

08/12/0006

HESTERCOMBE GARDENS TRUST

CHANGE OF USE FROM (B1) OFFICE TO (A1) HAIR AND BEAUTY SALON ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE WEST RANGE OF THE HESTERCOMBE GARDENS VISITOR CENTRE AT HESTERCOMBE GARDEN, CHEDDON FITZPAINE AS AMENDED

Grid Reference: 324140.128726

Full Planning Permission

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval

Whilst the site is remote from services and facilities, with limited public transport available, it is on the site of Hestercombe Gardens, which offers a wedding function and attracts a number of visitors. On the basis that the two salons are used largely in conjunction with the wedding function and by Hestercombe visitors, it could therefore be argued that it is reasonably sustainable in these terms. As such, the continued use of the two salons, is not considered to foster growth in the need to travel to an unacceptable level and is not therefore deemed contrary to the objectives of Government sustainable transport policy, as expressed in Part 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework and reflected in the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR1 (Sustainable Development) and STR6 (Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages) and Policy DM1 (General Requirements) of the emerging Taunton Deane Borough Council Core Strategy 2011-2028.

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The premises shall be used as a hair and beauty salon only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class A1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: The Local Planning Authority is of the opinion that other A1 uses are unlikely to be acceptable in this rural location and would be contrary to the objectives of Government sustainable transport policy, as expressed in Part 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework and reflected in the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR1 (Sustainable Development) and STR6 (Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages).

PROPOSAL

Hestercombe Gardens are situated to the north of Taunton, between Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton. The main house is a Grade II* Listed Building, whilst the formal garden, landscape garden to the north and orangery are Grade I Listed. Hestercombe Gardens and surrounding grounds are designated as a Conservation Area. This application relates to the old stable block and seeks retrospective planning permission for change of use from office use to a hair and beauty salon at first floor level above the shop. There are no alterations to the fabric of the building.

A supporting statement highlights that the hair and beauty salon is largely ancillary to and complimentary with the existing wedding and shop businesses. It indicates that 85% of the income of the salon is derived from wedding clients and members of Hestercombe, who come also to use the facilities at Hestercombe and is therefore a natural compliment to the existing facilities.

It was initially proposed to create 4 salons, but amended plans have been submitted reducing this to 2, following concerns raised by the case officer.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

CHEDDON FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCIL - Object – change of use applied retrospectively, not accepted or tolerated by Parish Council. Hestercombe is a trust providing a wedding business, not an industrial estate. Not accepted that hairdresser warrants a permanent salon. Providing the buildings/premises/gardens for weddings is where the service element ends in the Councillors opinion. Parish Council cannot support application.

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - The site is considered unsustainable in terms of transport policy and would usually receive a recommendation of refusal from the Highway Authority as it is considered that customers will be reliant on a private car. However, the development seeks a change of use from (B1) Office to provide a (A1) Hair and Beauty Salon. The site itself is located within the grounds of Hestercombe Gardens access to the site is obtained via Volis Hill a designated classified unnumbered highway to which the National Speed Limit applies.

Given previous use of the building, vehicle movements associated to the site are considered a similar level to that of the proposed intended use. Therefore, the traffic generation associated with the site is likely to be comparable. It is also considered that vehicle trips to and from the site will be linked with the existing services that Hestercombe Gardens offer. Fundamentally, the proposal is formalising an existing use which is provided as part of the wedding service. Additionally, vehicle parking provided within the site is adequate to cope with the change of use. No objection.

Representations

None

PLANNING POLICIES

EN20 - TDBCLP - Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest,
EN2 - TDBCLP - Sites of Special Scientific Interest,
EN14 - TDBCLP - Conservation Areas,
EN12 - TDBCLP - Landscape Character Areas,
STR1 - Sustainable Development,
STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages,
DM1 - TD CORE STRATEGY - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS,
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework,

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

A hairdressing and beauty salon, being an A1 use, would normally be expected to be located within a more sustainable area. However, it is acknowledged that Hestercombe offers a wedding service and hair and beauty are a fundamental part of the wedding day. It is questionable as to whether the wedding service is operating to the extent that it would warrant a hair and beauty salon permanently on the site, rather than mobile hair stylists and beauty therapists coming to site as and when required. However, it is also acknowledged that Hestercombe attracts a significant number of visitors to the gardens each week and it is plausible that visitors would combine a visit to the gardens or meeting friends in the café with a trip to the hair or beauty salon.

The acceptability of this site for a hair and beauty salon is however strongly dictated by the level of use that is ancillary to the weddings and visitors to the gardens. At present, two salons are being used, accommodating one hair stylist and one beauty therapist. It is considered that this current level of service being offered could be regarded as commensurate to the level of weddings taking place and the visitors that would also seek hair or beauty services, whilst visiting the site.

However this is not a site to which we would wish to see traffic movement increase solely to utilise the salon. On this basis, concerns were raised regarding the initial proposal to create 4 salons as this would be considered to take the use of the salons outside of what could reasonably be regarded as ancillary to the weddings and garden visitors, hence encouraging clients to travel to a salon in an unsustainable location. In that situation, due to the remote countryside location, where there is very limited public transport available, it is highly likely that clients would depend on the use of the private car for most journeys to access the salon, fostering growth in the need to travel, contrary to the objectives of Government sustainable transport policy, as expressed in Part 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework and reflected in the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR1 and STR6.

On balance, whilst this is not considered an ideal location for a hair and beauty salon, the continued use of 2 salons is not considered to result in unacceptable growth in the need to travel, to the detriment of the Government's sustainable transport policy.

There are no alterations to the fabric of the buildings and therefore no concerns

regarding the impact upon the Listed Building or the Hestercombe Conservation Area.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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