

Application No: 19/00659/FULL Full Application

Site: The Bumbles, Ringwood Road, Woodlands, Southampton, SO40 7GX

Proposal: Retention of resurfacing and land drainage; extension to existing driveway and associated landscaping

Applicant: Mrs D Folkes

Case Officer: Katie McIntyre

Parish: NETLEY MARSH

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council view

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION

No specific designation

3. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

DP2 General development principles
 SP7 Landscape character
 SP17 Local distinctiveness
 SP6 The natural environment

4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Not applicable

5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Netley Marsh Parish Council: Recommend permission: The proposals are not visible from the A336, they improve the area for walkers and other users and improve security in the area.

8. CONSULTEEES

- 8.1 Tree Officer: No objections
- 8.2 Landscape Officer: Objection.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 Four representations of support:
 - Development has tidied up the site.
 - Has improved flooding and drainage.
 - Improves security.

10. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 10.1 None relevant

11. ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The application site relates to a parcel of land sited to the front of the residential property 'The Bumbles.' It forms part of a verge and is an important landscape feature and green network for biodiversity. The parcel of land falls within the ownership of 'The Bumbles' however, is located outside of the residential curtilage and garden of the property and is divided by an access track which serves five dwellings. The A336 runs parallel to the gravel track and verge. This application seeks consent for the retention of resurfacing and land drainage; extension to existing driveway and associated landscaping.
- 11.2 The main consideration is the impact of the development upon the character and appearance of the locality.
- 11.3 The site lies within the New Forest National Park. The whole of the National Park is designated as a nationally protected landscape and as such all development proposals will need to take into account this level of protection. The intrinsic landscape character will also need to be recognised which cannot solely be determined by what is visible from a publicly accessible location. The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that *“great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks...which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues”* (paragraph 172). The first national park purpose as set out in the 1995 Environment Act also recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing an areas local character. Local Plan Policies DP2, SP7 and SP17 seek to prevent development and changes of use which would individually or cumulatively erode the National Park’s local character, or result in the gradual suburbanising effect within the National Park. Development proposals should conserve and enhance the character of the New Forest’s landscapes.

- 11.4 The piece of land in question, prior to the development the subject of this application, formed part of the verge between Ringwood Road and the gravel track which serves the residential properties. This landscape feature is considered to be important and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the locality. It is evident from historic photographs that over time this verge has been eroded slightly to provide for a wider access track to the properties as well as some informal parking under the trees, however the character of this gravel track has remained distinctively rural.
- 11.5 The applicant has stated that, in order to improve surface water flooding at the site, the land was cleared of debris and land drainage installed. The area of land was resurfaced in gravel and sleepers placed around the edges creating a rectangular area which has the appearance of a formal parking bay. Lighting was also installed for security purposes as there are no street lights serving the access track. Non-native hedging has also been planted. The applicant has stated that the area is not being used for formal parking and that there is sufficient space within the existing driveway for the parking of vehicles and, as such, has not resulted in the extension of their garden. It does, however, provide additional space for the turning of vehicles.
- 11.6 The works which have been undertaken are considered to have significantly altered the character of this verge through having an overtly domesticated appearance which has in effective resulted in the encroachment and extension of the garden / driveway of the site. This has resulted in the suburbanisation and erosion of the rural character of the locality contrary to Policies DP2, SP7 and SP17. The resulting landscape impact is exacerbated by the formal appearance of the development and the domestic features, such as the lighting and sleepers, appear as incongruous and alien features in this environment. Encroachments such as this, when viewed individually and cumulatively, significantly alter the character of the National Park to the detriment of the visual amenities of the locality. Verges such as these are characteristic of the National Park and contribute to its special character. The New Forest National Park's Landscape Action Plan identifies that the New Forest's landscape character is under pressure from piecemeal encroachment, changes to landscape and suburbanisation and the erosion of the dark night skies. The Landscape Action Plan identifies the erosion of settlement character through the widening and addition of driveways damaging road verges as a key pressure with an objective to avoid suburbanising garden features and resisting the temptation to 'tidy up' verges, as has happened in this case. If permission were allowed it could set a precedent for the other remaining dwellings served by the access track to carry out similar works. It could also set a precedent for future encroachments across the National Park as this relationship is not considered to be unique to the site, which would further erode and fail to conserve or

enhance the character of the New Forest landscapes.

