

LOCATION: THE MYTCHETT CENTRE, 140 MYTCHETT ROAD,
MYTCHETT, CAMBERLEY, GU16 6AA

PROPOSAL: Part Change of Use of land from car park to car wash facility to
include the erection of a canopy and storage container.
(Retrospective)

TYPE: Full Planning Application

APPLICANT: Mr Roger Hastings
Mytchett Community Association

OFFICER: Mr N Praise

This type of application would normally be determined under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, however, as the land is owned by Surrey Heath Borough Council the application is required to be determined by the Planning Applications Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The retrospective proposal relates to a part change of use of the land from car park to car wash facility with the erection of a building with storage area, staff rest room and a canopy structure. This report concludes that the proposal is acceptable in regard to its impacts upon residential amenity, drainage, trees, highways, parking and access. The use, however, represents an undesirable encroachment and intensification of car park land and the container and canopy fail to integrate into the street scene and Countryside beyond the Green Belt disrupting the intrinsic character of this area. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located within the carpark area of the Mytchett Centre which is accessed from the western side of the Mytchett Road (B3411). The application site comprises 81 parking spaces (4 of which are disabled spaces) circulation roads and a turning circle.
- 2.2 The wider street scape comprises the Mytchett Centre a brick and tile building offering a community focused venue with hall, bar and catering facilities set within playing fields and grassed areas. To the south a petrol station and care home exist and to the north and west playing fields associated with the Mytchett Centre. Further north residential properties of Coleford Bridge Road can be found and residential properties exist to the east, to the other side of Mytchett Road.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 There is none recent or relevant.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This retrospective proposal is for the part change of use of the land from car park to car wash facility. The applicant's state on the application form that 8 parking bays are utilised by the car wash facility. Additionally, the applicants seek to regularise a 31 square metre container which serves as a storage area with staff rest room and a canopy structure which projects off this building and overhangs the car wash area.
- 4.2 The rectangular shaped container has a maximum footprint of 9.9 metres in width by 3.2 metres in depth and a maximum flat roof height of 2.5 metres. The canopy structure projects 2.5 metres from the storage container with a width of 8 metres and sits above the storage building by approximately 30 cm (2.8 metres from the ground). The container and canopy are of metal construction finished in green. There are also two shipping containers located adjacent to the container/canopy but according to the application drawing these are not related to the use.
- 4.3 The car wash facility offers hand car washing with hand held jet pressure washers, hand polishing and hand held vacuuming services. The applicant's state on the application form that the opening hours are 08:30 to 18:00, 7 days a week and the car wash creates 4 full time and 2 part time jobs. The applicant also advises that on average the operation caters for 30 cars a day during weekdays and 50 cars a day at weekends.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 County Highway Authority No objection.
- 5.2 Surrey Heath Borough Council Arboricultural Officer Concern raised regarding the impact of the structures and car wash use on the long term health of the adjacent trees. *[Officer comment: If minded to approve a condition can be imposed to agree a tree impact assessment].*
- 5.3 Surrey Heath Borough Council Drainage Officer Details of the existing surface and foul drainage systems to be provided to the LPA for consideration before the Drainage Officer can offer his support of the proposal. *[Officer comment: If minded to approve a condition can be imposed to agree details of an acceptable drainage solution].*
- 5.4 Surrey Heath Borough Council Senior Environmental Health Officer No objection in regard to noise nuisance or hour of use.
- 5.5 Surrey Heath Borough Council Senior Recreation Officer Objects because the car wash is operating without landlord consent in breach of the lease; has been breaching advertising rules; car wash not in keeping with the objectives of the Community Association Business Plan; hour of use; no physical restrictions to contain the use and prevent encroachment; and, size and scale of the buildings.
- [Officer comment: The leasehold issues are separate to the planning process and outside the remit of the Planning Authority. Adverts would require separate consent under the advertisement regulations. The Community Association Business Plan is not a material planning consideration].*

6.0 REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 At the time of writing this report, no letters of support and no letters of objection have been received.

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The application site is located within the Countryside beyond the Green Belt, as identified by the Proposal Map of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP). As such policies CPA, CP2, CP8, CP11, CP12, DM9 and DM11 of the CSDMP apply. The site is also located within a main thoroughfare route part of the Historic Routes Character Area, as identified by the Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document (WUAC SPD). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 is also a material consideration. The issues to be considered therefore are:

- Impact on character of the area including the Countryside beyond the Green Belt;
- Residential amenity;
- Highways, parking and access; and
- Other matters.

