

3 & 4 Dell Lane, Stoneleigh, Surrey, KT17 2NE

Extension of existing temple at 4 Dell Lane to include first floor residential accommodation for priests of the temple and redevelopment of adjacent warehouse premises at 3 Dell Lane to provide community meeting space and ancillary facilities.

Ward:	Stoneleigh
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1 Plans and Representations

- 1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to this application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report. Please note that the link is current at the time of publication, and will not be updated.

Link: <http://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=NZPIPXYJZV00>

2 Summary

- 2.1 The application premises comprise the existing temple and the adjacent wholesale catering warehouse premises at 3 & 4 Dell Lane to the rear of Stoneleigh Broadway. The proposal would result in the remodelling of the existing temple premises with the addition of first floor accommodation to the rear over the hall below. It would also include the redevelopment of the warehouse into 2 storey premises that would be integrated at first floor level with the temple building to provide a community hall and ancillary facilities and new accommodation for priests of the temple. At ground floor level the redeveloped premises on the existing warehouse site would provide reception space and ancillary facilities all of which would cater for wedding receptions and banquets aimed at the Tamil, Indian, Mauritian and English Hindu community.
- 2.2 The application has been referred to Committee for determination by Councillor Mike Teasdale.
- 2.3 The application is recommended for REFUSAL** because of the impact on local parking and traffic conditions and because of the loss of existing employment premises.

3 Site description

- 3.1 The site is currently occupied by Sri Raja Rajaeswari Amman Temple (No. 4 Dell Lane) and a wholesale food warehouse (No. 3 Dell Lane). There is a small area of hard standing to the front of the buildings currently used as off-street parking bays for 4 vehicles.

- 3.2 The application premises are situated on the south side of Dell Lane, a private service road that also provides access to the rear of Stoneleigh Broadway shops, businesses, residential flats, the Hindu Cultural Centre at 5 Dell Lane next door, a scout group hall and a children's nursery. To the south of the premises are the rear gardens to dwellings in Briarwood Close and to the north immediately outside and facing the premises across Dell Lane are a series of rear garages and outbuildings in low intensity commercial or storage use, mainly associated with or ancillary to the Stoneleigh Broadway business frontage uses. Planning permission has been recently granted under 15/00336/FUL for the demolition of existing buildings to the rear of 44-48 Stoneleigh Broadway and the erection of a part single/part three-storey building providing commercial floor space at ground floor, and residential flat units at upper floor levels.
- 3.3 Almost opposite the warehouse building is a narrow service road that links Dell Lane with Stoneleigh Broadway.
- 3.4 The application site is situated between the established residential area to the south, east and west and the Stoneleigh Broadway District Centre immediately to the north. It is relevant to note that in recognition of the cluster of community and commercial uses located along Dell Lane it has been proposed in the Site Allocations Policies Document: Other Sites Consultation Paper, October 2013 to extend the District centre boundary to include these Dell Lane premises. This, however, has no formal status pending the preparation of the Site Allocations Policies Document for examination.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 The application proposes the extension of the existing temple at 4 Dell Lane to include first floor residential accommodation for priests of the temple and redevelopment of the adjacent warehouse premises at 3 Dell Lane to provide community meeting space and ancillary facilities.
- 4.2 The proposal would result in the remodelling of the existing temple premises with the relocation of existing first floor priests' accommodation to the rear over the hall below. It would also include the redevelopment of the warehouse into 2 storey premises that would provide modern purpose built space alongside the temple and linked at first floor level to accommodate both wedding ceremonies and banquets for the Tamil, Indian, Mauritian and English Hindu community and allow for in-house catering. Wedding receptions are currently held within the smaller rear hall of the Temple.
- 4.3 The proposed redevelopment of the warehouse premises would result in a slightly larger footprint with the building coming further forward by about 2.5m towards Dell Lane and up to about 3.0m further to the rear. With 2 floor levels the resultant floorspace of the new building linked to the temple would increase from the existing 285 sq m warehouse to 685 sq m. This would mean that the current 511 sq m of temple floorspace would increase to a total of 1196 sq m and occupy almost all the site curtilage but with the retention of 4 car parking spaces outside 4 Dell Lane.

