

Application No: 24/01207FULL Full Application

Site: Land Opposite The Cottage, Godshill Wood SP6 2LR

Proposal: Use of building and land for agricultural bee keeping; extension to building, polytunnel.

Applicant: Mr D Parker

Case Officer: Joshua Dawes

Parish: Godshill Parish Council

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council view

2. POLICIES

Development Plan Designations

Conservation Area

Principal Development Plan Policies

DP2 General development principles

DP18 Design principles

DP45 Extensions to non-residential buildings and uses

DP50 Agricultural and forestry buildings

SP6 The natural environment

SP7 Landscape character

SP15 Tranquillity

SP16 The historic and built environment

SP17 Local distinctiveness

SP48 The land-based economy

Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide SPD

NPPF

Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Sec 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

3. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

4. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Godshill Parish Council: resolved to support the above application on the grounds that the applicant covered many areas of concern raised by other consultees to the application when the application was considered at a meeting. He advised that the site will not be for commercial use, he will be the only person managing the site and no employees will be working at the site, with the only vehicle movements being his own vehicle(s) and any toilet facility put in place will be for his own use whilst managing the bees hives and the site. Consequently, Councillors considered that the anticipated impact on neighbouring properties, the local bee population, the footpath and on the use of the track to Godshill Wood would be no greater than its current use.

5. CONSULTEEES

Building Design and Conservation Officer: Concerns in relation to increase in scale, size, and massing within a small plot in a highly visible part of the conservation area which will appear as overdevelopment of the site and negatively impact the dispersed, rural character of the designated asset. This would be further exacerbated with the introduction of a large polytunnel. The introduction of a polytunnel on this site could be considered a proliferation of outbuildings on a considerably restrained site that neither preserves nor enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Ecologist: Unable to support. In my opinion currently there is insufficient information to demonstrate accordance with SP6.

Environmental Protection (NFDC): Environmental Health does not object to the application, providing suitable planning conditions are attached to any granted permission.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

Five comments received in objection with grounds summarised below.

- Concern that the proposal would result in a change of use as there has not been an agricultural use on the site for decades.
- The site is too small to accommodate the proposal, becoming over-prominent and un-characteristic within the landscape.
- The level of activity at the site will increase along with incoming/outgoing traffic.
- Placement of such a large amount of bees in a residential area would be a health risk to residents and passers by.
- Concern relating to the increased traffic on the narrow, rural lane and damage this might cause.
- Impact on the usability of the nearby public footpath.
- The placement of a commercial business in a residential area would be out of character and inappropriate.
- Concerns relating to the noise, light and pollution coming from the site and use.

- Impact on the local ecology with the introduction of an estimated 1 million bees.
- The proposed building would be too large.
- Addition of a septic tank and toilet would be unnecessary.
- The amount of development proposed would result in a significant level of visual intrusion.

7. RELEVANT HISTORY

Change of use from stables and stores to studio (NFDC/76/05592) refused on 04 October 1976.

8. ASSESSMENT

Application Site

8.1 The 0.1 hectare application site is located to the north east of the Cottage and to the south west of Godshill Wood House in Godshill Wood. The site is situated within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area. The site appears to have been used as agricultural in the past, with an agricultural building located on the site, which was left in disrepair and recently partially restored with a section being removed.

Proposed Development

8.2 This application seeks planning permission for the use of the land for agricultural bee keeping; an extension to the building which would be used in connection to the bee keeping on the site; and the construction of a polytunnel in the centre of the plot. The building and its extension would be used for storage space for spare hives and other beekeeping related equipment, as well as the extraction and processing facilities used for the jarring and processing of honey. The polytunnel would be used in connection with the bee-keeping activities on the site.

Consideration

8.3 The key considerations relate to Policies DP45 and DP50; the impact on the landscape, public footpath and heritage assets; the impact on neighbouring amenity; and the impact on ecology.

8.4 The application site comprises a small plot of land located to the north of The Cottage. Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that "agriculture" includes horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes, and "agricultural" shall be construed accordingly." The land has not been in use for an extended period of time. However, it is understood to have previously been in agricultural use and the use of the land for agricultural

activities would not result in a change of use, or require planning permission.

