

<b>LOCATION:</b>	Longacres Nursery, London Road, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5JB,
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Re-provision and extension to cafe seating area and re-provision of plant and display area following the demolition/removal of existing cafe extensions and polyhouse
<b>TYPE:</b>	Full Planning Application
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	C/O Agent
<b>OFFICER:</b>	Duncan Carty

This application would normally be determined under the Council's Scheme of Delegation but is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee because the agent representing the applicant has been employed by the Council, as a planning officer, within the previous 4 years.

## **RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions**

### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application relates to the erection of a rear extension to the garden centre building at Longacres Nursery, located north east of Bagshot within the Green Belt. The rear extension would provide an extension to the café and retail area within the main garden centre building. The proposal includes the demolition of existing structures, including a polytunnel used for retail display, and an existing café extension. This would lead to an overall reduction in built form in both volume and floorspace.
- 1.2 The proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would cause no adverse harm to the character of the area. There would also be no impact upon highway safety or upon neighbouring residential amenities. The proposal would not have any retail impact upon nearby centres.
- 1.3 The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

### **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The 0.7 hectare application site relates to part of Longacres Nursery garden centre. The overall garden centre comprises 5.4 hectares and is located on the north side of A30 London Road at the roundabout junction with Grove End. Grove End links the southbound traffic on the A322 dual carriageway with the A30. The west boundary of the site is with the Bagshot to Ascot rail line. The site lies within the Green Belt and is previously developed land.
- 2.2 The overall garden centre site is triangular and includes parking to the site frontage with the main glasshouse buildings centrally located with a yard to the rear used for retail display with storage beyond. The existing garden centre has an overall floorspace of 5,043 square metres and a car park providing 554 spaces. The application site is located to the rear of the main glasshouse building and includes a rear yard, an existing detached polytunnel used for retail display, and a café extension.

### 3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

The application site has an extensive planning history for which the following is most relevant:

- 3.1 93/0747 Continued use of glasshouses and polyhouses, other buildings and land for mixed nursery and garden centre purposes; retrospective consent for glasshouse extensions, formation of new access to A30 London Road, closure of existing access, extension of and alterations to existing car park, construction of secure open storage area and access roadway within the site, together with associated landscaping.
- Approved in November 1993.
- 3.2 10/0291 Erection of an attached glasshouse following the part demolition of existing glasshouse for garden centre.
- Approved in October 2010.
- This relates to the east half of the existing main garden centre building.
- 3.3 11/0447 Application for a minor material amendment to planning permission 10/0291 to provide fenestration amendments to east flank and rear, positioning of front lobby and the repositioning of doors from the eastern to southern front elevation.
- Approved in December 2011 and implemented.
- This relates to the north east half of the existing main garden centre building.
- 3.4 16/0669 Erection of an attached glasshouse following the demolition of existing glasshouse for garden centre.
- Approved in November 2016 and implemented.
- This relates to the south west half of the existing main garden centre building.
- 3.5 22/0667 Certificate of Lawful Existing Development for the erection of a poly tunnel used for displaying plants that needed some shelter from the elements and other garden sundries items such as fire wood, garden and household pots and baskets (all of which have been available for sale at the Garden Centre).
- Considered to be lawful in September 2023.
- 3.6 The conditions imposed under these permissions limit the garden centre to the retail sales of house plants and garden shrubs, trees, gardening sundries, including gardening tools and equipment and chemicals, garden associated objects such as statues, containers, garden furniture, landscaping materials, country craft produce such as dried flowers, baskets, greeting cards, Christmas trees and decorations, fresh flowers, wreaths, and bouquets; and, for 15% of the total floor area, pet food and sundries, books, pottery, glass, clothing, toys; and the provision of a coffee shop; and, for a maximum area of 275 sq.m. for the sale of food and drink. There are no conditions limiting the hours of operation.

## 4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The current proposal relates to the erection of a rear extension to the garden centre, towards the northeast corner of the building. The proposal would incorporate an extension to the existing café/restaurant and garden centre shop. The proposed extension would have a width of approximately 53.5 metres and a depth of approximately 13 metres with a mono-pitch roof to a ridge height of 4.6 metres. This would provide an extension of 380 square metres to the shop and 323 square metres to the café/restaurant. The proposed extension would reuse existing material where this is possible, providing a metal clad roof, with polycarbonate rooflights, with clear glazing and red brick/blue capping to the walls to match the existing building.
- 4.2 The proposal also includes the demolition of an existing café extension to the garden centre, which wraps around the rear (northeast) corner of the existing garden centre and the demolition of a polytunnel within the rear yard used for retail display. The café existing extension is considered to be lawful, having been confirmed by the applicant to have been constructed in about 2019 (and shown on aerial photography from, at least, early 2020), and the polytunnel was considered to be lawful under 22/0667. The polytunnel to be removed has a floorspace of 718 square metres with the café extension (to be removed) having a total floorspace of 289 square metres. In addition, internal alterations would expand the café area further, by about 150 square metres, into the retail sales area of the garden centre, with no changes to the servery and kitchen areas.
- 4.3 The proposal would provide improved and expanded café operations at the site, with part of the extensions to be removed being unheated and used principally in warmer months. It would increase the café floor area by extension by 34 square metres (with a further increase of about the café floor area by 150 square metres due to internal conversion). Whilst the overall retail floorspace for the site would be reduced, the proposal would increase the retail floorspace within the main glasshouse building and expand the café area. There are no proposals to restrict the hours of operation.
- 4.4 A further following documents have been submitted in support of this application including:
- Planning Statement; and
  - Design and Access Statement.