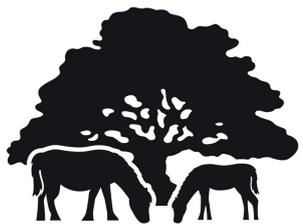
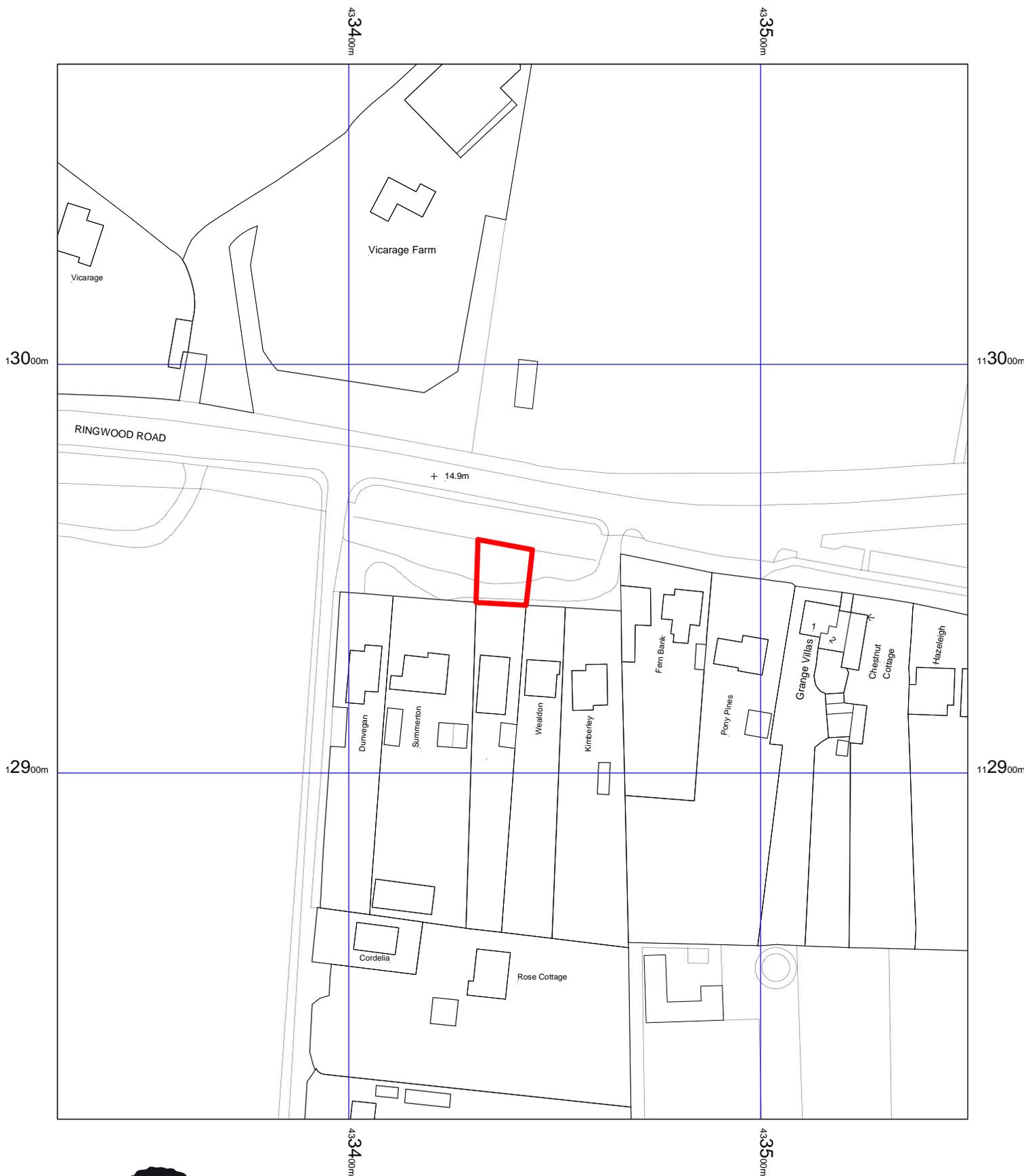
- 11.7 It is appreciated that the works may have been undertaken to improve the drainage at the site. It is, however, considered that this could have been undertaken in a more sensitive manner without the need for resurfacing and the installation of sleepers and lighting. Part of the problem of previous flooding seems to have been caused by debris and rubble being stored in this area by previous owners of the site compacting the soil. The re-planting of the verge with a native species mix would help to restabilise the ground as well as reduce the amount of surface water run-off.
- 11.8 The applicant has also provided further information during the course of the application in relation to the need for the lighting for security purposes. This is not a material planning consideration but in any event is not considered to override the harm caused by the overtly domesticated appearance. It is also considered more sympathetic security lighting could be installed on the property to deter criminal activity rather than illuminating the verge.
- 11.9 The works have resulted in the removal of trees and vegetation at the site which were not protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The Authority's Tree Officer has stated that the works may have resulted in the disruption of the rooting areas of numerous trees and a concern has also been raised with regards to the planting of a non-native hedgerow around the graveled areas. Further verbal discussions have taken place with the Tree Officer due to initial concerns that reverting the site back to as it was previously would further disturb trees. Provided, however, that the required works were undertaken by hand this would be unlikely to result in further harm and the removal of the bank and sleepers and the regrading of soil would help the spread of tree roots.
- 11.10 For the above reasons refusal is recommended as the development has in effect extended the garden of the site resulting in a significant change in the character and use of the land, having an overtly domesticated and formal appearance, resulting in the suburbanisation and erosion of the rural character of the area. This is exacerbated by the domestic lighting which appears as an incongruous and alien feature within the environment. The development is therefore contrary to policies DP2, SP7 and SP17 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason(s)

- 1 The development has in effect extended the garden of the site resulting in a significant change in the character and use of the land, having an overtly domesticated and formal appearance, resulting in the suburbanisation and erosion of the rural character of the area. This is exacerbated by the domestic lighting which appears as an incongruous and alien feature within the environment. The development is therefore contrary to policies DP2, SP7 and SP17 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019), the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

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