPPF. The exceptions include:
- b) The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of land within it.
- 7.4. The proposed development can be considered under b), for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor recreation and allotments.
- 7.5. Part b) of paragraph 145 states that the facilities should preserve the openness of the Green Belt and should not conflict with the purposes of land within it.

- 7.6. The proposed buildings would provide facilities for a gardeners shed and potting shed, which would be used for the storage of gardening equipment and a compostable toilet for the piece of private land used as an allotment for non-commercial gardening purposes, which can be considered as an outdoor recreational activity. The use of the facilities would be in line with the historic uses of heated glass houses for gardening and would not conflict with the purposes of land within it. The buildings would allow for ongoing maintenance of the garden to allow for new planting to enhance the allotment for future use.
- 7.7. As shown below the existing remnants of buildings 11 and 12 includes a wall, chimney stack and brick footings. The wall is 4.3 metres in height and this would not increase following the implementation of the proposed development. The garden shed would extend from this rear wall by 3.6 metres in line with the existing footprint. Moreover, this building would be located close to the enclosed boundary of the site which is characterised by a brick wall and would not extend further into the open space of the site. Although the bulk of the building would increase, the space around the building would be maintained and it is therefore considered that there would not be a significantly detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt when considered against the existing structure.

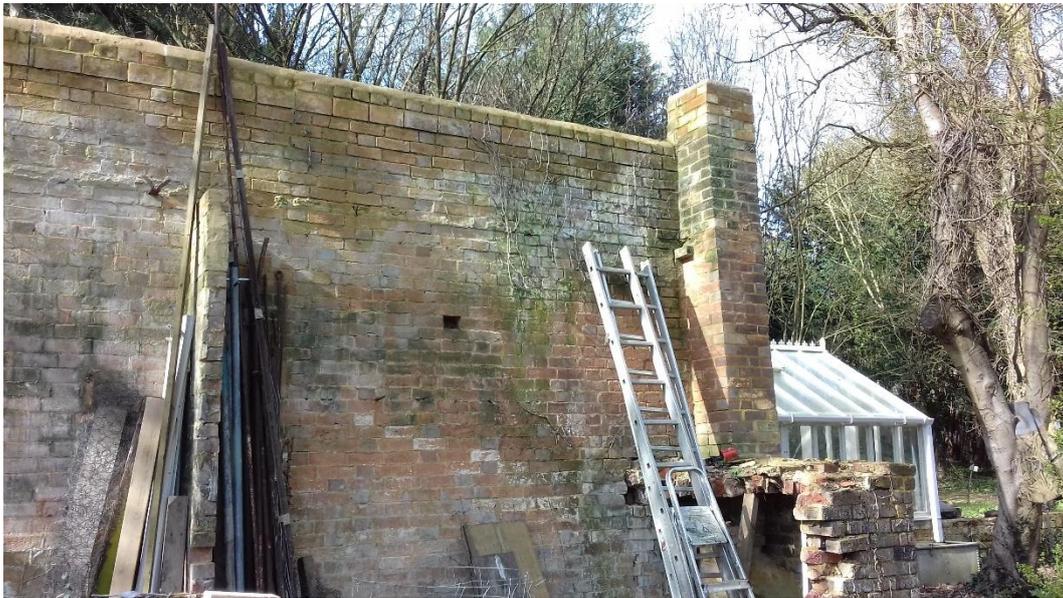


Image showing the remnants of buildings 11 and 12

- 7.8. The remnants of building 5 can be seen below, there is currently a low level plinth indicating where the previous building was located. The proposal would result in a small scale brick and timber structure being positioned above the existing plinth. The potting shed would have a height of 3.45 metres. Although this would be an increase in height of the existing remnants, its footprint of 7.6m² would be the same. Moreover, the potting shed would be a small scale development with much of the open space on the application site around the building being retained. The building would be set back close to the boundary within the site and would not appear prominent or intrusive in the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that this proposal would not significantly harm the openness of the Green Belt.



