

Application No: 20/00176/FULL Full Application

Site: Land Adjacent To Newtown Honey Farm, Newtown Lane,
Mockbeggar, BH24 3NN

Proposal: Single storey building for use as music rehearsal room and music
library

Applicant: Mr J Cook, Hyde Band

Case Officer: Liz Young

Parish: ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE AND IBSLEY

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Member Referral

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION

Conservation Area
Tree Preservation Order
Special Area of Conservation
Site of Special Scientific Interest
Special Protection Area

3. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

DP2 General development principles
SP5 Nature conservation sites of international importance
SP6 The natural environment
SP16 The historic and built environment
SP17 Local distinctiveness
DP18 Design principles
SP39 Local community facilities
SP55 Access

4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Design Guide SPD

5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Sec 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

Ann Sevier: Requests that the application be determined by the Planning Committee:

- The history of Brass Bands in this small area goes back to the late 1800's.
- There is in the Fordingbridge area an exceptional high standard of professional music making.
- They are an important part of the local community and play at the remembrance service in Fordingbridge and various local events.
- They have a training band which supports young people's playing and will be the band's future.
- The band have struggled to find a bespoke location where they could practice and are in need of a permanent home.
- The Planning Officer should take into consideration the cultural heritage of Brass Bands in the North west of the Forest and that the National Park should recognize they have a duty to support this cultural heritage.

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council: Recommend permission but would accept a delegated decision:

- Proposal would bring about community benefits and will support charitable causes.
- The proposal should be subject to a personal condition and should also include a restriction preventing residential use.
- Hours of use should be restricted to prevent harmful noise impacts.
- Car parking should be confined within the site.
- Proposed building would be sympathetic to its surroundings and would not be harmful to the character of the conservation area.
- There should be a tree management survey to accompany the proposal, including additional parking along Newtown Lane.
- A site survey should be carried out to record the relationship with RAF Ibsley (it has been noted that the 'Maycrete' design of billet was not in use at the time the airfield was built).

Hyde Parish Council: Recommend permission:

- Proposal would be in accordance with Policy SP39.
- The Hyde Band brings about significant community benefit and contribute to many local charities.

- Planning approval would ensure continuing community benefit.
- This area has been their base for 125 years.
- The public benefit of the building has not been considered by the Conservation Officer.
- Proposal would not have a harmful impact upon the SSSI.
- Policy SP16 does not apply as the application site is not a historic feature.
- Proposal would comply with Policy DP18 as a result of its modest design.
- Parking is already in place and many band members live within walking distance of the site.
- Most third party comments received have been positive.

8. CONSULTEES

- 8.1 Highway Authority (HCC): No objections based upon additional information provided by the applicant.
- 8.2 Tree Officer: No objections based upon amended plans and subject to conditions.
- 8.3 Building Design & Conservation Area Officer: No objections based upon amended plans and subject to an appropriate photographic recording condition.
- 8.4 Natural England: No objections subject to conditions.
- 8.5 Environmental Protection (NFDC): No objections subject to conditions.
- 8.6 Ecologist: No objections subject to appropriate mitigation and enhancement.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 60 letters of support received (including a letter from Sir Desmond Swayne, Member of Parliament):
- The band's equipment is currently being stored in dispersed locations.
 - The band needs a permanent venue for rehearsals.
 - A permanent venue would enable the band to attract more members.
 - The band are very active in the local community, perform nationally and provide free tuition to members of the community.
 - The band are an important part of the history of the New Forest.
 - The majority of band members car share to rehearsals.
 - The band actively support local charities.

9.2 Four letters of objection and five comments:

- Inadequate vehicular access.
- Increased traffic levels would be detrimental to the SSSI verges.
- Proposed provision would not be sufficient to accommodate all the band members.
- Granting this application would send the wrong message out about the necessity of fully approved plans for well-designed buildings, large or small, that will enhance the Forest.

10. RELEVANT HISTORY

10.1 Change of use of former RAF building to music room/library for temporary period of 3 years; car parking (18/00721) approved on 7 November 2018

(Brooklands Farm, South Gorley)

10.2 Erection of Band Hall with storage facilities and tuition rooms (Outline application with all matters reserved) (05/85137) refused on 15 August 2005

11. ASSESSMENT

11.1 The application site comprises an area of flat ground extending to just under 0.2 hectares. The site lies within a woodland clearing and the trees enclosing the site form part of a wider woodland tree preservation order. The site lies within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area. Access to the site is gained from Newtown Lane, a small rural lane which runs along the north boundary. The wider area comprises a mix of farms and secluded, rural dwellings. The site was one of the dispersed accommodation and ancillary sites serving Ibsley Airfield and the concrete bases of old nissen huts as well as an air raid shelter and the remains of a campsite toilet remain on site. Other second world war remains survive in the wider area. With the exception of these hardstandings, there are no buildings on the site.

