

WA/2024/00910 – Erection of a building and ancillary boiler/utility shed for tourist accommodation (retrospective) at VACHERY FARM HORSHAM ROAD CRANLEIGH

Applicant: Mr Nicolas Cook - Vachery Farm
Parish: Cranleigh
Ward: Cranleigh West
Grid Reference: E: 506978
N: 136793
Case Officer: Matt Ayscough
Neighbour Notification Expiry Date: 08/06/2024
Expiry Date/Extended Expiry Date: 08/07/2024 / 02/05/2025
RECOMMENDATION That permission be GRANTED

1. Site Description

- The application site is located within the 1000-acre Vachery Farm estate, approximately 290m to the south of Vachery House.
- Property Type: The application building the subject of this application has been erected. It is a timber framed building with tiled roof.
- Character: Rural
- Site Levels: Level

2. Proposal

Erection of a building and ancillary boiler/utility shed for tourist accommodation

3. Relevant Planning History

Reference	Proposal	Decision
WA/2023/00873	Retention of agricultural building and associated boiler room for use as welfare facility for farm workers.	REFUSED 05/03/2024

4. Relevant Planning Constraints

Ancient Woodland 500M Buffer
Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)
Countryside Beyond the Green Belt

5. Relevant Development Plan Policies and Guidance

- Waverley Borough Local Plan (Part 1): Strategic policies and sites (adopted February 2018): SP1, TD1, NE1, NE2, NE3, RE1, CC1, CC2

- Waverley Borough Local Plan (Part 2) 2023: DM1, DM2, DM4, DM5, DM11, DM15, DM32.
- Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2032 (made 2024): CRAN2, CRAN3, CRAN6

Other guidance:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)
- The National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (NPPG)
- Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2010 (SPD)
- Surrey Vehicular and Cycle Parking Guidance (2018)
- Cranleigh Design Statement (2009)
- National Design Guide (2019)
- Climate Change and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (October 2022)

6. Consultations and Town/Parish Council Comments

<p>Cranleigh Parish Council</p>	<p>Objection, noting:</p> <p>A resident has been in occupation for a significant period of time.</p> <p>Incorrect answers to ecological surveys / request for ecological surveys to be carried out.</p> <p>Request that tourist accommodation is made clear.</p> <p>Members do not accept proposed use of building.</p> <p>Members request that that the welfare facility use is define (sic) more specifically.</p> <p>A bat report should have been carried out.</p> <p>Vehicle access altered</p> <p>Trees and hedged removed.</p> <p>Site visible from public footpath.</p> <p>Planning advice should have been sought prior to the start of demolition and construction.</p> <p>Members question the need of a boiler room if it is to be used as a welfare facility.</p>
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A response to third party comments will be given later in the report.

7. Representations

None received

8. Planning Considerations:

9. Principle of development

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF 2024 sets out how decisions should support rural economy and enable to:

(a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

(b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural Businesses.

Policy DM32 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 states that measures which promote tourism, including recreation based rural diversification, will be encouraged.

DM32 further states that support will be given to proposals which develop opportunities associated with rural diversification, rural development initiatives and sustainable tourism, particularly where they assist farm diversification projects

The proposed development is to use the application building for the purpose of holiday letting which would generate income in the rural setting and support diversification of Vachery Farm.

10. Design and impact on visual amenity

The site is located within an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) wherein Policy RE3 of the Local Plan (Part 1) states that development should serve to conserve or enhance the distinctive character of the landscape in which it is located, commensurate with its designation as a local landscape designation.

The site lies within the Countryside beyond the Green Belt whereby Policy RE1 states that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside will be recognised and safeguarded in accordance with the NPPF.

Policy DM15 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 sets out that development in rural areas should recognise the natural beauty and undeveloped character which is intrinsic to the open countryside, together with the distinctive character and pattern of

development in areas of urban-rural transition and rural settlements, while making efficient use of land.

Policy CRAN3 of the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan (2024) states that development should preserve and, where practicable, enhance the character area in which it is located.

Policy CRAN6 of the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan (2024) states that development proposals should preserve and, where practicable, enhance the natural environment, landscape features and rural character of Cranleigh.

The application building is in site as the application is retrospective.

The building is in a barn style that has been erected from high-quality timber above a brick plinth with a clay tiled roof. The design fits well within the rural setting and compliments the other agricultural buildings present in the surroundings.

The application building is set close to a cluster of agricultural buildings and as such the building does not materially affect the open countryside character.

Previously, older buildings stood in the location of the application building and therefore little harm to the open character of the countryside has resulted from the construction of the building.

The use of the building as tourist accommodation would create some additional vehicle and people movements, however in the context of the use of the wider uses of Vachery Farm, the activity would not have a detrimental impact upon character.

Officers note that Cranleigh Parish Council have concerns about previous residential accommodation use of the building. During a site visit on 22/01/2025 Officers noted, upon internal inspection, that the building was wholly unoccupied.

If independent residential use is sought in the future, planning permission would be required and therefore no additional protection is justified by way of planning condition.

The ancillary boiler room is small and has not material impact upon character, although the design is visually appropriate.

Officers conclude that the proposed development does not result in material harm to the character of the AGLV and Countryside Beyond the Green belt.

As such, the proposal accords with Policy TD1, RE1 and RE3 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018, Policy DM4 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023, Policies CRAN 3 and CRAN6 of the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan (2024) and the Residential Extensions SPD.

11. Impact on residential amenity

Policy TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 seeks to ensure that new development is designed to create safe and attractive environments that meet the needs of users and incorporate the principles of sustainable development.

Policy DM5 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 sets out that development should avoid harm to the amenity of future occupants and existing occupants of nearby land, buildings and residences including by way of overlooking, loss of daylight or sunlight, or overbearing appearance.