- 4.4 The redeveloped building at 3 Dell Lane would match in scale and massing the existing Temple building in terms of the ridge height but it would include a higher eaves level on the Dell Lane frontage to accommodate the first floor level with a glazed curtain wall at first floor level and an open circulation corridor between the two buildings at ground floor level. On the rear elevation facing towards Briarwood Road there would be a series of first floor windows to serve the emergency stairwell, store/plant, the hall and the residential accommodation for the priests. Materials would be rendered walls, roof tiles and upvc windows and doors all to match those on the temple building at 4 Dell Lane.

5 Comments from third parties

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of letters of notification to neighbouring properties. To date (27.04.2016) 683 letters of objection have been received regarding:

- Loss of light or overshadowing from the increased bulk of the building to residential properties in Briarwood Road that sit down at a lower level;
- Overlooking and loss of privacy from the rear first floor flat and external staircase to residential properties in Briarwood Road;
- No 3 Dell Lane currently has no windows overlooking the neighbours adjoining the property. The proposed building will therefore be intrusive and result in a loss of privacy;
- Impact of parking upon surrounding residential streets and Stoneleigh Broadway shops by reducing available parking for local residents;
- Impact on preserved trees to the rear (Officer comment – the remaining preserved Lombardy poplar (313/G4 is of poor quality and there is no objection);
- Noise and disturbance to neighbouring residents from increased and longer events;
- No provision for storage and disposal of trade effluent or waste;
- Lead to vehicles overhanging the adopted highway verge/road to the detriment of other road users and restricting access to emergency vehicles;
- Adversely affect the amenity of surrounding properties through roadside parking on this narrow lane/busy junction;
- The scale of the proposal will attract more people, more frequently to events resulting in extended periods of parking issues and congestion;
- This development does not support or enhance the local community;
- Adverse impact on the appearance and style of Dell Lane, and is out of keeping with the surrounding residential properties;
- Increased traffic would pose a serious risk to toddlers / children who currently have no pavement to protect them when leaving the nursery on Dell Lane.

- 5.2 In addition to the individual objections 2 separate petitions of objection have been received, one 10 page petition regarding the negative impact on the local area and Stoneleigh Broadway shops from the shortage of parking, and one 6 page petition regarding increased traffic and parking.

5.3 333 letters of support had been received by 27.04.2016, mainly although not exclusively, from users of the Temple who reside outside the local area. The grounds of support include:

- Makes good use of the adjacent building by providing support to both the local community and for the use of the temple;
- Reduce the traffic of heavy goods vehicles, especially on Dell Lane;
- Replaces a large 2 storey warehouse with a more ascetically pleasing two storey building;
- The temple has serviced our community for more than 20 years and I live opposite and can confirm there is little noise or disturbance;
- Enhancing opportunities for the local community- cultural and academic teaching opportunities for all(irrespective of background),as well as other community based activities;
- Weddings occur at the temple already. There will not be a regular increase of people coming to the temple- weddings are short, irregular festivals;
- The temple community is stable and is unlikely to increase at all as a result of the new facilities;
- The temple provides such a wonderful attraction and place of multiculturalism to Stoneleigh;
- The proposal to provide a reasonably priced wedding hall for the Hindu community is welcomed;

A 10 page petition was also received in support of the application from users of the Temple and a separate petition received from the teachers and parents of students who attend the Hindu Cultural Centre at Enderwood House, 5 Dell Lane.

5.4 Surrey County Highway Authority: Recommends refusal on the grounds that it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposed extension to the Temple will not generate more traffic and parking in the vicinity of the premises to the detriment of free flow of traffic on surrounding roads and inconvenience for local residents, leading to conditions adverse to the safety of other road users. All this is contrary to CS16 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy 2007.