Proposal

11.2 Consent is sought to erect a building to be used for band practice by the Hyde band. The building would also accommodate a music library and kitchen. The external footprint would measure just under 125 square metres. The building would have a simple, rectangular footprint with a gabled roof line. The facing materials would comprise timber cladding, timber joinery and either slate or corrugated roofing. It is not envisaged that any other uses will take place within the building and it would not be used for performances. Additional information provided on behalf of the

applicant indicates that the use would take place typically between 9 am and 11pm.

Background

- 11.3 In terms of background, permission was refused on this site in 2005 for a similar proposal. The main concerns related to the lack of an identified direct benefit to the local community, highway safety concerns and the impact upon the surrounding woodland. More recently permission was granted at a nearby site (Brooklands Farm) to re-use a former RAF building for band practice. However, this building is no longer available to the applicant.
- 11.4 The main issue to consider for the purposes of this application is the extent to which the proposed development would meet the requirements of Policy SP39 and whether sufficient changes have been made to overcome previous concerns. Policy SP39 does not rule out new community buildings where they are of clear and direct benefit to the local community and where the scale of the development is proportionate to the use. Other key issues to assess relate to the impact upon protected trees, highway safety (also the provision of on-site parking), the impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area and any potential loss of amenity to neighbours. The site also lies directly adjacent to the New Forest SSSI and the impact upon the biodiversity of the site and adjacent designations would also need to be assessed.

Local Community Benefit and Sustainability

- 11.5 In terms of policy context, Policy SP39 of the Local Plan seeks to support the development of community facilities where they are essential to the local community and where the proposal would bring about a clear and direct benefit to the rural community. The proposal should be accessible to the local community that it serves. Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework recognises that to meet local community needs in rural areas some developments may need to be located in areas which lie outside existing settlements and in areas not well served by public transport. However, it sets out clearly that in these circumstances it will be important to ensure the development where possible would use previously developed land and would relate well physically to existing settlements.
- 11.6 Information which accompanies the application states that the band compete nationally and are also involved with many local charities. The band was established in 1895 and there are 30 senior members and also a training band (approximately 18 members at present). Since 2009, the band has rehearsed in many different venues. Most recently it has occupied a former RAF building at Brooklands Farm, South Gorley (following the

granting of a temporary permission). However, the benefactor involved is not able to continue with this arrangement and the building was also too small for the band's requirements. The application site was gifted to the band, who are now in need of a permanent venue for rehearsals.

- 11.7 Additional information received states that, because of the specialist nature of the establishment, it does attract attendees from a wider geographical area. One of the difficulties faced is that purpose built venues are not widely available. Whilst six representations have been received from the immediate area, the greatest proportion of comments in support have originated from Fordingbridge, Ringwood and Salisbury. It has also become apparent that a large number of members originate from Lymington and also Winchester, Eastleigh and Bournemouth.
- 11.8 The application site (which falls outside the defined settlement areas of the New Forest) is rural and remote, with no established built development. There is no established commercial, business or community use taking place from the site at present and it does not currently generate any significant levels of activity. The previously permitted change of use at Brooklands Farm was permitted prior to the adoption of the Local Plan and because it related to the use of an existing building it was primarily assessed against the re-use of buildings policy (which permits a broader range of uses in rural areas subject to ensuring no wider impacts upon the area). This proposal would introduce a substantial new element of built development along with associated parking and activity into the open countryside. Whilst Policy SP39 does not rule out the introduction of new community buildings, this would be restricted to situations where the proposal would be providing an essential service to the local community in the immediate area.
- 11.9 Whilst it is evident that some band members do live in the immediate vicinity, it has become increasingly apparent (from additional information submitted on behalf of the applicant) that the specialist nature of the use attracts members from a much wider geographical area. It is also apparent that many of the band's activities (performances) take place nationally and are not restricted to the Hyde or Gorley area. Having regard to the fact that the development now under consideration would result in the introduction of a significant element of built development and activity into the open countryside, the key test would relate to whether there is a demonstrated need for the use to be carried out in this location (i.e. whether it provides an essential service to the local community). Whilst it is acknowledged that the band enjoys considerable public support and makes a valuable contribution to communities within the Avon Valley and also the wider area within the New Forest and locations further afield, the applicant has not demonstrated a proven and specific need for the rehearsal venue to be located within Mockbeggar. This is because the majority of band members are travelling from much further

airfield (and significantly less rural locations) and also because other elements of the band's activities take place nationally.