8.5 In relation to the proposed extension of the existing building, Policy DP45 (Extensions to non-residential buildings and uses) sets out that the limited extension of existing non-residential buildings and uses will be permitted where it: a) would not materially increase the level of impact of the activity on the site; and b) is contained within the existing site boundary. The proposed extension would extend beyond the historic building line of the former building and would contain storage space, an incubator, desks and a toilet in addition to the current building containing an extraction and bottling room and stores. Whilst contained within the site boundary, the proposed extension is considered to comprise more than a limited extension, with associated impacts on the landscape and conservation area, and with the potential to materially increase the level of activity on the site.

8.6 The proposal also includes a polytunnel. Policy DP50 (Agricultural and forestry buildings) states that permission will be granted for buildings required for agriculture or forestry purposes where:

- a) there is a functional need for the building and its scale is commensurate with that need and its setting in the landscape;
- b) the building is designed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;
- c) the site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to agricultural necessity for a more isolated location; and
- d) they do not involve large or obtrusive structures or generate a level of activity which would have a detrimental effect on the National Park.

8.7 Whilst the polytunnel would be sited in close proximity to the extended agricultural building, it would comprise a large structure. In combination, the buildings would extend across a large portion of the plot, which would be easily seen from the main track and public footpath as well as other properties.

8.8 There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The Authority's Building Design and Conservation Officer has noted that an L-shaped outbuilding is illustrated on the 1924 OS map and therefore there is no in principle objection reinstating the outbuilding to its former size. However, concerns have been raised over further increasing the size of the outbuilding to the east, beyond the historic building line. An increase in scale, size, and massing within a small plot in a highly visible part of the conservation area is considered to appear as overdevelopment of the site and negatively impact the dispersed, rural character of the designated asset. This would be further exacerbated with the introduction of a large polytunnel which is considered a proliferation of outbuildings on a considerably restrained site that neither preserves nor enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposal would

be contrary to Policy SP16 of the adopted Local Plan and section 16 of the NPPF. In addition, it is considered that the proliferation of buildings on the site would have an adverse impact on landscape character contrary to Policy SP7.

8.9 Whilst the proposed development would have a visual impact, it is noted that there is some distance between the plot and neighbouring dwellings due to the other small plots of agricultural land and generous residential plots in the area. Many concerns have been raised about the impact of the bees on the nearby residents and passers by.

Environmental Health (pollution) at NFDC has been consulted and have no objection subject to planning conditions in relation to an Apiary Management Plan (AMP) detailing measures to ensure that the keeping of bees does not cause detriment to amenity or a nuisance, especially to those living and working in the locality.

8.10 In relation to the impact on ecology, the submitted information has been reviewed by the Authority's Ecologist. The Ecologist is currently unable to support the proposals. The proposals include a Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and Assessment, prepared by competent persons, which suggests BNG will be achieved on site largely by an improvement in neutral grassland condition and tree planting. A figure of 26.1% net gain is detailed. However, the Ecologist has highlighted inconsistency in the baseline data provided requiring clarification. In relation to impacts on protected species, further clarification is required in respect of protected species issues (mainly bat licensing and efficacy of mitigation related to local policy, as well as lack of meaningful engagement with enhancement aspects of Policy SP6 for species). Overall, there is insufficient information to demonstrate accordance with SP6.

Conclusion

8.11 As set out above, the increase in scale, size, and massing of the existing building within a small plot in a highly visible part of the conservation area, together with the introduction of a polytunnel would have an adverse impact on the landscape and on the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition, in relation to ecological impacts, there is insufficient information to demonstrate accordance with Policy SP6. Refusal is therefore recommended.