Relevant extracts from these documents will be referred to in section 7 of this report: Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement.

## 5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 The following external consultees were consulted and their comments are summarised in the table below:

External Consultation	Comments Received
County Highways Authority	No objections are raised on highway operation and safety grounds.  (See Annex A for a copy of their response).
Windlesham Parish Council	An objection is raised on the following

	<p>basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal is an overdevelopment of an already busy site;</li> <li>• Insufficient special circumstances to further develop on Green Belt land;</li> <li>• Further development will impact local businesses in Bagshot; and,</li> <li>• Additional development could put strain on an already busy car park.</li> </ul> <p><i>[Officer comment: The proposal would result in a reduction in floorspace and volume and would therefore not be inappropriate in the Green Belt; not impact on local businesses nor materially impact on parking capacity].</i></p>
--	--

5.2 The following internal consultees were consulted and their comments are summarised in the table below:

Internal Consultation	Comments Received
Environmental Health Services	<p>No objections. If the kitchen cooking capacity or style of cooking changes (e.g. more frying), a condition to control odour impacts is requested.</p> <p><i>[Officer comment: The proposal relates to a café and it is not suggested that a change in cooking style is to occur. In addition, the existing kitchen area is not expanding].</i></p>

## 6.0 REPRESENTATION

6.1 A total of 30 individual letters of notification were sent out on 19 December 2024. To date no letters of representation have been received.

## 7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION

7.1 This application is considered against advice contained with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Regard will be given to Policies CP1, CP2, CP9, CP11, DM9 and DM11 of the adopted Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 (CSDMP). The site lies in an out-of-centre location but because it amounts to a reduction in floorspace, a charge under the Council's CIL scheme would not apply.

7.2 The main issues to be considered with this application are:

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact on retail centres
- Impact on parking capacity and highway safety
- Other matters

### 7.3 Impact on the Green Belt

7.3.1 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, with a number of exceptions including where the proposal results in the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

7.3.2 The proposed development would provide an extension to the garden centre with two structures to be demolished. The structures include a polytunnel which has been used for retail display (for sale), considered to be lawful under 22/0667, and a café extension which is lawful (the applicant has advised this was built in 2019 and there is evidence from aerial photography that it has been in existence since at least early 2020). It is considered that the loss of these structures can be taken into consideration in the wider assessment of Green Belt harm from this development.

7.3.3 The overall changes in floorspace and volume are set out below:

	Floorspace	Volume
Existing (to be removed)	1,007 sq m	3,965 cub m
Proposed	703 sq m	3,926 cub m
Difference	-304 sq m	-39 cub m
% change	-30%	-1%

7.3.4 The proposal would add an extension to the rear of the main glasshouse building and would only be clearly viewed from the rear yard of the site and would result in a reduction in built form in both volume and floorspace, as indicated in the table set out in Paragraph 4.3 above. The proposal would remove the polytunnel which is the largest structure and located centrally within the rear yard. Spatially, therefore, the proposal would result in an improvement to the openness of the Green Belt by reducing the size and spread of built form on the site. It would be no greater in height than the main glasshouse building, having a low rise form and would be located centrally on the wider site. It would not be seen from the rear yard against the backdrop of this much larger structure, also reducing the visual impact of built form on the Green Belt.

7.3.6 The polytunnel is a lightweight structure, but has an opaque polythene material but with racking systems to both sides providing a more solid appearance. Whilst the proposed extension would, in part, have a light glazed finish, the depth of the building, internal wall partitioning and stock/shelving would not provide clear views through the extended building. As such, it is considered that the change to materials would have a neutral impact on Green Belt openness.

7.3.7 The proposal includes an overall reduction in built form reducing the floorspace by 304 square metres and volume by 39 cubic metres. This reduction would therefore not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development and would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, complying with the NPPF.

