

consultees comments on line
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- By providing a regular forum for planning agents,
- Working in line with the NPPF to encourage developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area,
- Providing easy on line access to planning policies and guidance, and
- Encouraging them to seek professional advice whenever appropriate.

In this instance the applicant/agent:

- 1) The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

Description of Proposal

- 1 It is proposed to erect a single-storey outbuilding to the front of Forge House that would be used as a garage, carport and workshop.

Description of Site

- 2 The application site comprises of a two-storey detached house situated at the centre of the Hamlet of Charcott, opposite The Green. The house is Grade II Listed. The listing reads; *Forge House and Forge Cottage TQ 54 NW 50/726 II 2. Forge House C15 or early C16 house, probably a hall. 2 storeys, 2 windows. Very large hipped tiled roof brought forward to form lean-to at left. Ridge stack. Early C19 tile hung 1st floor. Red brick ground floor with blue headers. C19 1-bar casements and 4-panel door. Forge Cottage is a set-back 2-storey, 1-window right extension which has massive offset end chimney with stone base, red brick dressings and shafts.* The site sits within Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway Ward.

Constraints

- 3 Listed Building - LB/G2/50/0726
- 4 Metropolitan Green Belt

Policies

Allocations and Development Management (ADMP):

- 5 Policies - EN1, EN2, EN4, GB3

Core Strategy (CS):

- 6 Policies - LO1, SP1

Other:

- 7 Leigh Village Design Statement
- 8 National Planning Policy (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History

- 9 06/03341/FUL - Demolition of existing redundant workshop, lean-to, link, and conservatory. Construction of dining room and music/guest room. REFUSE.
- 11 06/03344/LBCALT - Demolition of existing redundant workshop, lean-to, link, and conservatory. Construction of dining room and music/guest room. REFUSE.
- 12 07/02140/FUL - Demolition of existing redundant workshop and lean-to link. Construction of dining area and music/guest room. GRANT
- 13 07/02143/LBCALT - Demolition of redundant workshop and lean-to link. Construction of dining area and music/guest room. GRANT
- 14 08/01808/FUL - Erection of timber garden shed. GRANT

Consultations

SDC Conservation Officer

- 15 SDC Conservation Officer was consulted and has the following comments;

'The issue is whether the proposed development would affect the setting of the listed Forge House and preserve the character and appearance of the locality which forms the wider setting.'

Description of significance and character of setting

Forge House sits at the centre of Charcott to the south of the triangular Green that forms the heart of this small hamlet. The building is set well back from the road in a large corner plot where the road turns into south-easterly direction towards Camp Hill.

Forge House originated in the 15th century as one house, probably as a yeoman's house of some status. By the 19th century it was subdivided into cottages and is referred to in the 1840s tithe map as 'two cottages with gardens'. In the 19th century, it served as home for the local blacksmith with the smithy located to the north-west on the edge of the road (today's Charcott Garage).

Historic maps confirm that Forge Cottage is one of the oldest houses of the hamlet. Until the mid 19th century, Charcott consisted only of a small number of dispersed buildings. This changed in the Victorian period when the population of the hamlet increased, resulting in a number of workers cottages, a beer house (The Greyhound Pub) and a bakery and village shop being built on the northern side of the lane opposite Forge House and the smithy, forming a proper village core. The triangular Green was laid out at

the same time. Development continued in the 20th century with predominantly semi-detached houses to the east of the Green and road, leaving the core of the hamlet unchanged. Complemented by features such as the K6 telephone kiosk and a water pump on the Green, and a historic Royal Mail wall letter box within the walls of the former smithy, Charcott presents today a quintessential Kentish hamlet.

Historic maps show that the large corner plot to the north-east and east of Forge House has formed its garden since at least the 19th century. In the mid-19th century, a barn stood to the east on the western edge of the road in a separate plot, but this has disappeared by the end of the 19th century and the plot been included in the garden, which was used as an orchard. More recently, the plot seems to have been subdivided since the north-eastern/eastern corner part is no longer shown as being part of the curtilage.

The garden makes an important contribution to the setting of the listed buildings as well as to character and appearance of Charcott. The open gaps via the former yard of the smithy and the estate gate provide attractive views on to the building from the lane and The Green respectively. The contrast between the intimate enclosure of the road when approaching the core from the west, and the openness and green character provided by The Green and large garden to Forge House when approaching from the east, have been the defining spatial characteristic of Charcott since Victorian times.