7.2 Impact on character of the area including the Countryside beyond the Green Belt

- 7.2.1 The application site lies within the Countryside beyond the Green Belt and Paragraph 17 of the NPPF recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside needs to be protected. Paragraph 5.6 of the supporting text of Policy CPA of the CSDMP reiterates this by stating that inappropriate development within the countryside will include proposals that cause harm to its intrinsic character and beauty, landscape diversity, heritage and wildlife. Paragraph 28 of the NPPF also states that economic growth which creates jobs should be supported in the countryside; however, as noted above this must be balanced against any impacts the development has on the character of the countryside.
- 7.2.2 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development securing high quality outcomes, reflecting on the character of different areas, like in this case, the Countryside beyond the Green Belt. The NPPF requires development to integrate into its context and is clear that poor design that fails to improve the character and quality of the area should be refused. Policies CP2 (iv) and DM9 of the CSDMP reiterates this requirement.
- 7.2.3 The application site lies within a recognised Historic Routes Character Area, as identified by the WUAC SPD. The Historic Routes Character Area is based on the old roads running through the western borough. These roads as heavily trafficked main thoroughfares have a distinctive character, in this case open low density countryside. The positive features of the main thoroughfares include mature trees lining the main roads creating a green corridor.

- 7.2.4 The application site is characteristic of these positive green corridor features. The wider site benefits from a community building of brick and tile construction set back from the highway by approximately 38 metres which has a pleasant low density open character of playing fields and parking area to the front. It is therefore pertinent that any proposal retains this important character.
- 7.2.5 It is considered that this development's scale and flat roof sheet metal style building, in close proximity to the highway (approximately 1m) is at odds with this important green corridor and the open character of the countryside. The container has an industrial and utilitarian appearance and is considered to be incongruous and prominent, harmful to the visual amenities of the street scene. The levels of activity by cars coming and going, and the activity associated with car washing and hovering, further undermines the open character of the area exacerbating the negative impact of the proposal further.
- 7.2.6 It is accepted that the proposal makes an economic contribution to the area creating 4 full time jobs and 2 part time jobs. In the officer's opinion some weight can be attached to this economic argument. However, it is noted that Policy CP8 of the CSDMP directs employment generating uses to Core Employment Areas, Camberley Town Centre and the recycling, refurbishment and regeneration of existing employment generating uses. The proposal does not meet any of these tests. While some weight is attached to the creation of jobs in this location, it is considered this economic argument does not outweigh the overriding harm to the intrinsic character of the Countryside beyond the Green Belt.
- 7.2.7 As such this retrospective proposal is harmful to the character and appearance of the area and conflicts with Policies CPA, CP2 and DM9 of the CSDMP and the WUAC SPD.

7.3 Impact on residential amenity

- 7.3.1 The NPPF seeks a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Policy DM9 (Design Principles) ensures that the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties and uses are respected.
- 7.3.2 The closest residential properties are sited at least 30 metres away and as such the proposal is not considered to result in any loss of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupants of residential properties.
- 7.3.3 The applicants have submitted a noise assessment and the report concludes that noise levels at the closest dwellings to the application site meet the British Standard criteria and will have a low impact on those residential properties. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has considered the noise assessment and is content that sound levels from the proposal will be lower than the existing background noise at nearest residential property. There is also no objection to the opening hours.
- 7.3.4 Given its location and retained separation distances, there is no undue loss of residential amenity to the occupiers of any other adjoining or nearby residential properties. Therefore in this respect the development complies with Policy DM9 (iii) of the CSDMP.

7.4 Highways, Parking and Access

- 7.4.1 The County Highway Authority have undertaken an assessment in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision and are satisfied that the proposal does not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. The County Highway Authority therefore has no highway requirements and the development does not conflict with Policy DM11 of the CSDMP.

7.5 Other matters

- 7.5.1 Surrey Heath's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted by Full Council on the 16th July 2014 and the CIL Charging Schedule came into effect on the 1st December 2014. Surrey Heath charges CIL on residential and retail developments where there is a net increase in floor area, however, as the development does not relate to a residential or retail development, the development is not CIL liable.

8.0 ARTICLE 2(3) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2012 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER

In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included the following:

- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This retrospective change of use by reason of the level of activity and by virtue of the size and appearance of the storage container and canopy represents an undesirable encroachment and intensification and has resulted in an incongruous and prominent development in the street scene, harmful to the positive features of the area including the green corridor of the main thoroughfare historic routes, and the Countryside beyond the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore recommended for refusal.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reason(s):-

1. The change of use by reason of the level of activity; and, the scale, design and appearance of the container and canopy, sited in close proximity to Mytchett Road, represents an undesirable encroachment and intensification of car park land, that has resulted in an incongruous and prominent development harmful to the visual amenities of the street scene being at odds with the green corridor and positive features of the main thoroughfare of the Historic Routes Character Area. As such this inappropriate development fails to respect and enhance the character and quality of the area, including the intrinsic character of the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt, and is contrary to Policies CP1, CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy Development Management Policies 2012, the Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.