6 Relevant planning history

Application number	Decision date	Application detail	Decision
97/00680/FUL	12.12.1997	Erection of first floor extension to existing church/prayer hall to provide additional accommodation.	Granted
14/01484/FUL	16.03.2015	Change of use of the first floor to residential accommodation (use class C3) for priests of the temple.	Granted

7 Planning Policy

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2012

Chapter 1:	Building a strong and competitive economy
Chapter 2:	Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Chapter 4:	Promoting sustainable transport
Chapter 8:	Promoting healthy communities

Core Strategy 2007

Policy CS5	The Built Environment
Policy CS11	Employment Provision
Policy CS13	Community, Cultural and Built Sports Facilities
Policy CS15	Role of local centres
Policy CS16	Managing Transport and Travel

Development Management Policies 2015

Policy DM5	Trees and landscape
Policy DM9	Townscape Character and local Distinctiveness
Policy DM10	Design Requirements for new developments
Policy DM24	Employment Uses outside of existing employment policy areas
Policy DM34	New Social Infrastructure
Policy DM35	Transport and new development
Policy DM36	Sustainable Transport for new development
Policy DM37	Parking Standards

8 Planning considerations

Community Use

8.1 The applicant in supporting documentation has confirmed that The Sri Raja Rajeswari Amman Hindu Temple has been situated at 4 Dell Lane since 1994 and is currently used for Hindu worship with regular attendance during the week's services of up to 250 people. Over a year the temple will also undertake over 50 wedding services with up to 300 people gathering at any one time. There are currently four priests that support these worshippers and undertake daily duties in the Temple and live within walking distance of the Temple.

8.2 The Temple is currently open for the following hours:

Monday to Thursday 08:30 – 14:00 / 17:30 – 21:30; and

Friday to Sunday 08:30 – 15:00 / 16:30 – 22:00.

Evening worship is the busiest period for the Temple, with its service starting at 20:00 and finishing at 21:00. Wedding ceremonies generally commence at 1200 and are finished by 1400. Other than the evening service, Hindu worship is primarily an individual act rather than a communal one as it involves making personal offerings to the deity. Worshipers don't generally arrive for a specific start time, attending Temple individually over the course of a number of hours. The peak periods of worship for the Hindu community is Chaturthi – the full moon festival and Last Friday of the month festival.

8.3 The applicant wishes to improve the quality of the building to offer a better environment for activities and provide a more flexible space. The proposed development is aimed at providing the Hindu community with a local hall space for wedding banquets along with the general needs of a large faith community for gathering together. The proposed hours of use would not be dissimilar to those existing and are stated as:

Monday to Saturday 08.30 – 22.00; and

Sunday and BH 08.30 – 21.30

8.4 An extended community facility in this location on the edge of Stoneleigh Broadway district centre is acceptable in principle as it mainly meets the criteria set out under Policy DM34 for new social infrastructure and in particular is co-located with other social infrastructure and is in a sustainable location well served by public transport. It, however, fails to make appropriate provision for on-site car parking (criteria f) and it also would involve the loss of an existing employment building protected under Policy DM24 (see further below). The issue of adequate on-site car parking is considered to be particularly relevant because the majority of users of the Temple reside outside the area and many from South-west London and the applicant's own survey information confirms that the vast majority arrive by car. The proposed extension to create a larger wedding and reception venue is considered likely to increase the level of car use to the premises.