Image showing the remnants of building 5

- 7.9. The proposed sheds would be used for gardening purposes to maintain and enhance the existing allotment which would not conflict with the purpose of land within the Green Belt. It is considered that the reinstatement of these buildings would not amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Impact upon the Conservation Area and visual amenity of the Green Belt

- 7.10. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an Area of Great Landscape Value and a Conservation Area.
- 7.11. Buildings 11 and 12 would become a gardeners shed to allow safe storage of gardening equipment. It would sit in the same footprint as the existing and would have a sloping roof with 2 No. roof lights inserted to the roof slope. It would also have 3 No. windows inserted to the north east elevation. The insertion of these windows would allow natural light into the building. The roof lights and door have been amended following comments from the historic environment officer about the impact on the Conservation Area. The materials of brick, with a timber door and traditional roof lights are considered to be acceptable within the conservation area and would be in keeping with the surrounding area.
- 7.12. Building 5 would become a potting a shed with a composting toilet and would have a floor area of 7.6 sq. m. The materials used for this proposed shed are considered to be acceptable when viewed in the wider area. It would have a pitched roof with 1 No. window inserted to both the south west and north east side elevations of the shed to allow for natural light into the building. It is considered that this would be a small scale building which would not have not materially harm the character and amenities of the surrounding area.
- 7.13. The applicant has stated that that the reinstatement of the buildings would enable safe storage of gardening equipment. This would enable ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the site to plant suitable vegetation, encourage wildlife habitats and preserve previously historical buildings. It is considered that the buildings would be of an acceptable use to enable this and together would not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the Green Belt or Conservation Area.

- 7.14. The application site is also located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an Area of Great Landscape Value. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 states that the Local Planning Authority should conserve and enhance Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Designating an AONB protects its distinctive character and natural beauty and can include human settlement and development.
- 7.15. There are therefore two considerations directly related to a site's AONB status when determining a planning application. Firstly, does the application conserve the AONB, and secondly, if it does conserve the AONB, does it result in enhancement. The proposed buildings would have limited visibility from the wider public realm and the materials would be in keeping with existing structures which are currently on the site. It is considered that the proposed works would not have a detrimental impact on landscape views and would therefore conserve the AONB. The reinstatement of the buildings to their historical use is considered to be an enhancement.

Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties

- 7.16. Pixham Firs is a block of flats located to the north west of the application site. It would be located 35.6 metres from building 5 and 75 metres from buildings 11 and 12. It is considered that this would be a sufficient distance and thus it is considered that the reinstatement of the buildings would not give rise to any significant overlooking or amenity issues to this neighbouring property.
- 7.17. Purbrook is a block of flats located to the south east of the application south east of the application site.
- 7.18. Buildings 11 and 12, are proposed to become the gardeners shed would be located 45.8 metres from this property. It would maintain a 1.2 metre gap to the shared boundary which is characterised by a brick wall. There would be no windows inserted to the gardeners shed facing the grounds of Purbrook. It is therefore considered that the reinstatement of buildings 11 and 12 would not give rise to any privacy or amenity issues to this property.
- 7.19. Building 5, which is proposed to become a potting shed would be located approximately 13.4 metres away from Purbrook. The small scale building would be single storey and would not have any windows facing Purbrook on the south east elevation. It is therefore considered that the proposed building would not result in any overlooking or overshadowing issues to this neighbouring property.

Flooding

- 7.20. The application site is located within Flood Zone 2. The application is for the redevelopment of previously developed land, replacing existing structures with buildings which are to be used as a potting shed and gardener's store. The proposed works would be a minor non-residential development with an overall footprint of less than 250 square metres as classified within the National Planning Policy Guidance and therefore does not require a sequential test for flood-risk. The use of the land and buildings for gardening work is classified as being a less vulnerable use as set out in the National Planning Policy Guidance. As shown in the table below this means that the development would be of an appropriate use within the designated flood zone.

Flood risk vulnerability classification (see table 2)		Essential infrastructure	Water compatible	Highly vulnerable	More vulnerable	Less vulnerable
Flood zone (see table 1)	Zone 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Zone 2	✓	✓	Exception Test required	✓	✓
	Zone 3a	Exception Test required	✓	✗	Exception Test required	✓
	Zone 3b functional floodplain	Exception Test required	✓	✗	✗	✗

Key: ✓ Development is appropriate.
✗ Development should not be permitted.

Conclusion

7.21. It is considered that the proposed reinstatement of these two modest outbuildings to become a potting shed and gardeners shed would be an acceptable development in the Green Belt, Conservation Area and AONB and would not give rise to any harm to neighbour amenity. As such, the proposal is considered to be compliant with advice set out of the NPPF, Mole Valley Local Plan Policies ENV22, ENV23, ENV39 and with CS13 and CS13 of the Core Strategy.

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 Dwg. No. 18-141-15a, 18-141-14a, 18-141-7, 18-1471-7, 18-141-13 and 18-141-9 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. Before any above ground works commence, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be

submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development harmonises with its surroundings in accordance with Mole Valley Local Plan policy ENV22 and policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy.