

HEWEB – Hedge End, West End and Botley Local Area Committee Monday
12 March 2018.

Application Number: F/18/82351
Case Officer: Kitty Budden
Received Date: Friday 19 January 2018
Site Address: Highwood Barn, Itchen Valley Country Park, Allington Lane,
West End, Southampton, SO30 3HG
Applicant: I Austin
Proposal: Alterations and additions to fenestration in front and rear
elevations; addition of vent to front roof elevation; and
erection of covered shelter to the west of the main building.

Recommendation: GRANT PERMISSION, subject to relevant conditions.

CONDITIONS AND REASONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans numbered: 2680-D-0010, 6280-D-0001, 6280-D-0100, 6280-D-0101, 6280-D-0102, 6280-D-0103, 6280-D-0104, 6280-D-0105, 6280-D-0211, 6280-D-0252, 6280-D-0253, 6280-D-0253A, 6280-D-0255A, 6280-D-0256, 6280-D-0257, 6280-D-0257A, 6280-D-0258, 6280-D-0300, 6290-D-0255.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 2 Work shall proceed in accordance with the recommendations set out in the *Assessment of Impacts on Bats & Bat Mitigation Strategy* (4 Woods Ecology, January 2018). Works must avoid the hibernating and maternity period for bats as set out in the report. Reason: To conform with saved policy 25.NC.
- 3 Prior to the start of work, a lighting strategy to protect bats must be approved in writing by Eastleigh Borough Council. Reason: To conform with saved policy 25.NC.
- 4 Prior to first occupation, Eastleigh Borough Council shall receive written confirmation from an appropriately qualified ecologist that the development has been carried out in accordance with the approved mitigation strategy and lighting strategy. Reason: To conform with saved policy 25.NC.
- 5 Details of the proposed vent shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority, prior to installation. The vent and associated equipment shall be installed as per the approved details. Reason: To minimise odour emissions.
- 6 The materials to be used must match as closely as possible, in type, colour and texture those listed in Section 9 of the application form. Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance in the interest of the amenities of the area.

Report:

This application has been referred to Committee because the site is owned by Eastleigh Borough Council.

The Site and its Surroundings

1. The site comprises the Itchen Valley Country Park (IVCP) Visitor Centre and Woodlands Café (known as Highwood Barn); and the land within its immediate curtilage. This building and the associated structures are set within Itchen Valley Country Park. The park is open for public usage 365 days of the year with vehicle access restricted approximately to between 0800 to 1900 in the winter and 2100 in the summer. It comprises of coniferous and broadleaf woodland wrapped around an area of amenity grassland with a visitor centre, woodland kindergarten, children's play areas, BBQ areas, and paths and trails for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The site also contains a Go Ape course which is located on the western side of IVCP.
2. Most of the Country Park is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The development site is located in an area recognised as ancient woodland, although the building and associated structures are in an area clear of woodland which forms a boundary to the north of the buildings and east of the access road. South of the site is open grazing land and to the west, beyond an area of woodland, flows the River Itchen. A restricted access road passes through the application site to the south of Highwood Barn that allows access to grazing land and some controlled river access for certain parties.

Description of Application

3. This application comprises works to Highwood Barn which form part of a larger refurbishment to improve the café and visitor provision within the building, including an internal educational interactive play area for younger visitors; improvements to the existing play trail and the erection of an external covered shelter.
4. A number of these works can be carried out under Permitted Development rights and do not require formal consent. The alterations which require planning permission are:
 - Addition of five windows at ground floor along the southwest section of the rear elevation;
 - Removal of door and window in northeast section of front elevation and insertion of new window;
 - Removal of existing roof light and insertion of vent to front roof elevation top serve new kitchen; and
 - Erection of covered shelter, 5.5 x 9.5m, to the west of the main building.