Car Parking and Traffic

- 8.5 The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement and Travel Plan in response to a request by Surrey County Council, as Highway Authority, to provide this information in order to assess the impact of the proposal.
- 8.6 The Transport Statement details the use of the existing site, the scale of the proposed development and focuses on issues associated with traffic generation and travel planning. It states that Dell Lane is a privately owned lane and attendees at the Temple generally park on the lane to attend the Temple. It asserts that applicant has access to 18 car parking spaces but it should be noted that the application form and plans only refer to the 4 existing car parking spaces outside the temple being retained to service the development. It is also claimed by the applicant that the proposed modifications to the Temple are not envisaged to increase the number of worshipers at the Temple over and above those attending the Temple in its current form and that with regards to car parking, the Temple already receives large numbers of visitors on a weekly basis and that there would not be a further increase over and above those currently experienced.
- 8.7 The applicant has referred to the TRICS database trip generation to estimate that the existing 285 sq m wholesale food warehouse generates approximately 1 vehicle in the AM peak, 0 vehicles in the PM peak and a total of 12 daily trips. A travel survey was also undertaken at the temple for attendees on the busiest day of worship, which is the last Friday of the month, on Friday 26th February 2016 between the hours of 18:30 – 21:30. This surveyed 66 attendees of which, 89% travelled by car and 6% were car passengers. A total of 8% of attendees travelled by public transport and 3% walked to the Temple.
- 8.8 In addition to the travel survey, a car parking survey of on-street parking on adjacent roads, within a 1km walking distance route to the Temple, was undertaken on behalf of the applicant on the busiest day of worship, which is the last Friday of the month and on a neutral weekday between the hours of 19:30 – 20:30 in order to assess the impact of the existing temple use on the surrounding (mainly residential) streets. This survey found that the average occupancy in the surrounding residential roads was 56% and 59% of capacity throughout the surveyed period on a Friday and a typical weekday respectively and that the majority of attendees park on Dell Lane (which is a private road) and in the parking bays on The Broadway Stoneleigh.
- 8.9 The applicant states that the number of guests at weddings associated with the proposed development would be similar in number (300) to those who were surveyed on Friday 26th February. It is accordingly claimed by the applicant that with ample parking available for users of the Temple demonstrated, (even for their maximum use scenario) it is evident that with the proposed modifications to the Temple not envisaged to increase the number of worshipers at the Temple there would be no significant adverse effect on traffic flow, highway safety or parking stress as a result of the development.

- 8.10 The applicant's Transport Statement concludes that as the Temple is in a sustainable location, with a variety of public transport options available and with a suitable travel plan to be implemented by the Temple there would be no adverse traffic or parking impact arising.
- 8.11 Surrey County Council, as Highway Authority, has advised that the proposed increase in floor area more than doubles the existing Temple with no additional parking facilities to cater for the increase. The proposal removes an area of parking currently available in front of the Warehouse and increases the number of staff employed on the site from 3 to 6 full time and 4 part-time. The planning statement indicates that this is a growing faith group originally set up for Tamil Hindus but which, now embraces other nationalities of the same faith. Its growing popularity has led to the need for increased floor space but there is no indication of the rate of growth or that limits will be imposed on the future growth of the congregation. It is considered highly likely that the increased size of the temple would result in increased numbers attending and for longer periods with the improved and expanded facilities. This is borne out by the applicant's own statement that there are two other venues within south London that provide such dedicated space to the Hindu community for weddings but they are profit run businesses and as such are costly. The Temple aims to provide all its community with the opportunity to not only have the wedding service and marriage certification performed in the existing temple buildings but also then be able to have the wedding reception in the same space at lower cost as the Sri Raja Rajeswari Amman Hindu Temple runs as a not for profit organisation. The expansion of the existing facility is also underlined by the proposal to employ a full-time kitchen team of Chef, assistant and kitchen porter to provide food for two events each week together with a full-time site and events manager to organise and run the events.
- 8.12 The catchment area for the congregation is very broad, stretching far beyond the Borough Boundary into adjoining London Boroughs with most people attending coming by car.
- 8.13 The extended facilities would be easily separated from the existing temple and there is no guarantee that the halls on the ground and first floor will not be used independently by two users at the same time. It would be difficult to control the use of the halls even if planning conditions were introduced to this effect. The provision of banquet facilities will increase the length of time that the guests will be staying on site and this will put further pressure on local parking in the area. Whilst the applicant has undertaken a parking survey to demonstrate that the existing temple use does not impact on streets in the local area, it would seem that the congregation are using areas of private land in Dell Lane to park on, which are not included in the planning application, and which cannot be controlled for the use of the Temple and its congregation. Any increased size of wedding functions that would be catered for would be likely to coincide with when the Stoneleigh Broadway shops and businesses were open and would result in increased pressure on local public car parking facilities.