Assessment

I do not feel that the existence of the former smithy (Charcott Garage) or of a barn long since gone to the east would set a precedent for development intruding into the open space between Forge House and the Green. The introduction of the garage and workshop in the proposed location would result in the loss of openness and greenery and irreversibly damage the existing balance of buildings and spaces right at the centre of the hamlet. The bulk of the garage/workshop would be fully visible from the road via the large parking area as well from The Green via the estate gate. As a result, Forge House would appear framed by development in views from the north, while the view from the Green (north-east) would be altogether obscured, diminishing the contribution of the building and its front garden to the street scene. The curtilage may now be divided and the north-eastern/eastern part of the garden in different ownership. Notwithstanding this, the garden is still perceived as front garden to the listed building and has significance as setting to it. In this context, the location of the garage within what appears as the centre of the front garden would look random and inappropriate.

The D&A states that the setting will be improved by the reduction of cars being parked to the front of the building. However, with no proposals in place to reduce the actual amount dedicated to off-street parking, the construction of the garage/workshop building would simply result in further development and loss of greenery for off-street parking.

The corner plot currently benefits from a high hedge providing screening in

views from the road. This cannot be relied on in perpetuity and there are no controls in place that would prevent the removal of the hedge should any new owner choose to do so. Any loss or removal of the hedge would reveal the building to full views from the road and the Green and give it unduly prominence within the street scene.

Summary and Recommendation

For the reasons set out above, the proposed development would have a harmful impact on the setting and significance of Forge House and the character and appearance of Charcott.

The NPPF requires for any harm to heritage assets ‘clear and convincing justification’. The contentious issue of this application is the proposed prominent location of the garage/workshop within the front garden. Given the overall size of the plot, it is felt that more options for the siting of a garage and workshop building could be explored, notably to the rear, and that the overall bulk of the proposed building could be reduced by separating different functions from each other i.e. workshop/storage use from garaging. The rear garden seem to offer alternative locations and although the long views towards Charcott from Camp Hill are important, they would not prevent any development to the south of the building if of suitable design and subservience.

The NPPF requires a distinction to be made between substantial and less than substantial harm. For this purpose, the harm to the setting of the Listed Building is considered to be less than substantial. The NPPF requires in such cases that the harm must be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

There are no public benefits arising from the scheme. The house has been extensively extended and has a viable future as a single family.

For the reasons set out above, this application should be refused on Conservation grounds’

Parish Council

16 Leigh Parish Council supports this application.

Representations

17 None.

Chief Planning Officer’s Appraisal

Principle issues

18 The main issues for consideration are:

- Impact on the Street Scene

- Impact on the setting of the Listed Building
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- Impact on the Green Belt

19 Of particular relevant to this application is the following guidance:

Presumption in favour of sustainable development:

- 20 Para 14 of the NPPF confirms that the NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that development that accords with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. (See paras 11, 12, 13 of NPPF.)
- 21 Para 14 of the NPPF (and footnote 9) also advises that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless there are specific policies in the NPPF that indicate that development should be restricted. This applies to a variety of designations, including SSSI's, Green Belt, AONBs, designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding.

Green Belt considerations:

- 22 Having established that the site is within the Green Belt the Authority must consider both its own Development Plan Policy and edicts of the NPPF.
- 23 As set out in para 87 of the NPPF, where a proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 24 Para 88 of the NPPF advises that LPAs should give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 25 Therefore, the harm in principle to the Green Belt remains even if there is no further harm to openness because of the development.
- 26 Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and is different from visual impact. Openness is about freedom from built form. Even if there is absence of harm to openness, there can be harm in principle to the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Impact on Listed Buildings and their setting:

- 27 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on a local planning authority, in considering development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses.
- 28 The NPPF also states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets (para.132).

- 29 Policy EN4 of the ADMP states that proposals that affect a Heritage Asset, or its setting, will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset.

Appraisal

Green Belt

- 30 Policy GB3 of the ADMP outlines that outbuildings located more than 5 metres from the existing dwelling will be permitted where the building, including the cumulative impact on other outbuildings and extension within the curtilage of the dwelling, would be ancillary to the main dwelling in terms of function and design, and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive bulk or visual intrusion.
- 31 The proposed outbuilding would be located more than 5 metres from the existing dwelling and would have a height of 4 metres. The outbuilding is proposed to be used as a carport, garage and workshop and will be of traditional design with a catslide roof and timber weatherboarding. The outbuilding would clearly be ancillary to the main dwelling in terms of function and design.
- 32 The Development in the Green Belt SPD states that in order to minimise the impact of outbuildings on the openness of the Green Belt, the Council will seek to restrict any outbuildings to a limit of 40 square metres (measured externally). The proposed garage would measure 40 square metres. It is considered for the reasons stated above that the single garage would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive bulk.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

- 33 The NPPF states that the Government ‘attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.’ (para 56).
- 34 Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy states that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated.
- 35 Policy EN1 of the ADMP states that the form of proposed development should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area. This policy also states that the layout of proposed development should respect the topography and character of the site and the surrounding area.

Single-storey outbuilding

- 36 It is proposed to erect a single-storey outbuilding that will be used as a carport, garage and workshop/storage area. The outbuilding would measure 5.2 metres by 7.7 metres and would have an overall height of 4 metres.
- 37 The Residential Extensions SPD states that outbuildings in the Green Belt should be well designed in relation to the dwelling, compatible with the character of the area and designed and sited to minimise visual intrusion. It

goes further onto say that the Residential Extensions SPD states that garages and outbuildings should not generally be located in front of the building line.

- 38 The proposed outbuilding would be positioned to the front of Forge House close to the highway. I have visited the application site and other properties within the vicinity and have noted that ancillary outbuildings to the front of properties are not a character of the area. Next to the application site is Charcott Garage which is a large historic building set close to the highway. In the 1840's tithe map Forge House is referred to as 'two cottages with gardens' which served as a home for the local blacksmith with the smithy located to the north-west on the edge of the road (now Charcott Garage). I do not consider that the existence of Charcott Garage which is a historic building sets a precedent for development intruding into the open space between Forge House and the Green.
- 39 The land to the north east, although appears to be part of the residential curtilage of the site, is not shown on the red line plan to be in the same ownership as Forge House. Therefore, the hedgerow surrounding this site could be removed further increasing the prominence and visual intrusion of the building. No condition could be imposed and enforced preventing the removal of this hedgerow and therefore the hedge can be given limited weight as mitigation to minimise the visibility of the outbuilding from the Green.
- 40 In light of the above, I consider that the proposed outbuilding would be an intrusive feature that would not be in-keeping with the area, resulting in a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy EN1 of the ADMP and The Residential Extensions SPD.

Listed Building

- 41 The Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act 1990 states that proposals should protect the historic character and the setting of the listed building.
- 42 The Councils Conservation Officer has carried out a detailed assessment of the proposal above with which I wholly concur.
- 43 The proposed works would have a harmful impact on the setting of Forge House and would result in less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 44 The NPPF requires in such cases that the harm must be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. There are no public benefits arising from the scheme. The house has been extensively extended and has a viable future use as it stands today as a single family dwelling.
- 45 Therefore, for the reason that the works would harm the setting of Forge House and would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of Forge House the proposal would not accord with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF or Policy EN4 of the ADMP.

Amenity

- 46 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF identifies a set of core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking. One of these principles is that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 47 Policy EN2 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan outlines that proposals will be permitted where they would provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development, and would safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties by ensuring that development does not result in excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicle movements, overlooking or visual intrusion and where the build form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.
- 48 The outbuilding is well detached from neighbouring properties with an approximate distance of 13 metres to the nearest dwelling. Therefore the proposed works would not result in a loss of privacy, daylight or private amenity space to the surrounding neighbours or to the site. As such, it is considered that there would not be a negative impact on neighbouring amenity. The proposal would comply with Policy EN2 of the ADMP.

Off-street vehicle parking provision

- 49 The existing site has parking to accommodate multiple cars (at least 3). It is proposed to reduce the gravel area at the front of the property by 1.5 square metres, a marginal decrease; however this area would still be able to accommodate at least 3 cars. The guidance for residential parking suggests that a garage should measure 6 metres by 3 metres and a parking space should measure 5 metres by 2.5 metres to count as a space. I have measured the proposed carport and this complies with the guidance however, the garage does not. The addition of the outbuilding would provide parking for one additional vehicle.

CIL

- 50 This proposal is not CIL liable.

Conclusion

- 51 I consider that the proposed development would not harm neighbouring amenity and would amount to appropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposal would however harm the setting of the listed building and the significance of Forge House and the character of the area. Consequently the proposal is not in accordance with the development plan and therefore the Officer's recommendation is to refuse.