Officers are confident that the proposed development is separated from all neighbouring dwellings to a degree that no impact upon the neighbours by way of overbearing, loss of light or loss of privacy would occur.

The proposed development would not result in unacceptable harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and therefore would accord with Policy TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018, Policy DM5 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 and the Residential Extensions SPD.

12. Biodiversity and compliance with Habitat Regulations 2017

Policy NE1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 states that the Council will seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Development will be permitted provided it retains, protects and enhances biodiversity and ensures any negative impacts are avoided or, if unavoidable, mitigated.

Further, Circular 06/2005 states 'It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted.'

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been prepared by AEWG Ltd, dated March 2025, has been submitted in support of the application.

The report incorporates BNG calculations as well as satisfactory ecological enhancements which can be secured by planning condition.

The headline results in the report indicate that there is an estimated net gain of 11.95% for habitat units.

In light of the above and having regards to the completed Biodiversity Checklist and the environmental constraints, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policy NE1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018, Policy DM1 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 and Paragraphs 192 and 193 of the NPPF 2024.

13. Ancient Woodland

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF 2024 set out that, when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists. A wholly exceptional reason may include infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.

Policy NE2 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 states that the Council will seek, where appropriate, to maintain and enhance existing trees, woodland and hedgerows within the Borough.

Policy DM11 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 states that development should adequately protect trees and hedgerows during all phases of development.

Being located 92m away, the application dwelling is well separated from the ancient woodland. As such, the proposal would not be materially harmful to the woodland.

14. Response to third party comments

The Council thanks Cranleigh parish Council for making comment on the application.

The Council's response to the points raised are given in the table below:

Comment	Council response
A resident has been in occupation for a significant period of time.	The Council verified that the application building was vacant and unoccupied at the time of the site visit on 22/010/2025.
Incorrect answers to ecological surveys / request for ecological surveys to be carried out.	As part of the decision making process, the Council requested further ecological information which was duly provided by the applicant. The ecology information has been addressed in section 12 of the report.
Request that tourist accommodation is made clear.	The Council considers that tourist accommodation would fall within use class C1.
Members do not accept proposed use of building.	Should members of the CPC have concerns that the building is not being used lawfully, the matter should be raised with the Council's Planning Enforcement Team and any available evidence should be disclosed.

Members request that that the welfare facility use is define (sic) more specifically.	The application building is to be used as tourist accommodation as set out in the proposal, therefore this objection has fallen away.
A bat report should have been carried out.	Had the application been made prior to demolition of the existing building, the Council may have requested a bat report. However, given that the application is retrospective, this was not possible.
Vehicle access altered.	No alteration to vehicle access is specified in the proposal and none was noted in the red line area of the application. If CPC has concerns that development requiring planning permission has been carried out without correct permission, the matter should be raised separately.
Trees and hedges removed.	The Council is aware of no trees with specific protection by way of Tree Preservation Order within the application site. If CPC has evidence that any trees or hedges were unlawfully removed, the concerns should be raised with the appropriate authority.
Site visible from public footpath.	The impact of the proposed development on the character of the area has been assessed in section 10 of the report.
Planning advice should have been sought prior to the start of demolition and construction.	The legislative frame work which sets out the Planning process does not require such advice to be sought prior to commencement of development.
Members question the need of a boiler room if it is to be used as a welfare facility.	The application building is to be used as tourist accommodation as set out in the proposal, therefore this objection has fallen away.

15. Climate Change & Sustainability

Policy CC1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 seeks to support development which contributes to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change, including measures that use renewable and low carbon energy supply systems.

Policy CC2 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 seeks to promote sustainable patterns of development and reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy DM2 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 states that all development should seek to maximise energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions through its design, structure, orientation and positioning, landscaping and relevant technology.

The Council's Climate Change and Sustainability SPD (October 2022) is relevant.

A Climate Change and Sustainability Checklist has been submitted in support of the application. The proposals include adherence to the energy hierarchy, use of LED lighting and good levels of insulation. These measures are considered proportionate to the scale of development proposed and would comply with the relevant policies and guidance. No concern is therefore raised.

16. Conclusion

The planning balance assessment concludes that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan, as such, planning permission is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

That permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. Condition:

The plan numbers to which this permission relates are:

Site Location Plan 2063-P01 Rev. A;
Proposed Floor Plan 2063-P03;
Proposed Elevations 2063-P04;
Proposed Site Block Plan 2063-02;

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. No material variation from these plans shall take place unless otherwise first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

In order that the development hereby permitted shall be fully implemented in complete accordance with the approved plans and to accord with Policy TD1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and Policies DM1 and DM4 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

2. Condition:

The development hereby approved shall be implemented in full accordance with the details outlined in the Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Management Assessment by AEWC Ltd (dated March 2025) submitted in support of the application.

Reason:

In the interests of ensuring measurable net gains to biodiversity and in accordance with Policies NE1, NE2 and CC2 of the Local Plan (2018) Part 1 and Policies DM1 and DM11 of the Local Plan (2023) Part 2, and the NPPF 2024

3. Condition:

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the appropriate proposed measures identified within the submitted Climate Change and Sustainability Checklist unless first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

In the interests of achieving a high standard of sustainability in accordance with Policies CC1 and CC2 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018, Policy DM2 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023 and the Council's Climate change and Sustainability SPD (2022).

Informatives:

The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2025.

Case Officer Matt Ayscough

Signed: _____ Date: 29 April 2025

Agreed by Team or DC Manager: G Fitzpatrick Date: 01/05/25

Time extension agreement in writing seen by signing off officer: Yes

Draft decision notice viewed and agreed.