## **7.4 Impact on the character and appearance of the area**

7.4.1 Policy DM9 (ii) is relevant.

7.4.2 The proposal would provide a rear extension to the main garden centre building and would not be clearly visible except from within the garden centre complex. The rear extension is not larger in height than the existing structure, following similar multi-gable roof form and would be built from matching materials. Therefore, the proposed extension would be subordinate to the existing building and would not harm the visual amenity of the area.

7.4.3 As such, no objections are raised to the proposal on character grounds with the proposal complying with Policy DM9 of the CSDMP

## **7.5 Impact in residential amenity**

7.5.1 Policy DM9 (iii) is relevant.

7.5.2 The nearest residential property is Dellwood House, which is owned by the applicant. This is set about 70 metres from the siting of the proposal. The nearest residential property is West Lodge, on the opposite side of A30 London Road, and is set about 200 metres from the proposed siting, with the A30 and garden centre building in between. Given these distances and given that the proposal is sited centrally with the garden centre complex there would be no adverse impact on residential amenities.

7.5.3 The Environmental Health comments relate to the type of food cooked at the site, and potential harm from odours to nearby residential properties. Noting the level of separation, to all other nearby residential properties, no adverse impact is envisaged to residential amenity.

7.5.4 As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable on residential amenity grounds, with the proposal complying with Policy DM9 of the CSDMP.

## **7.6 Impact on retail centres**

7.6.1 Paragraph 91 of the NPPF states that main town centre uses, such as retail, should be located in town centres; then in edge-of-centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered. Policy CP8 of the CSDMP provides the hierarchy of retail centres within the Borough.

7.6.2 The proposal would support a local business to consolidate their operations and would not result in a significant increase in retail/cafe floorspace. Whilst it relates to an existing out of centre retail premises, it is limited to types of retail sales by conditions, and the proposal does not seek to amend the restrictions on the type of retail sales (i.e. retail sales typical of garden centres). It is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in any material harm to the function of any nearby retail/local centre. No objections are raised on these grounds with the proposal complying with Policy CP8 of the CSDMP and the NPPF.

## **7.7 Impact on parking capacity and highway safety**

7.7.1 Policies CP11 and DM11 are relevant.

7.7.2 The current proposal would not increase the building areas within the site. There are correspondingly no increases in the car parking provision (554 spaces), at the site and no alterations are proposed to the site access. The County Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposal considering that in terms of likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision, the proposal would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway.

- 7.7.3 As such, no objections are raised on highway safety grounds with the proposal complying with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the CSDMP and the NPPF.

## **8.0 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

- 8.1 Under the Equalities Act 2010 the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation of persons by reason of age, disability, pregnancy, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. This planning application has been processed and assessed with due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The proposal is not considered to conflict with this duty.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The application relates to a reduction in built form compared with the existing buildings to be demolished. The development would cause no greater harm to Green Belt openness than the existing situation, and the proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. No objections are raised on character, residential amenity, retail impact and highway safety grounds. The application proposal is therefore recommended for approval.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 GRANT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The proposed development shall be built in accordance with the following approved plans: M23.105.D.007, M23.105.D.008, M23.105.D.009; and M23.105.D.010, unless the prior written approval has been obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning and as advised in ID.17a of the Planning Practice Guidance.

3. The building works, hereby approved, shall be constructed in external fascia materials to match those of the existing building.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

4. The proposed extensions (annotated as restaurant seating area) and poly tunnel shown on Drawing Nos M23.105.D.002, M23.105.D.003, M23.105.D.004, M23.105.D.005 and M23.105.D.006, which are proposed to be removed, shall be removed prior to the construction of the development hereby approved.

To prevent harm to the openness of the Green Belt and to comply with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Except for the further retail sales allowed by Conditions 6 and 7 below, the garden centre shall only be used for the retail sales of house plants and garden shrubs,

trees, gardening sundries, including gardening tools and equipment and chemicals, garden associated objects such as statues, containers, garden furniture, landscaping materials, country craft produce such as dried flowers, baskets, greeting cards, Christmas trees and decorations, fresh flowers, wreaths, and bouquets, and for no other purpose in Class E of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) or in any other provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of local retail centres and to comply with Policies CP1, CP9, CP10 and DM12 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Except for the retail sales allowed by Conditions 5 above and 7 below, the garden centre shall only be used for the retail sales of pet food and sundries, books, pottery, glass, clothing, toys and the provision of a coffee shop and for no other purpose. The retail floorspace provided for the retail sales allowed by this Condition shall only be provided on no more than 15% of the total floor area of the main glasshouse building in Class E of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) or in any other provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of local retail centres and to comply with Policies CP1, CP9, CP10 and DM12 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. The retail area provided within the garden centre for the sale of food and drink shall not exceed an area of 275 square metres unless the prior written approval has been obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of local retail centres and to comply with Policies CP1, CP9, CP10 and DM12 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.