9. RECOMMENDATION

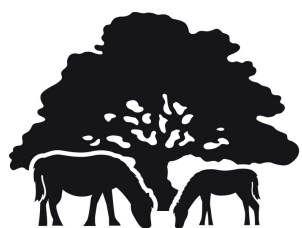
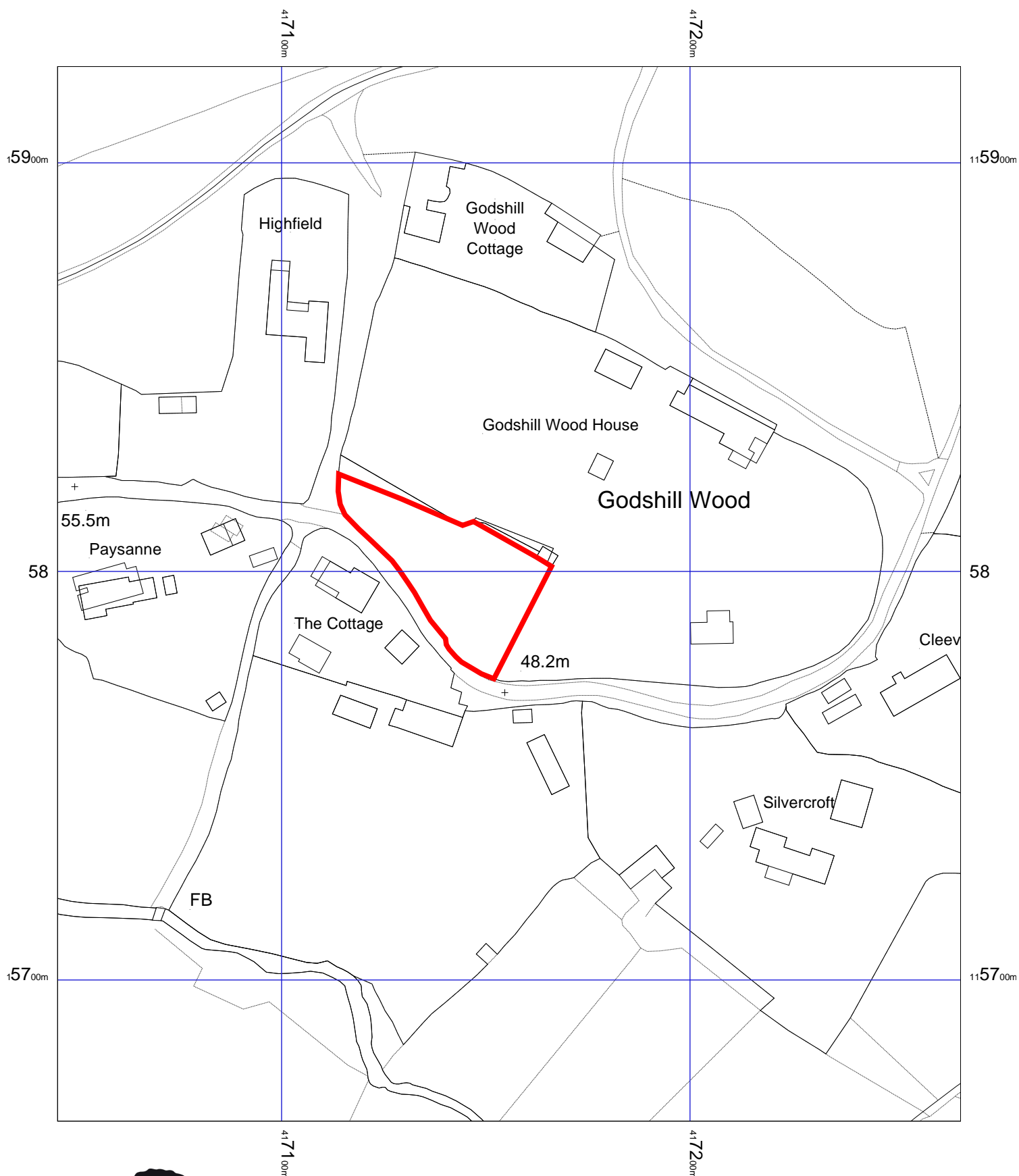
Refuse

Reason(s) for refusal:

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, form and siting would add significantly to the built development on the site which would result in a harmful impact on the landscape character of the area and upon the character and appearance of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area. The proposed development would be contrary to Policies DP2, DP45, DP50, SP7, SP16 and SP17 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (adopted August 2019) and the

NPPF. In addition, the proposed development would not seek to further the purposes of the National Park, contrary to the requirement of Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which amended Section 11A of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

2. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would avoid or adequately mitigate the impact on protected species. The proposal has unsatisfactorily demonstrated accordance with national (NPPF) and local policy (Policy SP6), nor fully engaged with the legal tests relating to European protected species. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DP2 and SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted August 2019), the NPPF and Paragraph 99 of Circular 06/2005.



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

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

Tel: 01590 646600 Fax: 01590 646666

Date: 06/03/2025

Ref: 24/01207FULL

Scale: 1:1250

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