- 11.10 The impact of introducing a significant element of built development and activity into a rural, tranquil location within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area needs to be balanced against the benefits the proposal would bring to the communities within Mockbeggar and Hyde. In his case, based on all the information submitted, it is considered that the proposals would not meet the objectives of Policy SP39 of the Local Plan and would also be at odds with Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst it is appreciated that purpose built venues are difficult to come by, it is evident that the band have carried out rehearsals previously within buildings designed for alternative uses. Furthermore, there is no information accompanying the application which could rule out the possibility of adapting existing buildings to accommodate the use under the re-use of buildings policy. The band have clearly faced difficulties in finding appropriate venues for rehearsals and the importance of securing an appropriate venue sooner rather than later is acknowledged by officers. However, there is insufficient information accompanying this application to show that other options to secure a venue or site within a less rural location have been explored. The wide geographical area of members benefiting from the use would suggest that there might be significant potential for an alternative site in a more appropriate location.

Trees

- 11.11 The trees on and adjacent to the site are all subject to a woodland tree preservation order. However, most of the proposed building would be positioned on the existing slab and is unlikely to have a harmful impact upon these trees. Installing the associated service routes, however, may have an impact but could be dealt with through conditions in the event that consent was granted. The Tree Officer had raised concerns in relation to the layout of the proposed parking and access as two parking spaces were shown in close proximity to a mature Oak tree and were likely to cause irreversible root damage. There was also no specification for the proposed ground treatment for the proposed access to the parking spaces. However, an amended plan has been submitted to address this issue and the Tree Officer is satisfied that, subject to appropriate conditions being imposed, the integrity of the protected woodland would not be adversely affected.

Conservation and Heritage Considerations

- 11.12 The application site contains the material remains of buildings from the second world war and the concrete slabs are therefore of archaeological interest, particularly if they form part of the complete remains of the Ibsley Airfield over a wider area. Whilst it

has not been established how much of the remains over the wider area remain intact, or whether the slabs are structurally capable of supporting the proposed building, the Conservation Officer has raised no objections subject to a photographic record being undertaken prior to development. In terms of the design of the buildings themselves, this has been amended with a simplified roof form and scaled down fenestration and the proposed building would therefore not result in any direct harm to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

Parking and Neighbouring Amenity

- 11.13 Based upon Annexe 2 of the Local Plan which sets out parking standards, the proposal would generate a parking requirement of 9 spaces. The proposed plans show a parking provision of 11 spaces and that would clearly meet these requirements. Initially, the Highway Authority requested further information in relation to the likely visitor numbers, frequencies, days and times of rehearsals. The applicant has come forward with further details, including an assessment of what has occurred in the past. Whilst detailed visitor / trip numbers have still not been provided, the further information sets out that the proposed uses of the building will include a music library. There would be at least two main rehearsal nights each week and training of the band on another night. Once a month there would be a directors' meeting. There would also be one to one tuition when required, an Annual General meeting, the Annual RAF Ibsley Historical Society Exhibition and occasional meetings. The applicant states that the times of use proposed would be the same as for the permission given at Brooklands Farm. These were from 09:00 and 23:00 every day. This earlier consent also included a personal condition to ensure the building in question would be used only by Hyde Band. Based upon this further information, the Highways Authority have advised that they are now satisfied that the proposal would not generate a level of vehicular activity which would impact significantly upon the local highway network and consider that there earlier concerns have been addressed.

Ecology

- 11.14 The application site lies within an ecologically sensitive location as it is located within 35 metres of a local wildlife site (SINC), within a clearing that is integral to a priority habitat, within 200 metres of standing water bodies and adjacent to the New Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest. The application should therefore have ideally been informed by a professional ecology survey. Notwithstanding this, the condition of the site is such that impacts upon fauna (for example, from external lighting) could reasonably be addressed through appropriate mitigation. The impact upon botanical interests is less clear and the proposed septic tank would also have potentially implications for the water environment in terms of increased nutrient levels. However, the Authority's

Ecologist raises no objection to the proposal on the grounds that (if consent were to be forthcoming) a scheme of mitigation and enhancement could reasonably address these issues.

