

Agenda Item: 6.3

06/02593/P

26/06/2006

Heathfield

Application for full planning permission

Agent:
Mr Chandler
Keith Chandler Ltd
37 Glenthorne Ave
Croydon
CR0 7ET

Applicant:
Mr Hart
Oaks Farm Receptions
Oaks Farm
Oaks Lane
Croydon
CR0 5HP

Location: Oaks Farm, Oaks Lane, Croydon

Description: Retention of existing marquee for use in connection with wedding functions

Drawing No(s): TP/BR/01

Recommendation: **Refuse Permission**

Reason(s) for refusal :-

1. The retention of the marquee would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would harm the open character and visual amenity of the area thereby conflicting with Policies SP5, RO1 and RO6 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)

Ward: Heathfield
Lead Officer: Head of Planning Control

PLANNING COMMITTEE
14 December 2006

06/2593/P
OAKS FARM, OAKS LANE, CROYDON

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report concerns an application for full planning permission to retain a marquee at the site in connection with the applicant's wedding business.
- 1.2 The application has been referred to Committee by the Head of Planning Control. It was deferred at the Meeting on 30 November 2006.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That planning permission is refused for the reason set out in the Agenda.
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3. BACKGROUND

Site Description

- 3.1 The site is located at the northern end of Oaks Lane, where it joins the Saffron Way footpath (identified as a “Green Chain” public footpath on the UDP proposals map). It is wholly within Green Belt land. Oaks Lane is a surfaced road up to the entrance to Oaks Farm and designated as a “permissive footpath.”
- 3.2 The main dwelling house of Oaks Farm is a large 2-storey building built in the late 19th century and in residential use. To the west is an outbuilding used as a function room for weddings since 1999 and attached to this building is a conservatory granted permission in 2003, also used as a wedding function room. The marquee is attached to this conservatory. To the north and west of these buildings are 3 single-storey barns arranged in a U shape. There is a 3m high beech hedge alongside the west facing elevation of the marquee.
- 3.3 To the south-west is Oaks Farm Cottage, a small single-storey dwelling with timber cladding. Part of the Shirley Park golf course surrounds the site.

Relevant Planning History

- 3.4 99/770/P – Planning permission was granted in July 1999 for the use of the former music room (outbuilding) as a function room for weddings for a maximum of 60 people.
- 3.5 03/1673/P - Planning permission was granted in October 2003 for the erection of a conservatory, next to the former music room (for use in connection with the main use as a function room for weddings).
- 3.6 04/291/P – Planning permission was granted in May 2004 for a single-storey extension behind the former music room to be used as a link to the kitchen area.
- 3.7 06/290/P- Planning permission was granted for the siting of a sewer connection to the east of the main dwelling house of Oaks Farm.

Proposal

- 3.8 This is a full planning application to retain the existing marquee on a permanent basis. It is sited to the west of the conservatory and a barn, and attached to these buildings, and is used for wedding functions.
- 3.9 The marquee has dimensions of 9.6m wide and 15m deep, giving an area of 144sq.m. It has a pitched roof with a height to the eaves of 2.6m and an overall height of 4.6m. It is constructed with white PVC sheets with clear PVC panels.
- 3.10 The applicant originally stated that there is space for a maximum of 100 vehicles at the site, although this has been qualified to state that a maximum of 50 vehicles per function is more likely. The parking takes place in a triangular grass paddock area at the western end of the site.

- 3.11 The applicant has also confirmed that the maximum size of the wedding party (of 60 persons originally permitted by condition on a previous permission) is not being increased as a result of the retention of this structure.

4. PLANNING POLICIES

- 4.1 The relevant policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan (the Croydon Plan) are SP1, UD1, SP5, RO1, RO2, RO6, SP9, SP10 and EP1.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of a site notice and the occupiers of Oaks Farm Cottage and the Manager of Shirley Park Golf Club have been individually notified.
- 5.2 The owner of Oaks Farm Cottage raises no objection to the permanent retention of the marquee as it fits in with the existing buildings and enhances the facilities of the site.
- 5.3 The Shirley Park Golf Club has no objection in principle to the retention of the marquee, but is concerned at the number of cars being parked and the capacity of the site to cope with these vehicles with the possible overspill of parking onto the Golf Course.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered are:

(1) Whether the development is appropriate or inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and if inappropriate, whether there are any very special circumstances in which to justify such inappropriate development,

(2) the effect of the proposed development in terms of;

- (i) The visual amenities of the Green Belt;
- (ii) the amenities of adjoining and nearby occupiers;

Green Belt - Appropriate or Inappropriate Development?

- 6.2 The site is well within Green Belt land. In the Green Belt there is a general presumption against "*inappropriate*" development. Inappropriate development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Local planning policies and PPG2 identify what may be appropriate or inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 6.3 The construction of new buildings and structures inside the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for agriculture and forestry purposes, the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, limited infilling in existing villages, or limited infilling or redevelopment of Major Existing Developed Sites identified in adopted local plans. The site is not identified as a Major Existing Developed Site in the Croydon Plan.

- 6.4 The existing marquee can be classed as a new building (structure), and as such its retention for the use as part of a wedding function area is by definition inappropriate development and would conflict with the terms of Policy RO1 of the UDP.

Green Belt – Are There Very Special Circumstances?

- 6.5 Paragraph 3.2 of PPG2 states that *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations...”*.
- 6.6 In paragraph 6.13 of the UDP, it states “the Council will take a very strict approach when assessing whether facilities are essential and genuinely required. It will not be sufficient to state or imply that facilities are desirable; there must be a demonstrable and genuine need. For essential facilities to be acceptable they should not adversely impact upon the openness of the land.....”
- 6.7 The applicant has not given any reasons in the application why permission should be granted and what very special circumstances may exist to justify the “inappropriate development”. The marquee structure increases the volume and floor space of buildings on this site and results in a spread of development, thereby harming the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.8 Notwithstanding this lack of information, it is considered there are no special circumstances to justify this inappropriate development. However, consideration should be given to the effect of the development in respect of other material considerations as detailed below.

Visual Amenities of the Green Belt

- 6.9 Although the marquee would be largely screened from views from the north and south, it can be seen from Oaks Lane, when approaching the site from the south. Bearing in mind the public use of the neighbouring golf course and of the Saffron Way footpath, it is considered that the retention of the marquee would harm the visual amenity of the area, having regard to its size, design and materials of the structure, and thereby conflict with Policy RO6 of the UDP.

The Amenities of Adjoining and Nearby Occupiers

- 6.10 Whilst there is one property in the immediate vicinity that would have direct views of the marquee structure (Oaks Farm Cottage) and it is considered that an increase in traffic movements to and from the site for wedding functions could also adversely impact on the amenities of this occupier by reason of noise and disturbance, the proposal itself would not give rise to an increase in traffic and the restriction of use to 60 persons remains in place.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The development would be inappropriate and detrimental to the open character of the surrounding Green Belt.

8. EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Level access is provided to the marquee structure and to the adjoining buildings at the site by way of a ramp.

Case Officer: John Lawson

Background Documents: 2 letters

Contact Officer: P Mills, Tel: 0208 760 5419