Relevant Planning History

5. A range of development has taken place within the Country Park to provide or improve the visitor experience.

Of most relevance to this application are:

Z/30618/002/00: Reserved Matters: Regulation 4 Erection Of Visitors Centre; Grant Deemed Consent, 31/05/1990;

Z/30618/004/00: Regulation 4 Application: Construction Of Two Storey Side Extension To Barn, grant deemed permission, 08/09/1992;

F/06/56914: Erection of amenity building containing toilets, changing room, Rangers room, kitchen and classroom, re-siting of existing play area and felling of trees, permitted, 14/06/2006;

F/07/59860: Excavation of new dipping pond and construction of wooden platform and formation of new access path, permitted, 19/06/2007.

Representations Received

6. No representations received.

Consultation Responses

Ecology:

7. No ecological reasons for refusal, subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the development to accord with the recommendations set out in the bat mitigation strategy; provision of a lighting strategy to protect bats; and written confirmation that works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Environmental Health:

8. Comments awaited. Members to be updated at Committee.

HCC Minerals and Waste:

9. No comments received.

Airport Safeguarding:

10. No objection on safeguarding grounds. Attention is drawn to the British Standard 'Code for Practice for Safe Use of Cranes' should a crane be required.

West End Parish Council:

11. No objection.

Policy Context: Designation Applicable to Site

- Outside Built-Up Area Boundary
- Within Site Of Nature Conservation Interest
- Within Airport Safeguarding Zone
- Within Minerals Consultation Zone

Development Plan Saved Policies and Emerging Local Plan Policies

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review 2001-2011 saved Policies:

- 1.CO – Protection of intrinsic character of the countryside;
- 10.CO – The replacement of a non-residential building in the countryside will be permitted subject to criteria including design and scale;
- 18.CO – Development which fails to respect or has an adverse impact on the character of the landscape will be refused;
- 23.NC – Development that would result in detrimental impact on SINC will not be permitted, unless can be demonstrated benefits of development outweigh the need to safeguard nature conservation value of site;
- 28.ES - Refuse storage provision and collection;
- 59.BE - Requires good quality design and proposals to take appropriate account of their site context and surroundings, as well as neighbouring uses;
- 101.T - Transport contributions;
- 104.T – Provision of off-highway parking;
- 160.TA – Proposals to develop/expand/improve existing leisure facilities will be permitted subject to criteria i.-vii;
- 191.IN - Provision of community infrastructure.

- Submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, July 2014 Policies:

- S9 – Countryside and countryside gaps;
- DM1 – General criteria for new development;
- DM16 – Extension and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside;
- DM23 - General development criteria – transport;
- DM24 – Parking;
- DM33 – New and enhanced recreation and open space facilities.

12. The Submitted Local Plan comprises: the Revised Pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2029, published February 2014;

and the Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes, submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2014.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Supplementary Planning Document: Quality Places (November 2011)
- Supplementary Planning Document: Biodiversity (December 2009)

National Planning Policy Framework

13. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Para 14 sets out a general presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out-of-date planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of the development would outweigh the benefits; or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted (paragraph 14). Local plan policies that do not accord with the NPPF are now deemed to be “out-of-date”. The NPPF requires that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. In other words the closer the policies in the plan accord to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.
14. The Framework recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities (para. 73). Existing public open space should not be built on unless, an assessment has demonstrated the open space, buildings or land are surplus to requirements; the resultant loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss (para. 74).
15. Para. 109 requires that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes; recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

National Planning Practice Guidance

16. Where material, this guidance should be afforded weight in the consideration of planning applications.

Assessment of Proposal: Development Plan and / or Legislative Background

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

Principle of Development:

17. Due to the location of the development site within designated countryside, the local planning policies and guidance aim to restrict development to that which needs to take place in the countryside, or is appropriate to a rural area (Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review 2001-2011, saved policy 1.CO). In addition, much of the Country Park is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), protected by saved policy 23.NC which states that development that is likely to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a SINC will not be permitted, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the benefits of the development outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site and mitigation measures are taken.
18. Itchen Valley Country Park has a dual function, to preserve and enhance biodiversity and educate people on environmental and ecological matters. As part of the vision for this service, the Itchen Valley Country Park Management Plan seeks to:
 - ‘- Provide high quality opportunities and facilities for recreation and access which respect the natural habitats and species found within the park;
 - Provide events and activities which enable visitors to learn about local and global environmental issues and encourage them to live more sustainably;
 - Increase the value of the park for nature conservation by protecting and managing natural habitats and species;
 - Encourage the widest possible range of visitors by identifying and where possible removing barriers to access.’
19. These accord with the Council’s Corporate Themes, which include ‘A Green Borough’ and ‘Healthy Communities’.
20. The proposed works form part of a package of works intended to improve the visitor experience and enhance the educational features of the visitor centre for younger visitors, while minimising the impact on the ecological value of the park. The works requiring planning consent are minimal and do not detrimentally affect the park or impact the

countryside designation. As such, it is considered the principle of the development is acceptable.

Design and Layout:

21. The proposed works have very limited visual impact on the visitor centre, primarily comprising the addition of windows to the rear elevation at ground floor. This, combined with the internal works, will provide a better internal environment for visitors and staff.
22. The external shelter is located in courtyard with other visitor facilities and will provide shelter during inclement weather; additional shading when hot; and somewhere for visitors with dogs to sit. The shelter is simple in design, appropriate for its location and well screened from access road.
23. It is considered the proposal accords with the requirements of Saved Policy 59.BE.

Ecological Matters:

24. Due to the minor nature of the works to the structure of Highwood Barn, and the location of these works in areas of the building where the evidence indicates bats do not roost, subject to the works being carried out in accordance with the submitted Bat Strategy, there is no impact on these protected species. As requested by the Council's Ecological Advisor, conditions to ensure this can be reasonably applied.
25. The proposed external shelter is located away from the ancient woodland and in an area of existing hard standing. As such, there is also no impact on ecology for this structure. Should lighting be required for this structure, the design will need to take of the presence of bats in the locality. This can be controlled via condition.
26. In light of this, it is considered that the proposal does not impact the ecology of the SINC and therefore accords with Saved Policy 23.NC.

Highway and Parking Matters:

27. The proposed works that require consent do not facilitate the intensification of the use of the country park, rather they improve the experience for existing and future users. As such, there are no significant impacts on the highways in the locality and no changes to the parking arrangements are necessitated.

Airport Safeguarding:

28. No objection has been raised in relation to aerodrome safeguarding.

Residential and Visitor Amenity:

29. Due to the minor nature of the works requiring consent and the significant distance from the nearest residential unit, it is considered there is no impact on the amenity of residents in the locality.
30. As discussed above, the proposed works will provide an enhanced visitor experience. Due to the change to the food offering at this venue, a vent is required. No comments have been received from the Council's Environmental Health Specialist, however it is anticipated that the detailed design of this will need to be approved to ensure an odour emissions are controlled. This can be dealt with through the imposition of an appropriately worded condition.

Minerals and Waste:

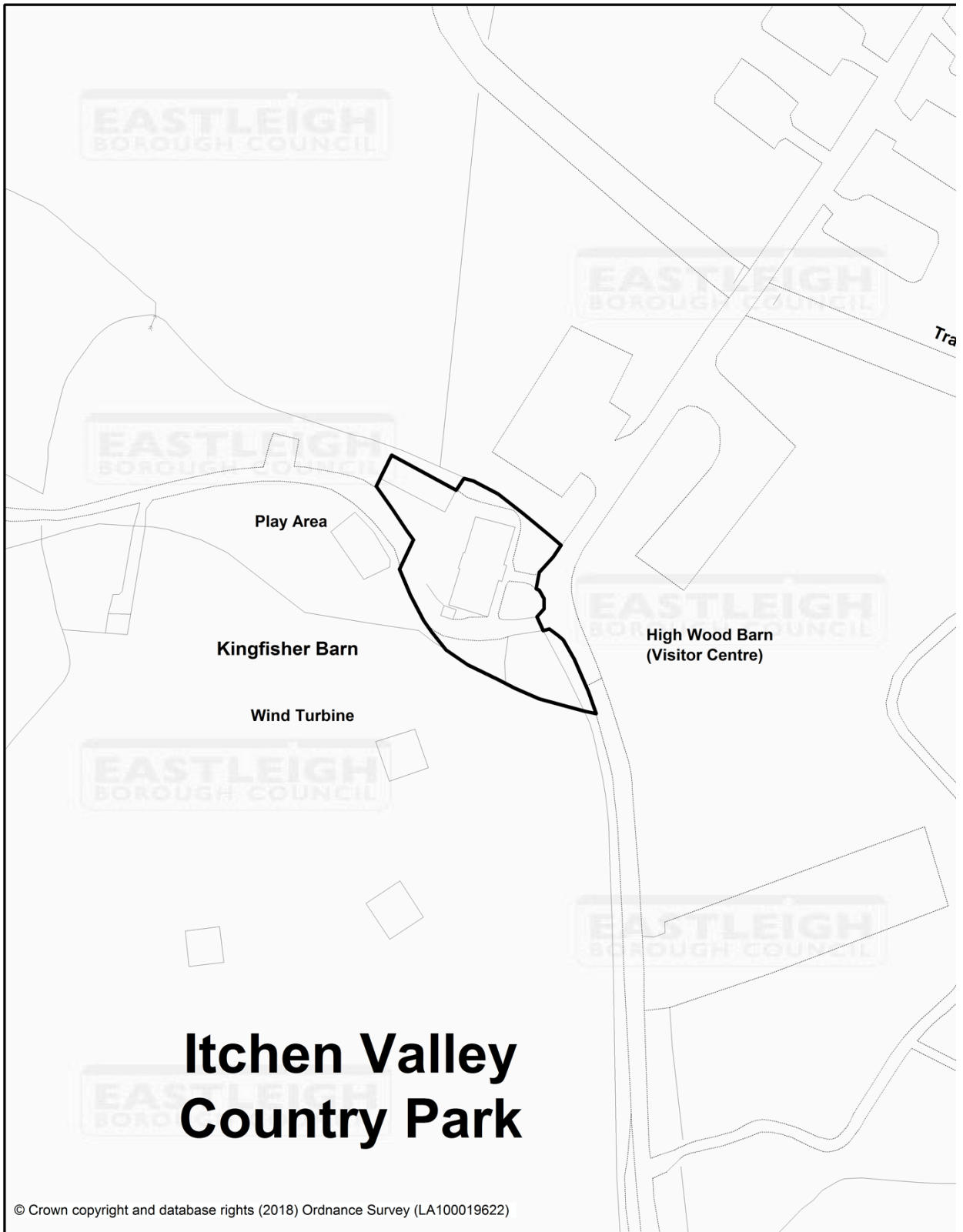
31. Due to the very small area of land affected by the proposal, which is already impacted by existing development, it is considered unlikely that any objection will be received from HCC's Minerals and Waste team.

Other material considerations

32. Of relevance is the Submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2029, July 2014. While not yet adopted it does carry weight by virtue of being intended as the current local plan's replacement. With regards to this application, the new policies essentially echo those of the current plan and are not considered to affect the recommendation put forward.

Conclusion

33. The proposed works are very minor in nature and will have minimal impact on the countryside function of the park and the ecology of the area. The works will, as part of the wider improvements, benefit visitors. The proposals are considered to accord with local and national policy and therefore are recommended for permission, subject to relevant conditions.



Itchen Valley Country Park

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F/18/82351

Title:

Highwood Barn, Itchen Valley

Country Park, Allington Lane

Scale:

1:1250

Map Ref:

SU4616SW

Date:

01/03/2018