Conclusion

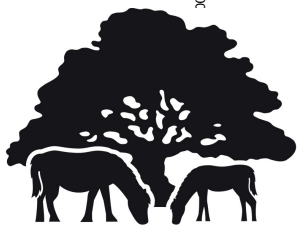
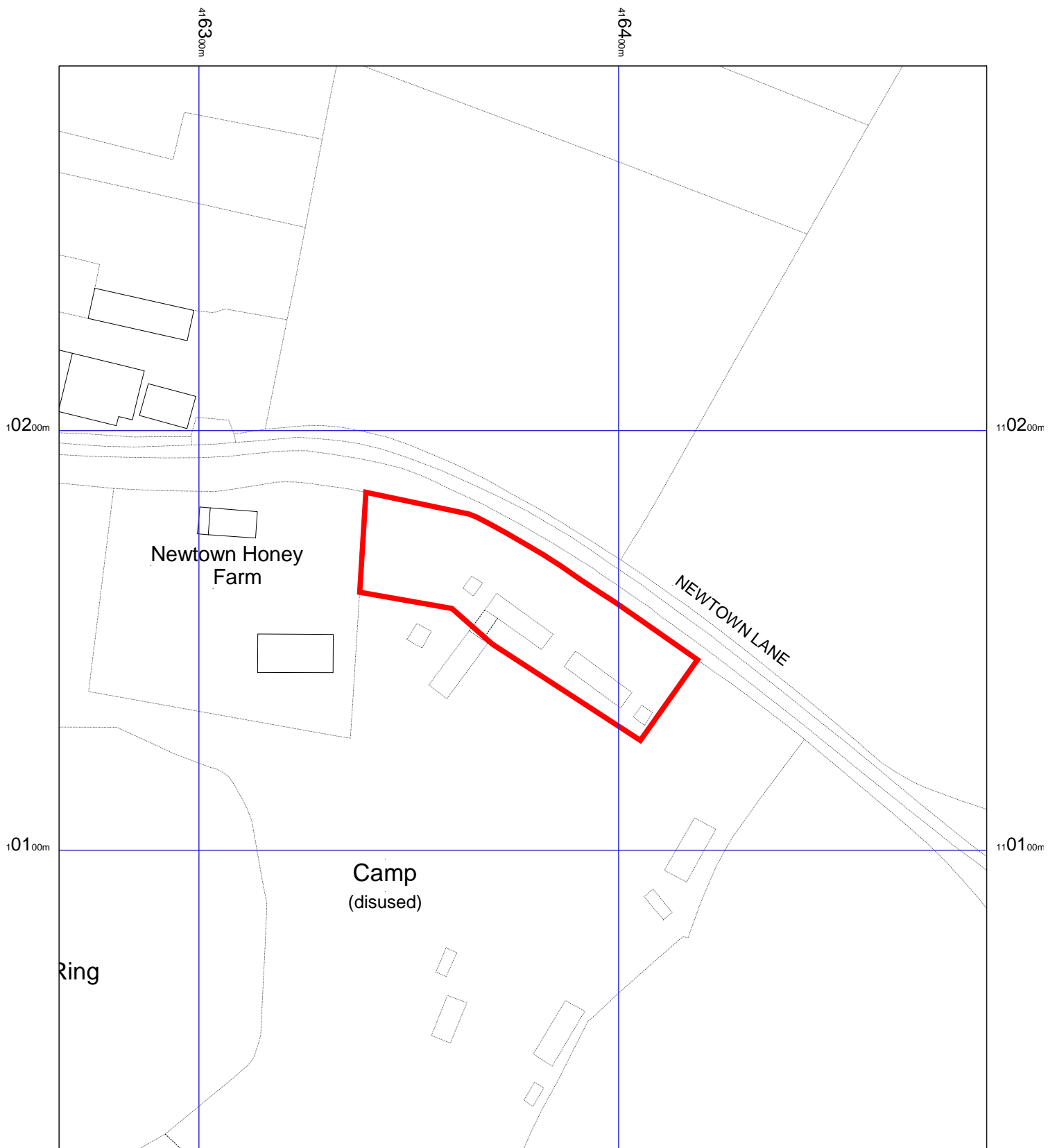
- 11.15 Whilst it has been established that the proposal would not bring about any direct harm to the built heritage or natural features of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area, ecology or the amenities of neighbouring residents, the proposal would result in the introduction of a significant element of built development, parking and activity into the open countryside on a site which has not been previously developed. This would significantly alter the delicate balance between built development and the open countryside and this impact would not be sufficiently outweighed by any benefits to the local community in terms of providing essential services and reducing the need to travel. The proposals (which would evidently serve a need which is not wholly restricted to the National Park) would therefore fail to meet the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and focusing new built development toward previously developed land, close to settlements and areas well served by public transport.
- 11.16 The band undoubtedly enjoys a high level of public support but for the reasons set out above, it is considered that the application has failed to adequately demonstrate why this particular site in this location is the only option for the band (other than the fact that the land has been gifted to the band). Refusal is therefore recommended.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Reason(s)

- 1 It has not been demonstrated that the proposal (which would introduce a substantial element of built development and activity into the open countryside) would be of any direct benefit to the local community or that it would contribute to the understanding and enjoyment of the New Forest. The development would appear to serve a need which originates from areas outside the immediate area and also beyond the National Park. The proposal would set an undesirable precedent for similar proposals thereby leading to further erosion of the visual amenities of the area and a significant increase in vehicular activity. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policies DP2 and SP39 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

New Forest National Park Authority
Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road,
Lymington, SO41 9ZG

Tel: 01590 646600 Fax: 01590 646666

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