

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P18/S1868/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	8.6.2018
<b>PARISH</b>	HARPSDEN
<b>WARD MEMBERS</b>	Will Hall Paul Harrison
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr Craig Newman
<b>SITE</b>	Harpsden Wood House, Harpsden Woods, Harpsden, RG9 4AF
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Proposed erection of a woodland maintenance barn (amended plans received 2nd August 2018, altering the position of the barn and reducing its scale)
<b>OFFICER</b>	Simon Kitson

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee because the officers' recommendation conflicts with the views of Harpsden Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) comprises an area of land to the front of Harpsden Wood House, a historic detached property constructed in the Arts and Crafts style and dramatically renovated. The property benefits from multiple householder consents for extensions, ancillary development and changes to the driveway. Over the course of these applications, a 25-year Woodland Management Plan (WMP) and associated felling licence was agreed by the Forestry Commission and Natural England.
- 1.3 The site falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and it is at the edge of a designated area of ancient woodland. Harpsden Footpath 6 runs approximately 130m to the east of the site.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 As detailed in the application submission, consent is sought for the erection of a woodland management storage barn to house the vehicles, machinery and equipment required in connection with the felling, re-stocking and maintenance of the woodland.
- 2.2 The proposed site plans, elevations and floor plans are **attached** as Appendix B. All associated documents and consultation responses can be viewed on the council's website: [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Harpsden Parish Council – Objection**

- Whilst initially having no objection, the Parish Council now object following the submission of an amendment reducing the scale of the proposed building and revising its position. The objection is based on the impact on the ancient woodland.

**The Woodland Trust – Objection**

- The proposal would conflict with paragraph 175c of the new NPPF, which states that 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

**Forestry Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council) - No strong views**

- Following the submission of revised plans and supporting information, the forestry team have no objections to the proposed development subject to the submission of a detailed arboricultural method statement prior to commencement of the scheme.

**Countryside Officer(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse) - No strong views**

- Following the submission of further supporting information, the ecologist now accepts that the area proposed for the barn was once a track and parking area, recently colonised by Laurel. As such, the area for the proposed barn does not comprise ancient woodland habitat.

**Neighbour Objection (1)**

- The proposal conflicts with the Development Plan and the NPPF requirements for the protection of ancient woodland. The proposal is a cover for a garage

**4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

**4.1 [P16/S1275/HH](#) - Approved (01/08/2016)**

Proposed construction of tennis court and enclosure, amendments to driveway position and erection of new entrance gates and piers (as amplified by additional tree impact assessment, received 6 June 2016; and as amended by revised plans received 20th June 2016, relocating the proposed gates further into the private driveway serving Harpsden Wood House. Further amendment to Arboricultural Impact Assessment received 11th July 2016; further amendment to gate design received 25th July 2016)

**[P99/S0379](#) - Approved (05/07/1999)**

Replacement of existing flat roofed garage with new single storey family room opening on to swimming pool; replacement of flat roofs with pitched and alterations to front elevation.

**5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE**

**5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) Policies;**

CON13 - Archaeological investigation recording & publication  
CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
CSQ3 - Design

**5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies;**

C4 - Landscape setting of settlements  
C8 - Adverse affect on protected species  
C9 - Loss of landscape features  
D1 - Principles of good design  
G2 - Protect district from adverse development

**5.3 The Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan;**

**5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)

**5.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The following issues are for consideration in relation to this application:-
- The impact of the scale and design upon the character of the area
  - The arboricultural and ecological impact
  - The impact upon neighbouring amenity

**Scale and design**

- 6.2 Whilst the Parish Council and neighbour claim that the building would neither be required nor used for woodland management purposes, the applicant maintains that the building is required in connection with their approved 25-year WMP and licensed felling activity. Whilst officers consider the principle of a building for the purposes specified within the submission to be acceptable, subject to an appropriate design, it is agreed that an incidental/ ancillary residential building would be more appropriately located within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse. If the committee are minded to grant approval, an appropriate condition should be attached, ensuring that the building is retained strictly for the woodland management purposes specified within the application submission.
- 6.3 The building would be positioned in reasonably close proximity to the main residential compound, rather than in an isolated position within the main body of woodland. It would also be sited within the location of a previous driveway and it would be approximately 130m from the nearest highway/ designated footpath, with little or no visibility from public vantage points. The building has also been significantly reduced in scale since the initial submission, following detailed discussion with the council. The proposed maintenance building would have a suitably low-key, functional appearance consistent with its proposed use and officers consider that the design would be appropriate when appraised within the context of the surrounding woodland and the substantially extended surrounding residential properties. Officers are satisfied that it would be assimilated into its surroundings without causing a harmful impact upon the special landscape qualities of the woodland or the wider AONB

**Arboricultural and ecological impact**

- 6.4 The building would be located outside the SSSI to the north-east, however, it would be within designated Ancient Woodland and the proposal has attracted objections on this basis. It is accepted that Ancient Woodland is designated for special protection, under Paragraph 175(c) of the NPPF. However, the council's ecologist and Forestry Team accept that the location of the building would not have a harmful impact upon an irreplaceable habitat, having regard to the condition of the specific area of land in question.
- 6.5 It has been demonstrated that the proposed barn building would be located on land which was previously crossed by a track serving the residential property. Furthermore, a substantial area of Laurel, a non-indigenous species, has since been removed from the land. Officers accept that there is unlikely to be any remaining natural ground flora. Following negotiation with the Forestry Team, the building would now be appropriately located centrally between the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of trees T147 and T148 on the submitted Tree Constraints Plan. On the basis of the information submitted within the amended Impact Assessment, the Forestry Team accept that the building can be constructed without causing immediate harm or the long-term decline of any trees of arboricultural significance. No objections are raised, subject to a detailed tree protection condition.

- 6.6 The council accepts that the proposal can be implemented without ecological or Arboricultural impacts and the design is broadly acceptable. On this basis, officers consider that the proposal would not result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat and the 'special circumstances' set out within NPPF Paragraph 175(c) are not required to justify this proposal.

**Neighbouring amenity**

- 6.7 Whilst there is an objection relating to the proximity of the building to the neighbouring properties, the building would be a single-storey structure, with limited visual bulk due to the low eaves and a steep roof pitch. It would be located around 50m from the nearest neighbouring dwelling at Harpsden Wood Lodge and separated from that property by a substantial tree belt. There would not be an overriding impact in terms of loss or light, outlook, privacy or other disturbances.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposal broadly complies with the relevant Development Plan policies and national guidance. Having regard to the existing site conditions, the District Council is satisfied that the proposed building would not result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat and there would not be an adverse impact upon the special landscape character of this part of the Chilterns AONB. The proposal is also acceptable in terms of the impact upon neighbouring amenity.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **To grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement within three years - full planning permission.**
- 2. The development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.**
- 3. Detailed tree protection measures to be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the local planning authority prior to the commencement of any works on site.**
- 4. The construction materials shall be in accordance with the details supplied within the application submission.**
- 5. The proposed building hereby approved shall only be used for the woodland management purposes specified within the application submission. It shall not be used for any incidental or ancillary residential purposes.**

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