- 8.12 A new community centre of this type would usually require car parking at the rate of 1 space per 20 sq m : a total of 34.25 spaces, and Bicycle parking for at least 2 cycles. The proposal is therefore seriously deficient in provision of on-site car parking and it is concluded would have an adverse impact on local parking provision, traffic movement and highway safety as well as upon residential character and amenity.
- 8.13 It is also relevant to note that if either or both of the recently permitted mixed commercial/residential scheme at R/O 44-48 Stoneleigh Broadway (15/00336/FUL) and residential scheme permitted on appeal at R/O 72 Stoneleigh Broadway (14/00795/FUL) are implemented there would be likely to be more on-street parking pressures as both these schemes are "car free" developments.

Employment Policy

- 8.14 Policy DM34 seeks to protect employment floorspace outside the existing employment policy areas unless the existing use has a significant adverse impact on residential amenity or where there is genuine evidence through, for example, marketing for a period of 18 months that the site is no longer suitable for employment uses. There is no evidence that the existing low key wholesale use is having a significant adverse impact on this mixed use area. The premises at 3 Dell Lane are moreover still in warehouse use so there is no evidence presented to demonstrate that the premises are not suited to continued B8 or other employment use.
- 8.15 The applicant has stated that the alteration of the property to D1 use would increase the employment levels related to the current B8 (from 3 F/T employees to 6 F/T and 3P/T employees). This may be true but it doesn't overcome the employment policy objective under DM24 of trying to ensure that the requirements of different employment sectors and especially B1, B2 and B8 uses can continue to be met in the Borough.

Design and Appearance

- 8.16 The design and scale of the building is considered to be acceptable in this transitional location between the 4 storey Stoneleigh Broadway properties and the suburban 2 storey residential properties to the south. The resulting building would be a relatively long (43m) and utilitarian building but in the context of the range of industrial style properties along Dell Lane it is considered that no objection can be made to the proposal on design grounds.

Residential amenity

- 8.17 Objections have been raised about the potential for loss of privacy, noise and disturbance and loss of light arising from the proposed development. It is however considered that the rear of residential properties in Briarwood Road being approximately 28m distant from the application proposal are sufficiently separated by their rear gardens that these matters would not be harmful to justify a reason for refusal. The rear first floor windows are small and being situated to the north of the residential properties there would be no overshadowing of rear gardens.

Community Infrastructure Levy

8.18 The development is not liable.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The application fails to make adequate provision for on-site car parking for what in effect would be a sub-regional community facility. It also fails to justify the loss of an existing employment facility that is still in use by a local wholesale company.

10 Recommendation

10.1 Planning Permission is refused for the following reasons:

Reasons:

- (1) It has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposed extension to the Temple will not generate more traffic and parking in the vicinity of the premises to the detriment of free flow of traffic on surrounding roads and inconvenience for local residents, leading to conditions adverse to the safety of other road users. The application is therefore contrary to Policy CS16 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM34 and DM37 of the Development Management Policies Document (2015).**
- (2) The development would result in the loss of existing employment premises and the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the exceptional criteria under Policy DM24 of the Development Management Policies Document (2015) have been met. The development is therefore contrary to Policy DM24 of the Development Management Policies Document (2015).**

Informative(s):

- (1) The plans considered in the determination of this application are as follows: 132/D/10, 132/D/11, 132/D/12, 132/D/13.**