Background Papers

Contact Officer(s): Rebecca Fellows Extension: 7390

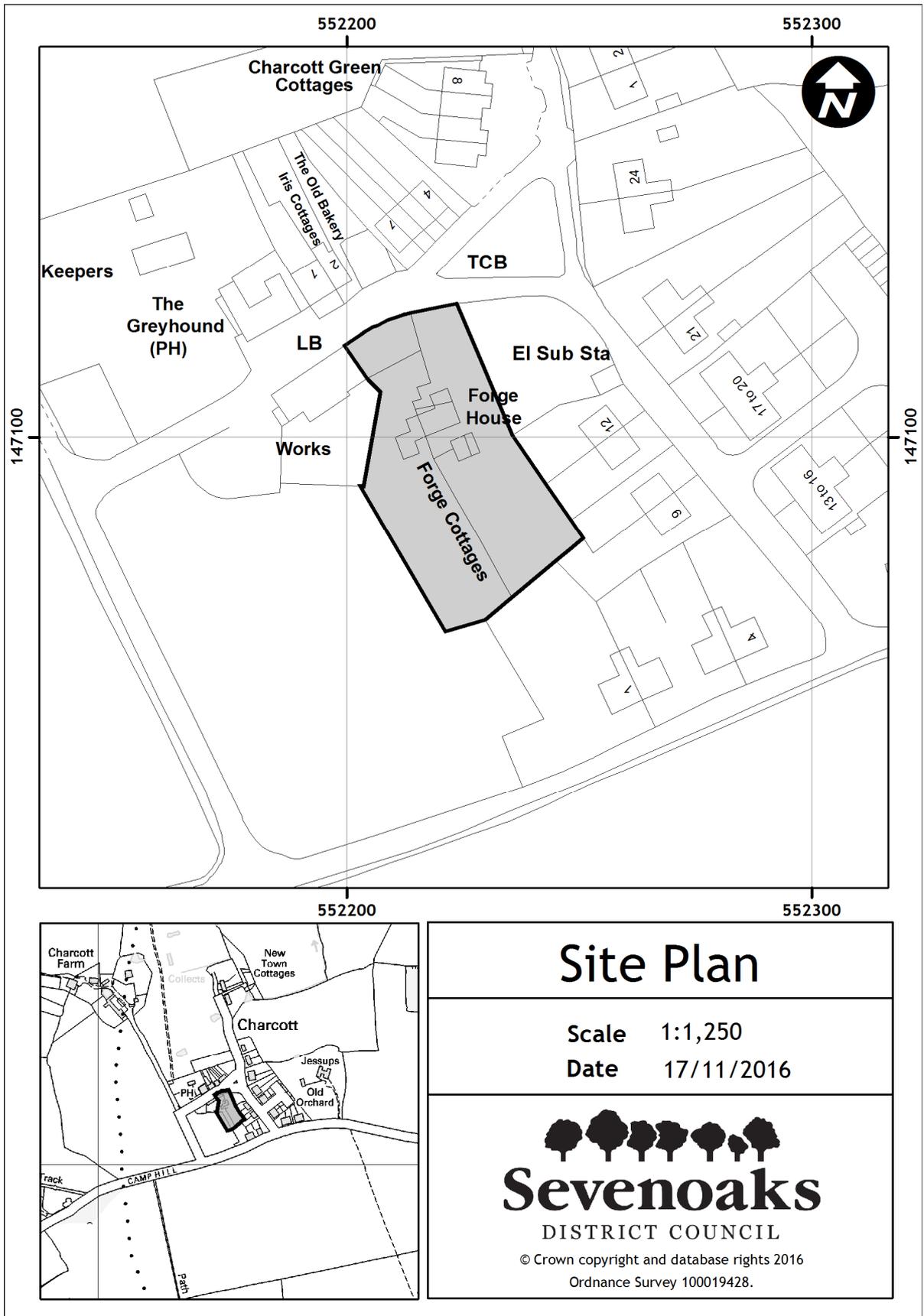
Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

Link to application details:

<https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OCIXXJBKJK400>

Link to associated documents:

<https://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=OCIXXJBKJK400>



Site Plan

Scale 1:1,250

Date 17/11/2016


Sevenoaks
 DISTRICT COUNCIL

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